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Prekindergarten Teachers' Training on Children's Behavioral Problems in the Classroom

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

PREKINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' TRAINING ON CHILDREN'S
BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
Characteristics of Prekindergarten Children and Teachers.....	6
Prekindergarten Teachers' Reported Problems.....	9
Teacher Education and Classroom Quality.....	13
Classroom Management and Quality.....	14
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS.....	17
Research Questions.....	17
Design.....	17
Participants	17
Measures.....	19
Teacher Survey.....	19
Variable Coding and Composites.....	19
Procedure.....	20
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	21
Preliminary Analysis.....	21
Frequency of Behavioral Problems.....	21
Research Question 1.....	22
Research Question 2.....	23
Research Question 3.....	24
Research Question 4.....	26
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	31
Training on Handling Behavioral Problems Taken by Teachers....	31
Helpfulness of Trainings on Handling Behavioral Problems	32
Teachers' Desire for Additional Training on Handling Behavioral Problems.....	32
Teacher Classroom Management Efficacy.....	33
Links between Results and Teacher Level of Education, Years	

Experience Teaching Preschool and Demographic Characteristics.....	34
Differences Among Center Types.....	35
Limitations.....	35
Future Research.....	36
Conclusion.....	37
APPENDICES.....	
A: Florida State University IRB Approval.....	39
B: Director and Teacher Cover Letters.....	41
C: Teacher Survey.....	43
REFERENCES.....	46
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	50

LIST OF TABLES

1. Teachers' Report of Frequency of Behavioral Problems.....	22
2. Types of Training Taken by Teachers.....	23
3. Teachers' Report on Helpfulness of Trainings.....	24
4. Teachers' Report of Desire for Additional Training.....	25
5. Teachers' Report of Classroom Management Efficacy.....	26
6. Spearman's Correlation Coefficients Between Teacher Characteristics and Training Variables.....	27
7. Spearman's Correlation Coefficients Between Teacher Efficacy and Other Variables.....	30

ABSTRACT

Prekindergarten teachers play a vital role in giving children a quality educational experience and in preparing the children to enter kindergarten, yet many of these teachers are underpaid and under-trained. One issue that prekindergarten teachers have previously identified as an area of major concern is managing children's behavioral problems in the classroom. The present study explored prekindergarten teachers' thoughts about training on how to handle children's behavioral problems in their classrooms. The study is an exploratory descriptive and correlational study that utilized survey research from a stratified sample of Florida prekindergarten teachers, including public, private and Head Start center teachers. Key findings include: (1) the majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed had taken some type of training on managing behavioral problems; (2) very few prekindergarten teachers surveyed found these trainings on classroom management to be not at all helpful; and (3) the majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed would like more training on how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the mental, emotional and social development that occurs during the first five years of life has been well-documented (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000). As more and more young children spend many hours a day during these preschool years in some type of childcare setting outside their homes (Perry, Dunne, McFadden, & Campbell, 2008), more attention is being paid to what these settings provide. At the same time, the country is increasingly placing school readiness high on its list of educational priorities (National Educational Goals Panel, 1998) and states are increasingly providing funding for preschool education (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006).

The teachers in these preschool settings clearly play a vital role in giving children a quality educational experience and in preparing the children to enter kindergarten. Despite the important role that preschool teachers play, working conditions for many of them, particularly in non-public school settings, are poor (Bellm, Burton, Whitebook, Broatch, & Young, 2002; Whitebook, 1999). Child care centers are plagued by high turnover rates for teachers; one study showed turnover rates to be almost four times higher for preschool teachers than they were for elementary school teachers (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1998). Whereas high turnover rates are somewhat typical of low-wage jobs, turnover is particularly problematic for child care settings, as it affects the quality of services children receive (Hale-Jinks, Knopf, & Kemple, 2006). The loss of a teacher with whom a child has formed a secure, trusting relationship can affect the child's feelings of security in the preschool setting and may affect the quality of the child's relationships with other teachers in years to come (Howes, Hamilton, & Phillipsen, 1998). Research has attributed the high turnover rates to inadequate compensation, high job stress, inadequate administrative support, and lack of adequate training (Hale-Jinks et al., 2006).

Lack of adequate training is certainly a problem in and of itself, but it is also possible that inadequate training could be contributing to high job stress. Without appropriate training, child care teachers may be unprepared for the daily challenges that a well-trained teacher would expect and know how to handle. Training requirements for child care teachers vary widely from state to state and also depend on the setting (publicly- vs. privately-operated). In private settings where only a few children are being cared for, child care worker qualifications are often not regulated. In center-based care, larger private settings, and public settings, state regulations are generally

higher and teacher requirements range from a high school diploma to college coursework or a college degree in early childhood education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). In general, though, child care teachers receive very little training. Using data from the Current Population Survey (a large-scale national survey of U.S. households), Herzenberg, Price and Bradley (2005) found that from 2002 to 2004, an average of only 30 percent of center-based child care teachers held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Whereas research examining the educational requirements for preschool teachers exists (CCCW, 2002), only one study could be found by the author that looked at the specific content of the education preschool teachers receive (Early & Winton, 2001), and the questions asked by this study regarding content were somewhat limited. One particularly important content area that was not addressed by the Early and Winton (2001) study, or by any other existing studies, was training regarding how to handle children's behavior problems in the classroom. Prekindergarten teachers in previous studies have ranked the issue of children's behavior problems as one of their top most "frequent and bothersome" work-related challenges (Johnston, 1982; Micklo, 1993), yet the issue of training teachers in this area has not been addressed in the research.

The concern prekindergarten teachers have about problem behavior in their classrooms is not unfounded. Whereas results from studies looking at prevalence rates of behavior problems in preschool-aged children have arrived at varied results due to different samples and measures used, the general consensus seems to be that approximately 10 percent of these children exhibit problematic behavior (Raver & Knitze, 2002). The rate is estimated to be even higher (30 percent) for low-income children (Qi & Kaiser, 2003). The most common problem behaviors for three- and four-year-olds are impulsivity, hyperactivity, oppositionality, and aggression; between 10 and 20 percent of preschoolers have been shown to exhibit these behaviors at significant levels either at home or at preschool (Powell, Fixsen, & Dunlap, 2003). Regarding more serious behavior problems, research has shown that approximately 8 percent of all preschoolers (children aged three to five years) exhibit behavioral problems severe enough to warrant a psychiatric diagnosis (Keenan & Wakschlag, 2004). It is also estimated that less than 10 percent of the children who do engage in serious problem behavior at a young age actually receive appropriate services for their problems (Kazdin & Kendall, 1998).

Teachers of these children are expected (and in many cases required) to be able to identify children who have serious behavior problems in order to refer them for diagnosis or

services. Teachers with little or no training on how to handle behavior problems in the classroom are not likely to have a good sense of behaviors that are “serious” and warrant further diagnosis or services. It is also possible that teachers who lack this training would over-refer children with behavior problems for services (Alkon, Ramler & MacLennan, 2003; Abidin & Robinson, 2002).

Because of these behavioral problem prevalence rates and issues, and because prekindergarten teachers have consistently listed children’s problem behaviors as a frequent and bothersome problem in the classroom (Johnston, 1982; Micklo, 1993), examining teacher preparation related to this topic is an important task. A lack of training on this topic could very well be adding to high levels of job stress and turnover for prekindergarten teachers, and because of the lack of research examining the issue of teacher training on children’s behavior problems in the classroom, the present study focused on this topic. The purpose of this study was to explore prekindergarten teachers’ thoughts about training on how to handle children’s behavioral problems in their classrooms. The following research questions were addressed:

(1) What training regarding how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom have prekindergarten teachers received? It was hypothesized, based on previous research showing that most child care teachers receive very little education in general (CCCW, 2002), that the large majority of prekindergarten teachers have received little to no training on how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom.

(2) If teachers have taken training on how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom, do they think it was helpful? Because no research currently exists on whether or not prekindergarten teachers receive training on this topic, or on how effective these teachers feel their training in general is, no hypothesis was made for this research question. It is possible that teachers who find children’s behavior problems in their classrooms to be a significant issue may be more likely to feel that training on the issue was helpful. Likewise, if a teacher already feels like he or she has classroom behavior issues under control, he or she may not find additional training on the issue particularly helpful. Also in regards to this question, the present study was only addressing teachers’ perception of training on the topic, not the actual quality of the training.

(3) Do prekindergarten teachers think that they need additional training and/or assistance to better manage children’s behavioral problems? It was hypothesized, based on previous research in which teachers have listed children’s behavioral problems as one of their top

work-related problems (Johnston, 1982; Micklo, 1993), that prekindergarten teachers do feel that they need additional training and/or assistance to better manage children's behavioral problems in the classroom.

(4) Do teacher characteristics relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?

(a) Do teachers' level of education, years experience teaching preschool, center type, and demographic characteristics relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was? Because research on links between teacher quality and level of education and experience has had mixed results (see Chapter 2), a hypothesis for this research question in general was not made. It was hypothesized that the type of center the teacher works at (publicly- or privately-funded) would be related to how much training on the topic teachers receive, because (as previously mentioned) teachers in public settings are often required to have more education than teachers in non-public settings.

(b) Does teachers' classroom management efficacy relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was? Because no research currently exists linking classroom management efficacy to any type of preschool teacher training, no hypothesis for this research question was made. It is possible that teachers with higher levels of classroom management efficacy are less likely to want additional training on the topic because they already feel they can handle children's behavioral problems well. There could also be a positive correlation between teachers' classroom management efficacy and how helpful they felt training on the topic was; teachers who found the trainings more helpful may have higher classroom management efficacy as a result.

The following chapter will provide further detail on many of the issues raised in the present chapter. Chapter 2 will begin with a brief overview of the characteristics of child care centers and teachers. Next in the chapter will be a discussion of existing studies on what prekindergarten teachers report to be their most challenging work-related problems. Research on how teacher education in general, and also classroom management skills in particular, are linked

to overall classroom quality and child academic outcomes will also be discussed. In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study will be presented, detailing the participants, measures, and procedures that were used to assess prekindergarten teachers' thoughts about training on managing behavioral problems in the classroom. The results of the survey will be presented in Chapter 4, followed by a discussion in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Characteristics of Prekindergarten Children and Teachers

It is estimated that more than 12 million children under the age of six (63 percent of all children under six) receive some type of regular child care or early education from someone other than a parent (Enochs, 2006). More specifically, a recent study using data from the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program found that 40 percent of all 3-year-olds, 70 percent of all 4-year-olds, and 75 percent of all 5- to 6-year-olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten attended a daycare center, preschool, prekindergarten, or Head Start program (O'Donnell, 2008). The term "daycare" typically refers to centers or classrooms for children 3-years-old or younger, and structured academic instruction does not usually take place at this age. "Preschools" are typically centers or classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds and include some relatively structured, pre-academic instruction as part of the day. "Prekindergarten" typically refers to centers or classrooms for 4- and 5-year-olds that serve to prepare these children for entry into kindergarten, and thus include more pre-academic instruction during the day. Head Start is a federally funded preschool/prekindergarten intervention program for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families. Childcare centers in general may be publicly or privately funded, and the present study will consider possible differences between public, private, and Head Start settings. Also, because more structured, pre-academic instruction typically begins around the age of three (as discussed above), the present study will focus on teachers of 3- to 5-year-olds.

Teachers in these preschool and prekindergarten settings play a vital role in giving children a quality educational experience and in preparing the children to enter kindergarten. However, these teachers are often underpaid and receive minimal training. While more teacher education usually means higher earnings, average child care worker earnings are generally very low, and employers often do not offer benefits (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008b). Median annual earnings of wage-and-salary child care workers were only \$17,630 in May 2006 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008b). In contrast, the median annual earnings of kindergarten teachers was \$45,120 in May 2007 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008a). In regards to training, requirements for child care teachers vary widely from state to state and also depend on the setting (publicly- vs. privately-operated). In private settings where only a few children are being cared for, child care worker qualifications are often not regulated. In center-based care, larger private settings, and

public settings, state regulations are generally higher and teacher requirements range from a high school diploma to college coursework or a college degree in early childhood education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008b). In general, though, child care teachers receive very little training. Using data from the Current Population Survey (a large-scale national survey of U.S. households), Herzenberg et al. (2005) found that from 2002 to 2004, an average of only 30 percent of center-based child care teachers held a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas all kindergarten teachers are required to have bachelor's degrees.

The study by Herzenberg and colleagues (2005) also found that the educational attainment of center-based child care teachers has been on a downward trend over the past two decades. In 1983, 43 percent of center-based teachers had a bachelor's degree or higher; this number declined to 27 percent in 2002, and in 2004 the number rose only slightly to 30 percent. In addition, the percentage of center-based teachers with only a high school education or less increased from 21 percent in 1983 to 30 percent in 2004. Most of the center-based teachers with the highest educational attainment are now in their late 50s, indicating a potential worsening of the problem on the horizon once these teachers retire. Herzenberg and colleagues (2005) blame these trends on consistently low wages and lack of benefits for teachers. For example, during the period of Herzenberg and colleagues' (2005) study, center-based teachers and administrators with a college degree typically earned only about two-thirds of similarly educated women in other fields. As the debate about what should be the minimum education qualifications for prekindergarten teachers continues (see further discussion on this issue later in this chapter), one issue that will continue to be of importance is exactly what type of training teachers receive in their various levels of educational attainment.

In regards to the present study's sample (Florida), all licensed child care facilities operating 8 hours or more per week must have at least one credentialed child care personnel on-site for every 20 children. (Facilities operating less than 8 hours per week and those with 19 or fewer children in care are not subject to the staff credentialing requirement; however, these facilities are still subject to minimum safety requirements, etc., in order to be licensed by the state Department of Children and Families.) To meet the credential requirement, teachers must have obtained one of several credentials: the National Early Childhood Credential, formal education (i.e., a bachelor's or associate's degree in early childhood education or similar field), the Birth through Five Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC; formerly the Florida

Child Development Associate Equivalency Credential), or the School-Age Florida Child Care Professional Credential (Florida Department of Children and Families, 2007).

The Birth through Five FCCPC requires a minimum of 120 clock hours of early childhood instruction (with a minimum of 10 hours in each of eight content areas), 480 contact hours with children ages birth through eight and at least two methods of formal assessment (a formal observation and an early childhood portfolio). The eight content areas required include (1) child growth and development; (2) creating a developmentally appropriate learning environment that is safe, healthy, respectful and supportive of children and families; (3) promoting the social and emotional development of children; (4) improving motor, language and cognitive development of children, including literacy development.; (5) promoting involvement and positive relationships with families and communities; (6) principles of screening and assessment; (7) professionalism in the field of early childhood education; and (8) effective program management techniques (Florida Department of Children and Families, 2008). No information is available regarding the coverage of more specific topics such as how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom.

Considering that most preschool/prekindergarten teachers do not receive much training in general, and even less on classroom/behavioral management, it is not particularly surprising that one of the major issues these teachers face in their job is how to handle children's behavioral problems in the classroom. While teachers have often cited this issue as problematic (i.e., Johnston, 1982; Micklo, 1993; Nungesser & Watkins, 2005), as discussed previously, there is little indication that teachers receive training on the topic. The present study sought to explore prekindergarten teachers' thoughts about training on how to handle children's behavioral problems in their classrooms. The term "prekindergarten" is used in a broad sense in this literature review, as defined by Johnston (1982): "early childhood programs serving children from birth until entrance into public schools, in full- and half-day programs such as nursery school, preschool and group child care" (p. 2). This chapter reviews the literature on relevant topics, beginning with a discussion of the existing studies on what prekindergarten teachers report to be their most challenging work-related problems, and then discussing research on how teacher education in general and also classroom management skills in particular are linked to overall classroom quality and child academic outcomes.

Prekindergarten Teachers' Reported Problems

Few studies exist on what prekindergarten teachers and childcare workers perceive as the most difficult challenges they face with their job, but the studies that do exist report children's behavior issues among the top challenges. Only three published studies have examined the issue (Johnston, 1982; Micklo, 1993; Nungesser & Watkins, 2005).

Early work by Cruickshank (1981) using surveys of K-12 teachers revealed five broad areas of concern: affiliation (establishing and maintaining good relationships), control (having students behave appropriately), parent relationships and home conditions, student success (both academic and social), and time (managing both personal and professional time effectively). Based on these findings, Johnston (1982) set out to determine if the problems of prekindergarten teachers were similar to or different than those reported by the K-12 teachers. Johnston (1982) hypothesized that due to the difference in work setting and conditions that prekindergarten teachers experience, they may have their own set of different work-related problems.

Prekindergarten teachers' duties can include curriculum development; building and maintaining client bases; training, supervision and evaluation of subordinate staff; and working with a variable budget (based on client tuition payments) and varying numbers of children (Johnston, 1982). Job descriptions for prekindergarten teachers can be inexact and broadly defined. These circumstances differ from K-12 settings, which tend to have more tradition and more sophisticated organizational and legal procedures (Johnston, 1982). Though Johnston's (1982) study was conducted nearly 30 years ago, not much has changed in the organization of prekindergarten settings; these settings are still less structured, and there is little uniformity in rules and requirements for their teachers.

Using an initial sample of 200 non-public prekindergarten programs (including programs serving children from birth until entrance into public schools, in full- and half-day programs), Johnston (1982) had teachers keep a diary-like record of problems they encountered in the classroom. Johnston used this information to create the 102-item Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist, which was then distributed nationally to an additional 400 prekindergarten programs. Respondents indicated how frequently the problems on the checklist occurred, and how bothersome the problems were.

Eleven problems on the checklist were indicated as being both significantly frequent and bothersome to prekindergarten teachers. Of these 11 problems, two were related to behavioral

issues: “Getting children to use words and not hit others when they are angry” and “Keeping one child’s behavior from affecting other children.” In addition, Johnston used exploratory factor analysis to group the checklist problems into seven global problem areas: subordinate staff relations, control and nurturance of children, remediation, relations with supervisor, parent cooperation, management of time, and management of routines. In the global problem area of control, prekindergarten teachers reported problems such as getting children to follow rules and routines, getting children to participate and pay attention, getting children to share or take turns, and knowing how to respond to frequent aggressive behavior of the children. Overall, Johnston found four areas of difference between the reported problems of prekindergarten and K-12 teachers, one of which was management of routines. Johnston found that both prekindergarten and K-12 teachers indicated the need to have children behave appropriately, but as the author notes, these problems may have specific differences based on the developmental level and care requirements for young children.

There are a few issues of concern with the Johnston (1982) study. First, Johnston only sampled non-public child care centers. As discussed in the previous chapter, setting (i.e., publicly versus non-publicly run) can affect the characteristics and problems of child care centers, and it would be helpful to know if teachers in publicly-run centers experience similar or different problems. Second, Johnston’s choice of where exactly to sample from may have affected his results. Johnston randomly selected approximately half of the centers from a list of all centers licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, and randomly selected the remaining centers from the membership of the National Coalition for Campus Child Care (NCCCC). Johnston does not specify why he chose to sample this second specific group (NCCCC child care centers are those on higher education institution campuses), but it is possible that these centers may differ from other more typical centers in communities. Third, Johnston did not collect any demographic information on the teachers, so it is not possible to tell whether or not reported teacher problems varied by teacher experience, age, etc. Despite these issues, Johnston made an important first step in investigating the problems of prekindergarten teachers.

Micklo (1993) built on the Johnston (1982) study and chose to look specifically at public school prekindergarten teachers. The focus of Micklo’s (1993) study was to determine if these teachers had problems similar to K-12 teachers due to the shared school setting or problems similar to non-public prekindergarten and preschool day care teachers because they work with

three- and four-year-olds. Micklo (1993) sampled public prekindergarten teachers who were part of a statewide Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program serving economically at-risk three- and four-year-old children. Micklo used a diary-like process very similar to that used by Johnston (1982) with an initial sample of teachers to create the Teacher Problem Checklist-Public Prekindergarten (TPC-PPk). Teachers were then asked to respond to each problem statement in two ways: on a scale from (1) *never* to (5) *always* for the frequency of the problem; and, (1) *not at all* to (5) *extremely* to determine how bothersome the problem is. Micklo also collected demographic information from the teachers, an element missing in the Johnston (1982) study. The majority of teachers surveyed in Micklo's (1993) study had a bachelor's degree (61.3%), and 29% held a master's degree. The median age range of the teachers surveyed was 31-40 years, with an average of 11.8 years teaching experience. More than 90% of the sample had three or more years of teaching experience. Approximately 80% of the teachers were certified in Early Childhood and/or Elementary Education.

In line with findings of the Johnston (1982) study, Micklo (1993) found control and discipline of children to be one of three major problem areas for the public prekindergarten teachers surveyed; the other two major problem areas were parent relationships/home conditions and the prekindergarten program. "Preventing aggressive children from interfering with others" was the survey item that topped the list of most bothersome problems, and was also found to be the seventh most frequently occurring problem. "Helping children who constantly seek attention through negative behavior" was found to be the third most frequently occurring and the fourth most bothersome problem item in the survey. "Getting children to use words and not hit others when they are angry" also was found to be both significantly frequent and bothersome. Micklo (1993) comments that "in rating control and discipline as an area of high concern, the teachers appeared to be indirectly asking for more training in dealing with these students" (p.65).

In a separate line of research, Nungesser and Watkins (2005) examined "preschool" (the study does not specify the exact ages of the children) teachers' perceptions and reactions to challenging classroom behavior, and implications for speech-language pathologists. The study focused mostly on the link between language delays/disabilities and challenging behavior, but the data provide useful information relevant to the present study. Nungesser and Watkins (2005) surveyed 45 lead preschool teachers in a mid-sized Midwestern community who interacted with both typically developing preschool-aged children and children with language disabilities within

their classrooms on a daily basis. The survey asked teachers to rank 45 challenging behaviors on a six-point scale according to their level of disruptiveness in the classroom. Several open-ended items in the survey asked teachers to report on various other related items, including the types of interventions they used for challenging behaviors in their classrooms.

Consistent with Johnston (1982) and Micklo's (1993) findings regarding aggression, results of the Nungesser and Watkins (2005) survey indicated that teachers overwhelmingly found aggressive types of behaviors (such as biting, throwing temper tantrums, or screaming) to be more disruptive than behaviors often characteristic of social withdrawal (such as not responding to peers, not participating in classroom activities, or appearing sad). The survey also indicated that teachers frequently responded to challenging behaviors with reactive types of intervention approaches (e.g., time out, restraint, removal of privileges) as opposed to more proactive or prevention-oriented approaches (e.g., functional assessment, using choice language, discussing feelings). As Nungesser and Watkins (2005) note, to handle these challenging behaviors most effectively, it may be beneficial to look at a variety of approaches, including both behavioral and communicative.

In sum, the Johnston (1982) and Micklo (1993) studies show that prekindergarten teachers in both public and non-public settings experience significantly frequent and bothersome problems handling children's behavioral issues in the classroom. Along with data from the Nungesser and Watkins (2005) study, these three studies also indicate that aggressive behavior is rated by teachers as the most difficult to handle. A lack of appropriate training may potentially explain why teachers are experiencing these problems. For example, in a survey of higher education programs that prepare teachers to work with preschool children, faculty members rated their graduates as only having "emerging skills" (as opposed to mastery of skills) related to handling children's challenging behavior in the classroom, indicating that the graduates may not be fully prepared to effectively deal with this issue (Hemmeter, 2008). In another survey, early childhood educators ranked addressing challenging behavior as their highest training need (Hemmeter, 2006, as cited in Hemmeter, 2008). The present study sought to determine what, if any, specific training on managing behavioral problems prekindergarten teachers receive, and if they would like to receive additional training on the issue.

Teacher Education and Classroom Quality

Because no literature exists on the specific content of prekindergarten teacher training programs or the presence or absence of classroom management content in training, it is not yet possible to tell whether there is a link between more behavioral problems training and better classroom quality. There also is no research examining whether there is a link between more behavioral problems training and teacher perception of how problematic behavior issues in their classrooms are. Research does exist, however, on the link between overall teacher education and classroom quality and children's academic outcomes. Classroom quality in early childhood classrooms is typically examined using observation measures such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2004). These measures observe both structural variables (i.e., how the classroom is arranged, how many books are in the classroom, the availability of toys and other learning materials, etc.) and process variables (i.e., how positive the child-teacher interactions are, whether or not teacher is including appropriate material in his or her lessons, etc.) However, as discussed below, this research has had mixed results.

Several studies over the past 15 years have indicated that in early childhood centers, staff with more formal education provide higher-quality classrooms than those with less formal education (Howes, 1997; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1996; Phillips, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney, & Abbott-Shim, 2000; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes, & Cryer, 1997; Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford, & Howes, 2002). However, results of more recent studies show contradictory or null findings. In a multi-state study of state-funded prekindergarten classrooms, Early et al. (2006) found "few associations between any of the measures of education, major, or credentials and classroom quality or children's outcomes" (Early et al., 2006, p.174). In another study that analyzed the combined results from seven different studies (including private, Head Start, and state-funded childcare centers from around the country), Early et al. (2007) again found largely null or contradictory results when determining if teacher education could be used to predict classroom quality and children's academic outcomes.

Bogard, Traylor, and Takanishi (2008) offer a critique of the Early et al. (2006; 2007) studies, and voice a concern that education policymakers may use the findings from these studies to advocate for cost-cutting measures and not requiring preschool teachers to have higher

education. Bogard and colleagues (2008) suggest that there is a fundamental problem with using teacher education and certification to predict classroom quality and child outcomes – all teacher education programs are not created equal and program requirements vary greatly. In addition to not knowing the quality or rigor of these teacher education programs, more proximal processes occurring in between teacher education and child outcomes should be examined first (Bogard et al., 2008). For example, links between teacher education content and pre-service teachers' learning, and teachers' learning and actual practices in the classroom must be established before one could then link practices to child outcomes. Bogard and colleagues (2008) also note a problem more specific to preschool teacher education studies – measuring only child academic outcomes may be leaving important school readiness factors out of the picture, such as physical, social and emotional growth. Rate and severity of children's behavioral problems in the classroom are also most often overlooked.

In sum, the findings from existing studies linking preschool teacher education to classroom quality and child academic outcomes are inconclusive. Whereas these studies provide an overview of the effects of preschool teacher education in general, the question of how training on behavioral issues in the classroom in particular affects classroom quality and child academic outcomes remains unanswered.

Classroom Management and Quality

Although teacher education in general has not been shown to definitively affect preschool classroom quality, a smaller body of literature has shown that a preschool teacher's classroom management techniques do relate to classroom quality. The aspect of classroom management focused on in these studies is how teachers respond to children's problem behaviors.

Goldstein and colleagues (2001) looked specifically at whether aggression is contagious in day care classrooms, and found that aggression was more likely to occur immediately following an aggressive act than when no aggression occurred. Acts of contagion were defined as acts that began after the beginning but within 15 seconds of the ending of another act; the aggressor in the two acts could not be the same child, to avoid inflation of contagion rates. The results of the study also showed that children's aggression receiving a positive outcome from the teacher (i.e., attention given by the teacher that reinforced the behavior) was associated with more contagion than was aggression receiving a negative response (i.e., punishment or negative attention from the teacher). Aggression (by other children) was more likely to occur immediately

following an aggressive act than when no aggression occurred. This study's findings suggest that how a teacher responds to aggression in the classroom can be critical in influencing further problems. If a teacher is trained to respond appropriately to children's acts of aggression, the teacher can stem further problems and maintain better classroom quality.

In a study of low-income preschool children, Arnold, McWilliams, and Arnold (1998) examined teachers' laxness and overreactivity, and children's misbehavior. The authors defined laxness as "a teacher's not enforcing rules, not following through on requests or directives, and coaxing or begging a child to behave rather than using firm, clear directives" (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, p.279). Teachers' overreactivity was defined by authors as teachers "responding to misbehavior with anger, irritation, frustration, or annoyance rather than being calm and businesslike" (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, p.279). The study found that how "lax" teachers were on discipline issues in the classroom strongly predicted how much the children misbehaved; higher levels of teacher laxness were associated with more misbehavior. In turn, the children's misbehavior influenced how lax the teacher was and how much they overreacted to the children. Based on the study's results, the authors suggested that "teachers who do not set and enforce clear, firm, consistent, and appropriate classroom rules are likely to face higher levels of misbehavior, which may trigger coercive cycles" (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, p.284). This study suggested that the better teachers know how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom, the fewer behavioral problems will occur in their classroom, thus providing for a more positive learning environment.

Based in part on the findings of the Arnold and colleagues (1998), Raver and colleagues (2008) provided an intervention to Head Start teachers using a clustered randomized controlled trial design. Eighteen Head Start sites, with a total of 35 classrooms, were randomly assigned the treatment or control condition. The treatment sites were provided an intervention in which teachers were invited to participate in training on behavior management, and were visited once a week in the classroom by mental health consultants who coached the teachers on implementing the techniques with the children. The results of the study showed that "intervention classrooms experienced a substantial improvement over control classrooms in their emotional climate, with teachers demonstrating greater enthusiasm with their students, more responsiveness to their students' needs, and lower use of harsh or emotionally negative practices" (Raver et al., p.22) after participating in the intervention. Results of this study provide further support for the

potential benefits of providing teacher training on how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom.

In conclusion, the existing literature on preschool teachers' reported problems, links between teacher education and classroom quality, and links between classroom management and classroom quality points to a need for further research examining the needs of these teachers regarding how to handle behavior problems in their classrooms. Prekindergarten teachers have identified behavior management as a significantly frequent, bothersome and disruptive problem (Johnston, 1982; Micklo, 1993; Nungesser & Watkins, 2005), and literature potentially linking teacher training to higher classroom quality (e.g., Raver et al., 2008) suggests that teachers (and their students) may benefit from more training. Toward those ends, the present study asked teachers what type of training they have received on classroom behavior management, whether or not any training received was helpful, and whether or not they would like further training on the issue.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to explore prekindergarten teachers' thoughts about training on how to handle children's behavioral problems in their classrooms. This chapter details the study's research questions, design, participants, measures, procedure, and planned analysis.

Research Questions

- (1) What training regarding how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom have prekindergarten teachers received?
- (2) If teachers have taken training on this topic, do they think it was helpful?
- (3) Do prekindergarten teachers think that they need additional training and/or assistance to better manage children's behavioral problems?
- (4) Do teacher characteristics relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?
 - (a) Do teachers' level of education, years experience teaching preschool, center type, and demographic characteristics relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?
 - (b) Does teachers' classroom management efficacy relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?

Design

This study is an exploratory descriptive and correlational study that utilized survey research. Permission was obtained from the Human Subjects Committee at Florida State University prior to data collection (see Appendix A). Informed consent was collected from all participating teachers through the return of their survey.

Participants

To determine the sample size needed for the study, a sampling error formula was used. A sampling error formula is often used in survey and correlational research when researchers seek to generalize results from a sample to a population (Creswell, 2008). Based on the chance that the sample will be evenly divided on a question, acceptable sampling error, and confidence

interval desired, Fowler's Sample Size Table (Fowler, 1988) can be used to determine the sample size needed. Using a rigorous standard of a 50/50 chance that the sample will be evenly divided on a question, a 4-6 percent sampling error, and a 95% confidence interval, the required sample size for the present study was estimated to be 300-500. It was anticipated based on prior survey research that approximately 25-35 percent of the sample would respond to the survey, so 1,200 centers were selected in order to yield a final sample size of at least 300-400 participants.

To select the study sample, a sampling frame was created that included all private and public child care centers and Head Start centers in the state of Florida. Two counties (Miami-Dade and Collier) were excluded from the sample because more than 30 percent of the counties' kindergartners were English Language Learners, and the survey was only administered in English. Preschool teachers are not required to speak English, so it is thought that teachers in areas with large English Language Learner populations may not speak English themselves. Of the remaining approximately 5,600 child care centers in Florida, 5,037 are private, 341 are public, and 225 are Head Start. Public and Head Start centers were over-sampled to allow for statistical group comparisons. To obtain a power of 0.80 and be able to detect a medium effect size of 0.50 (based on Cohen's guidelines), a minimum of approximately 50 participants was required for each center type. To exceed these minimums, 210 public centers and 210 Head Start centers were randomly selected from within each center type, which, assuming a 30 percent return rate, would yield 70 respondents from each center type. To reach the required sample of 1,200, 780 private centers were randomly selected. Participants were lead teachers of 3- to 5-year-olds, because more structured, pre-academic instruction typically begins around the age of three (as discussed in the previous chapter).

Of the initial 1,200 surveys mailed, 126 were returned as undeliverable. Of the 126 undeliverable surveys, correct addresses were found for 79 centers, and the remaining 47 centers were replaced with randomly selected centers of the same type (public, private, or Head Start). The total number of surveys returned was 466 ($N = 466$), resulting in an overall response rate of 38.8%. Of the total, 306 (65.7%) surveys were from private centers, 94 (20.2%) surveys were from public centers, and 66 (14.2%) surveys were from Head Start centers. The response rate of private centers was 39.2%, the response rate of public centers was 44.8%, and the response rate of Head Start centers was 31.4%. Participants varied in age ($\bar{x} = 43.0$, $SD = 11.2$), were mostly female (98.1%) and White (64.0%), Black (21.1%), or Hispanic (9.9%). Most teachers had an

Associate's degree or some college (45.6%); 24.1% had a Bachelor's degree, 17.8% had a CDA or less, and 12.5% had a Master's degree or PhD. The majority of teachers surveyed had more than 10 years experience teaching preschool (57.0%); 20.0% had between 6 and 10 years experience; 10.5% had 4 or 5 years experience; 10.8% had 1, 2 or 3 years experience; and 1.7% had less than 1 year experience.

Measures

Teacher Survey. The author created a teacher survey to measure prekindergarten teachers' thoughts about training on how to handle children's behavioral problems in the classroom (see Appendix C for full survey). The first part of the survey consists of nine items. The first question on part one asks teachers to rank how often specific problem behaviors occur in their classrooms (never, once a month, once a week, several times a week, or daily). The second question on part one consists of a four-item subscale on classroom management efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The remainder of the questions on part one ask teachers how bothersome behavioral problems are (e.g., teachers will indicate on a Likert scale their response to the statement, "Behavioral problems in my classroom regularly disrupt my routine/schedule."), whether or not the teachers would like additional training on behavioral problems, and the amount of training the teachers presently have on how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom. The second part of the survey, consisting of five items, asks demographic questions, including teachers' sex, age, race, years teaching preschool, and highest level of education obtained. Items on the first section were created by the author (with the exception of the classroom management subscale items), and items from the second section were borrowed from a similar study of home-based child care providers (Phillips, 2008). All items on the survey were multiple-choice using categorical coding or Likert-type scales.

Variable Coding and Composites. Based on the spread of the sample and on prior research (Early et al., 2006), teachers' highest level of education was coded into four levels: CDA or less, Associate's degree or some college, Bachelor's degree, and Master's degree or PhD. Also based on prior research (Phillips, 2008), teachers' years of experience teaching preschool-age children was coded into five levels: less than 1 year; 1, 2, or 3 years; 4 or 5 years; 6 to 10 years; and more than 10 years. A classroom management efficacy composite variable was created by averaging the scores on the four items from the Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001)

subscale. A behavioral problem frequency composite variable was created by summing the scores from the six behavior problem frequency items.

Procedure

Teacher surveys were mailed to the selected sample of child care centers, addressed to the center directors or school principals with an enclosed explanatory cover letter asking the director to give the survey to a randomly selected teacher of three- to five-year-olds with at least six months experience teaching preschool (to prevent new hires from completing the survey), along with informed consent documents (see Appendix B for these documents). All surveys were pre-labeled with a unique school identification number so as to be able to track the survey return date (used in wave analysis) and center type. The packets also included a self-addressed, stamped envelope to facilitate an efficient return process. A second mechanism for increasing participation was automatic entry into a drawing for a grand prize worth approximately \$200 in classroom materials (e.g., children's books); teachers were notified of the drawing in the cover letter/consent form mailed with the survey. Several weeks following the initial mailing, a follow-up mailing was sent to all survey recipients that included an additional copy of the survey and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. These follow-up mailings were used as needed to acquire the minimum sample size needed.

Participants were asked to complete a short survey divided into two sections. The first section asked teachers to rank how frequently specific behavioral problems occur in their classrooms, report on any training they have received regarding how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom and the effectiveness of that training, and on whether or not they would like additional training on the issue. The second section of the survey asked for basic demographic and educational information. It is estimated that the survey took teachers 10-15 minutes to complete.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted on each survey item to check for skew, kurtosis, and normality of distribution. Only one variable – years experience teaching preschool – was significantly skewed. Transformation was attempted on the variable and skew was not improved, so the original variable was used in analyses. Non-parametric statistics were used in analysis due to the rank order (non-interval) nature of the data. The primary research questions for this study were descriptive. The study sample was used to estimate the demographic, educational, and practice characteristics of Florida’s prekindergarten teachers on the topic of children’s behavioral problems in the classroom. Spearman correlations between responses to different elements of the survey were also conducted. Some subgroup comparison analyses, using appropriate non-parametric statistics, were conducted to compare groups demarcated by several categorical variables, including center type and teacher education and experience. Results of these analyses are presented below, organized by research question. Teachers’ report of the frequency of behavioral problems in their classrooms is reported first in order to contextualize the research question results.

Wave Analysis. Of the 466 surveys returned, 278 surveys (59.66%) were returned after the first mailing, and 188 (40.34%) were returned after the second mailing. Chi-Square analyses were performed to determine if there were any significant differences between teachers who returned the survey after the first mailing and those who returned the survey after the second mailing on demographic variables and on all survey items. There was a moderate, significant difference between the two groups on the “teacher is unsure of how to handle behavioral problems” item, $\chi^2(2) = 6.92, p < .05$. Teachers who returned the survey after the first mailing were more likely to disagree with the statement than teachers who returned the survey after the second mailing. Teachers who returned the survey after the second mailing were more likely to be neutral or agree with the statement than teachers who returned the survey after the first mailing. The two groups did not significantly differ on any other variables.

Frequency of Behavioral Problems

Teachers ranked six types of behavioral problems on a five-point scale ranging from never occurring to occurs daily. Of the six types of behavioral problems included in the survey,

the behaviors most often reported as occurring daily were child misbehaving during transitions (23.0%), child being aggressive toward another child (22.4%), and child misbehaving during clean-up time (21.2%). The behavior most often reported as never occurring was child being aggressive toward a staff member (43.5%). See Table 1.

Table 1
Teachers' Report of Frequency of Behavioral Problems

Type of behavior	Never	Once/month	Once/week	Several times/week	Daily
Child aggressive toward staff	43.5%	27.3%	10.6%	13.4%	5.2%
Child aggressive toward another child	5.2%	19.4%	21.1%	31.9%	22.4%
Child misbehaves during transitions	8.9%	14.1%	21.1%	32.8%	23.0%
Child misbehaves during clean-up	9.1%	13.4%	25.1%	31.2%	21.2%
Child is defiant	13.4%	21.3%	22.2%	25.9%	17.2%
Child throws temper tantrum	19.3%	29.9%	20.2%	20.2%	10.4%

Research Question 1: What training regarding how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom have prekindergarten teachers received?

The majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed had received some training on how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom (see Table 2); only three teachers (.6%) had not taken any trainings on the topic. Most teachers surveyed had taken a seminar or workshop on classroom management (82.7%), with slightly fewer teachers reporting taking the Florida Department of Children and Families' (DCF) 5-hour "Basic Guidance and Discipline" course (75.2%), in-service training on classroom management (66.0%), a college-level course on

classroom management (64.6%), and DCF’s 5-hour “Behavioral Management” course (61.7%). These percentages were larger than anticipated.

Table 2
Types of Training Taken by Teachers

Training type	Yes	No
DCF 5-hour “Basic Guidance and Discipline” course	75.2% (n=340)	24.8% (n=112)
DCF 5-hour “Behavioral Management” course	61.7% (n=274)	38.3% (n=170)
Seminar or workshop on classroom management	82.7% (n=377)	17.3% (n=79)
College-level course on classroom management	64.6% (n=295)	35.4% (n=162)
In-service training on classroom management	66.0% (n=307)	44.0% (n=158)

Research Question 2: If teachers have taken training on this topic, do they think it was helpful?

Very few prekindergarten teachers surveyed found these trainings on classroom management to be not at all helpful (see Table 3). Larger percentages of teachers found in-service training, college-level courses, and seminars or workshops on classroom management to be very helpful (48.1%, 52.7%, and 57.5%, respectively) than the two courses offered by DCF (35.0% and 38.5%). It cannot be determined whether or not these differences in percentages are statistically significant, however, the differences are greater than the survey’s margin of error.

Table 3
Teachers' Report of Helpfulness of Trainings

Training type	Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
DCF 5-hour "Basic Guidance and Discipline" course	3.4% (n=11)	61.7% (n=201)	35.0% (n=114)
DCF 5-hour "Behavioral Management" course	2.3% (n=6)	59.2% (n=157)	38.5% (n=102)
Seminar or workshop on classroom management	1.6% (n=6)	45.7% (n=168)	52.7% (n=194)
College-level course on classroom management	0.0% (n=0)	42.5% (n=124)	57.5% (n=168)
In-service training on classroom management	1.0% (n=3)	50.8% (n=150)	48.1% (n=142)

Research Question 3: Do prekindergarten teachers think that they need additional training and/or assistance to better manage children's behavioral problems?

The majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed would like more training on how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom (with 55.6% strongly agreeing or agreeing; see Table 4); this finding is consistent with the author's hypothesis. Only 30.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they would rather have training on a topic other than children's behavioral problems. Most teachers indicated that they did not feel unsure about how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom (with 86.6% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing); however, 41.6% of teachers indicated that behavior problems regularly disrupted their daily classroom routine.

Table 4
Teachers' Report of Desire for Additional Training

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Behavior problems regularly disrupt routine	11.5%	31.8%	15.0%	29.8%	11.8%
Teacher unsure about how to handle behavior problems	36.8%	49.8%	9.0%	3.9%	0.4%
Teacher wants more training on behavior problems	4.4%	10.4%	29.6%	41.9%	13.7%
Teacher wants training on another topic instead	7.1%	23.2%	39.3%	24.7%	5.7%

The four teacher classroom management efficacy items were analyzed both as individual items and as a composite variable (created by averaging the four items for each teacher). Most teachers answered the four items similarly, toward the high efficacy end of the scale, with the composite variable averaging at 7.55 – just above the “quite a bit” label on the scale (see Table 5).

Table 5
Teachers' Report of Classroom Management Efficacy

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher's ability to control children's disruptive behavior	465	1	9	7.42	1.47
Teacher's ability to get children to follow rules	465	2	9	7.68	1.24
Teacher's ability to calm a disruptive child	465	2	9	7.42	1.44
Teacher's ability to establish a classroom management system	463	3	9	7.68	1.21
Average of four teacher efficacy items	463	3.50	9.00	7.55	1.15

Note: Answers on teacher efficacy items range from 1 (teacher can do "nothing" to get children to follow rules, etc.) to 9 (teacher can do "a great deal" to get children to follow rules, etc.).

Research Question 4: Do teacher characteristics relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?

(a) Do teachers' level of education, years experience teaching preschool, center type, and demographic characteristics relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?

The relation between teacher level of education and whether or not they would like additional training on classroom management was investigated using Spearman's correlation coefficient, and the finding was not significant (see Table 6). However, there were small, negative significant correlations between teacher level of education and how helpful teachers found the two DCF classroom management courses ($r_s = -.18, p < .01$; and $r_s = -.18, p < .01$), and in-service training on classroom management ($r_s = -.20, p < .01$). There also was a small,

Table 6
Spearman's Correlation Coefficients Between Teacher Characteristics and Training Variables

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Teacher education	-	-.04	-.08	-.18**	-.18**	-.09	-.10	-.20**
2. Years experience with preschool-age children		-	-.10*	-.03	-.09	-.03	-.01	.02
3. Teacher wants more classroom management training			-	-.02	.01	-.03	-.10	.00
4. Helpfulness of DCF "Basic Guidance and Discipline" course				-	.80**	.60**	.45**	.52**
5. Helpfulness of DCF "Behavior Management" course					-	.63**	.55**	.66**
6. Helpfulness of seminar or workshop on classroom management						-	.55**	.60**
7. Helpfulness of college course on classroom management							-	.52**
8. Helpfulness of in-service training on classroom management								-

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

negative significant correlation between teachers' years experience working with preschool-age children and whether or not they would like additional training on classroom management ($r = -.10, p < .05$). There were large, positive significant correlations between finding one type of training helpful and finding the other types of training helpful.

The author also examined the relationship between the teachers' center type (private, public or Head Start) and teacher-reported helpfulness of trainings. Kruskal-Wallis tests (the non-parametric equivalent of ANOVA) were run to determine if there were group differences among center types on how helpful teachers found the different types of training to be. In reporting Kruskal-Wallis test results, H is equivalent to ANOVA's F statistic. The only types of training that showed significant group differences in helpfulness were seminar/workshops on classroom management ($H(2) = 6.06, p < .05$) and college courses on classroom management ($H(2) = 11.05, p < .01$). Mann-Whitney tests (the non-parametric equivalent of t-tests) were used to follow up on these findings. In reporting the results of Mann-Whitney tests, U is the test statistic, and r is the effect size. Bonferroni corrections were applied, so all effects are reported at a .0167 level of significance. Regarding helpfulness of seminar/workshops on classroom management, no group comparisons were significant after applying the Bonferroni corrections. Regarding college courses on classroom management, there was a significant group difference on helpfulness between public and Head Start teachers ($U = 1032.00, r = -.30$), indicating that Head Start teachers found college courses on classroom management significantly more helpful than public teachers did. The group differences between public and private teachers and between private and Head Start teachers were not significant.

The relations between teachers' center type and the variables "years experience teaching preschool-age children" and "whether or not the teacher would like additional training on handling behavior problems" were also examined using Kruskal-Wallis tests. Significant group differences were found on the additional training variable ($H(2) = 17.83, p < .01$), but not on the years of experience variable ($H(2) = 5.54, p = .06$). Mann-Whitney tests were used to follow up on the significant additional training variable finding. Again, Bonferroni corrections were applied, so all effects are reported at a .0167 level of significance. There was a significant group difference between private and public teachers ($U = 10276.50, r = -.19$), indicating that private teachers more strongly agreed that they would like additional training on handling behavior problems than public teachers. There was also a significant group difference between public and

Head Start teachers ($U = 1925.00, r = -.29$), indicating that Head Start teachers more strongly agreed that they would like additional training on handling behavior problems than public teachers. There was not a significant group difference between private and Head Start teachers on this variable.

(b) Does teachers' classroom management efficacy relate to whether or not they would like additional training on the topic or how helpful they think training on the topic was?

As a follow-up to these findings, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to determine the relation between teachers' center types and their scores on the teacher efficacy subscale (each teacher's answers on the four subscale items were averaged to form one score). Significant group differences were found ($H(2) = 16.37, p < .001$), and Mann-Whitney tests were used to follow up on this finding, with Bonferroni corrections applied. Again, there were significant group differences between private and public teachers ($U = 10607.50, r = -.17$) and between public and Head Start teachers ($U = 2083.50, r = -.16$), but there was not a significant group difference between private and Head Start teachers. Public teachers reported significantly higher levels of classroom management efficacy than both Head Start and public teachers, whereas Head Start and private teachers did not differ significantly on their reported levels of classroom management efficacy.

The relations between the teacher classroom management efficacy composite variable and other survey variables were also examined using Spearman's correlation coefficients (see Table 7). The correlation between teachers' levels of classroom management efficacy and highest level of teacher education was not significant. There were small, significant, positive correlations between teacher classroom management efficacy and years experience teaching preschool-age children ($r_s = .12, p < .05$) and how helpful teachers found all types of classroom management training ($r_s = .22, p < .01; r_s = .15, p < .01; r_s = .26, p < .01; r_s = .21, p < .01; r_s = .15, p < .01$). There was a small, significant, negative correlation between teacher classroom management efficacy and "teacher would like more training on how to handle behavioral problems" ($r_s = -.27, p < .01$). There were moderate, significant, negative correlations between teacher classroom management efficacy and frequency of children's behavioral problems ($r_s = -.43, p < .01$) and "behavior regularly disrupts teacher's daily routine" ($r_s = -.35, p < .01$). And

there was a large, significant, negative correlation between teacher classroom management efficacy and “teacher is unsure of how to handle behavioral problems” ($r_s = -.52, p < .01$)

Table 7
Spearman’s Correlation Coefficients Between Teacher Efficacy and Other Variables

Item	Teacher classroom management efficacy
Teacher education	.05
Years experience with preschool-age children	.12*
Frequency of children’s behavioral problems	-.43**
Behavior regularly disrupts teacher’s daily routine	-.35**
Teacher is unsure of how to handle behavioral problems	-.52**
Teacher would like more training on handling behavioral problems	-.27**
Helpfulness of DCF “Basic Guidance and Discipline” course	.22**
Helpfulness of DCF “Behavior Management” course	.15**
Helpfulness of seminar or workshop on classroom management	.26**
Helpfulness of college course on classroom management	.21**
Helpfulness of in-service training on classroom management	.15**

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore prekindergarten teachers' thoughts about training on how to handle children's behavioral problems in their classrooms. Prekindergarten teachers were surveyed about what types of training they have received on the topic, how helpful they thought these trainings were, and whether or not they would like additional training on the topic. Key findings include: (1) the majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed had taken some type of training on managing behavioral problems; (2) very few prekindergarten teachers surveyed found these trainings on classroom management to be not at all helpful; and (3) the majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed would like more training on how to handle behavioral problems in the classroom.

Training on Handling Behavioral Problems Taken by Teachers

The majority of prekindergarten teachers surveyed had taken some type of training on how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom; only three teachers in the sample had not taken any type of training on the topic. It was hypothesized that prekindergarten teachers have received little to no training on classroom management, based on previous research indicating that teachers receive little education in general (CCCW, 2002). This discrepancy between the anticipated and actual results may be due to the fact that the previous research focused on formal education (i.e., degrees from institutes of higher education), whereas the present study measured several different types of "non-formal" training on a specific topic. Previous studies have not examined the amount of training that preschool teachers receive in general, nor what the topics are of training teachers receive. In addition, Florida has minimum training and in-service requirements for childcare workers (see Chapter 2 for more detail), whereas many other states do not. For this reason, the amount of prekindergarten teacher training in Florida may be higher than in other states. Also, no existing studies have examined how many preschool teachers are pursuing degrees in early childhood education while working. Several teachers noted on their surveys that they were currently in a degree program; this may be a factor that contributed to the relatively high percentage of teachers who reported haven taken college courses on classroom management.

Helpfulness of Trainings on Handling Behavioral Problems

Very few prekindergarten teachers surveyed found the trainings they received on classroom management to be not at all helpful. Larger percentages of teachers found workshops, college courses, and in-service training on classroom management to be very helpful than the two courses offered by the DCF (“Basic Guidance and Discipline” and “Behavioral Management”). There are three possible explanations for this finding. First, the workshops, college courses, and in-service training may be of higher quality than the two DCF courses (quality of trainings was not measured in the present study). Second, the higher level of helpfulness may be a factor of the length and comprehensiveness of the trainings. College courses clearly last longer than the 5-hour DCF courses; workshops and in-service training may last longer as well. The other possible explanation for this finding is that the type of teacher that takes the DCF courses is different than the type of teacher that takes the other types of training. Teachers with CDAs or college degrees in early childhood education are eligible to exempt out of taking the DCF courses, so it may be that teachers taking the DCF courses are coming into those courses with less knowledge or different experience/beliefs and therefore find the 5-hour trainings to be less helpful. For example, some teachers may come from backgrounds where more assertive, even physical discipline strategies are common, and when the teachers are told in trainings not to manage their classrooms that way, there may be a disconnect between the teachers’ own backgrounds and what they are asked to do. Teachers who are getting more education may be more acculturated to the current mainstream attitudes and strategies.

The issue of the effectiveness of training versus the quality of teachers seeking out further training has been cited as an area that has yet to be addressed by the current research literature on early childhood professional development (Tout, Zaslow, & Berry, 2006). In terms of the helpfulness of trainings or any improvement in classroom quality that may occur as a result of training, it remains unclear whether it is the training itself that is helpful and causes improvement in classroom quality, or if it is that the teachers who seek out these trainings already have higher quality classrooms regardless of having taken the trainings.

Teachers’ Desire for Additional Training on Handling Behavioral Problems

The survey also found that the majority of prekindergarten teachers (55.6%) would like additional training on managing children’s behavioral problems in the classroom. The survey did not ask teachers why, specifically, they would like this additional training. It could be that these

teachers feel they are struggling with handling behavior problems, but of the 252 teachers who agreed that they would like additional training on how to handle behavioral problems, 200 indicated that they did *not* feel unsure about how to handle behavioral problems in their classroom. It is possible that even though teachers do not feel unsure about how to handle behavioral problems, they may feel like their methods are not as effective as they could be and thus would like additional training on the topic. This could potentially explain why many teachers (41.6%) indicated that behavioral problems regularly disrupt their daily routine, but very few teachers (4.3%) indicated that they were unsure of how to handle behavioral problems; whereas teachers may feel they know the appropriate way to handle the behavioral problems, these problems may still be significantly bothersome to the teachers and therefore teachers would like more training.

Another possible reason for the discrepancy between how many teachers indicated that behavioral problems regularly disrupt their routine and how few teachers indicated they were unsure of how to handle behavioral problems is that teachers may be struggling with a few specific behavioral problems or with one particular child. The survey item asked about handling behavioral problems in general, so teachers struggling with a specific behavioral problem may still have indicated that they were *not* unsure about how to handle behavioral problems in general. A teacher who may in general feel confident regarding his or her ability to handle behavioral problems may still encounter a particular variety of problems, or a particularly challenging child, that leads to the teacher's desire for further training. Also, a few teachers who indicated they wanted more training on this topic commented that they could always use more training, which may have been the sentiment of other teachers as well.

Teacher Classroom Management Efficacy

Teachers' classroom management efficacy also likely factors in to whether or not teachers want additional training on handling behavioral problems. In the present sample, teachers rated themselves relatively high on classroom management efficacy, with the average falling in the "quite a bit" range on the scale (just below the highest possible ranking of "a great deal"; indicating that teachers felt they could do quite a bit to manage their classrooms and control/handle children's behavior). Still, teachers' level of classroom management efficacy was negatively related to whether or not they wanted additional classroom management training; the higher the teachers' level of efficacy, the less likely teachers were to want additional classroom

management training. Teachers' level of classroom management efficacy was also negatively related to how often behavioral problems occurred in their classrooms and how much behavioral problems regularly disrupted their daily routine. Teachers who reported high levels of classroom management efficacy reported less frequent occurrence of behavioral problems and that behavioral problems did not regularly disrupt their classroom routine.

Links between Results and Teacher Level of Education, Years Experience Teaching Preschool and Demographic Characteristics

Results indicated that the relation between teacher level of education and whether or not they would like additional training on classroom management was not significant. This finding is a possible indication that in formal education experiences, teachers may not be receiving much instruction on classroom management (and thus there is no difference between more educated teachers and less educated teachers on whether or not they would like additional classroom management training). Even when classroom management is covered in college courses, it is unknown how much time is spent on the topic and what specific issues are covered. It is possible that teachers may be receiving instruction on classroom management in formal education experiences, but that the instruction is not helpful or sufficient. Results did indicate small, negative significant correlations between teachers' level of education and how helpful teachers found the two DCF classroom management courses and in-service training on classroom management, suggesting that more educated teachers found the DCF courses and in-service training less helpful than less educated teachers. This could be due to the quality of these trainings, or due to the characteristics of the more educated teachers. There also was a small, negative significant correlation between teachers' years experience working with preschool-age children and whether or not they would like additional training on classroom management, meaning that more experienced teachers were less likely to want additional training on classroom management. It is possible that more experienced teachers have already had training on behavioral management, or through their years of experience have figured out a classroom management system that works for them. Also, teachers who found one type of training helpful were much more likely to find the other types of training helpful. Teacher personality – how open they are to new knowledge – may also play a role in explaining these findings.

Differences Among Center Types

Teachers' center type contextualized many of the survey's findings. Public prekindergarten teachers generally had higher levels of education, classroom management efficacy, and lower occurrence of children's behavioral problems than private center teachers and Head Start teachers. These findings indicate that prekindergarten teachers cannot necessarily be thought of as one homogenous group. Authors of a large study of teachers in state-funded prekindergarten programs went so far as to say that, in their sample, "publicly-operated and privately-operated programs appeared to be evolving into separate segments of a two-tier prekindergarten system...Privately-operated programs, in effect, often appeared to serve as training and apprenticeship programs to prepare teachers for eventual employment in the higher-paying, publicly-operated programs" (Bellm et al., 2002, p. 2). It is also possible that the differences inherent in the structure of public prekindergarten programs provide advantages to those teachers. Center type is clearly a variable that must be included when considering prekindergarten teachers' training needs in future policies and research.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the selection of the prekindergarten teachers who completed the survey. Because the survey was mailed, the researcher was not able to control which teacher the center director or school principal chose to complete the survey. Although the cover letter instructed directors/principals to randomly select a lead prekindergarten teacher with more than six months experience, it is possible that this may not have happened. These instructions were intended to prevent newly hired teachers from completing the survey, but may have had the unintended effect of directors/principals giving the survey to their most experienced teachers. Preliminary analyses indicated that the teachers' years of experience teaching preschool-age children variable was negatively skewed; it is possible that the sample of teachers in the present study were more experienced than the average Florida prekindergarten teacher. Because years experience teaching preschool is not a variable that has been previously studied, it is not possible to compare the present study's findings with findings from other studies. Also, the cover letter indicated that the survey was about training on managing behavioral problems in the classroom, so it is possible that the directors/principals gave the surveys to teachers they knew had more training or to teachers they thought had strong classroom management skills.

There also were a few questions not included in the survey that would have been helpful in interpreting the results. Regarding the question of whether or not teachers want additional training on managing children's behavioral problems, it would have been helpful to follow up by asking why teachers did or did not want the additional training. For example, do teachers want more training because they feel additional training is always nice to have, or because they feel unprepared to handle behavioral problems on a daily basis? Do teachers want more training because they are struggling with one particular type of problem behavior (i.e., aggression among children) or with one particular child, or do teachers just want more knowledge about behavioral problems in general? Regarding the question of whether or not teachers felt unsure of how to handle behavioral problems, it would have been helpful to ask teachers about their uncertainty in handling specific behavioral problems (i.e., aggression, defiance, etc.), in addition to asking the question about behavioral problems in general. Regarding questions on the helpfulness of trainings teachers did take, it would have been useful to follow up by asking if there were behavior issues that teachers feel the trainings should have addressed but did not, and if so, what those issues are.

One other limitation is that teachers with large percentages of Spanish-speaking children were not surveyed. Preschool teachers are not required to speak English, so it is thought that teachers in areas with large English Language Learner populations may not speak English themselves, and the survey was only administered in English. This limits generalizability of the study's findings somewhat to teachers of primarily English-speaking children.

Future Research

There is much room for further research on the topic of prekindergarten teacher training in general, as well as training on managing children's behavioral problems in particular. Future studies should examine and compare the specific content of degree and certification programs, and of the different types of training available (in-service training, workshops, etc.). The effects of these trainings on children's behavioral problems in the classroom, on teachers' classroom management strategies and techniques, and on teachers' classroom management efficacy should be examined. These variables could be measured using classroom observation of the teacher and children before and after training (in the context of a controlled trial) and teacher surveys (to measure teachers' classroom management efficacy). The quality of these trainings should also be examined. One way quality of the trainings could be measured is to survey participating teachers

before and after the training to see how much and what they learned. Follow-up surveys could also ask teachers whether the training covered topics that were relevant and useful to them, and whether or not the training was engaging. Randomized control trials are needed to separate the effects of the training itself from the characteristics of teachers who seek out further training.

It would also be helpful to further research prekindergarten teacher characteristics. As in the present study, teacher education level, years experience teaching preschool-age children, center type, and level of classroom management efficacy should be included. Other characteristics that should be explored include teachers' background beliefs about discipline, motivation for becoming a teacher, and motivation for choosing to teach in the particular setting they are in.

An additional potential area for future research with the present study's data would be to use combinations of the study's variables as predictors to teacher classroom management efficacy and desire for more training on classroom management, in order to determine what the unique predictors are in a multivariate context (again using the nonparametric statistics where appropriate). Also, a relatively high percentage of teachers (approximately 30%) wrote in comments about behavioral problems on their surveys, despite comments not being solicited; these comments suggest great interest on the part of teachers. Teachers who wrote in comments stating they were indeed concerned about the issue, and were glad they were being asked about it, clearly feel that the issue of managing children's behavioral problems is an important one. This presents an avenue for further research.

Conclusion

Research on preschool teacher characteristics – their training and education, in particular – is in its early stages. Researchers are just beginning to come to a consensus on how exactly to define preschool teachers' training, formal education, and certification attainment (Maxwell, Feild, & Clifford, 2006). Even less research exists on the specific content of preschool teacher degree/certification programs and training. The present study serves as an initial examination into the classroom management training issues of prekindergarten teachers. Most teachers had taken some type of training on managing children's behavioral problems in the classroom. It is possible that in the decades that have passed since the Johnston (1982) and Micklo (1993) surveys, the amount of training available to teachers may have increased, along with teachers' classroom management efficacy. However, many teachers in the present study did not rate the

trainings as “very helpful.” And many teachers indicated that behavior problems regularly disrupt their classroom routine. Previous research has shown that the climate of preschool classrooms matter (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 1998), and that teacher training on children’s behavior problems improves classroom quality (Raver et al., 2008), so this area remains an important topic for further research. As more and more young children spend many hours a day in preschool settings (Perry et al., 2008), it is necessary to address the issues of those who care for and teach them. Addressing the issues of classroom quality, increased demand being put on teachers, lack of training and high turnover will improve the education of our young children.

APPENDIX A
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

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

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 1/7/2009

To: Erika Morse

Address: 3801 Mission Trace Blvd Apt J1
Dept.: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LEARNING SYSTEMS

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Prekindergarten Teachers' Training on Children's Behavioral Problems in the Classroom

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 1/4/2010 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 Chair 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: Beth Phillips, Advisor
HSC No. 2008.1848



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

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM (for change in research protocol)

Date: 3/30/2009

To:
Erika Morse
3801 Mission Trace Blvd
Apartment J1

Dept: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LEARNING SYSTEMS

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
Project entitled: Prekindergarten Teachers' Training on Children's Behavioral Problems in the Classroom

The memorandum that you submitted to this office in regard to the requested change in your research protocol for the above-referenced project have been reviewed and approved. Thank you for informing the Committee of this change.

A reminder that if the project has not been completed by 1/5/2010, you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

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 of such investigations 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: Beth Phillips
APPLICATION NO. 2008.0861

APPENDIX B

DIRECTOR AND TEACHER COVER LETTERS

FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY



*The COLLEGE of EDUCATION
Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems*

Florida Center for Reading Research
City Centre Building
Suite 7250
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Phone: (727) 709-0867
Fax: (850) 644-9085

March, 2009

Dear Florida Child Care Center Director,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems at Florida State University conducting research under the supervision of my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Phillips. I am interested in learning more about your teachers' training and beliefs related to the behavioral problems of three- to five-year old children in the classroom, with the goal of improving pre-service and in-service training for prekindergarten teachers. To gather this valuable information, I am asking you to give a brief survey on these topics to one of your lead teachers of three- to five-year-olds who has at least six months experience working with this age group. Your teacher's name and childcare center will not be reported in any published research that results from this study.

If your teacher returns the survey, he or she will automatically be entered into a drawing for a prize of books and other materials for use with the children you serve, valued at approximately \$200.

Please give the enclosed teacher cover letter and survey to one of your lead teachers of three- to five-year-olds with at least six months experience working with this age group. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. An addressed, stamped envelope is included for the teacher to mail back the survey.

Your teacher's participation in this study is voluntary. If he or she chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. It will not affect your standing with FSU or FCRR. Your teacher's completion and return of the survey that follows will be considered his or her consent to participate. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Erika Morse at 727-709-0867 or ele07@fsu.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Phillips, at 850-644-2002.

Sincerely,

Erika Morse

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this project, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board, through the Vice President for the Office of Research at (850) 644-8633.



Florida Center for Reading Research
City Centre Building
Suite 7250
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Phone: (727) 709-0867
Fax: (850) 644-9085

March, 2009

Dear Florida Prekindergarten Teacher,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems at Florida State University conducting research under the supervision of my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Phillips. I am interested in learning more about your training and beliefs related to the behavioral problems of three- to five-year old children in the classroom. To gather this valuable information, I am asking you to take part in a brief survey on these topics. You are being asked to complete this survey because you are a lead teacher of three- to five-year-old children that has at least six months experience working with this age group.

If you return the survey, you will automatically be entered into a drawing for a prize of books and other materials for use with the children you serve, valued at approximately \$200.

If you agree to participate in this project, you will be asked to complete the questions in the attached survey. This should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. An addressed, stamped envelope is included for you to mail back the survey.

Following this consent letter is the survey. Your name will never be associated with any of the data you provide. Information obtained during the course of the study will remain confidential, to the extent allowed by law. All data will be stored in a locked cabinet or on a password protected computer in the Phillips Lab at the Florida Center for Reading Research, and any links to identifying information will be destroyed after three years. There are no known risks involved with participation.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. It will not affect your standing with FSU or FCRR. Your completion and return of the survey that follows will be considered your consent to participate. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Erika Morse at 727-709-0867 or ele07@fsu.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Beth Phillips, at 850-644-2002. Your name and childcare center will not be reported in any published research that results from this study.

Sincerely,

Erika Morse

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this project, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board, through the Vice President for the Office of Research at (850) 644-8633.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER SURVEY

This survey is designed to provide information about prekindergarten teacher training on how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom. For the purposes of this survey, a "behavioral problem" is defined as: a child's action(s) that disrupts the normal classroom environment (examples include aggression, inattention, not following directions, etc.). We appreciate your time and effort in completing this form.

PART 1

1. The following items are a list of children's behavioral problems that may or may not occur in your classroom. Please consider each behavior and indicate approximately how often the behavior occurs in your classroom.

a. Aggressive behavior from a child toward a staff member. (circle one)

Never Once a month Once a week Several times a week Daily

b. Aggressive behavior from one child to another child. (circle one)

Never Once a month Once a week Several times a week Daily

c. Child does not behave appropriately during transitions. (circle one)

Never Once a month Once a week Several times a week Daily

d. Child does not behave appropriately during clean-up time. (circle one)

Never Once a month Once a week Several times a week Daily

e. Child is defiant and refuses to comply with directions/requests from teacher. (circle one)

Never Once a month Once a week Several times a week Daily

f. Child throws a temper tantrum. (circle one)

Never Once a month Once a week Several times a week Daily

2. Please indicate on the 9-point scale how you feel about the following statements:

a. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? (circle one number)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
 Nothing Very little Some influence Quite a bit A great deal

b. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? (circle one number)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
 Nothing Very little Some influence Quite a bit A great deal

c. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? (circle one number)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
 Nothing Very little Some influence Quite a bit A great deal

d. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (circle one number)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
 Nothing Very little Some influence Quite a bit A great deal

3. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:
- a. Behavioral problems in my classroom regularly disrupt my routine/schedule. (circle one)
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
- b. I feel unsure about how to handle behavioral problems in my classroom when they occur. (circle one)
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
- c. I would like more training on how to better handle behavioral problems in my classroom. (circle one)
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
- d. I would rather have training on a topic other than how to better handle behavioral problems in the classroom. (circle one)
- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
4. Have you completed the Florida Department of Children and Families 5-hour course on "Basic Guidance and Discipline" (either as in-service training or part of the initial Introductory Child Care Training Program)?
- No
 Yes
- If yes, please indicate how helpful you thought this course was (circle one):
- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful
5. Have you completed the Florida Department of Children and Families in-service training course on "Behavioral Management"?
- No
 Yes
- If yes, please indicate how helpful you thought this course was (circle one):
- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful
6. Have you ever attended a seminar session or workshop session that focused specifically on classroom management or discipline?
- No
 Yes
- If yes, please indicate how helpful you thought this seminar or workshop session was (circle one):
- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful
7. Have you completed any college-level courses that focused specifically on classroom management or discipline?
- No
 Yes
- If yes, please indicate how helpful you thought this course was (circle one):
- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

8. Have you participated in any in-service training given by your child care center director or another member of your center staff on the topic of classroom management or discipline?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please indicate how helpful you thought this training was (circle one):

Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

9. Have you attended any other type of training regarding how to manage behavioral problems in the classroom?

- No
- Yes (Please specify: _____)

If yes, please indicate how helpful you thought this training was (circle one):

Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

PART 2

1. Please indicate your sex. Female Male

2. How old are you? (in years) _____

3. How would you describe yourself? (**Check all that apply to you.**)

- White
- Black, African-American
- Hispanic
- Haitian/Creole
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Other (Please specify: _____)

4. How long have you been working with preschoolers (children 3 to 5 years old)?

- Less than 1 year Between 6 and 10 years
- 1, 2 or 3 years More than 10 years
- 4 or 5 years

5. What is the highest degree/certification you have earned?

- Less than high school
- GED
- High school diploma
- Child Development Associate (CDA) or Florida CDA Equivalent
- Some college coursework completed
- Associate's Degree (AA/AS) (Please indicate major/area of specialization: _____.)
- Bachelor's Degree (BA/BS) (Please indicate major/area of specialization: _____.)
- Master's Degree (MA/MS): (Please indicate major/area of specialization: _____.)

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