FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS'

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

By

SARA BETH TOURS

A Dissertation submitted to the
School of Teacher Education
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2017

Sara Beth Tours defended this dissertation on July 13, 2017.
The members of the supervisory committee were:

Ithel Jones
Professor Directing Dissertation

Thomas Welsh
University Representative

Elizabeth Jakubowski
Committee Member

Angela Davis
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.

Dedicated to my Dad and Grampa
Thank you both for supporting me through my life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I thank Dr. Ithel Jones. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be where I am today. Over the past 7 years and 3 degrees he has supported me the entire way. For this I shall always be grateful. Next, I must thank my father for always being a phone call away and being my number 1 cheerleader. I must also thank my mom and brother for all their love. I want to also thank my Aunt Heidi for her notes of encouragement. Many thanks go out to my grandparents; Lee and Bill Tours and Nancy and Charlie Wynne. I thank Helen Bekerman for instilling me with the foundation and love of early childhood education. I need to thank my esteemed committee members, Dr. Tom Welsh, Dr. Jakubowski and Dr. Davis for their constructive criticism. I thank my sister, Stephanie, for always being one phone call away. I also thank Jesse Lapin-Bertone for asking questions and trying to figure out what I am doing. Over the years while living in Tallahassee, I have made some amazing friends, who are now family to me. Therefore, I must also thank my extended family; Ahmet Simsar, Oguzcan Cig, Alena Troutman, Cathryn Lokey, Suyog Shelar, Julie Couch, Johnny Petit, Can Cui, Sheng Tan, Qiong Chao, Pavan Chintirala, Megan Cavano, Yu Che Chiu, Burcu Izci, and Jennifer Koon. For all the times you proofread for me and helped me make sure I was saying what I thought I was saying, I thank you. I want to thank my school family at The School of Arts and Sciences for allowing me to teach and work on my PhD at the same time. I thank Lisa Beverly for answering my emails and helping me figure out the dissertation process. In addition, I also thank Teachers-Pay-Teachers.com for supplying 2 of the 10 incentives that were given out.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

This study examined kindergarten teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs, developmentally appropriate practices, and their opinions about the current state of the kindergarten curriculum through the lens of teachers' beliefs. A sample of 107 kindergarten teachers participated in the study by completing the Teacher Questionnaire on-line. The survey instrument was comprised of three sections; The Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire, The Instructional Activities Questionnaire, and the Opinions Questionnaire. The findings showed that kindergarten teachers had concerns and were frustrated with the current state of the kindergarten curriculum. The respondents who were comfortable with the current state of the kindergarten curriculum had extenuating circumstances such as working in invitation-only school or using a Montessori curriculum. The findings also showed that kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices were not aligned. The kindergarten teachers tended to have developmentally appropriate beliefs, but they did not often engage in developmentally appropriate practices. It was also found that kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices overall were not significantly correlated. In addition, the findings showed that kindergarten teachers in Title I schools engaged in more developmentally inappropriate practices than did the kindergarten teachers who were not at Title I schools. Kindergarten teachers with more than 18 years of teaching experience engaged in more developmentally appropriate practices than kindergarten teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience and kindergarten teachers with 6-17 years teaching experience.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers in the field of early childhood education have expressed concerns about a shift from a developmental instructional approach to an academic standards-driven academic focus in public school kindergarten classes (Bassok, Latham, & Rorem, 2016; Gullo & Hughes, 2010; Miller & Almon, 2009). While some researchers maintain that there is too much focus on teaching academic skills and content (e.g., Carlsson-Paige, McLaughlin, & Almon, 2015; Classens, Duncan, & Engel, 2009; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Watts, Duncan, Siegler, & Davis-Kean, 2014), others are concerned about the lack of opportunities for children to play in kindergarten (e.g., Gallant, 2009; Miller & Almon, 2009; Russell, 2011). The outrage of early childhood educators concerning this issue is reflected in the use of labels such as "crisis" (Miller & Almon, 2009, p. 16), "rigorous classroom environment" (Gao, 2005, p.1), and "the beginning of serious academic instruction" (Russell, 2011, p.237) in recent publications, and the founding of organizations such as Defending the Early Years (DEY). The title of a recent Washington Post article (2012), "How Ed Policy is Hurting Early Childhood Education," aptly sums up the opinion of many early childhood educators.

The so called "crisis" concerns the recent shift in kindergarten education from the use of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) that are broadly based on a whole child-centered philosophy, to a standards-driven prescribed curriculum that focuses on testing literacy and mathematics skills through direct instruction (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Goldstein, 2007; Gullo & Hughes, 2011; Miller & Almon, 2009). This curricular shift has prompted many early childhood professionals to describe kindergarten as "the new first grade" (Bassok, Latham, & Roren, 2016; Miller & Almon, 2009; Tyre, 2006). These changes are likely a consequence of

recently implemented national policies, state legislation, (Goldstein, 2007; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009) and related calls for improved academic standards, and greater accountability. For example, the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001) known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) introduced an emphasis on mastery of academic skills, learning outcomes, and accountability within kindergarten and continued with the 2015 reauthorization of the same act (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Such an emphasis had previously been confined to first grade and above (Miller & Almon, 2009). Yet, given the increased emphasis on academic skills and accountability, many kindergarten teachers are now required by their school districts to implement prescribed scripted curricula that seem to be at odds with DAP and best practices in early childhood education. Many of today's kindergarten students are provided few opportunities to learn through play and exploration, or to exercise and use their imaginations (Miller & Almon, 2009).

While the evidence concerning recent changes in kindergarten education is primarily anecdotal articles, recent empirical evidence (Bassok et al., 2016) confirms that today's kindergarten classrooms are structured similarly to first-grade classrooms of the late 1990's. By analyzing longitudinal data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies (ECLS), Bassok and colleagues (2016) reported that there were fewer activity centers within today's kindergarten classrooms compared to classrooms in the late 1990's. Notably, the researchers also found that kindergarten classrooms with students from low-income families and non-White students seemed to have been most severely impacted by the curriculum shift by having more of an academic focus. In sum, the findings provide evidence supporting the oft cited claim that "kindergarten is the new first-grade" (Bassok, et al., 2016).

Although there is empirical evidence that the kindergarten curriculum has changed in recent years, such that there is less focus on DAP, the developmental levels of the children served remains the same (Elkind, 2007). The fundamental varying developmental characteristics of kindergarten children are the same as they were two decades ago (Gullo & Hughes, 2011). Presumably, the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) position statement on DAP is based on expert opinion concerning best practices for "promoting young children's optimal learning and development" (NAEYC, 2009, p. xii.). Moreover, this influential document is based on "research on child development and learning and in the knowledge base regarding educational effectiveness" (NAEYC, 2009, p. xii). Since children's development is unchanged, engaging in teaching practices that differ significantly from those that are recommended by the NAEYC could be problematic and challenging for kindergarten teachers.

Regardless of their origin, directives and recommendations for kindergarten practices have to be implemented by the classroom teachers. The classroom teacher is the one faced with the challenge of operationalizing curricular changes. It is the kindergarten teachers and students who have been directly impacted by the recent changes in the kindergarten curriculum and related teaching practices. Yet, little is known about the nature and extent of early childhood educators' opinions about the status of today's kindergarten teaching practices. Furthermore, little is known about the extent to which current kindergarten teaching practices are aligned with DAP.

Kindergarten teachers adopt practices in accordance with recommendations and directives from their district and school administrators. Furthermore, they are also likely to draw from their own knowledge base concerning child development and best practices in early

childhood education. It is also well established that teachers' practices are influenced by their own beliefs (Calderhead, 1987). Teachers' beliefs can be defined as dispositions to actions and major determinants of behavior (Brown & Cooney, 1982). Although there has been some disagreement concerning the precise definition of teacher beliefs (e.g., Pajares, 1992), it is evident that they motivate teachers' behaviors. In the context of teaching, beliefs can be considered principles that guide teachers' practices.

It is well established that teachers' beliefs play a significant role in how they teach, and what practices they use in their classrooms (Charlesworth et al., 1993; Fang, 1996; Gallant, 2009). If teachers, for example, hold strong beliefs about DAP, then their classroom teaching practices will most likely reflect those beliefs. In contrast, teachers holding strong beliefs in direct instruction, or developmentally inappropriate practices (DIP), will adopt more didactic teaching practices. Yet, given recent changes to the kindergarten curriculum, it is possible that teachers' practices may not reflect their beliefs. They could hold strong beliefs about DAP while their practices are more aligned with DIP. That being the case, a reasonable assumption may be that kindergarten teachers are concerned about, or disagree with, the changes to the kindergarten curriculum.

Given the recent increased expectations for kindergarten students and the presumed shift toward more didactic teaching approaches (Almon, 2009), the current study examined the beliefs and practices of a sample of kindergarten teachers. This first chapter discusses the recent changes in instructional approaches in public school kindergarten classes. The current study's underlying problem is outlined, and the related conceptual framework and rationale presented. This is followed by an overview of the purpose and significance of the study. Finally, the research questions guiding the study are listed and key terms are defined.

Statement of Problem

In recent years, educators and policymakers have expressed concerns about the nature of public school kindergarten curricula and teaching practices (Bassok, et al., 2016; Hirsh-Pasek, 2009; Miller & Almon, 2009). Kindergarten curriculum seems to have shifted from a developmental approach, using practices defined as developmentally appropriate (DAP), to the use of more scripted didactic approaches (Bassok et al., 2016). Little is known, however, about kindergarten teachers' response to this change. This includes their opinions, as well as their beliefs and practices concerning developmentally appropriate practices. Also, little is known about the extent to which the changing kindergarten curriculum has resulted in a corresponding change in kindergarten teachers' beliefs.

Conceptual Framework

The study examined kindergarten teachers' reactions to the current academic emphasis in kindergarten through the lens of teacher beliefs. It is well established that teacher beliefs are an important psychological construct in teacher education (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Furthermore, beginning in the 1970's (e.g., Fenstermacher, 1979), teacher beliefs became the focus of research on teacher effectiveness. In examining the literature on the construct of teacher beliefs, Pajares (1992) noted that "the beliefs that teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgements, which in turn affects their behavior in the classroom" (p. 307). This means that kindergarten teachers' beliefs influence their judgements and, in turn, affects their educational practices (Pajares, 1992).

According to Nilsson (2014), beliefs are formed by the senses and also by inventing explanations for and deriving consequences from what is already believed. Teachers come from a variety of backgrounds, have studied at different universities, and have differing levels of

experience. All of these factors potentially have an impact on their beliefs, and translates into their classroom through their teaching practices. Green (1971), states that a belief is never independent, but rather it occurs in sets or groups to make up a beliefs system. Thus, the entire teachers' belief systems influence the instructional practices that are used in the classroom.

Determining the most appropriate instructional practices for young children has long been the subject of debate. This was initially addressed when the NAEYC, who advocates for early childhood education, published its first position statement on DAP in 1987. The overarching intent of the guidelines was to describe both appropriate and inappropriate DAP practices in early childhood education. Appropriate practices being DAP centered and inappropriate being not DAP, but also not necessarily of a negative connotation. In other words, DAP represents a continuum, whereby instructional decisions are based upon knowledge about how children develop and learn. The guidelines represented the consensus of opinion on the status of current knowledge and thinking in the field. There was widespread acceptance of the DAP guidelines and a revised document was published in 1997. According to the NAEYC, DAP emphasize the developmental level of the whole child across the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive domains (Burts, Hart, & Charlesworth, 1989; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The NAEYC's initial DAP guidelines to a certain extent dichotomized practices into didactic or developmentally appropriate. However, according to Hatch et al. (2002) DAP can be considered "guidelines for classroom instruction that stem from a systematic knowledge base of research, theory, and practical experience that is informative about normative development and learning processes at different ages" (p. 447). As such, DAP can be considered a continuum of practices that are aligned with what we know about children's development, their needs, and learning styles.

Didactic practices typically rely on teachers' use of repetition, direct instruction, rote memorization, and the use of workbooks and worksheets. This approach offers few opportunities for student choice and peer collaboration (Burts et al., 1989). In contrast, DAP provide opportunities for children to work with peers and explore with manipulatives. DAP is based on a child-centered cognitive developmental perspective, and the notion that children learn by actively constructing their own knowledge though interaction with peers, adults, and materials. Thus, this type of instruction should be informal, drawing on children's own experiences, and integrated across content areas. Yet, when determining their instructional approaches, teachers also have to adhere to their own schools' and school district's policies, as well as state level expectations and standards.

Within the State of Florida, standards were originally introduced in 1996 with the Florida Sunshine State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2012). These standards were loosely worded. For example, "The student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively" (Panhandle Area Educational Consortium, n.d.). Then, in 2007, revised standards, known as the Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2012), were adopted. The new standards included more specific expectations within different subject areas, for example: "The student demonstrates knowledge of the concept of print and how it is organized and read" (Florida Center for Instructional Technology, 2017). Then in 2014, Florida adopted a new set of standards titled the "Florida Standards" (2017). These standards were based on the Common Core State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2017), and they were designed to document expectations concerning Kindergarten to 12th grade children's learning across different subjects. According to the Florida Department of Education (2012) the wording of the Florida Standards are more specific and precise. For

example, the standard from the English Language Arts Standards (LAFS) for kindergarten "With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text" (CPALMS, 2017) is precise, concrete, and measureable.

It seems that during the past decade, teachers in Florida have had to adapt to changing standards and expectations. While teachers have to consider the state standards when determining instructional practices, they also draw on their own beliefs concerning teaching and learning. It is well established that teachers' belief systems shape classroom experiences and the quality of learning (Garvis & Pendergast, 2011). In addition, the thoughts and actions of teachers are known to be related to their effectiveness (Leung, 2012), and that their beliefs can shape their classroom behaviors. It follows that teachers whose epistemological beliefs are consistent with a constructivist approach would most likely endorse DAP. In contrast, those with less developmentally appropriate beliefs may rely on more didactic approaches. Teachers' beliefs about DAP therefore refers to their theoretical agreement with developmentally appropriate principle guidelines. Since past and present experiences are known to play an important role in shaping teachers' beliefs (Raths, 2001), a reasonable expectation would be that the recent changes to the kindergarten curriculum would have influenced teachers' beliefs. With the increased academic emphasis in kindergarten, as well as the widespread adoption of didactic approaches that had in the past been used in first-grade and beyond (Bassok et al., 2016), a reasonable expectation is that kindergarten teachers' beliefs would not be aligned or consistent with DAP.

The research on early childhood teacher beliefs and practices suggests that there is a gap between their beliefs and practices. While some of the earlier studies (e.g., Charlesworth et al, 1993; Stipek & Byler, 1997) showed a positive relationship between DAP beliefs and classroom

practices, more recent studies have been equivocal. Shi, Zhang, & Lin (2014), for example, found inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and practices. The current research, in light of recent changes in kindergarten curriculum and expectations, sought to replicate these earlier studies by determining the extent to which teachers' DAP beliefs were aligned with their practices.

Arguably, teachers' DAP beliefs could influence the way they modify curriculum and the extent to which they feel comfortable in modifying their curriculum (Green, 1971). Furthermore, the degree to which a teacher holds a specific belief can also differ (Green, 1971). Kindergarten teachers who are more experienced might have had more exposure to DAP in the late 1990's; whereas more recent graduates may not have been exposed to DAP (Bassok et al., 2016). Current teachers may not hold strong DAP beliefs because they have not seen or used them in their classrooms. However, more experienced teachers who may have been a part of the DAP "movement" of the late 1990's could still hold strong DAP beliefs, and they may be able to blend DAP into didactic approaches. In sum, teachers' DAP beliefs and practices could be related to the nature and extent of their teaching experiences.

Purpose and Significance of Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers about curriculum and determine the extent to which they were able to adopt practices that were developmentally appropriate within their kindergarten classrooms. Bassok et al., (2016) identified a recent shift in the kindergarten curriculum from DAP to an approach that is more prescribed and a curriculum that relies on more didactic approaches. The researchers suggested that kindergarten classrooms of today place more emphasis on prescribed

direct instruction curriculum in comparison to the DAP instructional approaches that were prevalent in kindergarten classrooms of the 1990's. This represents a significant change in a relatively short period of time. Of interest, therefore, is the extent to which teachers' beliefs reflect this significant change in instructional practices and curricular expectations.

Gullo and Hughes (2010) argue that despite the curricular shift, young children still need DAP academic curriculum and practices. The varying developmental characteristics of kindergarten children remains the same, and as such instructional strategies should be consistent with their developmental levels. Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009) note that academic learning and development are inextricably intertwined. It follows that kindergarten students should be taught in a developmentally appropriate manner and teachers should, at the same time, ensure that academic standards are being met.

The research on early childhood education has shown that little is known about how kindergarten teachers have responded to the demands of the academic standards that were recently adopted, as well as the expectations emerging from NCLB (2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2014). Yet, early childhood experts have claimed that DAP practices can be implemented while also meeting the demanding academic standards for kindergarteners (Gullo & Hughes, 2010; Hirsh-Pasek, 2009). Researchers, however, have not explored the relationship between kindergarten teachers' beliefs, practices, and opinions concerning the recent changes to the kindergarten curriculum. Given the above conceptual framework on beliefs, the study sought to investigate the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers.

Significance of the Study

There is a paucity of research on the opinions of kindergarten teachers concerning the so called curriculum shift in kindergarten education. Gullo and Hughes, (2011) argue that

kindergarten teachers can use DAP while at the same time addressing the rigorous academic standards put forth for kindergarteners. However, there is no research on how DAP and academic standards can harmoniously coexist within the kindergarten classroom. Bassok et al.'s (2016) study documents that a shift has occurred in the kindergarten curriculum, but it does not consider the extent to which kindergarten teachers are dealing with the developmental needs of kindergarteners, and at the same time addressing the academic standards. The study furthers the research on this issue by documenting the opinions of kindergarten teachers about the kindergarten curriculum, as well as the nature of their beliefs and practices. The study measured kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices, and documented their opinions about the recent changes in the kindergarten curriculum. Consequently, this study serves as a voice for kindergarten teachers by addressing how they have been impacted by the recent curricular changes.

It is expected that the study will inform researchers about the current status of kindergarten teachers' beliefs, practices, and opinions about the current state of the kindergarten curriculum. For example, if the study shows that more experienced teachers are able to incorporate DAP into a standards based curriculum, then researchers may wish to explore these teachers' practices to help inform kindergarten practice and the intertwining of a standards-based curriculum and DAP. In addition, the findings could be of interest to practitioners and early childhood educators who are looking for ways to enhance and improve their own classroom teaching, and in turn better support kindergarteners' developmental needs.

Research Questions

This study was designed to explore the relationships between kindergarten teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices and opinions with DAP within the State of Florida. The study was guided by the following four questions:

1) What are kindergarten teachers' opinions about the status of the current kindergarten academic expectations and practices?

2) To what extent are kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices aligned with Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)?

3) Is there a correlation between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices?

4) Are there any differences between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices across different subgroups?

Definition of Terms

Accountability: the process of evaluating school performance on the basis of student performance measures (Hanushek, Machin, & Woessmann, 2011).

Beliefs: a persons' "lively idea related to or associated with a present impression" (Ginsberg, 1972, p. 3).

Curriculum: "consists of the knowledge and skills to be acquired in the educational program as well as the plans for experiences through which children's learning will take place" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 41).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP): is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early

education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Developmentally Inappropriate Practices (DIP): these are the practices that are usually labeled as teacher-directed, didactic, or traditional practices (Kumtepe, 2005).

Direct Instruction: teachers control instruction by presenting information, giving directions to the class; associated with teacher-centered, teacher controlled classrooms (Cruickshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2005, p. 520).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): replacing the NCLB, ESSA was signed into law by President Barak Obama on December 10, 2015. The Obama administration joined a call from educators and families to create a better law that focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers. ESSA includes provisions that will help to ensure success for students and schools. (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

Kindergarten: generally considered the first year of compulsory school and primarily serves 5-year-olds, but the age varies from state to state (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): professional organization which promotes excellence in early childhood education that set the standard for quality early childhood programs and dictate best practice (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, was the revision for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB claims to be "significant step forward for our nation's children in many respects, particularly as it shined a light on where students were making progress and where they needed additional support, regardless of race, income, zip code, disability, home language, or background. NCLB put in place measures that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved students

and their peers and spurred an important national dialogue on education improvement. This focus on accountability has been critical in ensuring a quality education for all children, yet also revealed challenges in the effective implementation of this goal" (No Child Left Behind, 2001, para. 1).

Teacher's beliefs: dispositions to actions and major determinants of behavior (Brown & Cooney, 1982).

Assumptions

The data were collected from kindergarten teachers in Florida public schools and the study assumed that participants answered the survey questions appropriately and honestly. In addition, the researcher assumed that kindergarten teachers focused on their personal beliefs on teaching, practices that were current in the classroom, and their opinions concerning the shifting kindergarten curriculum. The researcher assumed that the kindergarten curriculum had impacted experienced teachers due to the simple fact that they would have had more experience with DAP than teachers who were newer to the field. It was also assumed that kindergarten teachers' beliefs impacted their teaching practices and that their beliefs would be related to the extent to which they used DAPs within their kindergarten classrooms. The second core assumption of the study was that kindergarten teachers with more experience would be more concerned with the shifting kindergarten curriculum than newer teachers because they were the ones who would have seen more of the shift occur.

Summary

Within this chapter, an overview of the study to examine the relationship between kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices, as well as their opinions concerning the so-called shifting kindergarten curriculum was presented. The study was guided by the conceptual

framework based on teachers' beliefs. Furthermore, the importance of studying kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices was discussed in order to highlight the potential significance of the study. To conclude, the chapter highlighted and defined key terms and the study's underlying assumptions were discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to explore kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices as well as their opinions about the nature of public school kindergarten curricula and teaching practices, three major bodies of literature were first reviewed. In doing so, the literature documenting the history of the original kindergarten and what led to the need for Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) in the late 1980's was examined. The focus of kindergarten education has shifted significantly since it was originally developed. Thus, in this section of the review the changing emphasis of kindergarten education and kindergarten curriculum is examined. The second major section of the review examines the conceptual background regarding teachers' beliefs, and the potential impact their beliefs can have on their teaching practices. Then, the final section analyzes the relevant empirical research that examined early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices. The chapter concludes by summarizing the literature and relating the findings to the current study's conceptual framework.

Origination of Kindergarten

Historically, kindergarten was considered to be the beginning of formal schooling for young children. Frederick Frobel is considered to be the father of kindergarten because he developed and implemented the kindergarten method in Germany during the 19th century (Shirreff, 1880). Frobel believed that children should be allowed to learn by discovering results for themselves instead of being directly taught by the teacher. This approach was based on the assumption that this form of teaching was accomplished through progressive periods of physical and mental development of young children (Shirreff, 1880). This ideology is consistent with the position of researchers who note that there is a major shift in cognition for children between the

ages of 5 and 7, and that young children need be able to learn through concrete experiences (Piaget, 1952). This makes a kindergartener's cognitive development closer to that of a preschooler rather than a first grader (White, 1965).

Frobel opened his first school in 1816 and utilized the games and toys he created which are now referred to as Frobel's gifts (White, 1909). Frobel's gifts were designed to not only be toys, but to also be used as instructional tools (Shirreff, 1880). The fusion of work and play through the use of the toys is the foundation of Frobel's kindergarten. The intent of the play component is to stimulate the child's thinking and physical activity. The basics of Frobel's gifts consists of songs and dancing that uses rhythmic movements along with the toys that Frobel created (Shirreff, 1880). The 11 toys (Frobel's gifts) are given in order and each has specific instructions. In addition to the toys, Frobel also found it important for young children to take care of animals and learn to garden (White, 1909). Frobel felt that play was a natural way for young children to learn and exercise at the same time. It is believed that he felt the gifts were toys and games to the child but to the teacher they were instruments of learning (Shirreff, 1880). It is through a child's natural development and tendency toward play that the original kindergarten was designed (White, 1909).

In the early 20th century, kindergarten made its way to the United States and gradually became institutionalized into elementary schools (Russell, 2011). Kindergarten was originally designed as a half day program that was intended to be a child's first encounter with school, and help to transition a young child into formal schooling. As such, play and socialization were at the heart of kindergarten education. During the second half of the 20th century, kindergarten slowly changed, initially following the introduction of the Federal Head Start program and expanding preschool education (Russell, 2011). Then, as kindergarten gradually became a full

day program, there was a corresponding shift in focus toward academic learning. In response, the profession, though organizations such as the NAEYC, recognized the need for preserving the developmental focus of early childhood education programs. In turn, guidelines and recommendations for DAP were developed.

Learning though play and the provision of play activities has been an integral part of the learning experiences for young children (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). In the past, with the use of Frobel's gifts, taking care of animals, and working in the garden, children were provided hands-on learning experiences. This fusion of work and play paved the way for the original kindergarten. Then, as Frobel's original conception of kindergarten evolved, the early childhood profession gained widespread acceptance and support through professional organizations such as the NAEYC.

DAP

Like Frobel, the NAEYC adopted a developmental stance in its consideration of children's early learning. Historically, the NAEYC has been a strong advocate for early childhood education, and as such, they have developed position statements on a variety of topics and issues concerning the education of young children. Perhaps the most significant contribution of the NAEYC was the publication and dissemination of a statement and guidelines on DAP (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The need for DAP can be traced back to the Russian launch of Sputnik in 1957, because, at that time, the United States of America felt the need to emphasize the teaching of academic skills at an earlier age due to a global climate of academic competition (Elkind, 1988). This push for early academics and the pull of child development was documented in Elkind's book "*The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon"* (1988). This academic push continued during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, to a certain

extent, due to the poor performance of students who were disadvantaged. Elkind (1988) posits that prior to the 1960's children were originally thought to turn into "neurotic adults" if they had "too much" academic content taught to them at an early age. The phrase "early ripe, early rot" was used to describe what would happen to children who had been pushed into an academic focus at too young of an age (p. 6). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law and this, in turn, resulted in a push down of teacher directed academics into kindergarten (Klein, 2015). In his book, Elkind (1988) expressed concern about the academic focus of early education and called for change in early childhood education. The profession responded to this call by developing clear guidelines, such that by the 1980's the focus of early education shifted back to DAP and play-based learning.

History of DAP

DAP was originally introduced in 1986 with the publication of the NAEYC's first position statement. Copple and Bredekamp (2009), noted that the term "developmentally appropriate" was originally coined by developmental psychologists and was used in reference to age-related and developmental variation. The NAEYC adopted the developmentally appropriate approach and modified it to describe work done by excellent early childhood educators (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). DAP is a framework which is grounded in research findings on child development and learning, as well as in the knowledge base regarding educational effectiveness. It is meant to clearly highlight what quality early childhood practices are, in order to establish young children's optimal learning and development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The key elements of the position statement are: reducing learning gaps and increasing the achievement of all children; creating improved, better connected education for preschool and elementary children; recognizing teacher knowledge and decision making as vital to educational

effectiveness (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). With these elements in mind, the guidelines for DAP, as stated in the NAEYC Position Statement are: creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, planning curricula to achieve important goals, assessing children's development and learning, and establishing reciprocal relationships with families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Since its inception in 1986, the position statement has been revised on two occasions to incorporate more current research and stay relevant with changing societal needs. The first revision was conducted in 1996 by Copple and Bredekamp. The authors, (1997) added major early childhood issues to the statement to include: "the teacher as decision maker, the importance of goals for children being both challenging and achievable, and expanding the basic definition of developmentally appropriate practice to include consideration of social and cultural context" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p.5). Work on the second revision to the position statement began in 2005 and was published in 2009 by the same researchers. This revision emphasized several new interrelated themes: excellence and equality; intentionality and effectiveness; continuity and change, joy and learning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Due to individual learning differences in children, the NAEYC states that DAP should be implemented through playful learning experiences in which children are encouraged to express their eagerness and curiosity for learning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Although DAP was embraced by teachers and the early childhood profession, national and state level policy changes put pressure on practitioners to move away from DAP.

National Policies

A return to a teacher-centered, academic instructional focus occurred once more in 2002 when many of the fears that enforced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) were

reignited with its reauthorization as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The academic push reemerged in early education, but with much greater force than in 1965 with ESSA (Klein, 2015). The fear was the same: the United States' educational system was no longer internationally competitive, and this time money was at stake. The United States government mandated that states had to improve the academic performance of their students to a proficient level in order to qualify for federal government funding. The NCLB Act made testing mandatory in reading and mathematics in 3rd grade through 8th grade, and created mandatory standards for kindergarten through 12th grade. Progress for each school began to be tracked by monitoring and recording students' adequate yearly progress (AYP) so as to demonstrate that students were learning at a proficient level (Klein, 2015). These legal mandates placed strong academic demands on kindergarten teachers to ensure that their students were proficient in reading and mathematics, and thereby set them on a trajectory for success on the third grade tests, and in turn, achieve all of the goals of the mandatory academic standards (Russell, 2011).

Needless to say, early childhood education professionals expressed concern about the implications of the NCLB Act on teaching and learning in the early grades. Numerous articles were published emphasizing how the new educational policies were hurting early childhood education (e.g., Almon & Miller, 2011; Gao, 2005; Russell, 2011 Stauss, 2012; Tyre, 2006; Vise, 2007). Indeed, to this day, early childhood professionals continue to argue that the academic demands placed on kindergarten students are "too much and too soon" (Carlsson-Paige, McLaughlin, & Almon, 2015; Elkind, 2001; Gao, 2005; Tyre, 2006). Due to the demands resulting from the NCLB Act, kindergarten teachers can be required to adopt standards-based scripted curricula, which can be considered developmentally inappropriate for kindergarten

students (Almon & Miller, 2011; Carlsson-Paige, McLaughlin, & Almon, 2015; Curwood, 2007; Gao, 2005; Miller, & Almon, 2009; Russell, 2011; Tyre, 2006; Vise, 2007).

Little is known about kindergarten teachers' responses to the demands of these policies. It is, therefore, important to explore kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices in regard to DAP. Possibly, teachers' beliefs influence and impact their use of DAP within their classrooms. Further, given the recent educational policy changes, it is important to understand the extent to which kindergarten teachers' beliefs reflect developmental or academic instructional approaches. The importance of teacher beliefs is well established, and therefore the current study examined teachers' responses to the shifting academic focus of kindergarten education by measuring their DAP beliefs.

Conceptual Background

The study examines kindergarten instructional practices through the conceptual lens of teachers' beliefs and, in doing so, considers the extent to which those beliefs affect their teaching practices (Nespar, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Teacher beliefs have been described as a "fuzzy" concept and therefore it is hardly surprising that there is not one single agreed upon definition of teachers' beliefs in the educational research literature (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, & Cuthbert, 1988; Fang, 1996; Green, 1971; Hofer, & Pintrich, 1997). Pajares (1992) suggested that the lack of a clear definition of beliefs could be because beliefs are studied in diverse fields. Consequently, there is a need for many different definitions. However, the definition "a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression" offered by Ginsberg, (1972, p. 3) is a useful definition that can serve as a framework for the study. According to Pajares (1992), all of a teacher's beliefs in combination help to influence the manner in which he or she teaches. With this, Green (1971) adds that a belief is not held in solidarity but is held within a beliefs system.

The beliefs system helps to show that teachers' beliefs are combined, and that these combined beliefs influence the teachers' practices (Nespar, 1987). The conceptual framework is situated within the confines of teachers' beliefs and how they influence their teaching practices. Therefore, theories of beliefs, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' beliefs system are described and analyzed within this literature review.

Beliefs

Pajares (1992) states that the study of beliefs is challenging because beliefs is a messy construct. While clarifying, discussing, and describing what a belief is many researchers point out that it is important to state what a belief is not (e.g. Abelson, 1979; Ginsberg, 1972; Green, 1998; Pajares, 1992; Pruyser, 1974; Rokeach, 1975). Researchers have concluded that there are distinctions between beliefs and knowledge, and beliefs and attitudes (Abelson, 1979; Green, 1998, Ginsberg, 1972; Rokeach, 1975). However, these distinctions are not black and white and, as such, can be difficult to categorize. With beliefs at the center of the study, distinguishing what is not a belief is imperative.

A belief is different from knowledge, however, these two rely on each other a great deal (Abelson, 1979). Knowledge is something that is true and should be true to others. However, a belief distinct from knowledge carries the connotation of disputability (Abelson, 1979). This means that a belief is held differently by others or not held at all, while knowledge should be the same. An example of this would be that 2 + 2= 4. While this is true for two different people, a person's belief in their mathematics ability can vary between the same two people.

Unlike knowledge, an attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some manner" (Rokeach, 1975, p. 112). This means that two individuals could have the same attitude but have different beliefs on the same

subject (Allport, 1935). An example of this would be two teachers who said they have an attitude about young children and play. They could differ in their beliefs because one teacher's belief is that play should occur both in and out of school while the other teacher's belief is that it should only occur outside of school. However, it should be noted that while attitudes may include beliefs, all beliefs are not necessarily part of an attitude (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948).

Beliefs are highly intertwined with both knowledge and attitudes (Abelson, 1979; Rokeach, 1975). Yet, there are small distinctions to aid in the separation of beliefs and knowledge and beliefs and attitudes. This helps to better define what a belief is as well as what is not a belief. Teachers' beliefs are intertwined with their knowledge and attitudes but the conceptual framework of beliefs is more solidified with these distinctions.

The definition of a person's beliefs as "a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression" (Ginsberg, 1974, p. 3), becomes more clear by exploring the distinctions between beliefs and knowledge, and beliefs and attitudes**.** Beliefs are intertwined with knowledge and attitudes, however, distinctions given by Abelson (1979), on knowledge and Allport (1935), on attitudes, helps to frame the definition of beliefs by Ginsberg (1974) by clarifying what is not a belief. Wittrock (1986) furthers the research and explores teachers' beliefs within the process of teaching.

Teachers' Beliefs

According to Wittrock, (1986), the process of teaching consists of two major domains. The first is the teachers' thought processes and beliefs, and the second is teachers' actions and their observable effects (their teaching practices). Teachers' thought processes are much more difficult to measure than teachers' actions, because teachers' thought processes and beliefs cannot be observed (Fang, 1996). Due to the fact that beliefs are not observable, several

researchers on teachers' beliefs have conducted surveys to attempt to determine what teachers have in mind (e.g., Abu-Jaber, et al., 2010; Charlesworth, et al., 1993; Gallant, 2009; Jones, et al., 2006; McKenzie, 2013).

Fang (1996) maintained that teachers' beliefs affect their classroom practices. This suggests that teachers' beliefs help guide the type of instructional practices a teacher uses within his or her classroom. However, a belief cannot be independent of other beliefs, which is why beliefs always occur in sets or groups. This is referred to as a beliefs system (Green, 1971). There is a difference between a belief in and of itself and the extent to which that belief is held. A belief is not true or untrue, but rather the belief may be held to a certain degree (Green, 1971). An implication of this assertion could be that kindergarten teachers will vary in the strength of their beliefs concerning DAP, and that their DAP belief is related to their overall beliefs system. In turn, the amount of energy a teacher invests in DAP in his or her classroom activities will vary according to the strength of his or her beliefs (Nespar, 1987).

Green (1971) continues by stating that a belief system is a logical structure and that some beliefs are related to other beliefs. Some beliefs are about the world, while other beliefs are about beliefs themselves. It is pointed out by Green (1971) that beliefs are metaphorical, and exploring the idea of a beliefs system is exploring a metaphor. In discussing the beliefs system, Green (1971) explains that there is a contrast between what we believe and how we believe it. This means that there is a choice as to what is believed and the degree to which it is believed. Green (1971) further claims that one person cannot hold a belief better than someone else, and that a belief is not "well done" or "poorly done" (p.43). There are predicates to a belief system which pertain to the believer and how strongly a belief is held. Green (1971) points out that two

believers can hold the same belief but at varying degrees. On the other hand, two people may not hold the same belief at all (Green, 1971).

According to Fang (1996) the existence of various constraints means that teachers' beliefs may not always be able to be used within the teachers' classrooms (Fang, 1996). Such a situation could be evident in today's kindergartens. Teachers today are faced with pressures to maintain standards and utilize standardized tests, and meet expectations concerning accountability (Bassok, et al., 2016). This suggests that although kindergarten teachers may have strong DAP beliefs they may have to adopt practices that do not necessarily conform to those beliefs. Possibly, teachers' DAP beliefs have to be modified or adjusted in accordance with the circumstances and expectations from their school administrators.

Overview of Relevant Literature

During the past two decades there have been numerous studies that have examined kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices (e.g., Abu-Jaber, et al., 2010; Bassok, et al., 2016; Charlesworth et al., 1993; Gallant, 2009; Goldstein, 2007; Goldstein, 2007; Hedge & Cassidy, 2009; Jones, et al, 2006; McKenzie, 2013). Most of the studies are qualitative and none were conducted within the State of Florida. Several of the studies were quantitative surveys. However, none of the studies have examined the nature of public school kindergarten curricula and teaching practices since the introduction of NCLB (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

In conducting the literature review, several online databases were utilized including ERIC (ProQuest) and JSTOR, in addition to various online education journals. Many articles were found but few empirical studies were applicable or relevant to the current study. Search terms used included "Kindergarten, Teachers, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Beliefs, Practices, Survey, and Kindergarten Teachers' Beliefs of Developmentally Appropriate

Practices." The search produced more than 50 peer reviewed articles. However, many of the articles were not relevant to the current study because some were not conducted with kindergarten teachers or others were not about beliefs, practices, or opinions of kindergarten teachers. Articles about pre-service teachers and grades other than kindergarten were excluded from the literature review. Studies concerning preschools or pre-kindergarten have also been excluded from the literature review. Most of the articles identified are qualitative or mixed methods and have small sample sizes which limits the generalizability of their findings.

Empirical Evidence

The studies examined for the current review concentrate on kindergarten teachers' beliefs and DAP. Bassok, et al., (2016) have provided empirical evidence that a shift has occurred in the kindergarten curriculum since the late 1990's. Researchers have focused on the kindergarten curriculum and kindergarten teachers' classroom teaching practices. Another focus within the research literature has been on kindergarten teachers' beliefs about DAP, and the extent to which those beliefs were aligned with their classroom practices. The research that has been conducted on the kindergarten curriculum and kindergarten teaching practices within DAP was the main focus of this section.

Kindergarten Curricula and Teaching Practices

In Bassok and colleague's (2016) landmark study on the shift in the kindergarten curricula, they question "to what extent and along what dimensions has the public school kindergarten experience changed between 1998 and 2010" (p. 2)? The researchers hypothesized that since the late 1990's there has been more of a focus on academics, but more specifically literacy and mathematics, due to the fact that these subject areas were assessed under the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). The researchers used two nationally

representative data sets, one data set from 1998 and the other from 2010. Data from two cycles of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study for Kindergarten (ECLS-K; 1998 and ECLS-K; 2011) were examined. Within the data from both ECLS-Ks were surveys from kindergarten teachers in the fall and spring of the represented years. The number of teachers in the ECLS-K of 1998 was 2,500 and the number of teachers in the ECLS-K of 2011 was 2,700. Questions on both ECLS-Ks were organized into five categories: school readiness beliefs and kindergarten expectations, curricular focus and time use, classroom setup and materials, pedagogical approach, assessment practices, school and teacher characteristics. To analyze the data, the researchers used descriptive statistics and ran logistic regressions to measure the statistical significance of change over time on the measures of interest.

The results of this study showed changes in kindergarten classrooms between 1998 and 2010 within the five categories of the ECLS-K. In the school readiness beliefs and kindergarten expectations category, the researchers revealed that 31% of kindergarten teachers in 1998 thought that kindergarten children should be able to read by the end of the school year. While 80% of kindergarten teachers in 2010 thought that kindergarten students should be reading by the end of the school year. The researchers also found that 33% more kindergarten teachers in 2010 believed that kindergarten students should be taught the alphabet by their parents before the start of kindergarten. In addition, the research revealed that 30% more kindergarten teachers in 2010 believed that children should begin formal reading and mathematics instruction before entering kindergarten. The researchers also noted that kindergarten teachers in 2010 rated academics as being far more important than did the kindergarten teachers of 1998.

Within the curricular focus and time use category, the researchers found that, on the whole, kindergarten teachers in 2010 focused more on literacy and mathematics and less on

science and social studies than did the kindergarten teachers of 1998. The researchers also reported that non-academic subjects, such as music, art, dance, theater, and foreign language, had significant drops from 1998 to 2010. The researchers also highlighted a strong change in the topic focus within literacy and mathematics between 1998 and 2010. The researchers suggested that a heightened emphasis was placed on academic skills from 1998 to 2010.

As for the classroom set up category, the researchers found evidence of a decline from 1998 to 2010 in some of the centers used within the kindergarten classroom. The centers that had the most significant declines in use were listening centers, puzzles or books, water or sand table, science or nature, dramatic play, and art. The dramatic play, science or nature area, and water table or sand table had drops in use of more than 20% each. The researchers noted that these findings further support the decline in science instruction and art education in the kindergarten classroom. In addition, the researchers point out that with fewer hands on centers in the classroom, opportunities for exploratory activities by young children are limited.

The pedagogical approach category shows a 40% drop in child selected activities and an increase in the use of whole class activities. The use of worksheets, workbooks, and text books within kindergarten classrooms increased two fold within that time period. Furthermore, teachers in 2010 placed significantly more emphasis on students' achievement, standards, and the comparison of students' performance within and across classrooms.

Bassok, et al., (2016), were the first researchers to provide empirical nationally-representative evidence of the changing nature of public kindergarten under the heightened pressures of accountability in the era of the NCLB Act (2001). The researchers found that kindergarten teachers in 2010 felt that students should come to kindergarten with prior academic knowledge, and that kindergarten students should be fluent readers by end of the kindergarten

year. The researchers had also shown that there was increased emphasis on literacy and mathematics, and further documented the lack of other activities, such as art, dramatic play, and science in the classrooms of 2010. The researchers also found a striking increase in the use of standardized tests for kindergarten students. The results suggest that public school kindergarten has become similar in structure and focus to that of a typical first grade classroom of 1998. These findings were more prominent within schools serving a higher percentage of children from low-income families and non-White students.

Kindergarten Teachers' DAP Practices

In a recent article, Graue (2009) noted that the kindergarten program requires a delicate balance in terms of instructional approach, and that the kindergarten curriculum needs to captivate the interest of both 5-year-old and 6-year-old students. Kindergarten students should be engaged with a variety of real activities that are DAP (Graue, 2009). In addressing the competing demands of academic standards and DAP, Goldstein (2007) found that two kindergarten teachers were able to simultaneously manage the demands of the academic standards and incorporate DAP within their classrooms. These teachers, however, noted that using DAP took a great deal of effort and planning. The teachers in this study had been initially trained during a time when early childhood education was more DAP and child centered, and as such, their education had more of a focus on such approaches. It is hardly surprising, therefore that given their background and preferred teaching methods, the two kindergarten teachers held beliefs that were strongly aligned with DAP. The teachers found it difficult to incorporate their state's academic standards into their DAP classrooms, and there were times when they had to

modify their instructional approaches so that they could uphold the strong academic requirements.

In an earlier study, Jones and colleagues (2000) also found that teachers held strong DAP beliefs. In a small mixed methods study involving 9 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, by using surveys and interviews, the researchers found that the teachers' DAP beliefs served as the foundation of their classroom work. Much like the teachers in Goldstein's (2007) study, the teachers in this study were also teaching during a time when there was more of an emphasis on DAP as opposed to an academic standards driven curricular approach. As with the teachers in Goldstein's (2007) study, these kindergarten teachers also maintained that adopting an instructional approach that was consistent with DAP took a great deal of time and effort (Jones et al., 2000).

Kindergarten Teachers' Beliefs in DAP

Prajares (1992) suggests that there should be a strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their classroom practices. However, Prajares (1992) points out that it is difficult to develop a clear understanding of the relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their classroom practices. When this relationship is disconnected, or when teachers' beliefs are not aligned with their teaching practices, it is necessary to examine the cause of this discrepancy.

In a quantitative study by Charlesworth et al. (1993), 204 kindergarten teachers were administered a survey instrument. In addition to using the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire the researchers interviewed 20 of the teachers who had competed the survey. The researchers found that teachers' DAP beliefs were positively correlated with their use of DAP within their classrooms. Thus, the stronger the teachers' DAP beliefs, the more evident were such practices

within their classrooms. The study also found that teachers who held beliefs that were more aligned with DIP were also more likely to adopt the same instructional approaches in their classrooms. On the whole, the study found that teachers' beliefs concerning DAP were consistent with their teaching practices.

Unlike the Charlesworth et al. (1993) study, more recent research concerning literacy instruction by Gallant (2009) found that kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices were not aligned. Gallant (2009) used the Lipson et al.'s (1994) Kindergarten Survey which included a section with open-ended questions. In conducting the study, Gallant (2009) administered the Kindergarten Survey to 229 kindergarten teachers. Gallant (2009) found that teachers were not able to use DAP for their literacy instruction because of tension concerning students' performance, academic standards, and high-stakes testing. It was concluded that there was a complex link between educational policies and instructional practices that resulted in luring teachers away from using DAP. Although they wanted to adopt a DAP approach, the academic and curricular demands within their schools prevented them from doing so. Teachers in the study noted that some of the barriers to being able to use DAP within their classrooms were a lack of autonomy for decision-making, the curriculum, student readiness, materials, and time constraints.

Researchers have consistently suggested that more research is needed in a variety of schools and school districts to determine if and how other kindergarten teachers are responding to the demands of expectations concerning academic standards and DAP (Charlesworth et al., 1993; Goldstein, 2007). Several of the researchers have mentioned that the infrequent use of a DAP approach within classrooms is due to demands stemming from increasing emphasis on academic standards and standardized testing (Gallant, 2009; Goldstein, 2007; Jones et al., 2006).

It seems that pressure has been increasingly placed on kindergarten teachers in the form of academic expectations for their kindergarten students. In turn, it is believed that this pressure has resulted in kindergarten teachers feeling increasingly tense about their students' academic performance (Gallant, 2009). It seems that there were times when teachers knowingly used developmentally inappropriate practices in order to meet the high demands that were placed on them (Goldstein, 2007).

Summary

There is increasing evidence that, much like a pendulum swing, the kindergarten curriculum has alternated between an academic focus and DAP focus. The current curricular emphasis in kindergarten, beginning with the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, has been on academic content and academic learning. While there has been an apparent shift in kindergarten expectations and in the kindergarten curriculum, little is known about kindergarten teachers' response to this change (Bassok et al., 2016). Relatedly, little is known about the extent to which the changing kindergarten curriculum has resulted in a corresponding change in kindergarten teachers' beliefs concerning kindergarten teaching practices. It is well established that teachers' beliefs concerning academic practices influences their instructional approach in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers, and determine the extent to which they are able to adopt practices that are developmentally appropriate within their classrooms.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to examine the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers and determine the extent to which they were able to adopt practices that were developmentally appropriate within their kindergarten classrooms. A survey was administered and analyzed to determine whether there was a relationship between teachers' beliefs and the use of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) within their classrooms. Johnson and Christensen (2008) noted that survey research is a non-experimental method that seeks to understand characteristics of a population. Exploring teachers' beliefs was the main focus of the study. Based on the purpose of the study, the questions guiding the research were as follows:

1) What are kindergarten teachers' opinions about the status of the current kindergarten academic expectations and practices?

2) To what extent are kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices aligned with Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)?
3) Is there a correlation between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices?

4) Are there any differences between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices across different subgroups?

This chapter details the methods that were implemented to conduct the study. The chapter is organized into six sections including information about the participants, the specific

procedures that were employed, the study's design, the instruments that were used, how the data were analyzed, and possible limitations and generalizability.

Participants

The participants for this study were 107 kindergarten teachers sampled from five counties in the State of Florida. The five counties were randomly selected from the five regions loosely based on the Florida Department of Education's regions of Florida (2016) and includes all 67 counties (see appendix A for full list of counties): Northwest Florida, Northeast Florida, Central Florida, Southwest Florida and Southeast Florida. The counties that were randomly selected from each of the five regions were Duval County from Northeast Florida, Gadsden County from Northwest Florida, Marion County from Central Florida, Hendry County from Southwest Florida, and St. Lucie County from Southeast Florida. The five counties had diverse populations and a summary describing each county's population, including, ages, gender, race, and Hispanic origin can be found in Appendix B (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Johnson and Christensen (2008) note that random sampling is often used with survey research. The total number of kindergarten teachers that were sent the survey was 814; Hendry County had 29 kindergarten teachers, St. Lucie County had 127 kindergarten teachers, Duval County had 469 kindergarten teachers, Gadsden County had 22 kindergarten teachers and Marion County had 167 kindergarten teachers. The kindergarten teachers from the five randomly selected counties received an email with a link to the Qualtrics Survey that included the kindergarten version of the Teacher Questionnaire along with the Opinions Questionnaire (Charlesworth et al., 1993).

The kindergarten teachers' emails were obtained by submitting a public records request to each of the five counties. This is permitted by State Statute 119 under the Florida Legislature, which makes most government documents legal to disclose. In addition, Internal Review Board

(IRB) approval was obtained from Florida State University and Duval County, as this county has an IRB review department (Appendices D and E).

Participation in this study was voluntary. The researcher initially contacted the teachers by email, which included the IRB approved consent forms (see Appendix D and E for IRB consent forms) and a link to the survey instrument. The first section of the Qualtrics survey also included a summary of the consent form. Having read the initial email and IRB consent, the respondents clicked on the link to confirm their consent to participate in the study. This action also directed the respondents to the first page of the survey instrument. The first page of the survey provided a further statement concerning informed consent. A simple click on the "yes" button then directed them to the first part of the survey instrument. If they declined to participate, the respondent simply clicked the "no" button, which redirected them to the final acknowledgement page of the survey.

Procedures

Data collection for the study was conducted using an on-line platform. The survey instrument was sent to kindergarten teachers through their schools' email addresses during the 2017 spring semester. The kindergarten teachers received an email that explained the nature of the study, invited them to participate, and provided information concerning informed consent. An incentive was also offered to the teachers in the email. Upon completion of the data collection phase of the study, ten $10 gift cards to Teachers-Pay-Teachers were given to 10 randomly selected participants.

Data collection took place during a five-week period in the spring of 2017. Five weeks was considered sufficient time for this phase of the study (De Leeuw & Dillman, 2008). During the first week, the initial communication was made with the kindergarten teachers. The

kindergarten teachers were then sent six follow up reminders to complete the survey. The first follow up reminder email was sent 4 days after the initial invitation email. The second follow up reminder email was sent 8 days from the initial invitation email. The last follow up reminder emails were sent every 3-4 days after that.

Design

The study used a nonexperimental survey research method (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The counties in Florida were divided into five regions as identified by the Florida Department of Education, and one county from each of the five regions was randomly selected for the study (Florida Department of Education, 2016). Johnson and Christensen (2008) point out that the goal of survey research is to understand the characteristics of a population by gathering information. The population for this study was the kindergarten teachers and the information being gathered was their beliefs, practices, and opinions regarding DAP within their curriculum and classrooms.

An effort was made to determine the optimal sample size for the study. To this end, a G Power analysis was conducted prior to recruiting the participants. This analysis was based on an effect size of 0.50, which according to Cohen (1988) can be characterized as a "large" effect. Given the number of groups that would be used in the statistical analyses (i.e., ANOVA), the G Power analyses were conducted based on four groups. The results of these analyses indicated that a sample size of 76 should yield sufficient power. A sample size of 76 is approximately 9.34% of the number of survey instruments that were distributed. It was therefore estimated that a response rate of approximately 10% should yield sufficient data for the study. This low

percentage of survey instruments completed is considered typical for comparable survey methods (De Leeuw & Dillman, 2008).

Instrument

The instrument that was adopted for the purposes of the study was the kindergarten version of the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix F), designed by Charlesworth et al. (1993). The Teacher Questionnaire was initially designed and administered as a paper version. For the current study, the paper version was converted into a digital survey in Qualtrics so that it could be administered online. The Teacher Questionnaire is comprised of 3 sections. The first section was the Teacher Information Questionnaire, which asks the teachers about demographic information. The second section was the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire, which examines respondents' beliefs about their teaching. The third section was the Instructional Activities Questionnaire, which explores the respondents' practices within their kindergarten classroom. The fourth section of the survey was developed by the researcher, and asked the teachers their opinions about current kindergarten practices and expectations.

The Teacher Questionnaire, slightly modified from the original version, was designed to measure kindergarten teachers' beliefs about teaching, and the nature of their teaching practices within their kindergarten classrooms. An example of a modification is the one for question 19 on the Instructional Activities Questionnaire; the question originally reads "copying from the chalkboard" but this was changed to "copying from the board." This is because in today's classrooms, there may be other types of boards; such as a whiteboard or a digital board. Therefore, this question was modified to relate to more recent classrooms. The survey also

included a section designed to record kindergarten teachers' opinions about the current expectations for kindergarten curriculum.

The Teacher Questionnaire was also designed by Charlesworth et al. (1993) and followed the NAEYC guidelines for DAP for kindergarten students. The Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire section is comprised of 37 questions to which participants respond on a 5-point Likert scale. Similarly, the Instructional Activities Questionnaire includes 34 questions with responses recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. The final section of the survey is the Opinions Questionnaire section that consists of 6 items on a 5-point Likert scale and one open-ended question.

The Teacher Questionnaire has been used by Charlesworth et al. (1993) and more recently by Kim and Buchanan (2009). Charlesworth et al. (1993) administered the instrument to 204 kindergarten teachers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The study explored kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices and how they relate to DAP. The findings of the study showed that the Teacher Questionnaire could be used to identify teachers who used more DAP practices and those who used developmentally inappropriate practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993). The researchers suggested that the Teacher Questionnaire was useful in that it could provide a picture or snapshot of kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993). In sum, the instrument is considered valid based on the findings of a factor analysis of survey data (Charlesworth et al., 1991).

Kim and Buchanan (2009) used a modified version of the Teacher Questionnaire to explore the beliefs of teachers who taught children from three-years-old to five-years-old. This study modified the questions concerning DAP for the younger age group of the classes taught by the teachers. Researchers have found the questionnaire to be a reliable and valid measure of teachers' beliefs and practices based on the results of factor analyses of the survey data.

For the purposes of the current study, the researcher added a section to the instrument designed to capture kindergarten teachers' opinions on the current state of the kindergarten curriculum. The opinions section was added to examine teachers' opinions about the recent changes to the kindergarten curriculum. The demographic section of the survey was also modified so that it included fewer questions, and questions that were more relevant for the purposes of the current study. An example of such a modification can be found in the demographic section of the survey: with the question "Is the current school that you work at a Title I school?" No major changes were made to the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire and the Instructional Activities Questionnaire, other than minor revisions so that the language was consistent with current teaching practices (See Appendix F for Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire).

Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire

The Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire is an instrument designed to identify DAP practices as well as developmentally inappropriate practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993). DAP practices follow NAEYC guidelines for approaches that are consistent with the development of kindergarteners (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Typically, DAP are instructional approaches that are considered age, individually, and culturally appropriate. In contrast, developmentally inappropriate practices are instructional approaches that are not appropriate for the developmental level of kindergarteners. Charlesworth et al. (1993) aligned the survey with the NAEYC guidelines for DAP. Their questionnaire included options for responses recorded on a 5 point Likert scale; 1- not important at all, 2- not very important, 3- fairly important, 4- very important, 5- extremely important. For example, a question from the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire that is DAP: "*It is (blank) for children to talk informally with adults.* Then a

sample question that would be developmentally inappropriate is: *Workbooks and/or ditto sheets are (blank) to the kindergarten program."*

The Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire consisted of 6 categories: inappropriate activities and materials, appropriate socialization, appropriate individualization, appropriate literacy activities, appropriate integrated curriculum beliefs, and inappropriate structure (Charlesworth et al., 1993). Each of these sections correlates with questions from the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire. The inappropriate activities and materials category is related to questions: 4, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, and 32. Reliability estimates for the instrument are within an acceptable range. The section on inappropriate activities has a Cronbach alpha of α=.84. The appropriate social category is related to questions: 26, 28, 29, and 31 and this section has a reliability estimate of α=.77. The appropriate individualization category is related to questions: 5, 6, and 12 (α=.70). The appropriate literacy activities category is related to questions: 27 and 30 (α=.60). The appropriate integrated curriculum beliefs category is related to questions: 18, 33, 34, and 35 (α=.66). The inappropriate structure category is related to questions: 2 and 7. Finally, the structure category has a Cronbach alpha score of α=.58.

Instructional Activities Questionnaire

The Instructional Activities Questionnaire explores the activities and practices in kindergarten teachers' classrooms (Charlesworth et al., 1993). This questionnaire identifies appropriate activities or topics for kindergarten students such as question 7: *exploring animals, plants, and/or wheels and gears*. As well as inappropriate activities for kindergarten students; such as question 19: *copying from the board*. This questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale that

consists of the following answer options: 1- almost never (less than monthly), 2- rarely (monthly), 3- sometimes (weekly), 4- regularly (2-4 times a week), 5- very often (daily).

This section of the survey yields information in the form of 8 categories: appropriate activities, inappropriate literacy activities, inappropriate learning, creative exploratory learning, appropriate integrated curriculum practices, planned multicultural and outdoor activities, inappropriate management and guidance techniques, and inappropriate transitional activities. The appropriate activities category is related to questions: 1, 2, 4, 6, and 11 (of α=.79). The inappropriate literacy activities category is related to questions; 13, 14, 15, 17, and 19 (α=.79). The inappropriate learning category is related to questions; 12, 16, and 18 (α=.72). The creative exploratory learning category is related to questions; 3, 5, 7, 9, and 10 (α=.62). The appropriate integrated curriculum practices category is related to questions; 23, 32, 33, and 34 and it has a reliability estimate of α=.66. The planned multicultural and outdoor activities category is related to questions; 29 and 30 (α=.57). The inappropriate management and guidance techniques category is related to questions; 24, 25, and 27 (α=.56). Finally, the inappropriate transitional activities category is related to questions; 20 and 21 (α=.60).

Opinions Questionnaire

The Opinion Questionnaire was designed by the researcher to collect information about the teachers' opinions about the current status of the kindergarten curriculum. The questions were developed following a review of the literature, and by consulting professionals in the early childhood education field (Bassok et al., 2016; Fang, 1996; Goldstein, 2007; Prajares, 1992). This section includes questions such as "*The academic demands created by the kindergarten curriculum allow me to give meaningful feedback to students*." The teachers answered using a Likert type scale; 1-strongly disagree, 2- somewhat disagree, 3- neutral, 4- somewhat agree, 5-

strongly agree. In addition, there was an open-ended question for teachers to provide their opinions and feelings about the current status of the kindergarten curriculum.

Instrument Trial

Kindergarten teachers and teachers who have taught kindergarten at one school in Leon County were approached by the researcher during a staff meeting and asked if they would volunteer to complete the Teacher Questionnaire. They were asked to record the time it took them to complete the Teacher Questionnaire, and to determine if the directions and questions were clear. The purpose of this trial was not to collect survey data, but to test the instrument and procedures to determine their functionality.

Fourteen current and former kindergarten teachers were sent the Teacher Questionnaire on Qualtrics through an email. All 14 of the teachers completed the survey. A focus group interview was subsequently conducted with the teachers. They all agreed and confirmed that the survey instrument was clear and easy to understand. They reported that the amount of time it took to complete the instrument ranged from 8 minutes to 20 minutes, with an average time of 12 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics including two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The data were analyzed using the quantitative software program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). First, reliability scores of the test items and constructs were analyzed using Cronbach's reliability estimates. The results were then compared to the reliability estimates provided by Charlesworth and colleagues (1993). Descriptive statistics were computed in the form of frequencies, means, medians, and standard deviations. For the purposes of this study, the Likert scale was treated as

an interval scale for the data analyses (Knapp, 1990). Although there is some controversy concerning treating Likert scales as interval data, the fact that DAP represents a continuum contributed to the decision to adopt this approach (Jamieson, 2004). Furthermore, the exploratory nature of the study was a factor in determining how the data would be analyzed.

Research Question 1

The first research question is: "What are kindergarten teachers' opinions about the status of the current kindergarten academic expectations and practices?" Descriptive statistics were computed to answer this question. Teachers' responses on the Opinion Questionnaire ranged from 1 and 5. Statistics computed included frequencies of each response category as well as medians. The open-ended question of the Opinions questionnaire was analyzed using NVivo 11 software by coding for themes and trends.

Research Question 2

The second research question is: "To what extent are kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices aligned with Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)?" This question was answered in three parts. Descriptive statistics were computed in the form of means and standard deviations for each of the relevant sections of the instrument. These analyses were conducted for both the beliefs and practices sections of the instrument.

Research Question 3

The third research question is "Is there a correlation between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices?" Here the correlation between the two factors were

estimated by computing the Pearson Product-Moment correlation and determining its statistical significance.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question is "Are there any differences between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices across different subgroups?" The subgroups are the type of school (Title I or non-Title I) and the number of years' experience of the teachers. To answer this question, the mean of the scores for the Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire and the Instructional Activities Questionnaire were computed. Then two-way ANOVA and a post hoc of the two-way ANOVA were conducted to determine whether mean differences across the grouping variables were statistically significant.

Limitations and Generalizability

There are several limitations to the study. The first limitation is due to the nature of self-reported data from the participants. It was assumed that the participants answered the survey questions appropriately and honestly. The next limitation was that the Teacher Questionnaire was from 1993 (Charlesworth et al., 1993). However, this adds to the current study by being able to compare data from 1993 to 2017. Another limitation could be due to the number of participants who selected to complete the questionnaire and may make the study less generalizable. The final limitation concerns the Teacher Opinions section of the Questionnaire. This was a new set of questions that had not been validated, thereby limiting any potential generalizability.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Study Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers about curriculum and determine the extent to which they were able to adopt developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), and how these practices were related to their beliefs within their kindergarten classrooms. In this chapter, the results of the statistical analyses are reported. The results of the data analyses based on the research questions of interest are reported in a series of tables. All of the statistical analyses were conducted using the SPSS 23 software program. The qualitative analysis was conducted using NVivo 11 software. The findings are presented for each of the four questions.

Overview of Participants

The study was conducted using a digital Teacher Questionnaire that was administered to kindergarten teachers via email that included a link with access to the survey and the IRB approved letter. The teachers also received 6 follow up reminder emails with a link to the survey. The Teacher Questionnaire was emailed to 814 kindergarten teachers in five counties in the State of Florida. The Teacher Questionnaire consisted of 3 sections including The Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire, The Instructional Activities Questionnaire, and The Teacher Opinion Questionnaire which asked about the current state of the kindergarten curriculum. Of the 814 teachers who were sent the Teacher Questionnaire, 154 teachers responded to the email, which represents 18% of the teachers in the sample. However, of the 154 teachers who responded, only 107 teachers completed The Teacher Questionnaire, reducing the response rate to 13%. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of teachers by county. Each county had at least 9% response rates

from within their own county. Table 4.2 reports the number of kindergarten teachers that held a bachelor's, master's, or PhD degree by subgroups of Title I, Non-Title I, and number of years' teaching experience.

Table 4.1
Distribution of Teachers per County

County	Invited Participants	Number of Participants	% of all Participants	% from County
Duval	469	58	54%	12%
Gadsden	22	2	2%	9%
Hendry	29	7	7%	24%
Marion	167	27	25%	16%
St Lucie	127	13	12%	10%

Table 4.2

Respondents' Educational Qualifications by Subgroup

Subgroup	Bachelors	Master's	PhD
Title I	55	23	1
Non-Title I	22	6	0
0-5 Years' Experience	46	21	10
6-17 Years' Experience	15	9	5
18+ Years' Experience	0	1	0

Internal consistency for the measures were estimated by computing Cronbach's α (Alpha). This statistic is widely used in the social sciences as a measure of an instrument's reliability. Cronbach's α (alpha) is a function of the number of items in a test, the average covariance between item-pairs, and the variance of the total score. The α values for each of the subsections of the instrument are reported in Table 4.3 along with the same statistics as reported by Charlesworth and colleagues (1993). However, one of the categories, the appropriate individualization category, had a negative value of $\alpha = -0.08$. This shows that the questions are negatively correlated with the other questions within the same category. This may be because

the survey was developed in the 1990's and that this category is no longer relevant or valid. It is also possible that the characteristics of the sample from the current study is different from the sample from Charlesworth et al. (1993) in terms of this category.

Table 4. 3
Reliability Estimates for the Measures of Developmentally Appropriate Beliefs

Category	**Current Study**	**Charlesworth et al.**
Inappropriate Activities and Materials	0.77	0.84
Appropriate Socialization	0.59	0.77
Appropriate Individualization	-0.08	0.70
Appropriate Literacy Activities	0.76	0.60
Appropriate Integrated Curriculum Beliefs	0.24	0.66
Inappropriate Structure	0.84	0.58

The Cronbach Alpha was also calculated to estimate the reliability of the Instructional Activities Questionnaire, which consisted of 8 categories. Table 4.4 reports the current study's reliability estimates (Cronbach Alpha) and the Charlesworth et al. (1993) for the Instructional Activities Questionnaire. Items within each construct collectively contributed to the overall Cronbach Alpha score and removing any particular item did not reduce the overall score for the Instructional Activities Questionnaire. This suggests that the reliability is still within an acceptable range for each item.

The full survey item analysis is reported in Appendix G. Of the 107 teachers who completed the survey there were 105 female (98.1%) and 2 male (1.9%). The respondents reported working as teachers for a range of 4 months to 51 years, with an average of 12 years. The number of years the respondents reported having worked as kindergarten teachers ranged from 4 months to 37 years (Table 4.5), with an average of 16 years. Of the 107 teachers, 77 teachers reported having a bachelor's degree (72%), 29 teachers reported having a master's degree (27%) and 1 teacher reported having a PhD (0.9%) (Table 4.6). There was one open

ended question where the teachers were able to freely write about their opinions and feelings about the current state of the kindergarten curriculum. This yielded 4 responses of "n/a," while the majority of responses ranged from one sentence to several paragraphs.

Table 4. 4
Reliability Estimates for the Measures of Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Category	Current Study	Charlesworth et al.
Appropriate Activities	0.83	0.79
Inappropriate Literacy Activities	0.62	0.79
Inappropriate Learning	0.32	0.72
Creative Exploratory Learning	0.79	0.62
Appropriate Integrated Curriculum Practices	0.79	0.66
Planned Multicultural and Outdoor Activities	0.52	0.57
Inappropriate Management and Guidance Techniques	0.57	0.56
Inappropriate Transitional Activities	0.53	0.60

Table 4.5
Descriptive Statistics for the Respondents' Years Teaching Experience

Teaching	N	Range	Maximum	Min	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teaching K	107	37	37	0.33	8.47	8.85
Teaching in All	107	51	51	0.33	13.09	11.39

Table 4.6
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Highest Degree Earned

Degree	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	77	72%
Master's	29	27.1%
PhD	1	.90%
Total	107	100%

School Information

The kindergarten teachers were asked to report on the status of their current school, including whether their school was a Title I school. A total of 79 teachers reported that their school was a Title I school and 28 reported that their school was not Title I (Table 4.7). In addition, the teachers reported the approximate number of students who received free and

reduced lunch (Table 4.8), students who were English Language Learners (Table 4.9), and students with exceptionalities, as noted in Table 4.10.

Table 4.7

Frequencies of Reported Title I School Information by Respondents

County	Title I	Non-Title I
Duval	34	24
Gadsden	2	0
Hendry	7	0
Marion	23	4
St. Lucie	13	0
Total	79	28
Percent	74%	26%

Table 4.8

Frequency Distributions of Students Receiving Free and Reduced School Lunch

% of Students	Frequency	Percent
76%-100%	72	67.3%
51%- 75%	11	10.3%
26%-50%	18	16.8%
16%-25%	5	4.7%
less than 15%	1	.9%
Total	107	100%

Table 4.9

Frequencies of English Language Learners Attending Schools

% of Students	Frequency	Percent
76%-100%	7	6.5%
51%-75%	13	12.1%
26%-50%	21	19.6%
16%-25%	35	32.7%
less than 15%	31	29%
Total	107	100%

Table 4.10

Frequencies of Students with Exceptionalities Attending Schools

% of Students	Frequency	Percent
51%-75%	11	10.3%
26%-50%	27	25.2%
16%-25%	46	43.0%
less than 15%	23	21.5%
Total	107	100%

Research Question 1

To answer the first question, "What are kindergarten teachers' opinions about the status of the current kindergarten academic expectations and practices?" the survey asked the participants to rate 6 items on a 5-point Likert scale on the Teacher Opinions Survey section. In addition, an open-ended question asked the teachers to write their opinions about the kindergarten curriculum, and their feelings concerning the current state of the kindergarten curriculum.

Table G.4 in the appendix shows the frequency statistics of the respondents' answer choices to the Teacher Opinion Survey items regarding personal opinions and Table 4.11 reports the medians and standard deviations for each question from the opinions survey. Median scores are given and not mean scores because, as noted by Kostoulas (2013), Likert scale questions are ordinal data and as such cannot yield mean scores.

The responses to the first question on the Teachers Opinion Survey, "The academic demands created by the kindergarten curriculum allow me to give meaningful feedback to students" yielded a median score of 2 and a standard deviation of $SD = 1.27$. The scores suggest that most of the respondents disagree with the statement. The responses to the second question on the Teachers Opinion Survey, "I am able to modify the curriculum to address my students' developmental needs" yielded a median score of 4 and a standard deviation of $SD = 1.35$. This

score suggests that most of the respondents agreed with the statement. The responses on the third question on the Teacher Opinions Survey, "The kindergarten standards are easily met by my students" yielded a median score of 3 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 1.2. In this case the respondents' favored the neutral response. The fourth question on the Teacher Opinion Survey, "My students' developmental needs are being met through the curriculum that is provided by my school" yielded a median score of 2 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 1.28. This suggests that most of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The fifth question on the Teacher Opinions Survey, "In my kindergarten classroom, kindergarten students are given ample time to play" yielded a median score of 1 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 1.34. Most respondents disagreed with this statement. The final question on the Teacher Opinions' Survey, "The kindergarten curriculum is too rigid" yielded a median score of 4 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 1.16.

Table 4.11

Teacher Opinions Questionnaire Medians and Standard Deviations

Question	**Median**	***SD***
The academic demands created by the kindergarten curriculum allow me to give meaningful feedback to students.	2	1.27
I am able to modify the curriculum to address my students' developmental needs.	4	1.35
The kindergarten standards are easily met by my students.	3	1.2
My students' developmental needs are being met through the curriculum that is provided by my school.	2	1.28
In my kindergarten classroom, kindergarten students are given ample time to play.	1	1.34
The kindergarten curriculum is too rigid.	4	1.16

Open-Ended Question

The open ended question on the Teacher Opinions' Survey, "Please write your opinion about the kindergarten curriculum and your feelings on the current state of the kindergarten

curriculum" yielded several themes and trends. The teachers' responses were uploaded into NVivo 11 and then the responses were coded for themes and trends. Of the 107 kindergarten teachers 4 (.03%) responded to the open-ended question with "n/a." Fifty-one (48%) of the kindergarten teachers responded with one to two sentences. Most of the responses were written in paragraph form by 52 (49%) of the kindergarten teachers.

The themes and trends came from pattern finding in the kindergarten teachers' written responses. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, (2014) suggested that in conducting qualitative analyses patterns and themes should be repeatedly noted until the data makes sense. With this in mind, the researcher coded the data the first time looking for the reoccurring themes and coded a second time to check the themes that emerged with the first wave of coding. Then, the researcher went through the themes and coded within themes to code for trends within each of the themes. The themes that were identified included extenuating circumstances, lack of play, lack of social and emotional control, behavior issues, lack of centers, and issues with mathematics and reading curriculum. Table 4.12 reports the number of respondents per theme. These themes are further discussed in the following section.

Table 4.12

Number of Respondents Per Theme

Theme	**N**	**Percent**
Extenuating Circumstances	6	6%
Behavior Issues	16	15%
Lack of Social and Emotional Control	21	20%
Lack of Centers	24	22%
Lack of Play	27	25%
Issues with Mathematics and Reading Curriculum	76	71%

Several of the teachers expressed a need for change. For example, one teacher stated "We need to go back to the way K used to be!" While another teacher wrote that she was considering retirement because of the recent changes in kindergarten education:

> The prescribed curriculum in our county is ridiculous. I do not have any flexibility. It is inappropriate and boring. We teach the children about the Pilgrims in March and about C. Columbus in January. There are no cross-curriculum activities. Our mathematics curriculum is disjointed and too difficult for average students. The teachers have to provide numerous materials that should be provided along with the curriculum. The teachers also must construct many manipulatives to complete mathematics activities. We rarely have time to teach science. All centers must be academic. When I first started teaching K 14 years ago, I was given the freedom to teach my students what they needed. I cooked with them every Friday. We had plenty of time for fun centers and crafts. All which should be a large part of our curriculum. Children need to hear great literature that holds their attention. They also do not need to be taught 100-200 high frequency words. All my students who were in my first K class are successful college students. I believe in part to the fun we had in K. The stress we put on these little children is unnecessary and not to their benefit. I believe they are going to be burned out on school by the time they get to 5th grade. I am considering retiring after next year, because I feel I am hurting children rather than helping them. Things MUST Change.

This teacher highlights many of the concerns that other teachers seemed to be having within their classrooms. One kindergarten teacher voiced her concern, noting that "Unfortunately, there is not space nor time here for me to fully express my disappointment with the current state of the curriculum for kindergarten students." Many of the kindergarten teachers

seemed to feel that kindergarten had become more like first grade, or even second grade. Relatedly, they expressed concerns that they could be hurting their students and not fostering a love of learning.

Extenuating Circumstances.

Those that stated they were happy or content with the current state of the curriculum also mentioned extenuating circumstances. For example, one teacher stated, "I teach at a Montessori school and am allowed to follow the Montessori curriculum as long as I demonstrate how it meets standards." Another teacher stated that in the school where she works the curriculum is not strictly followed, and "If I was forced to stay tied to the curriculum, I don't think I would see very much student success, not to the level I am seeing and I'm sure there will be a gap as my peers have mentioned." One other teacher has an assistant once a week and has her retired mother come to assist in the classroom. She noted that "On those days, my students are able to paint and do more play while I conduct the "necessary" small group reading instruction. I hope for a day when we push back the curriculum but I don't know when or if it can happen because all the other grade levels count on us to build the foundation." One teacher wrote that she had a looped pre-kindergarten class and that her students were prepared for kindergarten because she had them the previous year. Another teacher who worked at an invitation only school noted that she felt that her students were able to perform well in kindergarten because many of the students were gifted and they had support at home.

Those teachers who had an alternative curriculum, flexibility in the use of the curriculum, additional help in the classroom, looped classrooms with pre-kindergarten, and gifted students with a lot of home support reported that they were able to meet the demands of the current kindergarten curriculum. On the other hand, more than 70% of the teachers noted concerns

regarding developmentally inappropriate curriculum issues, such as behavior issues, lack of social and emotional control, lack of centers, lack of play, issues with mathematics and reading curriculum. These concerns are discussed in the following section.

Behavior Issues.

A concern expressed by 15% of the teachers was that the lack of social and emotional skills, had resulted in increases in behavior problems. One of the kindergarten teachers went so far as to say that the "Kids don't get along." Another teacher felt that this may also be due to a lack of meaningful curriculum noting that "A lot of problem behavior occurs because they are not interested in the curriculum and it is not meaningful to their lives or past experiences." The kindergarten teachers seem to feel that the curriculum is no longer developmentally appropriate as exemplified by the comment "If children were allowed to do more developmentally appropriate curriculum, I think that there would be fewer problems in many areas such as discipline."

Lack of social and emotional control.

Social and emotional development was a concern of 20% of the respondents. Several of the kindergarten teachers indicated that they were having difficulty finding time to teach social and emotional skills. One of the kindergarten teachers, for example, stated that "I believe that the curriculum for kindergarten has taken away their time to learn social skills and interactive skills." Another kindergarten teacher pointed out that "Kindergarten students need to be exploring through play and building social skills. There is not enough time to do that with all the things we are required to teach them."

Lack of Centers.

The lack of developmentally appropriate experiences within the kindergarten classroom were also evident with regard to 22% of the teachers wanting more opportunities to use learning centers. One of the kindergarten teachers was concerned with the fact that "All centers must be academic." In general, it seemed that the teachers were not comfortable with the strictly academic centers with comments such as "I have less leeway to use related, but alternate activities and certainly curtails the use of any traditional K activities--the days of the housekeeping center, the block area and even daily art activities are long gone from regular public school kindergartens." The kindergarten teachers seemed to want to be able to have time to use learning centers within their classrooms for more play based activities: "I would also like to see dramatic play, blocks, and housekeeping centers being brought back into the kindergarten curriculum."

Lack of play.

The theme of play was explored by 25% of the teachers, the majority of whom felt that there was not enough time devoted to play. Moreover, they expressed the need for more play based learning by way of hands-on learning and concrete experiences. One kindergarten teacher pointed out, for example, that "There has been a trend in pre-primary of diminishing hands on activities and discovery learning." Teachers also expressed concern about the lack of opportunities for children to engage in free play. This was particularly evident in the opinions of teachers who worked in so called "failing" schools. One of these teachers pointed out that "There is no time for play and I am overwhelmed with the amount of work I am supposed to put on these children." It seems that the kindergarten teachers were frustrated because of the general lack of opportunities for children to play, and the related consequences such as children

lacking social skills. This was supported by the teachers' responses to the survey statement "In my kindergarten classroom, kindergarten students are given ample time to play." The median score for this item was a 1, which means that the kindergarten teachers strongly disagreed with the statement.

Issues with mathematics and reading curriculum.

Of the kindergarten teachers, 71% mentioned that they were dissatisfied with the mathematics and reading curriculum that had been adopted by their school districts. For example, one of the kindergarten teachers noted that "The prescribed curriculum in our county is ridiculous." Another kindergarten teacher wrote that her county used an online curriculum and she felt the "Current online curriculum is a waste of time. It is cheap, allows no flexibility, and teaches skills that are developmentally inappropriate for young children."

Concern about the mathematics curriculum centered on the opinion that the curriculum was too abstract for kindergarten students because they are concrete learners. One of the teachers elaborated on this position, noting that "students shouldn't be given all these abstract principles and be expected to understand them on paper day after day. My last test gave this question (kindergarten): Sarah had 9 cookies, she gave her friend one. How many cookies do they have in all? And then the problem was set up for addition! Why is my curriculum TRYING to trick and confuse these kids so young! It's terrible!" In addition, 32% the teachers also felt that many foundational skills were missing from the curriculum, with one kindergarten teacher pointing out at "The mathematics curriculum lacks the teaching of some of the fundamental skills, i.e., a unit of patterns, which is the basis for all mathematics or calendar skills."

Reading is another academic area that the kindergarten expressed concerns about. Many of the teachers reported that they were given a reading curriculum that did not have physical

books. One of the teachers stated that "The joy of learning has been taken away from us, especially the joy of reading. Students stare at images projected on a screen while the teacher reads boring text that is not meaningful to Kindergarten students." Another teacher pointed out that "The kindergarten curriculum in my county lacks physical books when teaching reading." Due to the fact that the curriculum is not developmentally appropriate, one of the kindergarten teachers explained that "We are not reading authentic literature to them and they are not learning to LOVE to read! Skills are taught to fast, 1 skill a day and students are not picking up the skills they need to be successful readers and writers." Another concern that 26% of the teachers seemed to have was that all children are supposed to be reading fluently by the end of kindergarten, although most come to kindergarten lacking basic emergent literacy skills. One kindergarten teacher expressed her dislike for this situation by noting that "The pressure to have all kids' reading is too great. We don't have the ability to let children develop at their own pace. Not reading? No problem... We will just put you in multi-tier system of supports (MTSS). Everybody assumes all children have been to preschool and have parents who read and talk to them. Not so. Those kids come to me in a deficit situation and I am supposed to make them show more than a year's growth in 180 days. And that's assuming the kids come to school every day and on time!"

The kindergarten teachers felt a great deal of frustration and also that they were doing a disservice to their students. This emotion was evident in one teacher's comment that "I hate what we are doing to these children. They are not allowed to learn in the ways that they need." Similarly, another kindergarten teacher said that "I feel that the constant demands for more testing, more seatwork, and more academics at the loss of more exploration time has really hurt the kindergarten program." The kindergarten teachers also expressed concerns that the

curriculum was no longer developmentally appropriate, particularly in the areas of play, social and emotional control, behavior issues, learning center time, and the mathematics and reading curriculum. Those teachers that seemed happy and content with their schools' curriculum all mentioned extenuating circumstances. One kindergarten teacher who sought change suggested that "We need to get curriculum back into the hands of those who have studied and actually worked with children to be written, instead of corporations or those in the business of selling curriculum and testing packages."

In sum, several themes point to teachers being concerned about a lack of opportunities for children to play, children's lack of social and emotional control, behavior issues in their classrooms, few opportunities to use learning centers, and concerns about the mathematics and reading curriculum. Those teachers that seemed to have fewer concerns were also in situations that had extenuating circumstances that allowed them more flexibility with the curriculum.

Research Question 2

To answer the second research question, "To what extent are kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices aligned with Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)?" descriptive statistics were computed in the form of means and standard deviations for each of the relevant factors. Means were used to address this question because the Teacher Questionnaire was designed to measure beliefs and practices in this manner. The Teacher Questionnaire was designed by Charlesworth et al. (1993) and was validated using factor analysis by Charlesworth et al. (1993). The instrument was developed following the NAEYC guidelines for DAP on kindergarten instruction. These analyses were conducted for both the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire and Instructional Activities Questionnaire. This was further broken down in the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire (Appendix G.2) by the six categories: (1)

inappropriate activities and materials, (2) appropriate socialization, (3) appropriate individualization, (4) appropriate literacy activities, (5) appropriate integrated curriculum beliefs, and (6) inappropriate structure (Charlesworth et al., 1993). It was also broken down in the Instructional Activities Questionnaire (Appendix G.3) by the eight categories: (1) appropriate activities, (2) inappropriate literacy activities, (3) inappropriate learning, (4) creative exploratory learning, (5) appropriate integrated curriculum practices, (6) planned multicultural and outdoor activities, (7) inappropriate management and guidance techniques, and (8) inappropriate transitional activities.

The Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire and The Instructional Activities categories means and standard deviations are reported in Table 4.13. The inappropriate activities and materials category had a mean of *M* = 3.96 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.54. The inappropriate structure category had a total mean score of *M* = 4.58 and a standard deviation of *SD*= 0.84. The appropriate socialization category had a total mean score of *M* = 4.24 and a standard deviation of *SD* = .66. The appropriate individualization category had a mean score of *M* = 3.87 and a standard deviation of *SD*= .55. The appropriate literacy activities had a mean score of *M* = 4.46 and a standard deviation of *SD* = .84. The appropriate integrated curriculum category had a mean score of M = 3.72 and a standard deviation of *SD* = .64.

The appropriate activities category had a mean score of *M* = 2.84 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 1.04. The creative exploratory learning category had a total mean score of *M* = 2.99 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.94. The appropriate integrated curriculum category had a mean score of *M* = 2.85 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.98. The planned multicultural and outdoor activities category had a total mean score of *M* = 2.72 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 1.

The inappropriate literacy activities category has a total mean score of *M* = 3.75 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.72. The inappropriate learning category has a mean score of *M* = 3.61 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.75. The inappropriate management and guidance techniques category has a total mean score of *M* = 3.64 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.89. The inappropriate transitional activities category has a mean score of *M* = 3.11 and a standard deviation of *SD* = 0.99.

Table 4.13
Means and Standard Deviations for the Measures of Respondents' Beliefs and Practices

Category	**Mean**	***SD***
Beliefs Inappropriate Activities & Materials	3.96	0.54
Beliefs Inappropriate Structure	4.58	0.84
Beliefs Appropriate Socialization	4.24	0.66
Beliefs Appropriate Individualization	3.87	0.55
Beliefs Appropriate Literacy Activities	4.46	0.84
Beliefs Appropriate Integrated Curriculum	3.72	0.64
Practices Appropriate Activities	2.84	1.04
Practices Creative Exploratory Learning	2.99	0.94
Practices Appropriate Integrated Curriculum	2.85	0.98
Practices Planned Multicultural & Outdoor Activities	2.72	1.00
Practices Inappropriate Literacy Activities	3.75	0.72
Practices Inappropriate Learning	3.61	0.75
Inappropriate Management & Guidance Techniques	3.64	0.89
Practices Inappropriate Transitional Activities	3.11	0.99

Kindergarten teachers' beliefs were more aligned with DAP as opposed developmentally inappropriate. This is evident in that higher means were obtained in the appropriate categories. However, kindergarten teachers' practices were more aligned with developmentally inappropriate practices as opposed appropriate practices. The higher mean scores in the inappropriate categories suggests that the respondents used these practices more often, and the lower scores for the appropriate categories suggests that such practices were infrequently used.

Research Question 3

To answer the third research question, "Is there a correlation between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices?" the correlation between the two factors was estimated by computing the Pearson Product-Moment correlation and determining its statistical significance. The results of the correlational analyses are reported in Table 4.14. There was a significant correlation between the beliefs inappropriate activities and materials and the practices inappropriate learning, as well as the beliefs inappropriate activities and materials and the practices inappropriate transitional activities. The findings suggest that the kindergarten teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices were not correlated. This suggests that while the kindergarten teachers had strong DAP beliefs, their self-reported practices were not aligned with DAP. Although the kindergarten teachers held DAP beliefs, they did not engage in DAP practices that were consistent with those beliefs.

Research Question 4

To answer the fourth research question, "Are there any differences between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs and self-reported practices across different subgroups?" a two-way ANOVA was calculated to determine whether there were any statistically significant mean differences across the subgroups based on Title I status and number of years teaching experience. Finally, two-way ANOVA post-hoc tests (Tukey's) were conducted to compare significant differences between each of the groups based on the number of years teaching experience.

In the subgroup of Title I Status, 79 (74%) kindergarten teachers reported that they worked in a Title I Status school, while 28 (26%) kindergarten teachers reported that they were employed in non-Title I schools. Table 4.15 reports the results of the two-way ANOVA in terms of differences between kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs across Title I and non-Title I

Schools. The table shows that there were no significant mean differences across appropriate and inappropriate categories of beliefs for Title I schools and non-Title I schools. However, the results of the two-way ANOVA that examined differences between kindergarten teachers' self-reported practices across Title I and Non-Title I schools show a significant difference for the inappropriate literacy activities category based on title status with a significance of p=.01. Additionally, the inappropriate learning category shows a significant mean difference (p= .03). The kindergarten teachers who worked at Title I schools exhibited more inappropriate literacy activities and inappropriate learning practices than did the teachers who worked at non-Title I schools.

The subgroup of number of years teaching kindergarten was created by grouping teachers into three clusters: 0-5, Years, 6-17 Years, and 18+ Years. The 0-5 Years category was determined based on Raue and Gray (2015), who stated that first 5 years of a teacher's career are the critical years, and teachers who have been employed for than 5 years are more likely to stay in the profession. The 18+ years of experience category was created because these teachers would have seen the difference in curriculum practices enforced by the policies associated with the NCLB (2001). The teachers in the 6-17 years of experience are established as teachers and may not have been as affected by the NCLB (2001) policies. Of the 107 teachers, 61 (57%) reported having 0-5 years' experience in teaching kindergarten, 31 (29%) reported having 6-17 years' experience, and 15 (14%) teachers reported having 18 years or more experience. Table 4.15 shows the results of the two-way ANOVA examining kindergarten teachers' self-reported beliefs based on teachers' years of experience. The results showed that the Inappropriate Management & Guidance Techniques Category (p= .04) and the Inappropriate Transitional Activities Category (p= .03) were significant. The two-way ANOVA post-hoc (Table 4.16)

results showed that kindergarten teachers with 6-17 years of experience have more inappropriate transitional activities than teachers with 18 or more years (p= .049). It also showed the Inappropriate Management & Guidance Techniques Category was significantly different between kindergarten teachers with 6-17 years of experience and kindergarten teachers with 18 years of more experience. These results show that kindergarten teachers with 5 years or less of experience had more inappropriate management and guidance techniques than did the kindergarten teachers with 18 or more years of experience. The results of the two-way ANOVA (Table 4.15) showed that the interaction term between Title I status and number of years' experience subgroups was not significantly different. This shows that teachers' years of experience was not related to whether or not they were employed in Title I schools.

Summary

This chapter reported the results of the data analyses for the four research questions that guided the current study. Within this chapter demographic information was provided for the study's participants and information about the schools. Reliability estimates for the current study and the Charlesworth et al. (1993) study were reported. Then findings with regard to the first question were reported by way of descriptive statistics as well analyses of the kindergarten teachers' written responses to the open-ended question. Findings showed that kindergarten teachers were frustrated and concerned about the current state of the kindergarten curriculum, and those that weren't had extenuating circumstances. The second question's results were reported using descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations of the measures of kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices within their classrooms. This question's findings were that kindergarten teachers' beliefs were aligned with DAP but that their practices were not. The third question's findings were reported by tabulating a correlation matrix. These were

results of the analyses that were conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation between measures of the various factors of kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices. Within the findings of this question, there was no significant correlation between the kindergarten teacher's beliefs and practices. Finally, the fourth research question's results included reports of two-way ANOVA analyses and a post-hoc analysis that compared mean differences of subgroups of participants, including those working in Title I schools, participants' teaching experience, and the interaction term between experience and title status. The teachers at Title I schools and non-Title I schools both had DAP beliefs, however, teachers at Title I schools had more inappropriate DAP practices than did the teachers at non-Title I schools. There were no significant differences for kindergarten teachers' beliefs' across the group on the number of years' experience. However, there were significant differences between kindergarten teachers' practices in the inappropriate management and guidance techniques and the inappropriate transitional activities. Teachers with 6-17 years of experience had more inappropriate practices in the inappropriate management and guidance techniques category in comparison to kindergarten teachers with 18 or more years' experience. In addition, kindergarten teachers with 0-5 years' experience had more inappropriate practices in the inappropriate transitional activities in comparison to the teachers who had been teaching for 18 or more years.

Table 4.14

Correlations of Appropriate and Inappropriate Beliefs Factors and Appropriate and Inappropriate Practices Factors

			Beliefs					
			Inappropriate Activities & Materials	**Inappropriate. Structure**	**Appropriate Social**	**Appropriate Individual**	**Appropriate Literacy**	**Appropriate Integrate Curriculum**
Practices	**Inappropriate Literacy**	Pearson Correlation	.189	-.138	-.033	.041	-.007	-.041
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.052	.157	.736	.678	.940	.677
	Inappropriate Learning	Pearson Correlation	.270**	.007	.051	.166	.086	.170
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.946	.601	.087	.376	.080
	Inappropriate Management	Pearson Correlation	.110	-.012	.059	.136	.122	.029
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.261	.900	.546	.163	.212	.765
	Inappropriate Transition	Pearson Correlation	.216*	.166	.136	.096	.180	.047
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.061	.135	.096	.100	.149
	Appropriate Activities	Pearson Correlation	.109	.126	.092	.180	.060	.182
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.266	.198	.344	.064	.539	.056
	Appropriate Explore	Pearson Correlation	.061	.070	.033	.047	.048	.110
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.534	.473	.736	.631	.621	.259
	Appropriate Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	.111	.044	.068	.063	-.003	.145
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.257	.650	.488	.517	.979	.135
	Appropriate Multicultural & Outdoor	Pearson Correlation	-.016	-.115	-.051	-.062	-.146	.136
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.866	.238	.605	.526	.134	.163

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. 15

Two-Way ANOVA Differences Between Respondents' Beliefs and Practices Across Subgroups

	df	**Mean Square**	***F***	**Sig. (*p* value)**
Inappropriate Management Practices				
Title I Status	1	7.39	1.05	0.3
Years' Experience	2	23	3.28	0.04*
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2	3.52	0.5	0.6
Inappropriate Transition Practices				
Title I Status	1	0.55	0.14	0.7
Years' Experience	2	13.17	3.39	0.03*
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2	2.08	0.53	0.58

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4.15 (continued)

Two-Way ANOVA Differences Between Respondents' Beliefs and Practices Across Subgroups

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)
Title I Status	1.00	0.78	0.18	0.66
Years' Experience	2.00	1.42	0.33	0.71
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	1.93	0.46	0.63
Appropriate Curriculum Practices				
Title I Status	1.00	9.78	0.62	0.43
Years' Experience	2.00	17.58	1.12	0.32
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	21.58	1.37	0.25
Appropriate Explore Practices				
Title I Status	1.00	1.86	0.08	0.77
Years' Experience	2.00	62.34	2.85	0.06
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	15.02	0.68	0.50
Inappropriate Learning Practices				
Title I Status	1.00	22.14	4.41	0.03*
Years' Experience	2.00	0.27	0.05	0.94
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	4.96	0.98	0.37
Inappropriate Literacy Practices				
Title I Status	1.00	78.08	6.27	0.01*
Years' Experience	2.00	8.92	0.71	0.49
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	13.19	1.06	0.35
Appropriate Activities Practices				
Title I Status	1.00	9.88	0.36	0.54
Years' Experience	2.00	44.17	1.60	0.20
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	29.26	1.06	0.34
Inappropriate Structure Beliefs				
Title I Status	1.00	0.03	0.01	0.92
Years' Experience	2.00	0.73	0.24	0.78
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	1.78	0.60	0.54
Appropriate Int. Curriculum Beliefs				
Title I Status	1.00	6.95	1.03	0.31
Years' Experience	2.00	6.14	0.91	0.40
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	1.76	0.26	0.77
Appropriate Literacy Beliefs				
Title I Status	1.00	1.47	0.50	0.48
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2.00	0.20	0.06	0.93
Title I Status X Years' Experience	2.00	1.81	0.61	0.54

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4. 15 *(continued)*

Two-Way ANOVA Differences Between Respondents' Beliefs and Practices Across Subgroups

	df	**Mean Square**	***F***	**Sig. (p value)**
Appropriate Individual Beliefs				
Title I Status	1	0.1	0.03	0.85
Years' Experience	2	4.42	1.56	0.21
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2	0.81	0.28	0.74
Appropriate Social Beliefs				
Title I Status	1	0.74	0.1	0.75
Years' Experience	2	0.78	0.1	0.89
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2	0.41	0.05	0.94
Inappropriate Activities & Materials Beliefs				
Title I Status	1	11.98	0.4	0.52
Years' Experience	2	63.61	2.14	0.12
Title I Status x Years' Experience	2	15.46	0.52	0.59

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4. 16

Two-Way ANOVA Post Hoc Differences on Practices By Teachers Years' Experience

	Mean Difference	**Std. Error**	**Sig. (*p* value)**
Inappropriate. Management Practices			
0-5 Years vs 18+ Years	1.6492	.76278	.083
0-5 Years vs 6-17 Years	.4347	.58378	.738
6-17 Years vs 18+ Years	2.0839	.83244	.037*
Inappropriate. Transition Practices			
0-5 Years vs 6-17 Years	.7197	.43443	.227
0-5 Years vs 18+ Years	1.3563	.56763	.049*
6-17 Years vs 18+ Years	.6366	.61947	.561

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This final chapter considers the study's key findings by outlining the overall conclusions and providing a discussion of the results. The discussion considers the results with reference to recent empirical studies as well as the conceptual rationale that was outlined in the first chapters. Then, in subsequent sections, the study's implications for practice, recommendations for future research, and limitations are presented.

For the purposes of this study and the discussion section, the findings are divided into appropriate beliefs, appropriate practices, inappropriate beliefs, and inappropriate practices. Gullo and Hughes (2010) noted that children have common developmental needs that happen at each child's individual level. Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) is not a dichotomy and nor is the term inappropriate meant to imply bad or inferior instructional practices (Hatch et al., 2002). Rather, the words appropriate and inappropriate were originally used to denote concrete examples of what might be good or bad principles of development. Yet, these principles are not set and, as such, they are more of a continuum that relies on a response to the class and to each child within it. They also respond to the developmental principle at hand (Hatch et al., 2002).

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers about curriculum, and determine the extent to which they were able to effectively apply developmentally appropriate practices within their kindergarten classrooms. Although the developmental characteristics of kindergarten children have been fundamentally consistent and unaltered through time (Gullo & Hughes, 2011), many educators are of the

opinion that today's kindergarten classrooms are structured similarly to first-grade classrooms of the late 1990's (Bassok et al., 2016). With these changes in mind, the current study sought to explore how kindergarten teachers have responded to the demands of the standards brought on by policy changes stemming from legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) which has now been reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSE, 2015). The study investigated kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and the extent to which those beliefs related to their teaching practices within the demanding standards to which kindergarteners are challenged (Gullo & Hughes, 2010; Hirsh-Pasek, 2009). This study was also conducted partly in response to recent publications by experts in the field of early childhood education expressing concerns about the kindergarten curriculum (e.g., Carlsson-Paige, McLaughlin & Almon, 2015; Classens, Duncan, & Engel, 2009; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Watts, Duncan, Siegler, & Davis-Kean, 2014). Recognizing that much of the evidence concerning recent changes in the kindergarten curriculum and kindergarten teaching practices was of an anecdotal nature (e.g., Carlsson-Paige, McLaughlin, & Almon, 2015; Classens, Duncan, & Engel, 2009; Watts, Duncan, Siegler, & Davis-Kean, 2014), the current study was designed to elicit the opinions of kindergarten teachers. Moreover, the study measured kindergarten teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices, as well as the extent to which their instructional practices were consistent with a developmental approach as defined by the NAEYC in their publications describing best practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

A survey was administered to measure teachers' beliefs and practices about DAP and elicit opinions from 107 kindergarten teachers in 5 counties in the State of Florida. The survey was adapted from The Teacher Questionnaire (Charlesworth et al., 1993) which is comprised of The Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire, The Instructional Activities Questionnaire, and the added

Teachers' Opinions Questionnaire. Kindergarten teachers beliefs concerning DAP, and their current DAP practices were measured, along with their opinions and feelings about the current status of the kindergarten curriculum. The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software by calculating frequencies, descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, correlation coefficients, and inferential statistics derived from a two-way ANOVA. In addition, the NVivo 11 qualitative software was used to analyze the open-ended question for recurring themes and trends.

Discussions of Results

DAP has a long history in the field of early childhood education in general, and more specifically with regard to kindergarten teaching practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The findings revealed that the kindergarten teachers in the current study held strong DAP beliefs but engaged in developmentally inappropriate practices. Responses to the instrument suggested that their beliefs were consistent with developmentally appropriate practices as outlined by Copple and Bredekamp (2009). Yet, recent empirical evidence (e.g., Bassok et al., 2016) suggested that the kindergarten curriculum has strayed away from a developmental approach. The kindergarten teachers sampled for this study held beliefs that were consistent with a developmental approach based on the means and standard deviations of The Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire, and they expressed concerns and frustrations about the current status of kindergarten teaching and learning through the Opinions Questionnaire. Presumably, their concerns were a consequence of the fact that while they strongly believe in one approach, they are unable to practice that approach. This was seen in the results of the Pearson Product-Moment correlation, which showed that the only significant correlation was between developmentally inappropriate beliefs and developmentally inappropriate practices. The teachers' beliefs were also aligned with appropriate beliefs but inappropriate practices in the results of the means within the appropriate

and inappropriate beliefs and practices categories. In short, the teachers could have been having difficulty practicing what they actually believed in. Such findings, seem to be consistent with other recent studies including findings reported by Shi, Zhang, and Lin (2014) who also found that kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices were not aligned.

Beliefs have been defined as a person's "lively idea related to or associated with present impressions" (Ginsberg, 1972, p. 3). Findings from the current study suggested that the kindergarten teachers held DAP beliefs, much like those of teachers who participated in studies during the past two decades (e.g., Charlesworth et al., 1993; Kim & Buchanan, 2009). It seems that little has changed with regard to teachers' beliefs since these earlier studies. Yet, unlike teachers in previous studies, the practitioners sampled for the current study were unable to align their beliefs and practices. Although it is well recognized that teachers' beliefs affect their classroom practices (e.g., Fang, 1996; Green 1971) this was not the case with the teachers' sampled for this study. With such findings in mind, Fang (1996) noted that teachers' beliefs affect their classroom practices. Within this study, the kindergarten teachers were unable to use their DAP beliefs in their practices. This may be due to academic demands that stem from policies stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In fact, the findings reflect those from more than two decades ago (e.g. Charlesworth et al., 1992; Kim & Buchanan, 2009). As in the current study, Fang's (1996) study also noted that there were various constraints that could prevent teachers from engaging in classroom practices that were consistent with their beliefs.

The overall results of the study suggested that the kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs were not significantly related to their engagement in DAP practices in the classroom. This finding contributes toward generating a plausible explanation for the participants' responses to the open ended question. This is because more than 70% of respondents expressed some

concerns about the current status of the kindergarten curriculum. Presumably, this is because the practices that they are required to adopt are at odds with their beliefs concerning best practices in the kindergarten classroom. This can be interpreted as a tension between beliefs and practices; a tension that is a consequence of the fact that more than 70% of the teachers cannot, or are not allowed to, engage in instructional practices based on their beliefs.

While the current study revealed the existence of tension between teachers' beliefs and practices, as well as concerns about current instructional approaches in the kindergarten classroom, little is known about the consequences of this tension. Possibly, such a situation could lead to increased stress on teachers that could contribute toward challenges such as burnout. Clearly, further research is needed to examine how kindergarten teachers are addressing academic challenges, and whether the tension between their beliefs and practices has any negative consequences.

Unlike the current study, Charlesworth et al., (1993) found a moderate, statistically significant positive correlation between the kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices. The researchers also found that the kindergarten teachers were more likely to teach according to their DAP beliefs. The more the teachers held DAP beliefs, the more they adopted DAP practices and the same was true for inappropriate beliefs and practices. It seems therefore that Charlesworth et al.'s (1993) findings are in contrast to those of the current study. It would seem that with the changes from the early 1990's in policies and with academic demands, the Florida kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices have also shifted.

Appropriate Beliefs

The findings of the current study showed that the kindergarten teachers had beliefs that were consistent with DAP. This was shown in the means and obtained from their responses on

the Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire. These findings are consistent with both Charlesworth et al. (1993) and Gallant's (2009) studies. Based on findings from the current study, as well as those from previous studies, it appears that kindergarten teachers' beliefs in DAP have not strayed since the 1990's.

The opinions of the kindergarten teachers that were documented in the written response section of the Opinions Questionnaire suggested that the teachers held beliefs that were consistent with DAP because more than 70% wrote about DAP practices that they felt were lacking in their classroom. This includes developmentally appropriate topics such as play and social and emotional development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). A plausible explanation for the kindergarten teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs is that teacher education programs in the State of Florida offer course work in appropriate development of young children. This may also be due to the Pre-kindergarten/Primary PK–3 certification within the State of Florida (Pearson Education, 2017). The exam for this certification consists of 4 subtests and one of the subtests is on "Developmental Knowledge." This means that through the kindergarten teachers' course work they learn about child development and child centered practices and this may impact their beliefs. Teacher education can have an impact on teachers' beliefs, and this could be why the kindergarten teachers in this study had beliefs that were consistent with DAP (Green, 1971).

When it comes to experience, those teachers in the study who were more experienced had similar DAP beliefs as did their less experienced colleagues. These findings are similar to those obtained by Snider and Fu (1990), who found that teaching experience does not have a significant effect on teachers' knowledge of appropriate practices. This could be due to the type of academic teaching or training that early childhood teachers' received. After all, many early childhood educational programs in colleges and universities teach DAP within the mandatory

coursework. Further, an examination of college level early childhood education textbooks would reveal that most adhere to content that is consistent with DAP. Indeed, even the State of Florida's early childhood certification, to a certain degree, reflects a developmental approach and it requires examinees to be conversant with DAP. Thus, the teachers sampled for this study held beliefs that were consistent with DAP.

Appropriate Practices

The means of the responses obtained from the Instructional Activities Questionnaire's 8 categories showed that the kindergarten teachers' practices fell in the "inappropriate practices" category. However, 5 of the kindergarten teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the current state of the kindergarten curriculum, and also reported that they had extenuating circumstances. These circumstances ranged from having additional help in the classroom, using a Montessori curriculum, teaching at an invitation only school, and having a looped pre-kindergarten to kindergarten class. In sum, these teachers seemed to have more flexibility in the application of their curriculum. A reasonable explanation for these 5 teachers being satisfied with the current state of the kindergarten curriculum is that they seem to have had more flexibility in their classrooms. This is in contrast to the 73 teachers who stated that they agreed with the statement that "the kindergarten curriculum is too rigid" in the Teacher Opinions Questionnaire.

Inappropriate Beliefs

The only significant correlations that were found were between the measures of kindergarten teachers' beliefs on inappropriate activities and materials and the kindergarten teachers' inappropriate learning practices, as well as kindergarten teachers' beliefs on inappropriate activities and materials and the inappropriate transitional activities practices. The overall results of the study show that the kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs were not

significantly related to their engagement in DAP practices in the classroom. Such findings offer an explanation for the teachers' open-ended written responses in which the teachers voiced concerns and frustrations about kindergarten instructional practices. It is also equally possible that the findings indicated that when kindergarten teachers have inappropriate beliefs about activities and materials, they tend to engage in, and apply, inappropriate transitional activities.

Inappropriate Practices

The results of the Instructional Activities Questionnaire showed that kindergarten teachers engaged in more developmentally inappropriate practices as opposed developmentally appropriate practices. Given that most of the kindergarten teachers noted that they did not have much control over their practices in their classrooms, and that they were concerned about a lack of DAP practices in their classrooms, this disconnect between DAP beliefs and practices is not a choice. The root of the disconnection seems to be the curricula that are used in the schools. That is, the teachers want more DAP activities in their classrooms but instead they are told, either directly or indirectly, by local administrators to use prescribed curricula. There seemed to be a tone of frustration in the teachers' responses; a frustration that possibly reflects the fact that while the teachers held strong DAP beliefs, they were prevented from adopting DAP practices in their classrooms.

The findings of the survey showed that the kindergarten teachers had strong DAP beliefs but that their DAP practices were somewhat weaker. With the ESSE Policy more than 70% of the teachers had didactic practices which tend to rely on the teachers' use of repetition, direct instruction, rote memorization, and the use of workbooks and worksheets. These are practices that are not considered DAP for kindergarten students as stated in the NAEYC position statement (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Based on the two-way ANOVA, kindergarten teachers in Title I schools engaged in more developmentally inappropriate practices than did the kindergarten teachers in the other schools. One possibility for this difference is that the teachers at the Title I schools were given even less flexibility to modify their curriculum. Being at a Title I school means that the school has at least 40% of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch (United States Department of Education, 2011). The kindergarten teachers might not have had as much flexibility in making changes to the curriculum as did those teachers who were not teaching at Title I schools.

In addition, kindergarten teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience in kindergarten and those with 6-17 years of teaching experience used developmentally appropriate teaching practices less often than did the more experienced kindergarten teachers (18+ years teaching). One explanation for this difference could be that kindergarten teachers with 18 years or more teaching experience were exposed to DAP teaching before NCLB (2001) was introduced. These teachers with more DAP exposure may have been able to draw on their experience to modify their curricular approach so that they engaged in more DAP practices.

Implications for Practice

The current study explored kindergarten teachers DAP beliefs and practices as well as their opinions about the state of the kindergarten curriculum. The findings revealed several important factors about the kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices. Given that the findings represent the beliefs and opinions of practicing teachers, they could be of interest to educational administrators, policymakers and teacher education programs. After all, the thoughts and opinions identified in this study are those of professionals who work most closely with young children. More importantly, if it is the teachers' opinions that current kindergarten

instructional practices are not meeting the needs of students, then policymakers should consider whether instructional or curricular changes should be implemented.

It is plausible that if kindergarten teachers' voices and opinions are heard, it might be possible to strike a balance between high academic standards and expectations and DAP practices. Gullo and Hughes (2010) maintain that it is possible to engage in developmentally and culturally appropriate practices while at the same time addressing the academic standards. Experts in the field of early childhood believe that teachers do not have to reject DAP in order to maintain high academic standards (Gullo & Hughes, 2010). This opinion is echoed by kindergarten teachers, such as those who participated in the current study. These teachers, drawing on their own professional expertise and day to day experiences with kindergartners, believed in DAP.

Recommendation for Future Research

Further research is recommended to validate the findings of the current study. While the findings showed that kindergarten teachers in this study had concerns about the current state of the kindergarten curricula, and that the kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices were not aligned, it was based on a relatively small sample size. Future studies should be conducted with larger samples of participants. It is also recommended that future studies should be conducted with more diverse participants, including those teaching in different school districts and different states.

The current study was limited since it only focused on kindergarten teachers and there was no related consideration of the kindergarten students themselves. Future studies should also take into account the kindergarten students and how they are responding to the academic demands. After all, they are the ones who are most directly affected by rigorous academic

standards and DAP practices. Such a study could be conducted using a qualitative approach that would include the use of direct observations and interviews. Such an approach should uncover more in-depth understanding of the effects of various approaches, practices, and curricula on kindergarten students. Relatedly, addressing the effects of DAP as it relates to the students themselves could help uncover important aspects of the kindergarten curriculum that are not necessarily evident when measuring kindergarten teachers' opinions.

Future research should also include observations of teachers, such as those who participated in the study, to examine whether their beliefs and practices are consistent with their reports of those practices. Simply put, observations of actual classroom practices could provide a more valid and reliable measure of DAP. The current study relied on teachers' self-reports of their beliefs and practices and therefore including classroom observations of the kindergarten teachers would add a level of validity to kindergarten teachers' self-reports.

The tension that has been caused by the possible disconnect between kindergarten teachers DAP beliefs and practices could also be explored using qualitative research methods. Studies are needed to identify how kindergarten teachers are dealing with this tension and whether there are any short and long term consequences. For example, studies could examine the extent to which the tension between teachers' beliefs and practices affect their classroom instruction. Qualitative studies could also be conducted by observing teachers who are successfully able to incorporate DAP practices into their classrooms. Studies of how teachers successfully implement DAP in their classrooms would inform teacher educators and others who are interested in teaching about optimal classroom instructional practices.

Limitations

Like most other studies, the current research was not without some limitations. The first limitation could be the small sample size that possibly limited the generalizability of the findings. Yet, despite this limitation, the participants were from 5 randomly selected counties in Florida. The selected counties were each from one of 5 geographical regions of the state and thus an effort was made to select a sample of participants that were representative of the state's population of kindergarten teachers. Another limitation could be that the survey was delivered through email and that it had a relatively low response rate of 11%. Such a low response rate, however, is quite typical in survey research and it was not unexpected. Finally, the fact that a section of the survey was developed by the researcher might have introduced some bias that could be interpreted as a limitation.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the beliefs, practices, and opinions of kindergarten teachers about curriculum and determine the extent to which they were able to apply DAP within their kindergarten classrooms. The study's findings showed that kindergarten teachers had DAP beliefs, but that their current practices were developmentally inappropriate. Furthermore, the kindergarten teachers' opinions suggested that they had concerns about the current state of the kindergarten curriculum. Many of the teachers expressed a desire to adopt more DAP practices within their classrooms but were unable to do so because of school and district curriculum requirements.

The current study extends the work of Bassok and colleagues (2016), who examined kindergarten practices from the 1990's to the 2010's. The findings suggest that there could be a tension between kindergarten teachers' DAP beliefs and practices that results in frustration and

concern. Unlike the work of Bassok and colleagues (2016), the current study goes beyond simply looking at the changes that have occurred in the kindergarten curriculum. The current study included the voice and opinions of teachers who are faced with the day to day realities of the academic demands and limitations of the current kindergarten curriculum.

APPENDIX A

FLORIDA COUNTIES BY REGION

Southeast Florida: Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, Okeechobee, Osceola, Palm Beach, and ***St. Lucie***

Southwest Florida: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, ***Hendry***, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Monroe, Pinellas, and Sarasota

Central Florida: Brevard, Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, ***Marion***, Orange, Pasco, Polk, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia

Northeast Florida: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, ***Duval***, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, and Union

Northwest of Florida: Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, ***Gadsden***, Gulf, Holms, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHICS OF COUNTIES

United States Census Bureau, (2015)	Marion County, Florida	Gadsden County, Florida	St. Lucie County, Florida	Hendry County, Florida	Duval County, Florida
Population					
Population estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	349020	46006	306507	39290	926255
Age and Sex					
Persons under 5 years, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	4.9	6.0	5.1	7.4	6.7
Persons under 18 years, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	18.7	22.1	20.5	27.7	22.7
Persons 65 years and over, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	28.3	15.9	23.0	12.9	13.1
Female persons, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	52.0	52.5	51.2	48.0	51.5
Race and Hispanic Origin					
White alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	82.6	42.1	75	82.2	61.8
Black or African American alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	13.3	55.4	20.3	13.1	30.1
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.1	0.4
Asian alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	1.7	0.7	1.9	1.2	4.8

United States Census Bureau, (2015) Continued	Marion County, Florida	Gadsden County, Florida	St. Lucie County, Florida	Hendry County, Florida	Duval County, Florida
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Two or More Races, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	1.8	1.1	2.2	1.1	2.8
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (b)	12.2	10.1	17.9	51.5	8.9
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	71.8	33.5	59	33.5	54.5

APPENDIX C

CONSENT EMAIL

Dear Kindergarten Teacher,

My name is Sara Tours, M.S. Ed, and I am a PhD candidate in Curriculum and Instruction with a Specialization in Early Childhood Education with the College of Education at Florida State University.

Curriculum Survey for Kindergarten Teachers

You are invited to be in a research study of the beliefs, practices, and concerns of kindergarten teachers about kindergarten teaching and curriculum practices. When the survey is completed, you will be entered into a drawing to win 1 of 10 gift cards for $10 each to Teachers Pay Teachers. The purpose of the study is to learn about kindergartener teachers' beliefs, practices, and concerns about various aspects of the kindergarten curriculum and the demands of teaching kindergarten. To this end we are seeking input from kindergarten teachers who are currently employed in one of Florida's school districts. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently a kindergarten teacher. We ask that you read this form and email any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Sara Tours, School of Teacher Education, Florida State University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to measure the beliefs, practices, and concerns of kindergarten teachers about kindergarten teaching. To this end, we are interested in learning about your kindergarten curriculum and the extent to which kindergarten has changed in recent years. We are also interested in your beliefs about kindergarten teaching.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to complete the on-line survey. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your information will be kept strictly confidential. By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in the research study.

Risks and benefits of the study

There are no risks of harm associated with your participation in this study. Also, there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. Information from this study will help increase our knowledge about kindergarten teachers' beliefs, practices, and concerns about the current kindergarten curriculum. This knowledge is critical as children in kindergarten are facing

more academic pressures than they have in the past. The benefits of this study will be information regarding your beliefs, practices, and concerns about the kindergarten curriculum.

Confidentiality

Names of those individuals completing the survey will not be collected and therefore your participation will be anonymous. The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report that might be publish, there will not be any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with your school or district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions please contact Sara Tours at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxx@my.fsu.edu, or Dr. Ithel Jones (faculty advisor) at 850-645-8468 or ijones@fsu.edu. In addition, questions related to research can be directed to Julie Haltiwanger at FSU's Human Subjects Office, 850-644-7900.

By clicking continue I am indicating that I have read and understand this consent letter. I also understand it is completely my choice, and I can decide whether or not I would like to participate.

Sincerely,

Sara Tours

APPENDIX D

FSU IRB LETTERS

Florida State
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President for Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 12/19/2016

To: Sara Tours [redacted]

Address: 1114 W. Call Street, Stone Building, 2208F, Tallahassee, FL 32306

Dept.: EDUCATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Curriculum Survey of Kindergarten Teachers

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 12/15/2017 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Ithel Jones <ijones@admin.fsu.edu>, Advisor
HSC No. 2016.19721

Florida State
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President for Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 12/19/2016

To: Sara Tours [redacted]

Address: 1114 W. Call Street, Stone Building, 2208F, Tallahassee, FL 32306

Dept.: EDUCATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Curriculum Survey of Kindergarten Teachers

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 12/15/2017 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Ithel Jones <ijones@admin.fsu.edu>, Advisor
HSC No. 2016.19721

APPENDIX E

DUVAL IRB LETTER

Accountability and Assessment
Dr. Kelly Coker-Daniel, Asst. Superintendent
1701 Prudential Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32207
(904) 390-2976

January 17, 2017

Sara Beth Tours
[redacted]

Dear Ms. Tours:

Your request to conduct research in Duval County Schools has been approved. This approval applies to your project *Curriculum survey of kindergarten teachers* in the form and content as supplied to this office for review. Any variations or modifications to the approved protocol must be cleared with this office prior to implementing such changes.

Participation in studies of this nature is voluntary on the part of principals, teachers, staff, and students. Our approval does not obligate any principal, teacher, staff member, or student to participate in your study. **A signed copy of the full approval letter must accompany any initial contact with principals, teachers, parents, and students.**

This approval for research runs through December 15th of 2017. If your research will extend beyond that date, you will have to submit a request for an extension at the appropriate time. You will be required to identify any changes to the original protocol at that time and to supply any revised documents you plan to use, as well as an updated IRB. If there have been no changes to the approved protocol you may refer to the previously submitted paperwork.

The Chief Officer of Human Resources has advised that neither you nor your students/colleagues are to be on any Duval County Public School campus nor have any contact with students until you have gone through the fingerprinting process at DCPS. If you or your colleague(s) will have one to one contact with students, please schedule an appointment with Human Resources by emailing Charri Greene at greenec1@duvalschools.org. In all other cases in which you will have reasonable access to students while on a campus, please contact the School Police at 858-6100. In both instances, you will need to attach or bring a copy of this approval letter with you to your appointment.

Upon completion of the study, it is customary to forward a copy of the finished report to the Office of Accountability and Assessment, 1701 Prudential Dr., rm. 327, Jacksonville, Florida 32207. Approval from this department must be sought and granted, in advance, of the publication of any reports/articles in which Duval County or any of its schools are mentioned by name.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call me at 390-2976.

[redacted]

Dr. Kelly Coker-Daniel
Asst. Supt. of Accountability and Assessment
Duval County Public Schools

APPENDIX F

THE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindergarten Curriculum

Consent I am Sara Tours from Florida State University and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Teacher Education, at Florida State University. I am currently conducting a study investigating the beliefs, practices, and concerns of kindergarten teachers toward the kindergarten teaching and curriculum. I would like to invite you to participate in the study by completing a on-line survey instrument. Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with your school or school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. If you decide to participate please click yes below where you will be able to gain access to the survey instrument. At the end of the survey you can choose to participate in the drawing for a chance to win 1 of 10 gift certificates for $10 to Teachers-Pay-Teachers.

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (3)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Demographics Page

Q1 Highest degree earned

- ❑ Bachelors degree
- ❑ Masters degree
- ❑ PhD

Q2 How many years have you taught kindergarten? (including this year)

Q3 How many years have you taught? (total)

Q4 Is the current school that you work at a Title I school?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Q5 Approximately what percentage of your schools' students are on free and reduced school lunch?

- ❍ 76%-100% (1)
- ❍ 51%- 75% (2)
- ❍ 26%-50% (3)
- ❍ 16%-25% (4)
- ❍ less than 15% (5)

Q6 Approximately what percentage of your schools' students are English Language Learners?

- ❍ 76%-100% (1)
- ❍ 51%-75% (2)
- ❍ 26%-50% (3)
- ❍ 16%-25% (4)
- ❍ less than 15% (5)

Q7 Approximately what percentage of your schools' students have special needs?

- ❍ 76%-100% (1)
- ❍ 51%-75% (2)
- ❍ 26%-50% (3)
- ❍ 16%-25% (4)
- ❍ less than 15% (5)

Q9 Rank the following (1-6) by the amount of influence you feel that each has on the way you plan and implement instruction.

- ❑ _____ parents
- ❑ _____ school system policy
- ❑ _____ principal
- ❑ _____ teacher (yourself)
- ❑ _____ state regulations
- ❑ _____ other teachers

Q10 Please respond to the following items by clicking the number that most nearly represents YOUR PERSONAL BELIEFS about the importance of the item in a kindergarten program.					
	1 Not important	2 Not very important	3 Fairly important	4 Very important	5 Extremely important
As an evaluation technique in the kindergarten program, standardized group tests are ___.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
As an evaluation technique in the kindergarten program, teacher observation is ___.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
As an evaluation technique in the kindergarten program, performance on worksheets and workbooks is___.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for kindergarten activities to be responsive to individual differences in interest.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for kindergarten activities to be responsive to individual differences in development.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ that each curriculum area be taught as a separate subject at separate times.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

It is ___ for teacher-pupil interactions in kindergarten to help develop children's self-esteem and positive feelings toward learning.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to be allowed to select many of their own activities from a variety of learning areas that the teacher has prepared (blocks, science center, etc.)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to be allowed to cut their own shapes, perform their own steps in an experiment,and plan their own drama, art, and writing activities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for students to work silently and alone on seat-work.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for kindergartners to learn through active exploration.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for kindergartners to learn through interactions with other children.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Workbooks and/or ditto sheets are ___ to the kindergarten program.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Flashcards (numbers, letters, and/or words) are ___ to the kindergarten program for instructional purposes.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The basal reader is ___ to the kindergarten reading program.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In terms of effectiveness, it is ___ for the teacher to talk to the whole group and make sure everyone participates in the same activity.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In terms of effectiveness, it is ___ for the teacher to move among groups and individuals, offering suggestions, asking questions, and facilitating children's involvement with materials and activities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

It is ___ for teachers to use their authority through treats, stickers, and/or starts to encourage appropriate behavior.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for teachers to use their authority through punishments and/or reprimands to encourage appropriate behavior.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to be involved in establishing rules for the classroom.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to be instructed in recognizing the single letters of the alphabet, isolated from words.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to color within predefined lines.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children in kindergarten to letters correctly on a printed line.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

It is ___ for children to have stories read to them individually and/or on a group basis.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to dictate stories to the teacher.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to see and use functional print (telephone books, magazines, etc.) and environmental print (cereal boxes, potato chip bags, etc.) in the kindergarten classroom.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to participate in dramatic play.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to talk informally with adults.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ for children to experiment with writing by inventing their own spelling.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ to provide many opportunities to develop social skills with peers in the classroom.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

It is ___ for kindergartners to learn to read.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In the kindergarten program, it is ___ that math be integrated with all other curriculum areas.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In teaching health and safety, it is ___ to include a variety of activities throughout the school year.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In the classroom setting, it is ___ for the child to be exposed to multicultural and nonsexist activities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is ___ that outdoor time have planned activities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Input from parents is ___.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q11 Please respond to the following items by clicking the number that most nearly represents how often your students participate in the following activities, on the average.					
	1 Almost Never (less than monthly)	2 Rarely (monthly)	3 Sometimes (weekly)	4 Regularly (2-4/week)	5 Very Often (daily)
building with blocks	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
children selecting centers (home, book, math, science, math, writing, etc.)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
participate in dramatic play	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
listening to recordings and/or tapes	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
doing creative writing (combining symbols/ invented spelling drawing)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
playing with games and puzzles	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
exploring animals, plants, and/or wheels and gears	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
singing and/or listening to music	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
creative movement	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
cutting their own shapes from paper	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

playing with manipulatives such as pegboards, puzzles, and/ or legos	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
coloring and/or cutting redrawn forms	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
children reading in ability level groups	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
circling, underlining, and/ or marking on items on worksheets	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
using flashcards with sight words and/ or math facts	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
rote counting	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
practicing handwriting on lines	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
reciting the alphabet	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
copying from the board	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
sitting for longer than 15 minutes	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
waiting for longer than 5 minutes between activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
large group teacher directed instruction	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

children coordinating their own activities in centers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
tangible rewards for appropriate behavior and/or performance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
losing special privileges (trips, recess, free time, parties, etc.) for misbehavior	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
social reinforcement (verbal praise, approval, attention, etc.) for appropriate behavior and/or performance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
using isolation (sitting away from the group, or outside of the classroom, or walking laps during recess) to obtain child compliance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
games/ activities directed by or made by parents	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
specifically planned outdoor activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

multicultural and nonsexist activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
competitive math activities to learn math facts	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
health and safety activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
drawing, painting, working with playdough, and other art media	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
math incorporated with other subjects	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q12 Please respond to the following items by clicking the number that most nearly represents your opinion with the statements.					
	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The academic demands created by the kindergarten curriculum allow me to give meaningful feedback to students.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am able to modify the curriculum to address my students' developmental needs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The kindergarten standards are easily met by my students.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My students' developmental needs are being met through the curriculum that is provided by my school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In my kindergarten classroom, kindergarten students are given ample time to play.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The kindergarten curriculum is too rigid.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q11 Please write your opinion about the kindergarten curriculum and your feelings on the current state of the kindergarten curriculum.

Q12 If you would like to be entered to win the drawing for 1 of 10 gift certificates to Teachers-Pay-Teachers, please enter the email address you would like the certificate emailed to if you win.

APPENDIX G

SURVEY ITEM ANALYSIS

Table G.1

Teacher Ranking of Influences on Planning and Instruction Results

Ranking by the amount of influence kindergarten teachers feel that each category has on way they plan and implement instruction

Rank	1		2		3		4		5		6		Mean	*SD*
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Parents	6	5.60%	1	0.90%	3	2.80%	8	7.50%	17	15.90%	72	67.30%	5.29	1.33
School System Policy	37	34.60%	48	44.90%	6	5.60%	7	6.50%	9	8.40%	0	0%	2.09	1.19
School Principal	2	1.90%	13	12.10%	66	61.70%	17	15.90%	8	7.50%	1	0.90%	3.18	0.84
Teacher	11	10.30%	16	15%	13	12.10%	52	48.60%	14	13.10%	1	0.90%	3.42	1.21
State Regulations	51	47.70%	23	21.50%	12	11.20%	8	7.50%	9	8.40%	4	3.70%	2.19	1.49
Other Teachers Influence	0	0%	6	5.60%	7	6.50%	15	14%	50	46.70%	29	27.10%	4.83	1.07

Table G.2

Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire Results

Number That Most Nearly Represents How Kindergarten Teachers' Students Participate in the Following Activities

	Not Important		**Not Very Important**		**Fairly Important**		**Very Important**		**Extremely Important**		**Mean**	***SD***
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**		
1.Standardized group tests are	20	18.70%	38	35.50%	27	25.20%	19	17.80%	3	2.80%	2.5	1.07
2. Teacher observation is	4	3.70%	1	0.90%	2	1.90%	27	25.20%	73	68.20%	4.53	0.89
3.Performance on worksheets and workbooks is	5	4.70%	31	29%	47	43.90%	17	15.90%	7	6.50%	2.91	0.94
4. Activities to be responsive to individual differences in interest.	2	1.90%	2	1.90%	15	14%	40	37.40%	48	44.90%	4.21	0.89
5.Activities are responsive to individual differences in development	3	2.80%	1	0.90%	6	5.60%	29	27.10%	68	63.60%	4.48	0.87
6. Curriculum area be taught as a separate subject at separate times	23	21.50%	40	37.40%	16	15%	21	19.60%	7	6.50%	2.52	1.21
7. Interactions help develop children's self-esteem & positive feelings	5	4.70%	0	%	3	2.80%	12	11.20%	87	81.30%	4.64	0.92
8. Children select their own activities that the teacher has prepared	2	1.90%	6	5.60%	21	19.60%	47	43.90%	31	29%	3.93	0.93
9. Children to be allowed to perform their own activities	2	1.90%	3	2.80%	8	7.50%	42	39.30%	52	48.60%	4.3	0.87

Table G.2
Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire Results (continued)

Number That Most Nearly Represents How Kindergarten Teachers' Students Participate in the Following Activities

	Not Important		Not Very Important		Fairly Important		Very Important		Extremely Important		Mean	*SD*
10. Students to work silently and alone on seat-work	26	24.30%	38	35.50%	24	22.40%	11	10.30%	8	7.50%	2.41	1.18
11. Kindergartners to learn through active exploration	4	3.70%	1	0.09%	0	0%	27	25.20%	75	70.10%	4.57	0.87
12. Kindergartners to learn through interactions with other children	3	2.80%	2	1.90%	1	0.90%	20	18.70%	81	75.70%	4.63	0.84
13. Workbooks &/or ditto sheets are	13	12.10%	41	38.30%	37	34.60%	12	11.20%	4	3.70%	2.56	0.97
14. Flashcards are _ to the kindergarten program	1	0.90%	19	17.80%	35	32.70%	34	31.80%	18	16.80%	3.46	1
15. The basal reader is _to the kindergarten reading program.	8	7.50%	16	15%	30	28%	37	34.60%	16	15%	3.35	1.13
16. It is _ for the teacher to talk to the whole group	2	1.90%	24	22.40%	42	39.30%	28	26.20%	11	10.30%	3.21	0.96
17. It is _ for the teacher to move among groups and individuals	2	1.90%	2	1.90%	3	2.80%	30	28%	70	65.40%	4.53	0.8
18. It is _ for teachers to use their authority to encourage behavior.	7	6.50%	18	16.80%	32	29.90%	34	31.80%	16	15%	3.32	1.12
19. It is _ for teachers to use their authority through punishments	15	14%	41	38.30%	26	24.30%	18	16.80%	7	6.50%	2.64	1.11
20. It is _ for children to be involved in establishing rules	2	1.90%	3	2.80%	15	14%	33	30.80%	54	50.50%	4.25	0.93
21. It is _ for children to be instructed in recognizing the single letters	5	4.70%	11	10.30%	20	18.70%	27	25.20%	44	41.10%	3.88	1.19
22. It is _ for children to color within predefined lines	13	12.10%	29	27.10%	31	29%	19	17.80%	15	14%	2.94	1.22
23. It is _ for children to letters correctly on a printed line	1	0.90%	21	19.60%	29	27.10%	30	28%	26	24.30%	3.55	1.09
24. It is _ for children to have stories read to them	5	4.70%	0	0.00%	1	0.90%	12	11.20%	89	83.20%	4.68	0.89
25. It is _ for children to dictate stories to the teacher	1	0.90%	5	4.70%	18	16.80%	39	36.40%	44	41.10%	4.12	0.91
26. It is _ for children to see & use functional and environmental print	4	3.70%	4	3.70%	10	9.30%	29	27.10%	60	56.10%	4.28	1.03
27. It is _ for children to participate in dramatic play	3	2.80%	4	3.70%	11	10.30%	31	29%	58	54.20%	4.28	0.98
28. It is _ for children to talk informally with adults	1	0.90%	2	1.90%	14	13.10%	31	29%	59	55.10%	4.36	0.85
29. It is _ for children to experiment with writing	3	2.80%	3	2.80%	7	6.50%	18	16.80%	76	71%	4.5	0.94
30. It is _ to provide many opportunities to develop social skills	4	3.70%	1	0.90%	2	1.90%	15	14%	85	79.40%	4.64	0.88
31. It is _ for kindergartners to learn to read.	3	2.80%	11	10.30%	25	23.40%	30	28%	38	35%	3.83	1.11
32. It is _ that math be integrated with all other curriculum areas	2	1.90%	8	7.50%	27	25.20%	39	36.40%	31	29%	3.83	0.99

Table G.2
Teachers Beliefs Questionnaire Results (continued)

Number That Most Nearly Represents How Kindergarten Teachers' Students Participate in the Following Activities

	Not Important		Not Very Important		Fairly Important		Very Important		Extremely Important		Mean	*SD*
33. In teaching health and safety, it is _ to include a variety of activities	2	1.90%	2	1.90%	12	11.20%	43	40.20%	48	44.90%	4.24	0.86
34. It is _ for children to be exposed to multicultural/nonsexist activities	5	4.70%	3	2.80%	14	13.10%	27	25.20%	58	54.20%	4.21	1.08
35. It is _ that outdoor time have planned activities	18	16.80%	25	23.40%	21	19.60%	11	10.30%	32	29.90%	3.13	1.48
36. Input from parents is _	4	3.70%	4	3.70%	23	21.50%	35	32.70%	41	38.30%	3.98	1.04

Table G.3
Instructional Activities Questionnaire Results

Number That Most Nearly Represents How Kindergarten Teachers' Students Participate in the Following Activities

	Almost Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Regularly		Very Often		Mean	*SD*
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
1. building with blocks	46	43%	18	16.80%	25	23.40%	13	12.10%	5	4.70%	2.19	1.24
2. children selecting centers	21	20%	22	20.60%	18	16.80%	17	15.90%	29	27.10%	3.1	1.49
3. participate in dramatic play	51	47.70%	25	23.40%	12	11.20%	13	12.10%	6	5.60%	2.05	1.26
4. listening to recordings and/or tapes	13	12.10%	15	14%	40	37.40%	25	23.40%	14	13.10%	3.11	1.17
5. doing creative writing	3	2.80%	9	8.40%	18	16.80%	33	30.80%	44	41.10%	3.99	1.08
6. playing with games and puzzles	22	20.60%	15	14%	30	28%	27	25.20%	13	12.10%	2.94	1.3
7. exploring animals, plants, and/or wheels and gears	39	36.40%	26	24.30%	19	17.80%	14	13.10%	9	8.40%	2.33	1.31
8. singing and/or listening to music	7	6.50%	6	5.60%	22	20.60%	24	22.40%	48	44.90%	3.93	1.21
9. creative movement	11	10.30%	13	12.10%	24	22.40%	27	25.20%	32	29.90%	3.52	1.31
10. cutting their own shapes from paper	18	16.80%	26	24.30%	10	9.30%	34	31.80%	19	17.80%	3.09	1.39
11. playing with manipulatives	28	26.20%	16	15%	21	19.60%	23	21.50%	19	17.80%	2.9	1.46
12. coloring and/or cutting redrawn forms	11	10.30%	34	31.80%	25	23.40%	23	21.50%	14	13.10%	2.95	1.21
13. children reading in ability level groups	2	1.90%	4	3.70%	13	12.10%	36	33.60%	52	48.60%	4.23	0.93
14. circling, underlining, and/ or marking on items on worksheets	7	6.50%	14	13.10%	25	23.40%	28	26.20%	33	30.80%	3.62	1.23
15. using flashcards with sight words and/ or math facts	2	1.90%	12	11.20%	23	21.50%	33	30.80%	37	34.60%	3.85	1.08
16. rote counting	2	1.90%	3	2.80%	20	18.70%	36	33.60%	46	43%	4.13	0.94

Table G.3
Instructional Activities Questionnaire Results (continued)

Number That Most Nearly Represents How Kindergarten Teachers' Students Participate in the Following Activities

	Almost Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Regularly		Very Often		Mean	*SD*
17. practicing handwriting on lines	5	4.70%	11	10.30%	26	24.30%	33	30.80%	32	29.90%	3.71	1.14
18. reciting the alphabet	10	9.30%	7	6.50%	21	19.60%	28	26.20%	41	38.30%	3.78	1.28
19. copying from the board	10	9.30%	20	18.70%	25	23.40%	25	23.40%	27	25.20%	3.36	1.29
20. sitting for longer than 15 minutes	4	3.70%	15	14%	20	18.70%	25	23.40%	43	40.20%	3.28	1.21
21. waiting for longer than 5 minutes between activities	26	24.30%	41	38.30%	20	18.70%	11	10.30%	9	8.40%	2.4	1.2
22. large group teacher directed instruction	0	0%	3	2.80%	10	9.30%	23	21.50%	71	66.40%	4.51	0.78
23. children coordinating their own activities in centers	28	26.20%	23	21.50%	20	18.70%	19	17.80%	17	15.90%	2.76	1.42
24. tangible rewards for appropriate behavior and/or performance	3	2.80%	5	4.70%	16	15%	32	29.90%	51	47.70%	4.15	1.02
25. losing special privileges for misbehavior	8	7.50%	15	14%	25	23.40%	23	21.50%	36	33.60%	3.6	1.28
26. social reinforcement for appropriate behavior and/or performance	1	0.90%	0	0%	4	3.70%	7	6.50%	95	88.80%	4.82	0.58
27. using isolation to obtain child compliance	14	13.10%	22	20.60%	21	19.60%	29	27.10%	21	19.60%	3.2	1.32
28. games/ activities directed by or made by parents	74	69.20%	13	12.10%	11	10.30%	4	3.70%	5	4.70%	1.63	1.11
29. specifically planned outdoor activities	31	29%	28	26.20%	29	27.10%	13	12.10%	6	5.60%	2.39	1.18
30. multicultural and nonsexist activities	14	13.10%	21	19.60%	34	31.80%	21	19.60%	17	15.90%	3.06	1.25
31. competitive math activities to learn math facts	25	23.40%	17	15.90%	35	32.70%	22	20.60%	8	7.50%	2.73	1.24
32. health and safety activities	12	11.20%	41	38.30%	31	29%	14	13.10%	9	8.40%	2.69	1.1
33. drawing, painting, working with playdough, and other art media	18	16.80%	20	18.70%	39	36.40%	17	15.90%	13	12.10%	2.88	1.22
34. math incorporated with other subjects	13	12.10%	21	19.60%	35	32.70%	21	19.60%	17	15.90%	3.07	1.23

Table G.4

Teacher Opinions Questionnaire Results

Number that Most Nearly Represents Kindergarten Teachers' Opinions

	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neutral		Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree		Median	*SD*
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
The academic demands created by the kindergarten curriculum allow me to give meaningful feedback to students.	23	21.50%	37	34.60%	16	15%	21	19.60%	10	9.30%	2	1.27
I am able to modify the curriculum to address my students' developmental needs.	17	15.90%	26	24.30%	10	9.30%	38	35.50%	16	15%	4	1.35
The kindergarten standards are easily met by my students.	15	14%	28	26.20%	19	17.80%	38	35.50%	7	6.50%	3	1.2
My students' developmental needs are being met through the curriculum that is provided by my school.	41	38.30%	32	29.90%	12	11.20%	14	13.10%	8	7.50%	2	1.28
In my kindergarten classroom, kindergarten students are given ample time to play.	54	50.50%	21	19.60%	12	11.20%	11	10.30%	9	8.40%	1	1.34
The kindergarten curriculum is too rigid.	4	3.70%	10	9.30%	20	18.70%	24	22.40%	49	45.80%	4	1.16

REFERENCES

Abelson, R. P., (1979). Differences between belief and knowledge system. *Cognitive Science,* 3(4), 355-366

Abu-Jaber, M., Al-Shawareb, A., & Gheith, E. (2010). Kindergarten teachers' beliefs toward developmentally appropriate practice in Jordan. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 38*(1), 65–74.

Allport, G. W., (1935). Attitudes. A handbook of psychology. Worchester, Mass: Clark University Press.

Almon, J., & Miller, E. (2011). The crisis in early education: A research-based case for more play and less pressure. *College Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood*, *3*, 297–308.

Bassok, D., Claessens, A., & Engel, M. (2014). The case for the new kindergarten: Challenging and playful. *Education Week.* Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/06/04/33bassok_ep

Bassok, D., Latham, S., & Rorem, A. (2016). Is kindergarten the new first grade? *AERA Open*, *2*(1).

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Brown, C. A., & Cooney, T. J. (1982). Research on teacher education: A philosophical orientation. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, *15*(4), 13–18.

Buchanan, T. K., Burts, D. C., Bidner, J., White, V. F., & Charlesworth, R. (1998). Predictors of the developmental appropriateness of the beliefs and practices of first, second, and third grade teachers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *13*(3), 459–483.

Calderhead, J. (1987). *Exploring teachers' thinking: an introduction*. London, England: Cassell Educational.

Carlsson-Paige, N., McLaughlin, G. B., & Almon, J. (2015). *Reading instruction in kindergarten: Little to gain and much to lose.* Boston, MA: Defending the Early Years.

Charlesworth, R., Hart, C. H., Burts, D. C., & Hernandez, S. (1991). Kindergarten teachers beliefs and practices. *Early Childhood Development and Care,* 70(1),

Charlesworth, R., Hart, C. H., Burts, D. C., Thomasson, R. H., Mosley, J., & Fleege, P. O. (1993). Measuring the developmental appropriateness of kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *8*(3), 255–276.

Claessens, A., Duncan, G., & Engel, M. (2009). Kindergarten skills and fifth-grade achievement: Evidence from the ECLS-K. *Economics of Education Review*, *28*(4), 415–427.

Claessens, A., & Engel, M. (2013). How important is where you start? Early mathematics knowledge and later school success. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(6), 6.

Clements, D. H., & Sarama, J. (2014, March 3). Play, mathematics, and false dichotomies [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://nieer.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/play-mathematics-and-false-dichotomies/

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavior science*. United States of America: Lawrence Erlbaum Association.

Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Copple, C., Bredekamp, S., Koralek, D. G., & Charner, K. (Eds.). (2014). *Developmentally appropriate practice: Focus on kindergartners*. Washington D. C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

CPALMS. (2017). Browse and search standards. Retrieved from http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard#0

Cruickshank, D. R., Jenkins, D. B., & Metcalf, K. K. (2005). *The act of teaching*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Curwood, J. S. (2007). What happened to kindergarten? *Instructor, 117*(1), 28.

De Leeuw, E. D., & Dillman, D. A. (2008). *International handbook of survey methodology*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Duncan, G. J., Dowsett, C. J., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A. C., Klebanov, P., Paqani, L, S,. Feinstein, L., Engel, M., Brooks-Gunn, J., Sexton, H. Duckworth, K., & Japel, C., (2007). School readiness and later achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, *43*(6), 1428.

Eisenhart, M. A., Shrum, J. L., Harding, J. R., & Cuthbert, A. M. (1988). Teacher beliefs definitions, findings, and directions. *Educational Policy*, *2*(1), 51–70.

Elementary and Secondary School Act. (2015). Every student succeeds. Pub. L. No. 114-95. In *114th Congress*.

Elkind, D. (1988). *The hurried child: Growing up too fast too soon*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.

Elkind, D. (2001). Much too early. *Education Next*, *1*(2), 9–15.

Elkind, D. (2010). *Miseducation: Preschoolers at risk*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational Research*, *38*(1), 47–65.

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1979). A philosophical consideration of recent research on teacher effectiveness.In L. S. Shulman (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (Vol. 6, pp. 157–185). Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Florida Department of Education. (2017). About the Florida standards. Retrieved from http://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/florida-standards/about.stml

Florida Department of Education. (2012). Florida adoption of state standards. [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from www.fldoe.org/core/.../0081025_floridasadoptionofstatestandards.ppt

Florida Department of Education. (2016). [Map and graph of Florida school districts by region] DA_Regions_and_Map_2016-17.pdf. Retrieved from https://s3.amazonaws.com/attachments.siponline/production/downloads/223/DA_Regions_and_Map_2016-17.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJOJUUKNTH5ILBL7A&Expires=1490147758&Signature=Na6tJ74jM6Llrm7V%2BDwEFMD%2FhNs%3D

Florida Center for Instructional Technology. (2017). Sunshine state standards: Search Florida's next generation standards. Retrieved from http://tools.fcit.usf.edu/sss/

Gallant, P. A. (2009). Kindergarten teachers speak out: "Too much, too soon, too fast!"*Reading Horizons*, *49*(3), 3.

Gao, H. (2005, April 11). Kindergarten or "kindergrind?" School getting tougher for kids. *San Diego Union Tribune*, Retrieved from http://legacy.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/20050411-9999-1n11kinder.html

Garvis, S., & Pendergast, D. (2011). An investigation of early childhood teacher self-efficacy beliefs in the teaching of arts education. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *12*(9), 1–15.

Ginsberg, M. (1972). *Mind and belief: Psychological ascription and the concept of belief.* New York, NY: Humanities Press.

Goldstein, L. S. (2007a). Beyond the DAP versus standards dilemma: Examining the unforgiving complexity of kindergarten teaching in the United States. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *22*(1), 39–54.

Goldstein, L. S. (2007b). Embracing pedagogical multiplicity: Examining two teachers' instructional responses to the changing expectations for kindergarten in US public schools. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *21*(4), 378–399.

Graue, E. (2009). Reimagining kindergarten: Restoring a developmental approach when accountability demands are pushing formal instruction on the youngest learners. *School Administrator*, *66*(10), 10–15.

Graue, E. (2008). Teaching and learning in a post-DAP world. *Early Education and Development*, *19*(3), 441–447.

Green, T. F. (1971). *The activities of teaching*. Troy, NY: Educator's International Press, Inc.

Gullo, D. F., & Hughes, K. (2011a). Reclaiming kindergarten: Part I. Questions about theory and practice. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *38*(5), 323–328.

Gullo, D. F., & Hughes, K. (2011b). Reclaiming kindergarten: Part II: Questions about policy. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *38*(6), 393–397.

Hanushek, E. A., Machin, S., & Woessmann, L., (2011). Handbooks in economics, Vol. 3. The Netherlands, North-Holland: Elsevier

Hatch, A., Bowman, B., Jor'Dan, J. R., Morgan, C. L., Hart, C., Soto, L. D., Lubeck, S., & Hyson, M. (2002). Developmentally appropriate practice: Continuing the dialogue. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *3*(3), 439-457.

Hegde, A. V., & Cassidy, D. J. (2009). Kindergarten teachers' perspectives on developmentally appropriate practices (DAP): A study conducted in Mumbai (India). *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *23*(3), 367–381.

Hirsh-Pasek, K. (2009). *A mandate for playful learning in preschool: Applying the scientific evidence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hofer, B. K., & Pintrich, P. R. (1997). The development of epistemological theories: Beliefs about knowledge and knowing and their relation to learning. *Review of Educational Research*, *67*(1), 88–140.

Huffman, L. R., & Speer, P. W. (2000). Academic performance among at-risk children: The role of developmentally appropriate practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *15*(2), 167–184.

Jamieson, S. (2004). Likert scales: How to (ab) use them. *Medical education*, *38*(12), 1217-1218.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2008). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jones, I., & Gullo, D. F. (1999). Differential social and academic effects of developmentally appropriate practices and beliefs. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *14*(1), 26–35.

Jones, L. D., Burts, D. C., Buchanan, T. K., & Jambunathan, S. (2000). Beginning prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices: Supports and barriers to developmentally appropriate practices. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, *21*(3), 397–410.

Kagan, D. M., (1992). Implication of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist, 27*(1), 65–90. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep2701_6

Kim, K. R., & Buchanan, T. K., (2009). Teacher beliefs and practices survey: operationalising the 1997 NAEYC guidelines. *Early Child Development and Care, 179*(8), 1113–1124.

Klein, A. (2015). No child left behind: an overview. *Education Week.* Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html

Knapp, T. R., (1990). Treating ordinal scales as interval scales: An attempt to resolve the controversy. *Nursing research*, *39*(2), 121-123.

Kostoulas, A., (2013). On likert scales, ordinal data and mean values. Retrieved from https://achilleaskostoulas.com/2013/02/13/on-likert-scales-ordinal-data-and-mean-values/

Krech, D., & Crutchfield, R, S,. (1948). Theory and problems of social psychology. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

Kumtepe, A.T., (2005). The effects of developmentally appropriate practices on children's reading development from kindergarten through third grade (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ERIC (ProQuest). (fsu:181195)

Leung, C. H. (2012). Teacher beliefs and practices of kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, *37*(1), 38.

Lipson, M. Y., Goldhaber, J., Daniels, P., & Sortino, S. (1994). Literacy practices in kindergarten: Competing interests and multiple practices. In *39th Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, Toronto, Canada*.

Magnuson, K. A., Ruhm, C., & Waldfogel, J. (2007). The persistence of preschool effects: Do subsequent classroom experiences matter?. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *22*(1), 18–38.

McKenzie, E. N. (2013). National Board certification and developmentally appropriate practices: Perceptions of impact. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *27*(2), 153–165.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods soucebook*. Sage. Thousand Oaks, CA

Miller, E., & Almon, J. (2009). *Crisis in the kindergarten: Why children need to play in school.* : College Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood (NJ3a).

Moore, K. D. (2007). *Classroom teaching skills*. Thousand Oaks, CA: McGraw-Hill Humanities, Social Sciences & World Languages.

Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *19*(4), 317–328.

Nilsson, N. J. (2014). *Understanding beliefs*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

No Child Left Behind Act. (2001). No child left behind. Retrieved from www.nochildleftbehind.gov

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research,* 62(3), 307-332

Panhandle Area Educational Consortium. (n.d.).Sunshine State Standards PreK-2. Retrieved from http://www.paec.org/resources/floridacurriculumframeworks/main/standards/allprek.pdf

Pearson Education. (2017). Prekindergarten/primary pk–3. Retrieved from http://www.fl.nesinc.com/testPage.asp?test=053

Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children* (Vol. 8). New York: International Universities Press.

Pintrich, P. R., & De Groot, E. V. (1990). Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *82*(1), 33.

Raths, J. (2001). Teachers' beliefs and teaching beliefs. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, *3*(1), 1–10.

Raue, K., & Gray, L. (2015). Career paths of beginning public school teachers: results from the first through fifth waves of the 2007-08 beginning teacher longitudinal study. Stats in Brief. NCES 2015-196. *National Center for Education Statistics*.

Rokeach, M., (1972). Beliefs, attitudes, and values. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Russell, J. L. (2011). From child's garden to academic press: The role of shifting institutional logics in redefining kindergarten education. *American Educational Research Journal*, *48*(2), 236–267.

Shi, Q., Zhang, S., & Lin, E. (2014). Relationships of new teachers' beliefs and instructional practices: Comparisons across four countries. *Action in Teacher Education*, *36*(4), 322–341.

Shirreff, E. A. E. (1880). *The kindergarten: principles of Fröbel's system. Also, Remarks on the higher education of women*. Syracuse, N.Y: W. Swan Sonnenschein & Allen.

Snider, M. H., & Fu, V. R. (1990). The effects of specialized education and job experience on early childhood teachers' knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 5(1), 69-78.

Stipek, D. (2006). No child left behind comes to preschool. *The Elementary School Journal*, *106*(5), 455–466.

Stipek, D., Feiler, R., Daniels, D., & Milburn, S. (1995). Effects of different instructional approaches on young children's achievement and motivation. *Child Development*, *66*(1), 209–223.

Strauss, V. (2012, May 26). How ed policy is hurting early childhood education. *The Washington Post*, Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/how-ed-policy-is-hurting-early-childhood-education/2012/05/24/gJQAm0jZoU_blog.html?utm_term=.f9f205ecb68e

Tyre, P. (2006). The new first grade: too much too soon? *Newsweek*, *148*(11), 34–44.

United States Census Bureau. (2015). Quick facts United States [Data file]. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/00

United States Department of Education. (2011). ESEA Title I LEA Allocations. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy11/index.html

Vise, D. D. (2007, May 22). More work, less play in kindergarten. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from http://www. washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/22/AR2007052201696

Watts, T. W., Duncan, G. J., Siegler, R. S., & Davis-Kean, P. E. (2014). What's past is prologue relations between early mathematics knowledge and high school achievement. *Educational Researcher*, *43*(7), 352–360.

White, J. (1909). *The Education Ideas of Froebel*. London, England: University Tutorial Press.

White, S. H. (1965). Evidence for a hierarchical arrangement of learning processes. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, *2*, 187–220.

Wittrock, M. C. (1986). *Handbook of research on teaching: a project of the American Educational Research Association*. New York, NY: Macmillan and Collier-Macmillan.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

SARA BETH TOURS
EDUCATION

Academic Degrees

Doctorate	Florida State University Tallahassee, FL Major: Curriculum and Instruction Specialization: Early Childhood Education Advisor: Dr. Ithel Jones	2017
Master of Science	Florida State University Tallahassee, FL Major: Early Childhood Education	2013
Bachelor of Science	Florida State University Tallahassee, FL Major: Early Childhood Education	2012
Associate of Science	Broward College Coconut Creek, FL Major: Early Childhood Education	2010
Associate of Arts	Broward College Coconut Creek, FL Major: Early Childhood Education	2009

Certifications

March 2016	Preparing Future Faculty Certificate, Florida State University
August 2013	2013 Program for Instructional Excellence Teaching Assistant Certificate
September 2013	Human Subjects Training Module Online Certificate
July 2012- Current	State of Florida English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Endorsement
July 2012- Current	State of Florida Department of Education Professional Educator's Certificate
December 2011	National Child Development Associate Renewal (National CDA)
April 2008	Florida Child Care and Education Program Director Credential
December 2007	Early Childhood Professional Certificate (E.C.P.C.)

August 2007	Introductory Childcare Training Certification

TEACHING

Post-Secondary Teaching

2013-Current	Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL Instructor of Record, Teaching Assistantship
Courses:	EEC 4943 Student Teaching in Early Childhood Education (Spring, 2017)
	EEC 4303 Expressive Arts for the Young Child (Fall, 2013, Fall, 2014, Fall, 2015 & Fall, 2016)
	EEC 4907 Observation/Participation: for Junior Cohort (Spring, 2014, Spring, 2015, Spring 2016, & Spring 2017)
	EDG4321 Foundations of Teaching (Fall, 2014 & Spring, 2015)
	Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL Grader, Teaching Assistantship
Course:	EDG4321 Foundations of Teaching (Summer, 2014)

Elementary Teaching

August 2016- Present	The School of Arts and Sciences, Tallahassee, FL Second Grade/ Third Grade Teacher (August 2016- June 2017) Kindergarten/First Grade Teacher (August 2015- June 2016)
April 2014- June 2014	American School of Valencia, Valencia, Spain Fourth Grade Teacher

Preschool Teaching

May 2013- April 2014 June 2014- August 2014 May 2015-August 2015	Florida State University Children's Center, Tallahassee, FL Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
August 2010 - December 2012 June 2016- August 2016	Creative Child Learning Center V, Tallahassee, FL Administrative Assistant/ Teacher
January 2008 - July 2010	Creative Child Learning Center II, Coral Springs, FL Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
June 2007 - December 2007	Our Children's Workshop, Pompano Beach, FL Pre-Kindergarten Teacher/ Summer Camp Director

Internships

May 2013	Marymount International School, Paris, France Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
December 2013- April 2013	International School of Valencia, Valencia Spain Kindergarten Teacher
January 2011- April 2012	Buck Lake Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL First Grade Teacher

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

August 2013- Current	Council for Professional Recognition Professional Development Specialist for the Child Development Associate, Washington D.C. • Observe CDA Candidates
August 2012-December 2012	Graduate Assistant, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL • Assistant to Dr. Lindsay Dennis

PUBLICATIONS

Tours, S., & Dennis, L. R. (2015, September). Easing first day jitters: Strategies for successful home-to-school transitions. *Young Children.* 70(4)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Tours, S., Simsar, A. & Lokey, C. (presented 2017, August). *The Importance of Phonemic Awareness for ESOL Hispanic Pre-Kindergartners in the USA.* Paper presented at European Early Childhood Education Research Association 27th Conference, Bologna, Italy (International)

Lokey, C., & Tours, S. (presented 2017, August). *Emerging Evidence for Mindfulness Practices with Young Children.* Poster presented at European Early Childhood Education Research Association 27th Conference, Bologna, Italy (International)

Simsar, A., Kadim, M., & Tours, S. (presented 2017, August). *Early Childhood Teachers' Information Technology Usage and Its Impact on Education.* Poster presented at European Early Childhood Education Research Association 27th Conference, Bologna, Italy (International)

Middleton, J., Tours, S., & Simsar, A. (presented 2017, August). *The Effects of Parents on Home Literacy Environments: Regards to Emergent Literacy.* Paper presented at European Early Childhood Education Research Association 27th Conference, Bologna, Italy (International)

Tours, S. & Simsar, A. (presented 2017, February). *Phonemic Awareness Instruction for Prekindergarten Spanish English Language Learners*. Paper presented at Eastern Educational Research Association, Richmond, VA (National)

Lokey, C., Tours, S., Troutman, A. & Simsar, A. (presented 2016, September). *Mindful Awareness Practices for Young Children.* Paper presented at European Early Childhood Education Research Association 26th Conference, Dublin, Ireland (International)

Tours, S. & Simsar, A. (presented 2016, April). *The effects of play on social development in American children.* Poster presented at 2016 Marvalence Hughes Research in Education Conference, Tallahassee, FL (National)

Tours, S. & Simsar, A. (presented 2015, September). *The effects of play on social development in American children.* Paper presented at European Early Childhood Education Research Association 25th Conference, Barcelona, Spain (International)

Tours, S., Kervin, T., Simsar, A., Izci, B., & Lyons, J. (presented 2015, April). *The deterioration of play in the American kindergarten.* Poster presented at 2015 Marvalence Hughes Research in Education Conference, Tallahassee, FL (National)

Tours, S., Kervin, T., Simsar, A., Izci, B., & Lyons, J. (presented 2014, August). *The deterioration of play in the American kindergarten.* Paper presented at 3rd Biennial EARLI Conference of SIG 5- Learning and Developing in Early Childhood, Jyväskylä, Finland (International)

Ford, J., Tours, S., & Bakare, N. (presented 2014, April). *The shifting kindergarten curriculum.* Poster presented at 2014 Marvalence Hughes Research in Education Conference, Tallahassee, FL (National)

Jones, I., Ford, J., Tours, S., Bakare, N., & Quick, T. (presented 2014, February). *The shifting kindergarten curriculum.* Paper presented at Eastern Educational Research Association, Jacksonville, FL (National)

Tours, S. (presented 2013, October). *An education journey through Europe*. Presented at College of Education International Poster Presentation, Tallahassee, FL (National)

OTHER CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

September 2015	25th European Early Childhood Education Research Association Conference, Chair of Symposium E28, Barcelona, Spain

AWARDS AND HONORS

2017	Nomination for Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Florida State University
2016	Nomination for Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Florida State University
2016	

2015	Nominated for Best Teacher Ever Contest!, By School of Arts and Sciences for Kindergarten/ First Grade Teacher
	Nomination for Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Florida State University

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

May 2013- May 2014	Florida Center for Reading Research Fluency Project, Florida State University Coding data on fluency in the classroom on a longitudinal study Recording data of teachers in the field through video and observational notes

EXTRACURRICULAR UNIVERSITY SERVICE

January 2012- Current	Golden Key International Honor Society Student Member, Florida State University
August 2010 – April 2012	Kappa Delta Pi Historian, Florida State University
November 2009-April 2010	Phi Theta Kappa Vice President, Broward College

OUTREACH

January 28, 2017	Art Competition Judge, Indian Association of Tallahassee, Tallahassee, FL

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

June 2017-Current	European Early Childhood Research Association
January 2016-Current	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages International Association
August 2010-Current	National Association for the Education of Young Children
August 2010-Current	Florida Association for the Education of Young Children