IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM QUALITY

by

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ABSTRACT

The evaluation of early childhood education programs includes focus on child outcomes and later academic success, but little is known about the impact of preschool leadership on early childhood education program quality. The purpose of this qualitative comparative case study was to investigate the relationship between early childhood leadership and preschool program quality among Preschool Development Grantees (PDG) in a rural northwest state. Two research questions were used to guide the study (1) how does a preschool leaders approach to leadership influence preschool program quality? (2) How does the instructional delivery model influence the leaders approach to program quality? Results from this study hope to continue to advance early childhood initiatives in the state and perhaps suggest a leadership model which leads to higher quality programs. This study also hopes to inform organizations that are planning on starting preschools within their community and the impact of program structure. There are two program structures examined in this study. The first is a preschool located in a K-12 building. The second is a mixed-delivery model of preschool and Head Start students located in one school. Two PDG sites were purposefully selected using Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) data. School leaders were interviewed and assessed using the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) which was used to gather multiple perspectives about each leader's behavior. Data analysis revealed three themes: the importance of relationships, leadership orientation, and leadership candor. Results indicate that some leaders are more transactional than transformational and that the structure of the program assisted with a better understanding of Child Guidance. Further study needs to be done on the history and background of preschool sites to determine the type of leader that is needed at the time. Also, a more in-depth broader study could be completed to examine how leadership affects high quality programs.

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Importance of Early Childhood Education

Over the last several years, state funded preschool programs have become increasingly popular. There are currently 43 states that offer state funded preschool programs, which serve more than 1.3 million four-year-olds – nearly one-third of all four-year-olds in the country. (Friedman-Krauss, 2018). Further, federal dollars have been shifted to fund grants for states to expand programs for four-year-old students. The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) is one of those grants. In 2015, a rural state received $10 million a year for up to four years to build and expand access to high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities. This rural state currently has 22 sub-grantees located in high needs communities including eight Indian Reservations. There are 76 classrooms and over 1000 children attending a PDG preschool. The goal of the PDG is to build or enhance preschool programs for the delivery of high-quality preschool services to children and expand access to high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities (Montana, OPI, 2015). Quality preschool programs have been tied to increased graduation rates and higher attendance rates at four-year universities. Plus, children who attend preschool learn important skills like how to follow directions, how to get along with others, and how to pay attention (Dorman, et al, 2017 and US Department of Education, 2015).

One of the most critical stages of development is the ages between zero and five (Gur, 2011). This is when children develop basic skills, their personalities are developed,

and the foundations are laid for how they will learn new information. Preschool creates a strong foundation in a child's early years and helps "promote lifelong achievement and positive behavior, while a weak foundation increases the chances of later problems" (Duncan, 2007, p. 20 and Copple and Bredekamp, 2009). Therefore, investing in early childhood programs is an investment in our future. James Heckman (2012) studied the effects of early childhood education and how they influence economics, health, and social outcomes. He found the following:

1. Those seeking to reduce deficits and strengthen the economy should make significant investments in early childhood education
2. Early childhood development drives success in school and life
3. Investing in early childhood education for at-risk children is an effective strategy for reducing social costs
4. Investing in early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy for promoting economic growth (p. 1)

One of the most prominent studies completed on the importance of early childhood education is the Perry Preschool Study (Schweinhart, 2000). This study was one of the first research studies that looked at the long-term effects of preschool. It followed 123 participants with follow-ups completed yearly at ages three to eleven, at 14 and 15, at 19 and at 27 and 40. It determined that students who attended preschool were less likely to be arrested, get on welfare, and more likely to graduate from high school (Schweinhart, 2013). The Perry Preschool Study is often used to cite the importance of early childhood funding and lobby for quality programs.

Another example of a model preschool program is the Abecedarian Program, which started in 1972. The purpose was to serve the most low-income, mostly African American children who were most at risk of developmental delays based on their

families' low-income status. Children were randomly assigned to a research-based educational child care program or a control group. The education group consisted of every child receiving an individualized prescription of education "games" incorporated into the day which focused on social, emotional, and cognitive areas of development with an emphasis on language (Abecedarian Program). All participants attended the research-based early childhood center (Campbell et al 2012). The children who participated in the study were followed up with during primary grades, into secondary school and finally into adulthood. Children who participated in the study were more likely to attend college and to work in high-skill, better-paying jobs, and less likely to become teen parents (Duncan, 2007). The Abecedarian project is often cited as an argument for early childhood education as it clearly shows that a child who is at risk for developmental delays can far exceed potential expectations if they attend a preschool program (Campbell, Burchinal, Kainz, Pan, 2012).

Barnett (1995) did a review of research to determine the long-term effects of preschool on low-income families. He examined different models of preschool including: Head Start, child care, and home visiting programs. He determined that early childhood programs can have benefits for students relating to their intelligence quotient (IQ), cognitive development, grade retention, special education placement, and social benefits. However, he also noted that not all the programs he reviewed were able to produce such benefits and hypothesized that there were differences in funding and quality which may have affected the child outcomes.

Other studies have shown that the quality of preschool makes a different in child outcomes specifically low-income students Burchinal et al (2010) examined data from an 11-state study, which focused on teacher-student interactions. He suggested that high-quality classrooms may “improve social skills, reduce behavior problems, and promote academic skills” (p. 175). However, he also found that these benefits are lost unless the teacher maintains a high-quality program.

Conflicting evidence about the quality and impact of preschool includes several studies which examine environments, impact, and outcomes. Early et al (2005), investigated preschool programs in 11 states and found that 12% of the classrooms had inadequate classroom environments: 80% had minimal quality, 8% good, and none were considered excellent. Further, according to Kagan & Cohen (1997), out of every ten preschool programs, two provide high-quality care, seven provide mediocre care, and one jeopardizes the health and safety of children” (p. 2).

Puma et al (2010) studied the impact of students attending Head Start and found that it had few lasting benefits for children. Even a study conducted on middle-class children who attended preschool for two years showed inconsistent benefits that dissipated after first grade (Magnuson, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2007). Therefore, just attending preschool doesn’t necessarily equate to lasting benefits. Barnett (1995) found that quality early learning programs have shown to be effective in helping students become more successful in later grade levels, reduce placement in special education, and increase the likelihood of graduating from high school. Multiple studies show that only a

high-quality preschool can close the achievement gap. (Barnett, 1995, Burchinal et al, 2010, and LoCasale-Crouch et al, 2007).

Statement of Problem

Studies have shown that students who attend high-quality preschool programs are less likely to drop out of high school, have a need for special services, and are more likely to attend a four-year university (Children's Reading Foundation, 2015). Therefore, quality indicators are often organized into categories including environment, outcomes, or readiness for kindergarten. It is unclear how school leaders influence the creation of a high-quality program.

Most of the research on leadership is tied to K-12 education and its importance in changing organizations. Leithwood et al (2006) found that leadership can play a very important role in improving student learning explaining that "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school and leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed the most" (p. 5). Recently, school districts have been forced to raise standards of achievement due to government reforms (Schleicher, 2012). However, even though policies and demands of K-12 education have changed, a school's success depends on effective leaders (Schleicher, 2012, Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Kagan & Bowman, 1997). Multiple studies exist on the potential positive impacts of leadership on student achievement (Gu & Johansson, 2013, Day et al, 2016, and Robinson, Lloyd, and

Rowe, 2008). Therefore, leadership is very powerful and can positively affect student outcomes in K-12 education.

When examining the research on leadership in a preschool setting, most of the research is centered on the behaviors of a leader in an early childhood organization (Culkin, 1995 and Pipa, 1997) or the importance of leadership in early childhood settings (Seplocha, 1998; Culkin, 1995; Love, 2001). Up until this point, early childhood research has focused mostly on program quality and individual leadership traits of an early childhood leader. Some research does indicate that leadership contributes to early childhood program quality. For example, The McCormic Center for Early Childhood Leadership examined the education and training of program directors and found that it may be an important component for improving early childhood program quality. However, they concluded that further research was needed to understand the influence a leader has on the quality of a program (Abel et al 2016). Further, the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015) and Kostelnik and Grady (2009) found that leaders are important to quality because it's the leaders who determine who is hired for early childhood positions and will need to understand the characteristics that are needed to create a quality program. However, minimal research was found on leadership and its impact on preschool program quality.

Likewise, the research tied to program structure was limited to mixed delivery models or preschools that have different funding sources within one building. For example, a building with both Head Start (free preschool for low income families) and school district (state or grant funded) classrooms would be an example of a mixed

delivery model. Minnesota produced a report in 2017, which made recommendations for program structure. They recommended that mixed delivery model is important, so parents have a choice of which type of program they can attend (Prek to 3 Design Team, 2017). Therefore, a parent could have a choice instead of being limited to preschool based on income. However, minimal research was found on program structure and its effects on preschool leadership or quality.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the relationship between early childhood leadership and preschool program quality among Preschool Development Grantees in a rural northwest state. Results from this study hope to continue to advance early childhood initiatives in the state and perhaps suggest a leadership model which leads to higher quality programs. This study also hopes to inform organizations that are planning on starting preschools within their community and the impact of program structure. There are two program structures examined in this study. The first is a preschool located in a K-12 building. The second is a mixed-delivery model of preschool and Head Start students located in one school.

Research Questions

1. How does a preschool leader's approach to leadership influence preschool program quality?

2. How does the instructional leadership delivery model influence the leaders approach to program quality?

Overview of Methods

A comparative case study design was used to answer the research questions. Purposeful selection of preschool leaders from two instructional models was used: (1) preschool-only sites where other grade level instruction is not offered on site but rather at the elementary school beginning with kindergarten and (2) preschools that are housed in locations where other grade levels are located – similar to a preschool located in an elementary school. Although Qualitative and Quantitative data were collected, this is not a mixed methods study because there was no statistical analysis done on the quantitative data and the sample size was too small to determine significance. The quantitative data that was collected will include each program's overall Classroom Assessment (CLASS) scores as well as each leader's Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) score. CLASS is an assessment that measures teacher and student interactions. There are three domains and ten dimensions. The Domains are: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Each of these domains contains 3-4 dimensions which are illustrated in Figure 2. The LPI measures five Leadership Practices (Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart) which are detailed in Table 3.0. The qualitative data include in-depth interviews with preschool leaders to ascertain each leader's philosophy of

leadership, their background in early childhood education, and artifacts such as each program's mission and vision statements.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework represented in Figure 1 is a visual representation of this research study. The conceptual framework is represented in an inverted triangle to show the research terrain which will be examined. The wider part of the triangle represents the broad issues in this study which is the impact of early childhood education and transformational leadership in an early childhood setting. The middle of the triangle represents the proximal context of the research which is understanding the various definitions and assessments of a High-Quality Preschool. The point of the triangle represents the specific inquiry of the study which is the specific leadership behaviors or approaches that affect quality.

Further, data collection and analysis will be tied to high-quality leadership and preschool program delivery models. It's important to note that preschools in this rural state have different structures – a self-contained program which solely houses preschool students under one roof – like a Head Start, and a preschool that is placed in a K-12 building. These structures are important to investigate to determine if, and how, the instructional delivery model influences the leadership approach, and reciprocally, if and how leadership within affects the quality.

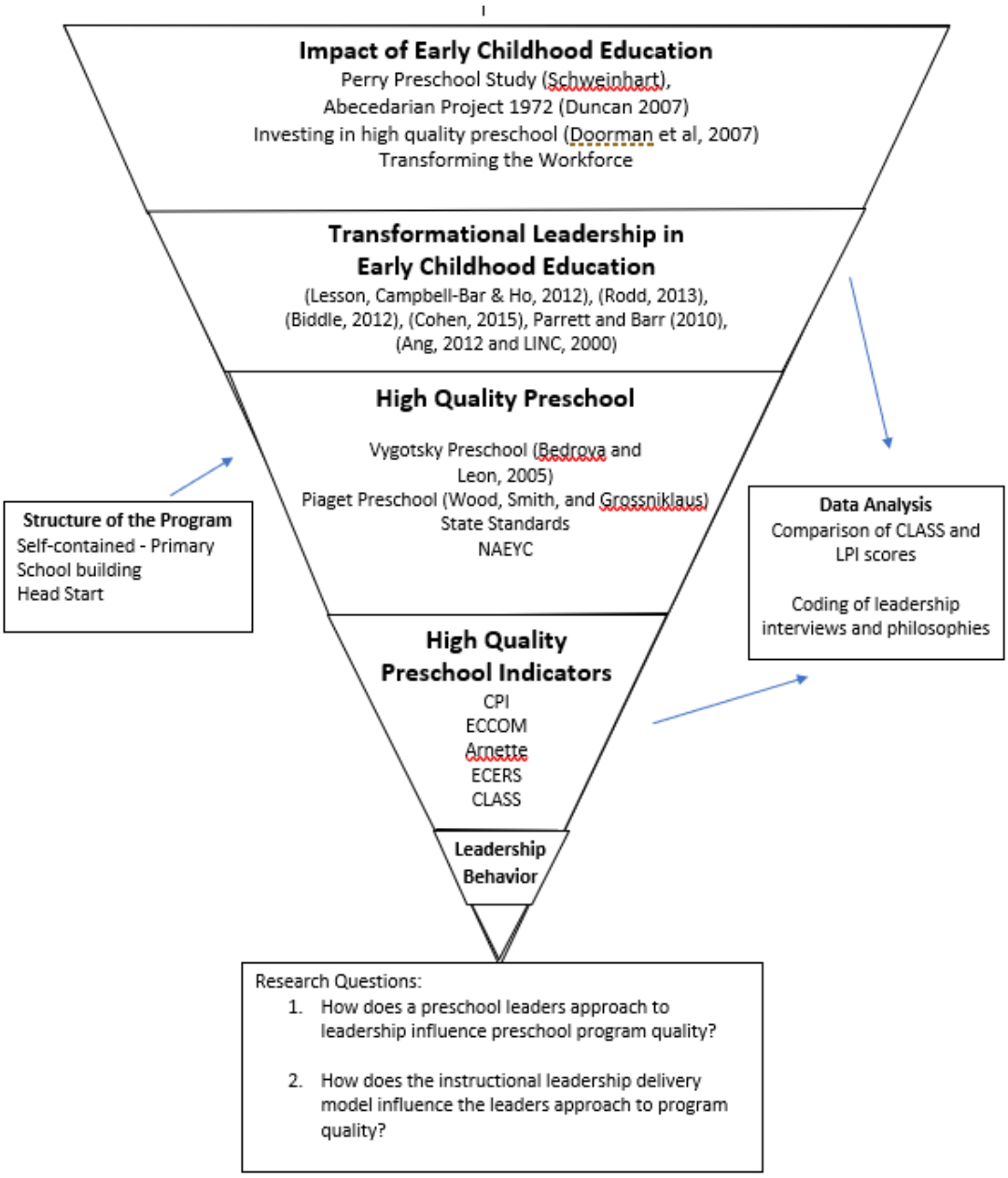


Figure 1 - Graphic Depiction of the Study's Conceptual Framework

The findings of this study will influence the leadership approaches that current preschool leaders need to incorporate in their current practice to create a high-quality early childhood program. This study is important in the field of early childhood education

as it will help inform a school district's hiring process, which will ensure they are hiring leaders with certain leadership characteristics to ensure programs are of high quality. This study will help determine which specific leadership approaches can create a higher quality preschool program in either of the two instructional models being investigated.

Assumptions

This study was guided by the philosophical assumption of pragmatism which has an ontological belief that reality is what is useful, an epistemological belief that reality is known through many objective and subjective evidence, an axiological belief that values are openly discussed because of the way that the research reflects both the researcher's and the participants' views, and a methodological belief that the research has both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis (Cresswell, 2013 p. 37). Assumptions for this study included similar leadership experience, traits, education, and ability to articulate leadership philosophy among participants.

Limitations

Some limitations of this study are that it only examined the early childhood leaders in a rural state and may not represent a true example of early childhood leaders in the nation. Additionally, researcher experience and positionality may have influenced the coding and data analysis.

Some of the factors that influenced this study are the distal factors. These included the political influences of the study. Many preschools in the state are funded by

a federal grant that many believe is on the chopping block of a new administration. Other factors included the experience of the leadership and the informal nature of interviewing the leaders in their own school. This may have affected some answers. Also, the time of year that the interviews took place was towards the end of the year when everyone was tired and looking forward to summer. This may have affected the answers to the interview questions as well as their ratings on the Leadership Practice Inventories (LPI) These would be the proximal factors.

Delimitations

This research study is confined to the two highest scoring programs on the CLASS assessment of Cohort I schools who participated in the Preschool Development Grant. This study is delimited to interviewing five leaders who are current leaders of these programs. Some of the leaders are building principals that have programs embedded within their school districts, and others are directors, coordinators, or principals, who operate standalone programs. These individuals have dual roles as administrators and early childhood instructional leaders.

Definition of Key Terms

CLASS – Classroom Assessment Scoring System – this is a tool developed to assess the quality of a preschool program (Pianta et al, 2008).

LPI – Leadership Practices Inventory – this is a tool to determine an individual leader's strengths in determining their Transformational Leadership Traits. (Kouzes and Posner, 2001)

PDG – Preschool Development Grant – Grant received by the state of in 2015 to expand high-quality preschool for low-mid income families (Montana OPI, 2015).

Cohort I –These are programs in the PDG that that have been around the longest. These programs have participated in all professional development related to this grant starting in 2015.

Summary of Chapter One

Recent research suggests that a quality preschool is what makes the difference in a child's later success in school and in life. Yet, empirical research is sparse regarding what is considered a quality preschool program and is almost non-existent in terms of the leadership needed to create and sustain quality preschool programs. There is also minimal research on the structure of a preschool and how it affects the leadership approach. This case study research sought to fill a gap in research regarding leadership and its effects on a quality preschool program. It examined the CLASS scores of Cohort I programs participating in the Preschool Development Grant, and the LPI scores of its leaders to determine the reciprocal influences the leadership instructional model has on the quality of preschool programs. Interviews and artifacts were used to provide a deeper understanding of the themes identified by the quantitative data.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Early childhood education in the United States was originally created to help care for low-income children because many believed that parents living in poverty could not properly take care of their children (Morgan, 2011). It was also created as a place for mid- to high-income families to go to school (Tank, 1980). Over the years, there were different versions of preschools starting with infant schools in the 1830s, which were used primarily to take care of children from the poorest of families. They then transitioned to schools to take care of children while mothers worked in factories during World War I and World War II. Once the wars were over, women returned to their domestic duties (Anonymous, 1946). Finally, in the 1960s, Head Start was created to help low-income children reach their full potential.

There continues to be various types of preschools offered in every US state including Head Start, state funded preschools, private preschools, and preschools paid for by federal grants like the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). There are also quality rating improvement systems tied to each of these types of preschools. However, it is difficult to determine quality as there are countless observational assessments and checklists that have been designed to determine the quality of a program.

One component of a program quality is examining the leadership of each program and the practices that lead to high-quality programs. Kostelnik and Grady (2009) state that to achieve high-quality principals need to:

1. Seek out examples of high quality early learning classrooms from which to visit
2. Observer the early learning classrooms for which you are responsible, using quality as your focus
3. Remember that early childhood education goes through third grade and apply principals of high quality to all pre-K to third-grade classrooms
4. Use quality as a guide for program decision making (p. 29-30).

Leadership in a preschool setting may require a different philosophy or approach compared to that of an elementary school due to the difference in instructional delivery and staff knowledge. For example, some preschools are in standalone facilities where there are hundreds of preschool students, while others are in elementary schools. Understanding what makes a good early childhood leader is important to understand as well as philosophies of leadership that have created successful early childhood leaders.

Theoretical Framework

As discussed in Chapter One, this is a study that used an interpretive framework of pragmatism. Creswell (2013) wrote that pragmatism "focuses on the outcomes of the research" (p. 28). Specifically, what works is replicated in practice because it has worked in past practices. Pragmatism embodies the notion of best practice. Using pragmatism as a philosophical framework necessitates focusing on the outcomes and making choices about what to accept and reject based upon outcomes within a given context. Pragmatism originated in the 1870s but became popular in the early 20th century. Pragmatism is the

belief that the truth or meaning of an idea lies in things that are observable rather than things that are not observable (Cline, 2017). Pragmatism can be summarized by the following statement: “whatever works is likely true.” Creswell (2013) states that Pragmatism “focuses on the outcomes of the research – the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry – rather than antecedent conditions” (p. 28). Pragmatism is action and change (Blumer, 1969). The authors of pragmatism can be traced to Pierce, Dewey, and James. Charles Sanders Pierce was one of the first people to propose pragmatism. He believed that for any statement to be meaningful, it must have practical bearings (Peirce, C.S. 1931-58). Peirce believed that pragmatism was a theory of meaning and believed that beliefs are simply guides for actions (Hookway, 2000). He felt that beliefs remained true until something changed forcing this belief system to be altered.

Later, John Dewey, who is often referred to as the father of pragmatism, stated, “Pragmatism believes in knowledge as a fact…. knowledge, even getting knowledge, must rest on facts, or things. But the need of truth, of cognitively assured things, means once more that such things are not present…” (p. 325). Therefore, one cannot develop new knowledge without facts and truth rests in facts. Dewey later founded the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago in 1896 because he believed that students sitting quietly in their seats passively learning was a detriment and he wanted children’s own instincts, activities, and interest to be the point of education (ECT, 2000). John Dewey stated, "When we look at early childhood classrooms today, we see children building language skills as they share snacks with classmates, learning important science concepts

as they water and care for plants, and developing math skills as they cook up a special treat for lunch. All these commonplace preschool activities stem from the ideas of a forward-thinking and most uncommon man" (ECT, 2000 p. 1). Much of the contemporary literature regarding organizational leadership and leadership theory is derived from the philosophy of pragmatism.

Northouse (2007) wrote that leadership is the process whereby some individual influences a group to achieve a common goal. This literature review started with various leadership theories which seemed most applicable to preschool. These theories are trait theory, behavioral theory, situational leadership theory, and transformational leadership theory. It also explored the various definitions of a high-quality preschool program, as well as the importance of adult-child interactions and how these are assessed in early childhood programs. Research studies were limited to the past 10 years; however, at times it was expanded to include the original research that was used in creating the assessment tools or development of education or development theory.

Trait Theory

Trait Theory was defined in the 19th century as “innate or inheritable qualities of an individual” (Zaccarro, 2007, p. 7). Later in the 20th century, the focus became more on the individual characteristics that a leader possessed to make him/her successful. This came from research focusing on successful military leaders like Napoleon, Joan of Arc and Abraham Lincoln (Northouse, 2016). It’s important to note that researchers of Trait Theory could not agree on what traits a leader needed to possess. Bass (1990), noted that in a review of research that he completed that there were 43 different characteristics that

were noted in Trait Theory research. For example, Bird (1940) felt that successful leader traits included accuracy in work, knowledge of human nature and moral habits. Stogdill (1948) had different leadership traits which included speech fluency, decisiveness in judgement, interpersonal skills, and administrative abilities. Finally, Zaccarro, Kemp, and Bader (2004) found that cognitive abilities, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness, agreeableness, motivation, social intelligence, self-monitoring, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving were leadership traits. Traits of leadership were eventually abandoned because no one could agree on a specific list.

In the 1990s individual leadership traits became more prevalent when researchers began to look at social intelligence. Social intelligence is defined as the ability to understand one's own feelings and those of others and act appropriately (Marlowe, 1986). This was believed as one of the traits of a leader. Northouse (2016) stated that there are major leadership traits one needs to be viewed by others as a leader these include: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (p. 23).

The trait approach is usually used in hiring individuals for leadership positions within an organization. Usually, candidates are given an assessment to determine the strengths they possess and can perhaps be used as a self-reflection tool to determine if leaders have the traits necessary to move up in a company. Contemporary leadership authors typically do not specifically reference trait theory, but many of its concepts have been incorporated into later leadership theories including transformational leadership theory. For example, Kouzes and Posner (2001), found five sets of behaviors that leaders engage in, which are (1) Challenging the Process, (2) Inspiring a Shared Vision, (3)

Enabling Others to Act, (4) Modeling the Way, and (5) Encouraging the Heart (p. 23). More information on these behaviors is listed later in this chapter.

Behavioral Approach Theory

Behavioral Approach Theory is about what leaders do and how they act. Northouse (2016) stated that there are two kinds of behaviors: task behaviors and relationship behaviors. Task behaviors can be defined as things that are done to accomplish goals. Relationship behaviors help others feel comfortable with themselves, within a group, and with the situation. Behavioral Approach was first studied by Ohio State in the 1970s when the researchers wanted to learn how leaders acted when in charge. So, they had followers complete questionnaires regarding how often leaders participated in a certain type of behaviors. Results indicated that leaders have two types of behaviors: initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure included management tasks which included things like organizing, giving structure, defining responsibilities, scheduling work, etc. Consideration behaviors included tasks related to relationship building which included building respect and trust between the leader and its followers (Stogdill, 1974).

Some critics of Behavioral Approach Theory feel as though there isn't a correlation between tasks and relationships and its effect on outcomes such as "morale, job satisfaction, and productivity." It has also been criticized because it doesn't consider context. Different situations require a different type of leader.

Situational Leadership

Situational Leadership is a step by step process which gives leaders a set of steps to follow based on a situation. It is often used to train leaders within organizations, for example, it is often used in training programs for people to become leaders. There are many Fortune 500 companies that use Situational Leadership as the basis for training upcoming leaders (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993).

Situational Leadership directs leaders to think of leadership in categories which include directing style, coaching style, supporting style, and delegating style. Each style requires a leader to take a different approach. In the directing style, a leader would focus on goals and tell the followers exactly what needs to be done and then monitor these directives. In a coaching style, the leader focuses on goals but also on the group's socioemotional needs. So, the leader still needs to direct but is also focused on individual needs and needs to encourage. In a supportive style, the leader listens, asks for input, and gives feedback – this is more of a relaxed role and allows the group to have control but is available to solve problems. In a delegating approach, the leader delegates control to followers and allows the followers to take responsibility for the direction and tries not to intervene (Kathman, 1985).

Critics of this approach feel as though there isn't enough research to justify the approach, they also feel that there isn't a clear set of steps for how followers move from low to high development, and they don't feel as though it provides guidance on how leaders can utilize this approach in group activities and settings (Northouse, 2016, p. 111).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. So, unlike previous leadership theories discussed, this one enables others to become a transformational leader rather than check boxes on traits and characteristics or approaches. Burns (1978) is often referred to as the founder of transformational leadership. He defined it as someone who "forms a relationship of mutual stimulation and converts employees into leaders" (1978, p. 16). However, it was first used in 1973 by James Victor Downton in his book *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and charisma in a revolutionary process.* Burns believed that transformational leaders try to help followers reach their fullest potential.

Bass (1985) defined a transformational leader as having four characteristics:

> (1) individual consideration of employees who seem to be neglected
> (2) intellectual stimulation which allows employees to think of old problems in new ways,
> (3) inspirational motivation which is characterized by having high expectations and finally
> (4) idealized influence which means modeling what you would like your employees to be (p. 2).

Transformational leaders transform employees to perform at their best but through intrinsic motivation (Bass, 1985). The main goal of this philosophy is to allow the organization or school to have multiple leaders and delegate because all members of the organization have the same philosophy about the organization.

Other researchers include Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Kouzes and Posner (2001). Bennis and Nanus developed their transformational theory by interviewing 90 leaders. They asked basic questions about a leader's strengths and weaknesses or what

experiences influenced their leadership approach. From their interviews they were able to identify four common strategies leaders use to transform organizations:

(1) Leaders had a clear vision of the future – leaders can articulate the vision, but it needs to originate from both leader and follower
(2) Leaders were social architects for their organizations – leaders communicate a directive that transformed values and norms
(3) Leaders created trust – making positions clearly known and by standing by them
(4) Leaders used creative deployment of self through positive self-regard – leaders are aware of their own skills and will learn and relearn so there is consistency with an emphasis on education (Bennis and Nanus, 1985 p. 89-91).

Kouzes and Posner completed recent research first in 1987 and then in 2002 in which they interviewed 1300 managers in public and private organizations and asked them to describe their "best" experiences as leaders. From these interviews, they were able to develop their model of leadership which includes five practices that help leaders be successful. They include model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2001, p. 22).

Transformational Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Due to recent research findings showing that early intervention increases positive outcomes for students (Barnett, 1995, Barnett et al 2007, Gormley, 2010, Pianta et al, 2009), there has been more of a focus on early childhood education. Literature about transformational leadership in an early childhood setting as related to child outcomes appears to be minimal. Transformational Leadership is a leadership model that requires changing the culture and developing leaders and people from within the organization. It requires building relationships which is a major part of being an early childhood leader.

Rodd (2013) believed that a relationship model for leadership in early childhood fit best because most preschool leaders are female. Transformational leaders must have relationships with their employees to make gains. They motivate by building relationships, supporting staff individuality and growth, and promoting collaboration. Without relationships, the transformational leader will not be successful. Biddle (2012) also discussed the importance of relationships in transformational leadership. She stated that transformational leaders in early childhood settings are the relationship leaders for families, teachers, children, and the community. Biddle further asserted the concept of the three R's of leadership – relationships, reciprocal learning, and reflection.

While there seems to be a limited amount of research tied to transformational leadership in early childhood settings there seems to be more in K-12 education. The more recent research tied to transformational leadership and high performing schools was completed in was in 2015 when Cohen (2015) interviewed 25 administrators in TITLE I schools in Maryland and found that the:

> (1) leaders in the high performing schools were more transformational in their leadership behaviors, (2) share leadership responsibilities, (3) encourage strategic thinking and planning to achieve school goals, (4) the leaders viewed themselves as trainers and developers who build others capacity to the shared goal, (5) create an open, risk-free, trusting, professional environment (6) had clearly articulated and a shared vision and (7) engaged parents and the community (p. 85).

Further, a study conducted by Parrett and Barr (2010), reviewed the findings of 18 studies to determine which strategies leaders employed to become high performing schools. They found that leaders in these schools had transformational traits or built

leadership capacity, focused time, attention, and resources on professional learning and created positive learning environments.

The current research on leadership in early childhood settings often relies on the participants taking a self-assessment and reporting on what they believe to be their leadership style (Ang, 2012 and LINC, 2009). There are issues with these types of studies because they require the leader to be self-reflective and honest. Therefore, utilizing a tool that has its roots in transformational leadership not only requires the leader to take a self-assessment but also have other teachers or staff rate the individual is very powerful. Having others rate the leader using the assessment tool means that the leader gets a more accurate depiction of what type of leader they are.

The most common researched leadership model that has been identified as resulting in success is “transformational” (Day, Gu, and Sammons, 2016 p. 224). Transformational Leadership has shown to affect quality and student achievement.

This literature review will now discuss the research regarding the history of early childhood education, defining quality early childhood education, the importance of adult-child interactions, and a discussion of different assessments that examine adult/child interactions.

Transformational Leadership and Pragmatism

One might think that Pragmatism and Transformational Leadership are at odds with each other due to transformational leaders being more about relationships and pragmatism dealing with facts. Some may think that pragmatism is the coldness that a

leader needs to possess, and Transformational Leadership is the warmth that happens through relationships. However, pragmatism and transformational leadership theory do complement each other. For example, if one subscribes to a pragmatic belief they are someone that focuses on the practical. When setting a goal, they are leaders that think about how to get something completed and see the big picture – perhaps even manipulating variables to get the desired outcome. (Lowe and Gardner, 2000). This is true for Transformational Leaders. Transformational Leaders need to see the big picture and know the steps that need to be taken in order to accomplish the long-term task for the good of the system. While they might not necessarily manipulate the situation, Transformational Leaders would ensure that relationships and key facts are in place before making significant changes.

History of Early Childhood Education

Preschool in the United States started for two reasons. One was a belief that lower-income families were unable to properly socialize their children. The second was the belief that children needed a program that was designed to meet their developmental needs (Tank, 1980). This would be considered a sort of “head start” for children’s educational careers (Cahan, 1989). The main difference between these two beliefs was that one was for children in poverty and the other was for children in the middle to upper class.

The history of preschool in the United States can be traced as far back as 1928 when a group of evangelical women interested in “providing religious instruction,

preschool education, and daycare for young children in Boston" established the Infant School Society in Boston. The school accepted children ages 18 months to four years. This group believed that this type of school would "relieve mothers of their domestic duties and allow them to seek employment "(Infant School Society of Boston, 1828 p. 5). The group wanted to serve the poorest families and they warned that "the seeds of folly which were bound up in the heart of a child may spring to prematurity in…. hotbeds of vice, and before they were four years old…. bring forth bitter fruits" (Beatty, 1981, p. 23). Ninetieth century Americans believed that poverty was a spiritual problem, not an economic problem. Therefore, similar schools were established along the east coast (Kuhn, 1947). The infant school movement ended in 1832 when some believed that students who attended these schools were "less teachable" than those who had not attended (Beatty, 1981).

Starting in the 1830s, many believed that the child's home was the best place for early development and the mother was the best teacher. An article in the American Journal of Education advocated against infant schools or preschools. It stated:

> … they furnish occasion for remissness in the discharge of parental duties, by devolving the care of infancy on teachers, instead of leaving with the mother the full weight and responsibility of her natural relation. The strength of domestic attachment in the child is also said to be weakened, by removing him for a considerable part of the day from home and furnishing him with enjoyments of a higher kind than he could experience there (cited in Beatty, 1981, p. 29).

Therefore, families continued to be viewed as the main source of a child's early learning and socialization. Poor families continued to utilize day nurseries and more affluent families' utilized nursery schools (Tank, 1980). Day nurseries were established by social

reformers who believed children of poor families were being neglected because they were being left to be cared for by the "substitute mothers" (Rosenau, 1894, p. 334). In fact, many of these day nurseries were worse. For example, "at one nursery school, children were served watery vegetable soup, thin cocoa and only children that had a prescription for milk were served it "(Beer, 1957, p. 44). Also, very few children were allowed outdoors for exercise as outdoor work was viewed as a catalyst for continued poverty. The goal of day nurseries was to offer employment to mothers or to help mothers find employment. For example, some nurseries would place widows or mothers in upper-class homes as laundry attendants and domestic servants or kitchen help in local restaurants (Tank, 1980, p. 123). Supporters of the day nursery hoped that nurseries would help families support their young children through work. However, what was started as a way to help mothers care for their families became the start of mothers needing to fulfill multiple roles of breadwinner, mother, and caretaker and were therefore exhausted and couldn't do anything really well. By 1911, the day nursery was a necessary evil trying to "thrust a working man's wife out of her home and into and the industrial's system" (Hartt, 1911, p.24). Today these day nurseries would be considered poor quality daycares.

In the late 1920s, the United States made a switch to nursery schools. These nursery schools were a way of preparing women to meet the responsibilities of family life and the obligations of parenthood (Whipple, 1929, p. 28). They were so popular that 74 colleges and universities sponsored nursery schools. Sixty-six four-year institutions reported that research in child development as the primary purpose of their nursery

schools. Further, teacher education programs in 47 colleges or universities reported using nursery schools as places for training for teachers (Davis and Hansen, 1933, p. 31). The problem with nursery schools was that the research was tied to middle- and upper-class families and not all families could access these services. By 1930, there were less than "500 nursery schools in the United States. These schools had a maximum enrollment of 14,000 children when there were over 16 million preschool-aged students in the United States "(Tank, 1980, p. 294). During World War I and World War II, the United States had many women join the workforce to help with the war effort. Women who worked in war-affected areas were able to send their children to temporary nursery schools. These were disbanded after the wars as women were expected to return home and care for their families (Anon., 1946, p. 1 0). Yet, there was still a need for childcare as some women continued to work after the war. Nursery schools continued to function to supplement the family's socialization activities not supplant (Cahan, 1989).

Starting in the 1960s there was a significant change in the understanding of early experiences and development. In an effort to summarize the previous 50 years of research, McVicker Hunt published a book titled *Intelligence and Experience* in 1961. He believed that experiences early in life affected a child's development. To test his theory, he put baby rats on a feeding schedule where they weren't fed at regular intervals and were deprived of food and others that were placed on a normal schedule. He found that rats that were placed on feeding deprivation schedules would hoard rat pellets, which is not normal rat behavior. Hunt then believed that this would be the same for young children. If they were deprived at an early age it would lead to abnormal behavior later in

life**.** He concluded that the early years were more important for intellectual development that previously thought (Hunt, 1961). Further, Bloom (1964) stated in his book *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, that by age four – around fifty percent of the cognitive skill can be accounted for and that "early childhood education can profoundly affect the child's general learning pattern" (p. 110). Therefore, early learning matters.

At the same time, there was growing concerns in the United States with poverty. At the time there was at least twenty percent of Americans living in poverty (Cooley, 2018). In his 1964 State of the Union Address, President Lyndon Johnson used the phrase "unconditional war on poverty." He thought that the number of families living in poverty was a failure of society. He stated, "the cause may lie deeper in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities, in a lack of education and training, in a lack of medical care and housing, in a lack of decent communities in which to live and bring up children" (Johnson, 1964). Thus, the War on Poverty was born. President Johnson solicited the advice of Sargent Shriver, a researcher who conducted studies on child development and mental retardation at the University of Texas (Zigler, 2003). Sargent Shriver headed up a panel of pediatricians, child development researchers, educators, and psychologists who eventually recommended to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) that preschool programs be implemented to help poor children develop to their full potential (Steiner, 1976 p. 26-29, and Ziegler and Valentine, 1979). Supporters of early education for poor children believed that "children from these homes lacked experiences and opportunities available to children in more prosperous homes. They believed that by the time these poor children got to public school, they were often

already unable to take full advantage of the situation since their preschool years were deprived" (Cahan, 1989 p. 32-33). As a result of these recommendations, the Economic Opportunity Act was passed by Congress and became law in August 1964. The Act provided funds for vocational training, created Job Corp to train youths, established Volunteer Services of America, and Head Start, an early-education program for children of poor families (Cooley, 2018).

Head Start started first as an eight-week summer program. They enrolled over 500,000 students in 11,000 centers located in over 1300 communities. The first Head Starts were in the basements of churches and public schools across the country. At the time, money was given to early childhood programs whose goals were to address poverty, educational attainment, and help low-income citizens (Gallagher, 2000). In the fall of 1965, the program was expanded and there were 171,000 children ages 3 to 6 enrolled in a Head Start yearlong program of social and cognitive development, medical care, and nutrition. Payne (1973) stated that Head Start has been called "the country's biggest peacetime mobilization of human resources and effort" (p. 2-3). At the time, Head Start's goal was to educate the "whole child" but also the parents and community. The program wanted to foster cognitive, social, and emotional development (Payne, 1973, p. 2-3).

Currently, Head Start has 1,700 sites across the country. Head Start and Early Head Start provide services to over a million children. There is a Head Start in every US state and territory, in farmworker camps, and in over 155 tribal communities. The current goal of Head Start is to promote "school readiness of children ages birth to five from low-

income families by supporting their development in a comprehensive way. According to the National Office of Head Start website, the organization has the following mission:

> **Early learning**: Children's readiness for school and beyond is fostered through individualized learning experiences. Through relationships with adults, play, and planned and spontaneous instruction, children grow in many aspects of development. Children progress in social skills and emotional well-being, along with language and literacy learning, and concept development
> **Health**: Each child's perceptual, motor, and physical development is supported to permit them to fully explore and function in their environment. All children receive health and development screenings, nutritious meals, oral health and mental health support. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure that children are receiving the services they need.
> **Family well-being**: Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning and development (Office of Head Start, 2017).

Many studies have shown that Head Start is effective when working with at-risk youth. (Aikens, et al, 2013, Bauer & Schanzenbach, 2016; Garces, Thomas, & J. Currie, 2002). However, this effectiveness is often lost over time (Johnson, 2011; Ludwig; Miller, 2007). In 1998, the US Congress required that a study be completed on the impact of Head Start on the children it serves. A longitudinal study was completed in 2012, which followed a cohort of students from preschool through third grade. It found that Head Start had a positive impact on students across developmental domains but had few impacts on children kindergarten through third grade. Therefore, gains are positive in the beginning but don't last past elementary school (OPRE, 2012).

Currently, there are many models for Early Childhood programs across the nation and each one is different based on location, curriculum, and cost. Many families choose

one of the many options available to them based on their income. Some families choose a Child Care/Day Care option which is used for babysitting while a parent is at work. Others choose private preschool programs which are usually two or three-hour sessions per day, a few days a week. These programs are used for childcare but also offer opportunities to prepare for kindergarten. So, children go to daycare and part of their day is also school. These types of programs are often in their own buildings, community centers, or places of worship and parents must pay extra to have their child attend this type of early learning school. (Corsi-Bunker, 2017).

Defining High-Quality Programs

Recent research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool programs have "better healthy, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes that those who do not participate" (Committee on Integrating Science of Early Childhood Development, 2000 p. 3). These types of outcomes are particularly important for those students who come from low-income families and are at risk for academic failure "who on average start kindergarten 12 to 14 months behind their peers in pre-literacy and language skills" (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000 p. 5). Children who attend high quality programs are less likely to need Special Education services or be retained in their grade, and are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college, and "succeed in their careers than those who have not attended high-quality preschool programs "(Center for Public Education, 2008).

One important component of a high-quality program is not only what happens in the classroom but the entire organization. There can be a high-quality classroom but to truly impact the most students there needs to be high-quality programs. Kagan and Bowman (1997) state that “the strength of any institution or field is the strength of its leader” (p. 160). This means that an early childhood leader can no longer function as a manager but a need to shift to an educational leader. Glasser (1990) states that if “we focus on effective early childhood leader roles then there will be an increase in quality and student achievement” (p. 17). To be an effective leader in any organization requires training and preparation but it is extremely important in an early childhood program. Brown and Manning (2000) state that an effective leader in an early childhood organization one needs to be trained and knowledgeable in order to impact program quality.

What is a High-Quality Preschool?

Fuller, Gasko, and Anguiano (2010) found that quality matters when it comes to assessing child outcomes. The definition of high quality greatly depends on what developmental theory the program adheres to. For example, Lev Vygotsky developed his cognitive development theory in the 1920s. This theory stated, "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). It stated that a child learns based on the interactions with adults and through independent play. Over the years Vygotsky

has influenced early childhood centers across the world. The following are criteria that a Vygotsky high-quality preschool would possess. A Vygotsky high-quality preschool

> Amplifies the child's learning and development within age and developmentally appropriate activities. (2) Has dramatic play as the leading activity of preschool. (3) Promotes co-construction and individualized teacher-child interactions that scaffold development. (4) Uses standards as general guidelines (5) Prepares children for later grades by emplacing underlying competencies (Bodrova and Leong, 2005 p. 442-443).

There is even a curriculum titled Tools of the Mind: A Vygotskyan Approach to Early Childhood Education. Vygotsky believed that until children learn to use their "mental tools" their learning would be controlled by their environment. Therefore, a Vygotsky preschool teaches children to use these "tools" and then they control their behavior and learning (Tools of the Mind, 2017). Barnett et al (2008), conducted a study with the Tools of the Mind curriculum. The Vygotsky curriculum was found to improve classroom quality and children's executive function as well as small increases in language development. Another study conducted by Diamond et al (2007) found that the Vygotsky curriculum improves the "executive function skills of preschoolers. Executive Function skills are skills that need to be developed for later success these include; resisting habits, temptations, or distractions, working memory both using and holding information and the ability to adjust and change" (p. 3). A Vygotsky preschool classroom should have activities that a child can do independently but also with others – including other students and adults. Vygotsky believed that children process information from observation through language. So, children observe and listen and then try to imitate what they have seen. In a preschool that follows a Vygotsky approach to language development would be a major part of the programming. A child in a Vygotsky preschool

would be playing in make-believe situations and would be talking aloud for most of the day. (Child Development Media, 2017).

Another popular child development theorist which preschools across the country are modeled after is Jean Piaget. Piaget's theory, which was developed in 1936, stated that a child's cognitive development occurs due to interactions with the environment (McLeod, 2015). His theory is often referred to as Cognitive Theory which included the sensorimotor stage which is from 18 months to two years of age, the preoperational stage which is usually between 18 and 24 months and seven years old, and the concrete operational ages 7–11 years old and the formal operational which is from adolescent to adulthood (Oswalt, 2015). The theory was developed to explain how children's thinking developed. He believed that children developed as they discovered more about the world around them. He described "two processes for adaptation which is an organism's ability to fit in with its environment he called these assimilation and accommodations" **(**Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 171). Assimilation is the "process of transforming an environment so that it fits the cognitive structures of the student and accommodation is the processes of changing the cognitive structures of a student to accept something from the environment (Cambell, 2006). Piaget believed in the balance between assimilation and accommodation. He felt that a teacher could change the environment which would cause a student to be placed in disequilibrium and cause the student to be curious. He advocated that teachers should use this curiosity which would motivate students and cause changes in their mental cognitive structures (Blake and Pope, 2008).

In a preschool using the Piaget model, a teacher would focus all of a child's learning at the preoperational stage of development and provide experiences for the child to learn through discovery (Wood, Smith, and Grossniklaus, 2001). One would see a lot of centers focusing on learning through play and less on direct instruction type activities. Piaget's theory has not been universally accepted by many in the early childhood field (Blake and Pope, 2008). Croker (2003) states that children can learn higher level skills once easier ones have been learned therefore many people criticize him because he underestimates a child's ability to learn higher level concepts (p. 61).

Another approach to early childhood education, which is probably more familiar, is the Montessori preschool. The Montessori Method was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1907. It is a child-centered approach to teaching and is based on self-directed activities, hands-on learning and collaborative play (American Montessori Society, 2017). Dr. Montessori learned that students have a better understanding of language, math, science, music, and social interactions through experimental learning. In a Montessori preschool, a classroom would:

- Foster the growth of functional independence, task persistence, and self-regulation
- Promote social development through respectful, clear communication and safe, natural consequences
- Contain a large variety of materials for the refinement of sensory perception and the development of literacy and mathematical understanding
- Offer opportunities for imaginative exploration leading to confident, creative self-expression (Montessori Northwest, 2017).

Research conducted on Montessori education is difficult to interpret because there's not a universal way to determine student outcomes for those that attend – each

state has its own assessment. For example, in Wisconsin, they have a standardized state tests called the WKCE (Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination) and also the ACT assessment. Other states have different assessments. Some researchers have used ACT scores as a determinate for Montessori quality. For example, Dohrmann (2003) and Lillard (2012) found that students who attend a Montessori program from the ages of three to eleven "predicts significantly mathematical and science standardized test scores in high school" like the ACT (p.3).

Quality Preschool Program Definitions

Many organizations across the country have defined what they believe is high-quality preschool based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children or NAEYC standards or the Quality Rating Improvement Standards (QRIS). The state of California funds their preschool programs and has created a set of standards which define a high-quality program:

- Early learning standards and curricula that address the whole child, are developmentally appropriate, and are effectively implemented.
- Assessments that consider children's academic, social-emotional, and physical progress and contribute to instructional and program planning.
- Well-prepared teachers who provide engaging interactions and classroom environments that support learning.
- Ongoing support for teachers, including coaching and mentoring.
- Support for English learners and students with special needs.
- Meaningful family engagement.
- Sufficient learning time.
- Small class sizes with low student-teacher ratios.
- Program assessments that measure structural quality and classroom interactions.
- A well-implemented state quality rating and improvement system. (Wechsler, Melnick, Maier, and Bishop, 2016 p. 1).

The rural state where this study takes place does not currently offer universal funding preschool. However, the state recently obtained a 10-million-dollar federal grant to expand its early childhood education and another 3-million-dollar grant funded through the state legislature to "increase access to high-quality preschool and demonstrate the effectiveness of preschool in multiple settings including public schools, private preschool providers, and public-private partnerships." (MTN news, 2017). Currently, there are twenty-four high needs communities throughout the state which are implementing high-quality preschool programs (Montana OPI, 2014). High-quality preschool for the purposes of the grant, is defined by eight standards based on the NAEYC (National Association of the Education of Young Children) standards of quality:

1. Program leadership and administration - include requirements necessary to ensure that the preschool program effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems to support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management, so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences
2. Early Learning Content Standards – Are a tool for every early childhood professional and offers a developmental continuum in order to meet student's needs.
3. Curriculum - High-quality early childhood education programs have a defined set of expectations for teaching and learning.
4. Instruction - High-quality early childhood education programs have a defined set of expectations for teaching and learning. In many ways, these expectations revolve around the domains of curriculum and instruction.
5. Assessment – Assessment is a critical element in quality early childhood programs. The information obtained from child assessment and program evaluation provides important decision-making information about programmatic philosophies, policies, family relationships, and instructional supports.
6. Physical and Learning Environment - A learning environment is a combination of social and physical qualities that help to create the classroom experience. It includes classroom schedules, routines, and management procedures. The physical space is set up in an organized way and is well maintained. It is thoughtfully furnished in ways that are

inviting to children and families and promote growth and development in the domain areas.

7. Child Guidance - Adult actions that guide, correct, and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors are called child guidance. To effectively accomplish this, teachers must employ a variety of positive guidance strategies that foster self-regulation, respect for others, and meeting the needs of individual children as well as the group.
8. Family and Community Engagement - Teachers should actively work to create partnerships with each family, communicating regularly to build mutual understanding and trust and to ensure that children's learning and developmental needs are met. Families should be invited to fully participate in the educational program. (OPI, 2016 p. 8-62).

Further, Kostelnik and Grady (2009) found that 10 variables represent the essential components of a high-quality program. They include:

1. Teachers and staff are well prepared and appropriately compensated
2. Staffing is stable
3. Group sizes are small, and a small number of children are assigned to each adult
4. Adults establish warm, attentive relationships with children
5. Environments are well organized safe and healthy
6. Environments are stimulating and geared to the unique ways in which young children learn
7. Teachers understand and address the needs of diverse learners
8. Families are involved in their children's education.
9. There is continuity between home, the early childhood program, and the primary school
10. There are links to comprehensive community services (p. 23-24).

Different researchers have attempted to define high-quality preschool and while the definitions seem to overlap sometimes it is community expectations that determine quality.

Adult Child Interactions and Quality

Educators know that child development is greatly influenced by the relationships a child has with the adults in their lives. Brock and Curby (2014) state that "young

children rely on relationships with caregivers to meet their physical, cognitive and emotional needs" (p. 661). In the 1960s John Bowlby coined the term attachment theory. Attachment theory states that childhood development depends heavily upon a child's ability to form a strong relationship with "at least one primary caregiver" or one of the parents (Psychologist World, 2017). A caregiver can be defined as a parent or any adult who cares for the basic needs of a child. Studies conducted by Ainsborth (1969) and Bowlby (1969) proved that the quality of the interactions between a mother and a child affected a child's cognitive functioning. Mothers who were sensitive and consistent have "children who do better on tests of achievement and ratings of social competence and display fewer problem behaviors "(Cutrona et al, 1994, p. 9). In contrast, mothers who are emotionally detached and lack structure tend to have children with weaker cognitive skills (Moss et al, 2009). Therefore, one could conclude that a child's development is the result of interactions that occur in the home, school, or any location where interactions happen over an extended period of time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Due to more students attending school as early as age three, it's important that the interactions that a child experiences outside of the home be positive. Early childhood teachers can be considered caregivers as they take care of the basic early learning needs of students. Brock and Curby (2014) found that children establish trust and expectations with their caregivers through consistency of emotional support over time. If a student attends an early childhood program with a teacher who is warm, sensitive, and consistent, the child will have better outcomes (Howes, 1992 and Hamilton, 1993). Therefore, the interactions that happen in preschool are extremely important. In a preschool environment, children

spend time with their teachers and figure out what is expected and how to navigate social interactions (Pianta, 1999). Numerous studies show that the quality of interactions between the teacher and the student predicts academic and social outcomes (Howes et al., 2008, Mashburn, 2008, Stipek & Byler, 2004). If a teacher has higher levels of emotional support then there are higher levels of student achievement, social skills, and few problem behaviors (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, Ponitz, 2009 and NICHHD, 2003). Further, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) conducted a long-term study from 1991–2000, which examined a child's experiences in preschool and elementary schools. The study included 1300 children who were followed from birth to their freshman year of high school. The study was on how teachers interact with children. This study showed that good language stimulation from teachers and caregivers promotes positive childhood development with higher achievement (Curby, Brock, and Hamre, 2013). It's clear that adult-child interactions are a catalyst for later success. Assessment of these interactions will be discussed in the next section.

Preschool Quality Measurements

There are many assessments used to determine quality of preschools. Child Trends (2009), conducted a review of all these quality preschool determination instruments. They found a total of 35 assessments that measure quality. While this study is using the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) to determine quality, it is important to understand the other assessments that are similar to CLASS and focus on interactions between the adults and students as a measure of quality.

Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs

The Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs (APECP) is a tool used to evaluate the learning environment and teaching strategies in preschool classrooms. It was developed by Abbott-Shimm and Sibley in 1992 and standardized in 401 early childhood classrooms (Abbott-Shimm, 1998). It went through a revision in 1998 when it was standardized in 2,820 classrooms which was a combination of Head Start, Kindergarten, First and second-grade classrooms in 31 states (Abbott-Shimm and Sibley, 1998). The tool evaluated safety, learning environments, scheduling, curriculum methods, interacting, and individualizing. There was also a component of administrative practices which were evaluated in terms of physical facilities, food service, program management, personnel, and program development. There were 75 total items on the Assessment Profile. The tool used an assessment format where the observer observed for three hours, and if an item was present, it is scored using a yes/no scale. The APECP scores have been researched to show improvement in child outcomes in program improvement and quality. (Lambert, Abbott-Shinn, and Sibley, 2006).

Classroom Practices Inventory

The Classroom Practices Inventory or CPI was originally created to assess developmentally appropriate practices as determined in 1987 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or NAEYC (Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek & Rescorla, L. 1990).

It contains 26 items which are divided into an emotional climate component and teacher-directed practices. The emotional climate assesses a teacher’s warmth,

encouragement, and positive guidance. The teacher-directed practices assesses large group instruction, workbooks, ditto sheets, memorization, etc. (Child Trends, 2007). It's important to note that the tool was created before NAEYC amended their statement on developmentally appropriate practices in 1997 to include more diverse teaching strategies, differentiation, and the importance of academic content. The tool takes approximately 2.5 hours to administer.

Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure (ECCOM)

The Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure or ECCOM was developed in 2004 and focuses on which type of preschool is present either a child-centered program or a teacher-centered program. The measure requires at least three hours for observation. It consists of 32 items broken into three different areas: management, social climate, learning climate and instruction (Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, 2008). It observes the instructional approach rather than the content. Practices are rated on a scale of 1 (not seen) to 5 (predominate practice) (Stipek and Byler, 2004). While it has shown positive effects and is considered high quality, a criticism of the tool is that it contains too many instructional practices, and, therefore, it's hard to determine what was exactly observed and for how long (Committee on Development Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, 2008).

Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale

The Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale or CIS was developed to rate the emotional tone, discipline style, and responsiveness of teachers and caregivers in a

classroom. It contains 26 observational items which are characteristics of a child care provider. These include sensitivity, harshness, detachment, and permissiveness. Items are scored on a four-point scale from 1 – not at all characteristics to 4 – very much characteristic. Each teacher or caregiver should be observed for 45 minutes (Arnett, 1989).

The Environmental Child Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)

The Environmental Childhood Rating Scale was last updated in 2003 and now is called the ECERS-R. It is the most widely used tool for assessing quality in early childhood programs. Head Start uses it as a measure of quality and it was used as a tool in the ongoing Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). The FACES survey is longitudinal study of the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of Head Start Children. (US DPHHS FACES, 2013). The tool has 41 items which are broken down into seven areas: space and furnishing, personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. Each item is rated on a scale of one to seven. One is inadequate and seven is excellent (Cryer, Harms, Riley, 2003). The scale requires 2–3 hours to administer.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

CLASS is short for Classroom Assessment Scoring System and was developed by University of Virginia to measure classroom quality in preschool through 12th-grade classrooms. According to the tools website, CLASS is the “only observational teacher assessment tool that captures teacher behaviors linked to student gains and that has been

proven to work in tens of thousands of classrooms from preschool to high school and beyond." CLASS was developed with the premise that teachers are the "primary mechanism through which classroom experiences affect development" (LaParo, Pianta, and Stuhlman, 2004 p. 413). Findings from several studies have supported the importance of the quality of teacher-student interactions. Teachers who use feedback and possess warmth have been found to significantly produce gains in child performance which leads to high-quality programs (Matsumara, Patthey-Chavez, Valdes, & Garner, 2002, & NICHD, 2003).2005.

Leadership and Child Outcomes

Some researchers have found that there is a direct link between school leadership and students outcomes, however, most of these studies also found that curriculum and instruction and leadership being spread out among the organization also play a role in student outcomes in a K-12 setting (Bell, Bolam & and Cubillo, 2003 and Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003).

There are two well-cited studies that link leadership as one of the biggest factors closest to student achievement. These are the Marzano, Waters, and McNulty study (2005) and the Chin study (2007). The Marzano et al study was a meta-analysis of studies completed on K-12 schools and examined the relationship between leadership of the building principal and student academic achievement. The researchers determined that "principals have a profound effect on the achievement of students in their schools" (Marzano et al., 2005 p. 38). The Chin Study was on 28 leadership studies in the US and

Taiwan and found that school leadership especially the quality had positive direct links to student achievement (Chin, 2007). Another study linking student achievement to leadership is the Reading First Study completed in 2006. This study examined 388 principal responses on the Principal Implementation Questionnaire (PIQ) and linked it to first-grade reading scores. The study concluded the leader's implementation and assessment practices were a direct result of increased first-grade students reading scores (Nettles and Petscher, 2006).

Summary of Chapter Two

Early childhood education has shown to make significant gains in a child's development and educational outcomes (Schweinhart (2013), Duncan (2007), Doorman et al, (2017), and Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). Further, studies have shown that a high-quality preschool is key to a child's later success (Children's Reading Foundation, 2015. Committee on Integrating Science of Early Childhood Development, 2000, Bodrova and Leong 2005, and Duncan, 2007). Defining and measuring a high quality preschool program depends on which assessment is being utilized and there are many assessments geared towards assessing a programs quality. For the purposes of this study leadership will be measured utilizing the Leadership Practices Inventory and teacher student interactions which have shown to improve outcomes for students will be measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System or CLASS.

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODS

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework that influenced this study was pragmatism. Pragmatism is defined as "focusing on the outcomes of the research – the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry rather than the antecedent conditions" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 28). O'Leary (2007) stated that pragmatism is an interpretive framework that "holds truth and value which can only be determined by practical application and consequences" (p. 11). Researchers who use this framework use multiple methods of data collection, techniques, and procedures of research that "best meet their needs and purposes" and that best address their research questions (Creswell, 2013). Creswell notes, for example, that this framework is used when researchers doing case study or ethnography use both qualitative and quantitative (i.e. surveys) data collection (p.29). Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. Therefore, researchers are free to choose the "methods, techniques, and procedures" that best meet their needs. In conducting qualitative research, individuals using pragmatism employ multiple methods of data collection and will focus on the practical implications. This interpretive framework is usually utilized when looking at quantitative and qualitative data collection (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). This study utilized quantitative data and as well as qualitative data in a comparative case study design. The quantitative is the overall program Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores as well as Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) individual scores. The qualitative data is the interviews with purposefully selected

preschool principals/directors and artifacts such as mission and vision statements. The purpose of this study was to determine how the leadership approach of the principal and the instructional design of the preschool program intertwine to influence preschool program quality. Specifically, (1) How does a preschool leader's approach to leadership influence preschool program quality? And (2) how does the preschool program structure influence preschool program quality?

Methodological Design

Given the purpose of the study and related research questions, the research approach was a case study. A case study approach is defined as:

> A case study is an empirical method that – investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within a real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident (Yin, 2018 p. 15).

In other words, a case study is utilized when one wants to understand a real-world phenomenon. Case studies have been largely used in the social sciences and have been found to be valuable in social research (Flyvbjer 2006). There are different definitions of case study research. For example, Yin (2018) defined case study as "social science research method, generally used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and its real-world context" (p.286). Sagadin (1991) stated that case study is used when we analyze and describe a person individually, a group of people, individual institutions, or a problem, process, or phenomenon (p. 31). Therefore, a case study is a description of an individual case or multiple cases and why a phenomenon happened. Case Study research is a qualitative research method (George and Bennett, 2005). Qualitative research

emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual. Therefore, the subjective views of the researcher play a vital part in the study results (Starman, 2013). Case Study research involves the researcher defining the ‘case’ that will be studied. This means that I define the case and then the boundaries of the case or cases. The level of analysis for the case comparison is at the program or school level.

This is a comparative case study as it covered two different preschool sites. The first site is two separate preschool classrooms in two separate elementary schools. The second site is located in a preschool-only facility which is comprised of school district and Head Start classrooms and is considered a mixed-delivery model. However, both programs share some leadership positions. Comparative case studies analyze and synthesize the similarities and differences that focus on a common goal and produce generalizable knowledge (Goodrick, 2014). For this study, the common goals of both programs are the goals of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). The goals of this grant are (1) build or enhance preschool programs for the delivery of high-quality preschool services to children, and (2) expand access to high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities. (Montana OPI, 2014). Case Study research requires that the cases be bounded or clearly defined, i.e. who is a part of the study and who has been excluded. For the purposes of this study, preschool programs were selected first because they are a grantee within MPDG but also because they are part of Cohort I of the grant. The other two cohorts were not included.

Purposeful Selection of Cases

The Preschool Development Grant was awarded to a rural state in 2015. The state received 11 million dollars a year to (1) build or enhance preschool programs for the delivery of high-quality preschool services to children, and (2) expand access to high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities. The participants of the grant have been categorized into three cohorts. Cohort I programs are providers that participated in previous preschool grants and have already begun to implement many of the states' early learning standards. These programs are considered models for Cohort II and Cohort III schools (Montana OPI, 2015). Cohort I programs are made up of three school district programs and four Head Start programs. The programs in Cohort I are either preschool-only schools where preschool is the only grade served or preschools within a K-12 building. The other type of program is those that are located within a K-12 building. This would be a preschool in a K-6 school or some other combination. Cohort I schools were chosen because they are the programs with the least amount of turnover, have participated in the professional development since the beginning of grant, and have preschools with program leadership that have been in place for at least three years.

There are quality assessments tied to the PDG grant. These assessments are ways that the state chooses to determine quality. The first quality assessment is the DIAL-4. Every eligible four-year-old is given the DIAL assessment to determine likelihood for kindergarten readiness. The DIAL is a developmental assessment often used to determine if students have potential delays. Participating classrooms are also assessed with the ECERS-R Assessment, which examines the environment of the classroom and every

classroom is assessed with CLASS an assessment used to judge the quality of adult/student interactions. For the purposes of this study, only the CLASS scores were examined.

The CLASS scores for all the Cohort I programs were obtained from the Office of Public Instruction or OPI. The scores were organized by overall average scores. CLASS scores are organized into three domains with ten indicators that are measured and are illustrated in Figure 2. The three domains are Emotional Support which has four indicators, Classroom Organization which has three indicators, and Instructional Support which has three indicators. Each domain within CLASS is given an average and then these three domains were averaged to obtain the overall CLASS score for each program. The highest overall class score from each group was asked to participate. Further explanation of the CLASS instrument is described below.

The researcher contacted the leaders of the Cohort I schools to ask for their participation. Once they agreed to participate in the study, the leaders were asked to identify three individuals who would fill out LPIs on the leader. LPIs are Leadership Practice Inventories which are designed to assess each leader's tendency to practice one of the five transformational leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. A visual of the LPI and what it measures is shown in Figure 3. The leaders filled out a self-assessment on themselves while at least three subordinates or followers filled out observer assessments on the leader. LPIs were scored electronically and a report is

produced which tells the leader how often they are performing one of the five leadership practices. More information about the LPI instrument is outlined below.

Instrumentation – CLASS and LPI

A grant requirement for all MPDG classrooms is that each classroom is assessed one time a year. Classrooms are observed by reliable CLASS assessors who are required to attend a training by Teachstone, the publisher of CLASS, and become certified as reliable. This ensures the inter-rater reliability of classroom observations. Teachstone requires that a classroom be observed for four twenty-minute cycles of observation. The observers are paid out of PDG grant funds, they record their scores, return the reports to the state Department of Education who then disseminate them to the individual programs.

CLASS was developed and field tested to assess children in preschool through third grade. Initial versions of the scale were piloted in preschool and early elementary classrooms. It was tested for validity and reliability in 2004 with a project funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education. The tool was used in 40 schools/centers, 227 teachers participated in the study. Reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument is free from error associated with the process of measuring the construct of interest (Pianta et al, 2008). The Classroom Assessment and Scoring System has an inter-rater reliability on the dimension of class that range between .78 and .96, which indicates adequate reliability as it needs to be above .50 (Sandilos, DiPerna, 2011). Three major areas of classroom characteristics were included in the final tool - Figure 2 illustrates the CLASS Domains and Dimensions:

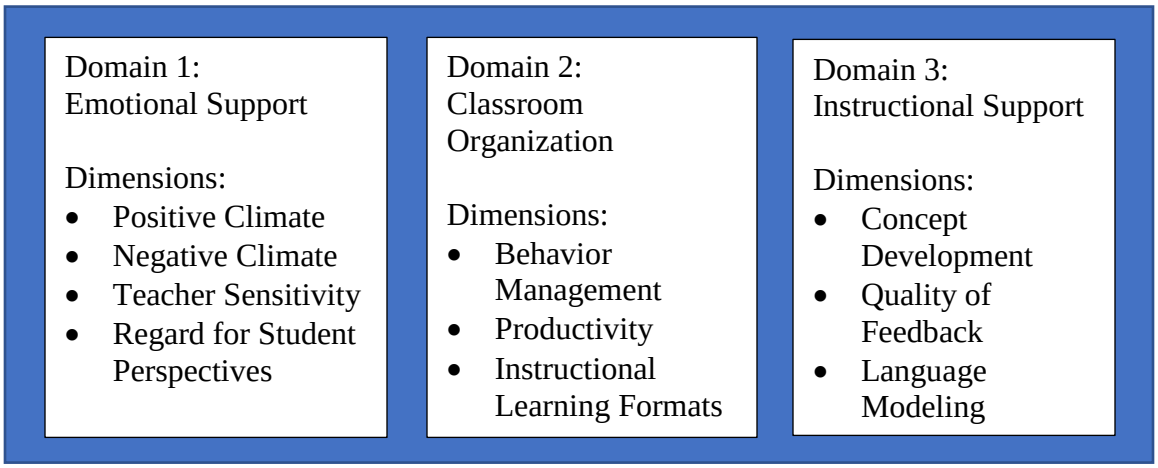


Figure 2: CLASS Domains and Dimensions

CLASS is the newest of the quality assessments that early childhood centers utilize, and its popularity is growing. Currently, it is now used in several states for early childhood quality rating improvement including Arizona, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. (National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement, 2013). Unlike ECERS-R, CLASS focuses less on what teachers do with the materials they have and more on the interactions they have with children.

Justification for CLASS

Currently, there are countless assessments that claim to determine if a preschool is considered high quality. The Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs (APECP) measures environment and teaching strategies, CPI assesses developmentally appropriate practices, ECCOM measures whether a program is child-centered or teacher-centered, CIS measures a teacher's discipline style and tone within the classroom, and ECERS-R primarily focuses on a child's access to their developmentally appropriate environment.

CLASS measures how a child interacts with their environment as well as the adults in the room. It is one of the few assessments that predicts positive outcomes for students. Recently, a study was released that reviewed 150 peer-reviewed published studies, which focused on child outcomes. These studies confirmed that "classroom quality as measured by the CLASS, predicts positive developmental and academic outcomes for children" (Teachstone, 2017 p. 1). Further, in examining standards of quality from California, a state that has funded public preschool since the 1960s, it's clear that interactions between teachers and students are important, because one of its standards of quality is that "teachers need to provide engaging interactions and classroom environments that support learning" (Wechsler, Melnick, Maier, and Bishop, 2016 p. 1). CLASS identifies and assesses different types of interactions within a classroom setting that reflect quality. For example, it assesses negative climate which would have a negative impact on child outcomes. Further, CLASS does not promote or prescribe a curriculum or content and focuses on teaching and interactions.

Measuring Transformational Leadership – LPI

According to the tool's website, the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) is a questionnaire that contains 30 statements and asks individuals to rate themselves on the frequency in which they believe they engage in each of the 30 statements (leadershipchallenge.com). Then the leader chooses three to five people to complete the 'LPI Observer' a similar tool that rates the leader on how he/she engages in certain behaviors. The tool is based on the transformational leadership model of Kouzes and Posner (2017). This model of transformational leader states that there are five exemplary

leadership practices and ten commitments. See Figure 3. The Leadership Practices inventory was created by using statements describing leadership actions and behaviors that transformational leaders should be doing. For example, the self-assessment has statements like these: I set a personal example of what I expect of others, I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization, or I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions. Each statement is rated on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 – almost never do what is described to 10 – almost always do what is described in the statement.

Reliability of LPI

Reliability refers to the extent in which an instrument contains "measurement errors" that cause scores to differ for reasons unrelated to the respondent: The fewer errors contained, the more reliable the instrument. The LPI scales are generally above .80, which means that it has strong internal reliability. Anything above .50 is considered reliable. Reliability is also enhanced when the instrument asks about a behavior more than once. This means that a two-item scale is inherently more reliable than a one-item scale. The LPI scales contain six items or statements for each of the five leadership practices. (Kouzes and Pozner, 2001).

Model the Way
- Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared values
- Set the example by aligning actions with shared values

Inspire a Shared Vision
- Envision the future by imagining exciting and enabling possibilities
- Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations

Challenge the Process
- Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve.
- Experiment and take risks by consistently generating small wins and learning from experience

Enable Others to Act
- Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships
- Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence

Encourage the Heart
- Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence
- Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community

(Kouzes and Posner, 2017, p. 24)

Figure 3 – Leadership Practices

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began with a data request to the Office of Public Instruction Growth and Enhancement of Students or GEMS. The request was to gain access to the Preschool Development Grant CLASS scores for the 2017-2018 school year. The request was granted, and scores were emailed for analysis. The CLASS scores were first grouped by cohort and then overall averages were determined by averaging the three domain

scores. These scores are listed in Table 3.0. There are three domains which contains 10 indicators and are detailed in Figure 2. The domain scores are averages of these indicators. Therefore, the average of the three domain scores was the overall program score. The programs were then ranked, and the top two programs leaders were emailed and asked to participate in the study and set up a site visit and an interview. Interview questions are in Appendix A. Interviews were utilized because they were targeted to focus on the topics of the case study as well as provide possible explanations and personal beliefs. The interviews took place at individual sites during the spring semester of 2018. The protocol for the interviews is contained in Table 3.0 below. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and sent back to the leaders, so they could add any additional information or correct information they felt was not accurate. There were no corrections or additions by any of the leaders. The recordings were stored on MSU's secure cloud storage box. Each leader was asked to provide their programs mission and vision statements which were utilized as part of the data analysis process. Before the site visits, leaders were given a copy of the LPI as well as a consent form. Most of the leaders were able to complete the Self LPI before the researcher's arrival except for one which was returned via mail. The leaders were also asked to identify 3-4 individuals who could rate their leadership abilities. None of the leaders were able to identify these individuals beforehand, therefore leaders were given four LPI Observer Forms and consent forms with a self-addressed stamped envelope which were returned via mail. Leaders were reminded about returning the LPIs multiple times after the site visits until at least three Observer Ratings were returned. During the site visit, the researcher walked through the

building and classrooms and made anecdotal notes regarding visuals within the classrooms as well as interactions that the leader had with staff.

Table 3.0 Table of Specifications for Interview Protocol

Research Question 1:	Interview Questions	Data Analysis:
How does a preschool leader's approach to leadership influence preschool program quality?	Tell me about your current leadership position – how were you prepared for the position and what do you focus on. How would you describe your leadership of the school/program? Your class scores are among the best in Cohort I, what do you attribute these high scores to? Is your leadership style different in your preschool classrooms compared to other classrooms within your school? How would others describe your leadership?	LPI and CLASS score comparison and the development of common themes

Table 3.0 Continued

Research Question 2: How does the preschool program structure influence preschool program quality?	Your class scores are among the best in Cohort I, what do you attribute these high scores to? Tell me about the program/school that you lead. Is your leadership style different in your preschool classrooms compared to other classrooms within your school? How would others describe your leadership?	Development of common themes

Data Analysis Procedures

The following was included in the Data Analysis for this study: Program CLASS scores, LPI scores, transcribed interviews, mission and vision statements, and anecdotal notes that were taken during the tours of the preschool sites.

The coding process took place in three different stages. The first stage was to do some open coding. Open coding is the process of reading and rereading all the data to determine some patterns and then comparing them for similarities and differences and finding different categories in which to place them (Devos, 2009). Significant quotes were separated out to reflect other categories that may be significant. The name given to each category is one that seemed most logically related to the data it represented (Strauss

& Corbin, 1990). Words and phrases were sorted into two groups: phrases or words that related to leadership approach and then words or phrases that related to instructional delivery model. The next step was then to take each group of words and phrases and put them in sub groups. These included categories like tasks, belief statements regarding leadership, hiring practices, belief statements regarding early childhood, qualifications, philosophy-like statements, personal challenges, learnings, and adjectives to describe themselves or adjectives that others would use to describe their leadership and professional development activities or learnings.

The next step was axial coding. Axial coding involved looking at connections between the themes so that related items could be merged into bigger chunks or clusters (Devos, 2009). During Axial coding it was important to look for patterns and possible trends throughout the narratives that related to the LPI scores or the CLASS scores of the participants. Themes were created because they made the most sense to the researcher. The initial themes were broad and included leading by example, leadership actions, and leadership beliefs. The final step was selective coding, which involves narrowing the data into a more management set of themes to write the narrative. (Saldana, 2009 p. 87). Quotes from individual participants and mission/vision statements are used in the findings section of this paper to illustrate the themes.

Researcher Positionality

It's important to understand my background when reading this study. First, I started my education career as a special education teacher. I taught in all types of special

education classrooms: self-contained, resource, full inclusion in a variety of grade levels in K-12 education. I have been an administrator for the past nine years. The first four of which I served as a half-time teacher/administrator in a preK-12 building. Currently, I am the principal of a preschool to second-grade school. I have had varied experiences in early childhood. First, as a special education teacher, I consulted with students who were housed in our school, but I was never responsible for their case management. When I became an administrator, I relied on my experience as a special education teacher to shape my philosophy or beliefs regarding preschool instruction and programming as my preparation for K-12 school leadership did not prepare me to be a leader in a preschool program. Later, my school became a PDG program which meant that my special education preschool was going to be expanded to include students without disabilities. Again, I had very little knowledge on what an inclusive preschool should look like. My team of teachers visited other preschool sites to learn and together we tried to navigate this world of early childhood. We tried some things that we saw in other places and sometimes we would keep it in place or we would move in a different direction due to a lack of fit with our program or a lack of understanding as to why it was important.

One of the requirements of MPDG is that if you teach in one of the classrooms you are encouraged to go to a Summer Institute which is a professional development week focused on early education. It was here that I was first exposed to CLASS, what it examines, and why teacher/student interactions are so powerful. I became CLASS certified in January of 2018 and have been on several site visits coding classrooms to ensure I would maintain my reliability.

I have visited programs that were preschool-only sites and programs that were housed within a K-12 building. I have noticed that each is operated completely differently. In the schools, there appears to be a realization and understanding of kindergarten readiness and a focus on this process. The programs have teachers that are certified and have a thorough understanding of child development. When asked why they are doing a certain task or asking the kids to work on something they could always communicate why it was beneficial for kids. In preschool-only settings there seemed to be less of an understanding of kindergarten readiness and more of a push for "developmentally appropriate practice." In the past, the term "developmentally appropriate practice" was difficult for me because I have always believed that kids can do more if we expect it. In other words, if one person doesn't think it's appropriate because of a predetermined set of stages, and simply waits for the child to naturally obtain these skills, then I believe they have just done a disservice to the child. However, over the years and through various professional development opportunities, I have learned the true meaning of developmentally appropriate practice especially when it relates to an early childhood setting. We have learned that while you do take the age and stage of development of a child into consideration, you also look at the individual needs of each student to develop a program.

As a school administrator, I've been forced to learn along with my staff about early childhood education and what four-year-olds should be learning. I have always felt it was important for me to learn right along with my staff, so I can help direct and facilitate the programs goals and ask questions. I have learned a lot in the past four years

and I believe that my philosophy on early childhood education has shifted due to learning about the importance of social-emotional development, adult/child interactions, and kindergarten readiness. As a result, some of this learning has shifted the work that is done in the K-2 classrooms.

Ethical Considerations

This study focuses on comparing leadership within two different preschool sites. It's important to acknowledge that most preschool-only programs are Head Starts, and preschools located in a K-12 building are run by a school district. It will be extremely important that during this process I maintain the anonymity of the programs to ensure the reputation of either "type" is not inadvertently damaged.

While the rural state is very large in terms of square miles, it has a very small education community. Everyone knows each other because all program directors need to attend trainings offered throughout the school year. PDG currently has programs in only 28 communities. Therefore, pseudonyms are used throughout this study, so the participant's programs and community's identities remain confidential.

While interviewing my colleagues, I needed to be cognizant of the relationships I have built with the program leaders. These relationships facilitated a trusting relationship, and, as a result, I believe I got honest answers. However, at times I felt like these relationships were a threat. For example, program directors are not given access to each other's CLASS scores. Therefore, some of the leaders may have been offended that I

knew how their program performed on CLASS, and they could have chosen to say untruths during interviews.

Trustworthiness

There were several threats to validity that needed to be considered during this study. The first is its transferability to the general population. Transferability is defined as the researcher ensuring that the descriptions are rich enough for the reader to gain a clear understanding and transfer it to similar settings (Cresswell, 2013). To accomplish this, I described in as much detail as I could the research participant's demographics and settings without compromising confidentiality. However, it will be up to the readers of this research to determine if this study applies in the context of their setting. Another threat to validity is researcher bias. This is defined as the researcher promoting one theory over another or not interviewing different leaders due to an inherent bias towards one group over another (Cresswell, 2013). As stated earlier in the study, I have an inherent bias towards school districts having better preschools; however, the sample of this study included Head Start and school district leaders to ensure all leaders were represented. While coding and determining themes, I needed to be cognizant of my own inherent bias and bracket this information during coding. I conducted member checks to ensure that the findings are interpreted correctly. Member checks are defined as "the researcher soliciting participant's views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 252). After interviews were transcribed and coded for themes, they were sent back to the original participant to ensure accuracy in beliefs

and trends. Triangulation was also used to ensure the evidence was valid. Triangulation is when “researchers use multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 251). For this study, the interviews of the participants, as well as each preschool site’s mission and vision statement and program CLASS scores and leader LPI scores, were used to determine the themes. Further, because I have stated my inherent bias, a second coder was used to ensure that similar themes were found.

Summary of Chapter Three

The interpretive framework of this comparative case study is pragmatism. Multiple forms of data were gathered including: program CLASS scores, leader LPI scores, interviews with the leaders of the top preschool-only program and top preschool within a K-12 setting based on their overall program CLASS scores, and mission and vision statements. This data was coded and sorted for themes, which are detailed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS

Introduction

This qualitative study examined the leadership of preschool programs participating in Cohort I of a rural state's Preschool Development Grant. Cohort I sites were the programs that had previously established preschools and have been participating in professional development and creation of a quality preschool since 2015. This study examined the top two sites using a comparative case study research model. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity. The first site is called the Adair Preschool with two leaders Alpha and Brock. The second site is called Bailey Preschool with three leaders: Carla, Doug, and Edgar. Leaders of both sites filled out a Leadership Practice Inventory or LPI, a tool used to examine the transformational traits of a leader. The leaders then choose at least three followers to complete observational LPIs on the leaders. Results were tabulated electronically. Leaders were also interviewed, mission vision statements were collected, each preschool site was toured by the researcher, and coding took place on all artifacts. There were three themes that resulted from this analysis which included leadership orientation, candor, and relationships. Further, a second coder was utilized to ensure that researcher bias did not affect the outcome of the study and ensure trustworthiness. The themes that the second coder found were communication, collaboration, integration, sense of community, and professional development. These codes are reflected within the themes that the researcher found either with synonyms or as sub themes within the overall study, which are illustrated in Figure 5.

CLASS Score Summary

The first step in data analysis was to obtain CLASS scores for all the Cohort I schools. These scores were then averaged and ranked highest to lowest. The top two preschool sites were then asked to participate. The CLASS scores for Adair Preschool and Bailey Preschool are detailed in Table 4.0 as well as Domain Averages are listed.

Table 4.0: CLASS Scores for Adair Preschool and Bailey Preschool

Program Name	PC	NC	TS	RSP	ES Domain	BM	P	ILF	CO Domain
Adair Preschool	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.25	6.13	6.00	6.00	6.04
Bailey Preschool	6.50	7.00	6.75	6.00	6.56	6.75	6.75	6.63	6.71
National Average					6.1				5.7

Program Name	CD	QF	LM	IS Domain	Program Average
Adair Preschool	5.38	5.50	5.38	5.42	5.90
Bailey Preschool	4.50	4.13	4.13	4.25	5.84
National Average				3.6	

(GEMS data request 2018 and Cubbage, 2015)

KEY
PC – Positive Climate
NC – Negative Climate
TS – Teacher Sensitivity
RSP – Regard for Student Perspectives
ES – Emotional Support Domain
BM – Behavior Management
P – Productivity
ILF – Instructional Learning Formats
CO – Classroom Organization Domain
CD – Concept Development
QF – Quality of Feedback
LM – Language Modeling
IS – Instructional Support Domain

CLASS is organized into three domains comprised of the Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Each domain has at least three or more dimensions that make up that domain. Table 4.1 describes the dimensions listed within each domain and the definition of what is measured.

Table 4.1 – CLASS Domains and Dimensions Pianta et al (2008)

Emotional Support (ES) Domain	
Positive Climate (PC)	Reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and amount students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions (p. 23)
Negative Climate (NC)	Reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom; the frequency, quality, and intensity of the teacher and peer negativity are key to this scale (28)
Teacher Sensitivity (TS)	Encompasses the teacher's awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate students' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement (32)
Regard for Student Perspectives (RSP)	Captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy (38)
Classroom Organization (CO) Domain	
Behavior Management (BM)	Encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior (44)
Productivity (P)	Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities (49)
Instructional Learning Formats (ILF)	Focuses on ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities (55)
Instructional Support (IS) Domain	
Concept Development (CD)	Measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction (62)
Quality of Feedback (QF)	Assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation (69)
Language Modeling (LM)	Captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language facilitation techniques (75)

The CLASS scores listed in Table 4.0 illustrate the difference between the top two preschool sites in Cohort I participating in the PDG. These scores are based on the CLASS assessment. The difference between the two sites is six tenths of a point. The biggest difference between the two sites is in the Instructional Support Domain where Adair Preschool had over a point higher average score than Bailey Preschool. Further, Adair Preschool scored higher than Bailey Preschool on the Domain of Instructional Support, which include Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling. The Instructional Support was the lowest score for both programs as well as the National Average. Yet, each preschool site scored higher than the National Average. Further, Bailey Preschool had higher scores in Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Behavior Management, Productivity, and Instructional Learning Formats, but the difference in scores in Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling made the difference and possibly caused their average score to become higher.

Site Profile's and Leadership Practice Inventory

It's important to understand each preschool site in terms of its size, demographics, structure, and understand each leader's experience and qualifications Therefore, each site is detailed below and LPI scores are listed after each site description.

Adair Preschool

Adair Preschool is part of a larger school district. The school district has a total population of 5300 students. There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools, a senior high school, and an alternative school program. The school district has a special

education preschool, which is solely for students with disabilities. In 2015, it was awarded the PDG with the funds being utilized to place a preschool classroom in two separate elementary schools. Each classroom has its own principal and set of teaching teams (teacher and paraeducator). Each elementary school operates independently from each other and has different needs; however, they share an Independent Consultant, State Appointed Consultant, and a School District Coach. However, they have separate principals. Therefore, both administrators of the two classrooms were included in the study. The administrators at the Adair Preschool are Alpha and Brock.

Alpha's Background

Alpha went through the "normal track." He got a bachelor's degree and then taught for about five years before earning a Master's Degree from a university in Michigan. He then taught fourth grade for about 15 years and coached Varsity Basketball. His first leadership position was as an Athletic Director/Middle School Principal. In 2011, he moved to his current job as an elementary school principal. The school has a special education preschool program. Alpha has had very little experience with preschool prior to coming to his current position.

Brock's Background

Brock has been a principal for 19 years. He has been in his current position for six years. Prior to this posting, he spent time in another school district as both a teacher and an administrator. He was an elementary teacher for six years before stepping into a leadership role in an elementary school. While at his first administrative post, he had

experience working with a preschool program for students with disabilities, but it was an inclusive model, so students with and without disabilities were included in the program. The district charged tuition for typically developing peers to join the program. About four years ago, he piloted a program utilizing Title I monies, and then a year later, the school district obtained funds for the Preschool Development Grant. One thing of note is that this leader had a plaque hanging in his office. He was awarded a National Distinguished Principal Award from the NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals). Yet, he never brought this up in our interview.

Leadership Practice Inventories

Leadership Practice Inventories (LPIs) contain 30 questions for the leaders to fill out on themselves and another 30 questions which the leader gives to people that the leader works closely with and will understand the leader's behaviors. The 30 questions are leadership behaviors, and each is tied to a specific leadership skill. One rates the behaviors on a scale from 1-10. 1 is Never and 10 is Almost Always. The leadership skills that the LPI measured are Enabling Others to Act, Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart. Each of these behaviors is detailed in Figure 3. The LPI averages the leader and observer scores and then ranks the leader's skills in the above areas as High, Moderate, or Low. These scores are detailed in Table 4.2 and Table 4.4. The scores in the tables represent percentages. Percentages above 70 represent a high frequency. Scores between 30 and 69 represent a moderate frequency and scores below 30 represent a low frequency. The LPI also

indicates if a leader scores him or herself differently than the observers. The behaviors that are at least 1.5 points different should be given close attention. These scores are detailed in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4.

Adair Preschool Leadership Practices Inventories

The LPI scores for Adair Preschool leaders are detailed in Table 4.2 below. The scores listed are in averages. Alpha scored himself higher than his observers in all the five Leadership Practices. Brock scored himself fairly similar to his observers.

Table 4.2 – LPI scores for Adair Preschool

	Aplha Self	Alpha Observers score	Brock Self	Brock Observer Score	Adair Preschool Overall Scores
Enabling Others to Act	47	38.2	48.0	53.0	43.2
Challenging the process	47.0	37.0	48.0	48.0	40.7
Inspiring a Shared Vision	42.0	32.2	44.0	46.0	36.8
Modeling the Way	40.0	27.5	48.0	47.0	34.0
Encouraging the Heart	37	16.2	46.0	46.0	26.2

Further, Table 4.2 shows that overall the leaders at this site practice most of the behaviors moderately except for Encouraging the Heart, which was the lowest overall scores. However, it's important to note that Alpha's scores were lower than Brock's scores. While both leaders scored themselves in the Moderate range – Alpha's observers scored him in the Low range and Brock's observers scored him in the Moderate range.

When one breaks down each Leadership Practice and looks closer, there are certain behaviors that stand out. Alpha had 22 behaviors that were scored at least 1.5 points different than his observers. Table 4.3 detail the Leadership Behaviors that were at least 1.5 points different and the leadership skill that the individual behavior is linked with.

Table 4.3 – Alpha's – Behaviors more than 1.5 points different

Leadership Behaviors	Self	Observers	Leadership Skill
Is enthusiastic and positive about future	6	7.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Speaks with conviction about meaning of work	9	7.5	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Describes Compelling image of the future	7	2.5	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Appeals to others to share dream of future.	6	1.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Develops Cooperative Relationships	7	3.2	Enabling Others to Act
Supports other people's decisions	8	6.5	Enabling Others to Act
Challenges people to try new approaches	8	6.5	Challenging the Process
Experiments and Takes Risks	8	6.0	Challenging the Process
Looks outside the organization for ways to improve	8	6.0	Challenging the Process
Takes initiative to overcome obstacles	8	5.8	Challenging the Process
Ensures that people adhere to agreed-on standards	6	3.5	Modeling the Way
Follows through on promises and commitments	7	2.5	Modeling the Way
Expresses confidence in people's abilities	6	3.0	Encouraging the Heart
Gives team members appreciation and support	6	2.5	Encouraging the Heart

Table 4.3 Continued

Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments	7	2.2	Encouraging the Heart
Creatively rewards people for their contributions	5	2.2	Encouraging the Heart
Recognizes people for their commitment to shared values	5	2.0	Encouraging the Heart

Alpha had three behaviors tied to Inspiring a Shared Vision, four behaviors tied to Challenging the Process, one behavior tied to Enabling Others to Act, two behaviors tied to Modeling the Way, and five behaviors tied to Encouraging the heart. Overall, Alpha's Self scores were mostly in the Low Range.

Brock scores were lower than his observers. He also had eight Leadership behaviors that were scored 1.5 points different than his observers. These are detailed in Table 4.4. Brock had two behaviors that were tied to the Leadership Skill of Enabling Others to Act, two behaviors tied to Challenging the Process, two behaviors tied to Enabling Others to Act, two behaviors tied to Modeling the Way, and two behaviors tied to Inspiring a Shared vision. There were three behaviors where Brock ranked himself at least 1.5 points higher than his observers, these were follows through on promises and commitments, describes compelling image of future, and asks "what can we learn?" The other behaviors he rated himself lower than his observers.

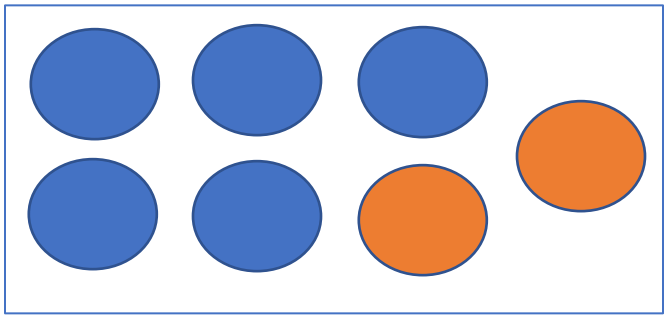
Table 4.4 – Brock – Behaviors that are 1.5 points different.

Leadership Behaviors	Self	Observers	Leadership Skill
Ensures that people grow in their jobs	7	9.0	Enabling Others to Act
Supports Other People's Decisions	7	8.5	Enabling Others to Act
Takes initiative to overcome obstacles	7	9.0	Challenging the Process
Asks, "What can we Learn?"	7	5.5	Challenging the Process.
Follows Through on Promises and Commitments	8	6.5	Modeling the Way
Ensures that goals, plans, and milestones are met	7	8.5	Modeling the Way
Speaks with Conviction about meaning of work	6	8.0	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Describes Compelling image of future	8	6.5	Inspiring a Shared Vision

Bailey Preschool

Bailey Preschool is also located within a school district which has 1200 students and has one elementary school, one middle school, an alternative school, and one high school. In 2015, the school district was awarded the PDG. The school district's preschool is housed in a separate school with the community's Head Start – the school is called Bailey Preschool and the Head Start logo and school district logos are located on the outside of the building side by side. Further the mission and vision of Bailey Preschool shares the same logos and is located throughout the building. Bailey Preschool and the school district share leadership positions and a few of the positions are paid for jointly. For example, Head Start's Ed. Coordinator, Health Services, and Family Engagement Coordinator have a percentage of their salaries paid by the school district. The majority of their salaries are paid for with Head Start funds. The superintendent is the evaluator of

the school district staff at the preschool site. There are seven preschool classrooms in this school comprising of 96 total students. Four of the classrooms are Head Start classrooms and two are school district classrooms. The only thing that differentiates one room from the next is how the employees are paid – otherwise the site strives for continuity. Figure 4 illustrates the format of the Bailey Preschool.



Blue – Head Start Classrooms (mix of 3 and 4-year-olds)
Orange – School District Classrooms (only 4-year-olds)
Figure 4 – Visualization of Bailey Preschool

Carla's Background

Carla is the Director of Head Start. She has been the Director for 12 years and was the fiscal officer for 10 years. She has an Associate Degree in Business Management and a Bachelor's in Communication. This is the only leader who participated in the study that did not have a degree in education. This is also the only female leader. Head Start does not require that a director have a degree in education. While this is preferred, Head Start regulation 01.04.01 states that a minimum qualification that a site director have is a bachelor's degree or equivalent in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Social Welfare, Public Administration, Human Resources, Day Care Administration, or one of the Social Sciences.

Doug's Background

Doug is the Education Coordinator at Head Start. He is a retired elementary principal. He has a Master's Degree in Education Leadership and spent 25 years in the elementary and middle schools in his community. He spent 15 years as a school principal before retiring. He didn't have experience in a preschool before starting to work at Head Start in 2010.

Edgar's Background

Edgar is the Superintendent of the school district. His previous post was as a principal in a small rural community. He spent 14 years in that position. Prior to that, he was a third grade teacher for five years. He spent a few years working on getting a Master's Degree in Early Childhood but stopped recently because the scholarships were cut due to loss of funding.

Bailey Preschool Leadership Practice Inventories

Two of the Bailey Preschool leaders turned in their Self LPI on the day of the interview. One was returned via mail. Four observer ratings were received on each of the leader's followers. A summary of the scores is located below in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 – LPI scores for Bailey Preschool – SELF and Observer

	Carla Self	Carla's Observers	Doug's Self	Doug's Observers	Edgar Self	Edgar Observer's	Overall Scores
Enabling Others to Act	44	42.2	50	53.0	49	53.8	48.5
Challenging the Process	43	42.0	38	55.2	44	49.8	45.3
Inspiring a Shared Vision	46	41.8	44	58.0	45	52.2	48.3
Modeling the Way	47	49.8	48	56.2	45	46	48.6
Encouraging the Heart	42	44.8	50	51.5	39	51.5	46.4

All of the LPI scores were in the moderate range. Carla's scores were very similar to her observer's except in the area of Inspiring a Shared Vision, which was a five-point difference. Doug had similar scores on Enabling Other's to Act and Encouraging the Heart. However, he rated himself lower on the behaviors relating to Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, and Modeling the Way. His observers scored him higher on all behaviors. Edgar's scores were also lower than his observers. His lowest Self score was on Encouraging the Heart and the Behavior that was the closest to his observers score was the behavior of Modeling the Way. Overall, the LPI scores of Bailey Preschool are in the Moderate range.

When one examines each leader's scores more closely, one notices that they each have their own perceived strengths and perceived weakness, which are either confirmed or denied by a closer examination of individual behaviors relating to a Leadership Skill. Table 4.5 details the behaviors that Carla had that were at least 1.5 points different than her observers.

Table 4.6 – Leadership Behaviors that are 1.5 points different for Carla

Leadership Behaviors	Self	Observers	Leadership Skill
Ensures that goals, plans, and milestones are set	7	8.8	Modeling the Way
Makes Progress towards goals one step at a time	6	8.2	Modeling the Way
Talks about Future Trends	10	7.5	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Experiments and takes risks	8	6.2	Challenging the Process
Asks, “What can we learn?”	9	7.0	Challenging the Process
Supports other people’s decisions	9	6.8	Enabling others to Act
Describes compelling image of the future	8	6.2	Enabling Others to Act

Carla scored herself higher than her observers on every behavior except *makes progress towards goals one step at a time*, which relates to the Leadership Skill of Modeling the Way. This is the only leader that didn’t have at least one behavior in each Leadership Skill. She had zero behaviors in the leadership skill of Encouraging the Heart, which was different than the other leaders in her site.

Doug had only one behavior where he rated himself higher than his observers, which was “gives team members appreciation and support.” This was the one behavior that had the highest difference in scores. Further, most of Doug’s scores were lower than the observer’s. His scores are detailed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 – Leadership Behaviors on the LPI that have more than 1.5-point difference – Doug

Leadership Behaviors	Self	Observers	Leadership Skill
Makes progress towards goals one step at a time	8	9.8	Modeling the Way
Ensures that goals, plans, and milestones are met	7	9.8	Modeling the Way
Sets example of what is expected	8	9.5	Modeling the Way
Shows others how their interests can be realized	8	9.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Appeals to others to share dream of future	7	9.5	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Describes compelling image of future	6	9.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Talks about Future Trends	6	9.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Challenges people to try new approaches	6	9.5	Challenging the Process
Seeks challenging opportunities	5	9.5	Challenging the Process
Looks outside organization for ways to improve	7	9.0	Challenging the Process
Experiments and Takes Risks	6	8.8	Challenging the Process
Gives Team members appreciation and support	9	6.8	Encouraging the Heart
Praises People for a job well done	8	9.5	Encouraging the Heart

Doug had a behavior which was scored at least 1.5 points different than his observer's except in the Leadership Skill of Enabling Others to Act which was different than his colleagues.

Edgar's scores on the LPI show that he scored himself lower on the leadership behaviors than his observers. His scores are detailed in Table 4.8. Edgar had more

behaviors in the Leadership Skill of Encouraging the Heart than his colleagues. Yet, he scored himself lower than his observers on every leadership behavior.

Table 4.8 – Edgar – Summary of Leadership Behaviors that are at least 1.5 points different

Leadership Behaviors	Self	Observers	Leadership Skill
Ensures that people adhere to agreed-upon standards	6	7.8	Modeling the Way
Listens to diverse points of view	7	9.2	Enabling Others to Act
Shows others how their interests can be realized	7	8.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Describes compelling image of future	7	8.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Appeals to others to share dream of future	6	8.8	Inspiring a Shared Vision
Looks outside organization for ways to improve	7	8.8	Challenging the Process
Experiments and takes risks	6	8.8	Challenge the Process
Praises People for a job well done	7	9.5	Encouraging the Heart
Speaks with conviction about meaning of work	6	8.5	Encouraging the Heart
Express confidence in people's abilities	6	8.0	Encouraging the Heart
Creatively rewards people for their contribution	6	7.8	Encouraging the Heart
Recognizes people for commitment to shared values	6	9.0	Encouraging the Heart
Gives team members appreciation and support	7	8.8	Encouraging the Heart

Mission and Vision Statements

Mission statements were collected from each preschool as part of the data collection process. Mission statements are used to describe the purpose of schools and the commitment, its values and what the focus is on (Education Reform, 2015). Adair

Preschool had two separate mission statements because the preschool classrooms are in separate buildings. These will be tied to the leaders to assist with understanding the behaviors of each administrator. Alpha's mission statement reads:

> We invest in our students' learning by creating a supportive, challenging, and positive environment where every student can succeed and make a difference in a rapidly changing world community.

In contrast, Brock had a specific mission statement for his early childhood program it reads:

> In a nurturing and play-based environment, our program builds a child's self-esteem and problem-solving skills, while fostering respect for themselves and others. We teach the skills needed to successfully transition into kindergarten by fostering intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth and we collaborate with community partners to support the needs of all families and children involved in our program.

Bailey Preschool has one mission and vision statement even though there are Head Start and school district classrooms located in the school. The mission and vision statement are located throughout the school but most prominently on the outside of the building on a large plaque with both the Head Start logo and the school district logo. It reads:

> [Baily Preschool] will be a positive influence for change by providing a supportive and safe learning environment for children and their families. Its mission reads, "[Bailey Preschool's] mission is to ensure that all children enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive, early reading, math and social skills for continued school success. We strive to establish the foundation for creating a successful future.

Themes

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of data.

1. Leadership Orientation or the ability to understand strengths and weaknesses to determine one's own priorities and preferences. This is referred to as leadership orientation or task oriented or people oriented.
2. The importance of having candor or being open and honest with their staff which helped them be successful.
3. The importance of relationships between teacher and students as well as principals and staff.

The themes are illustrated in Figure 5 below. The first theme relationship is defined as connecting people or actions that bring people together. Each leader discussed the importance of relationships throughout the research indicating relationships were key to their successes. The next theme of candor was evident when discussing how leaders filter information to their followers. Each site talked about the importance of filtering needed information for their staff to ensure they were able to focus on the tasks at hand, and finally, Leadership Orientation was discussed at both sites. Leadership Orientation for the purposes of this study is defined as each leader understanding their priorities and preferences. Each leader had admitted strengths and weaknesses which they were able to add to their program and make it better and each leader was identified as either a task-oriented leader or a people-oriented leader. The clusters are located below each theme.

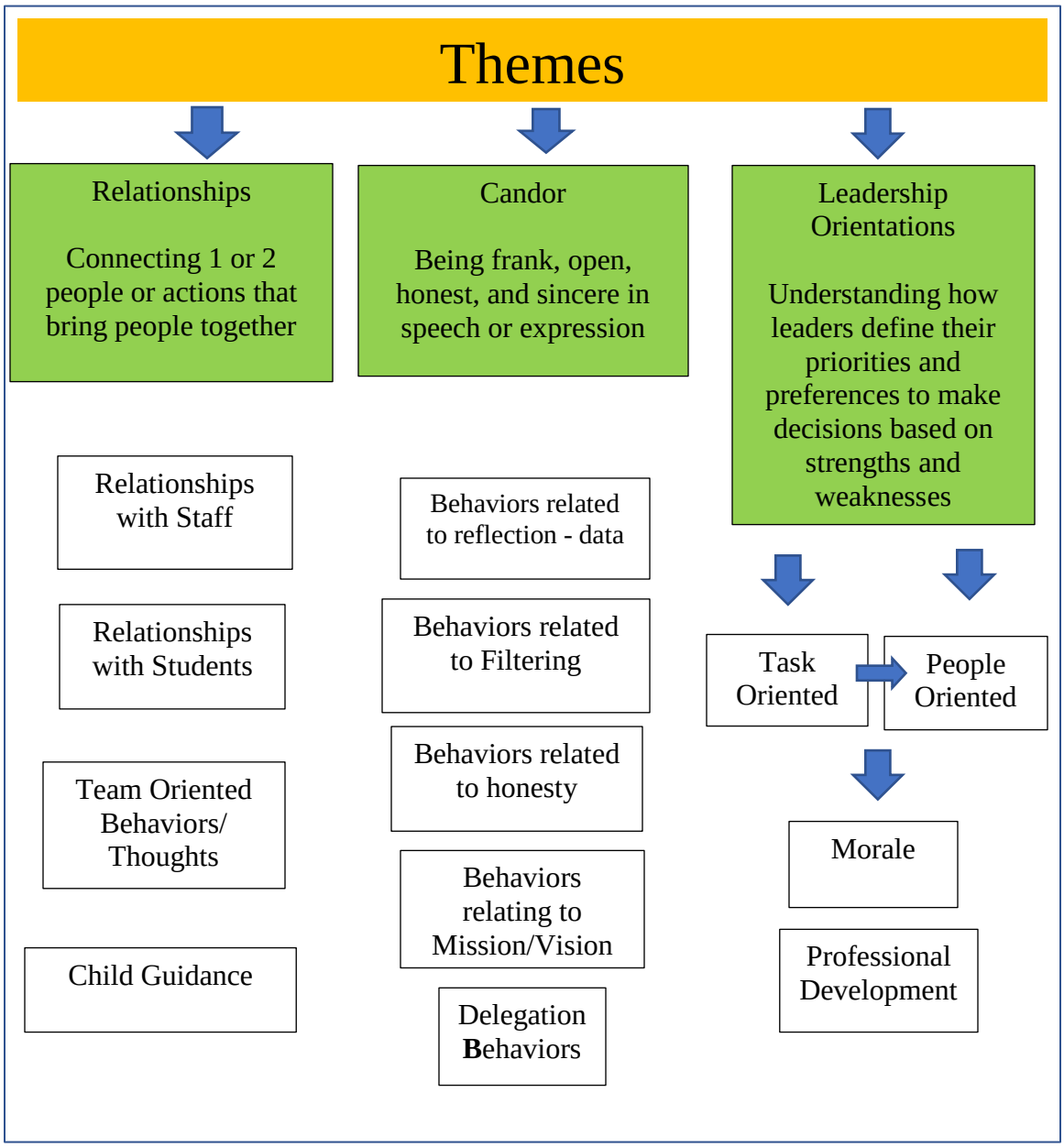


Figure 5 – Illustration of Themes

Theme 1 – Leadership Orientation

Leadership Orientation is defined as whether leaders are task-oriented or people oriented. Task-orientated leaders tend to focus on getting work done and setting and meeting deadlines. People-oriented leaders are leaders that focus on getting work done

but also want to please the employees (Leadership Orientation: Task-Oriented & People-Oriented, 2012).

Adair Preschool – Leadership Orientation Evidence

Alpha stated, he felt like he was someone who was good at finding good people. He stated, “I think I do a pretty good job of hiring…I feel like hiring is the most important part of my job, and then trusting them to do the best job that they can and keeping those lines of communication open, so I can help them problem solve through what they need to do…” Alpha mentioned his ability to hire good people multiple times throughout the interview. Later he stated that he looks for, “people who are good content wise, have good management, and can be team players.”

Further, he also felt as though he was approachable and supportive stating, “I'm approachable. And once again, I'm not going to turn down a good idea. I think, [we are] a pretty open and welcoming school. I know that lot of our itinerate staff…will make a comment sometime throughout the year [about] how much they enjoy coming to our school because it's just opening, welcoming, positive attitude moving forward.” When asked about what his colleagues would say about him, he felt they would say he was realistic and he discussed his mentoring of other administrators. “I think colleagues…would consider me pretty realistic on stuff. I've mentored a couple of other principles I just tell them…for the first three years you're going to feel like you suck and that's okay because you probably do. We all do the first three years unless you get over that piece, give yourself some grace and let's move forward.”

In terms of his challenges, he readily admitted multiple times that communication and lack of follow-through were his biggest weaknesses. Alpha's LPI scores also confirm these challenges. The leadership behaviors that relate to his leadership orientation and were his lowest self-scores were that of the following behaviors: (1) ensuring people adhere to agreed-on standards, (2) expresses confidence in people's abilities, (3) follows through on promises and commitments, (4) finds ways to celebrate accomplishments, (5) appeals to others to share dream of future. Alpha scored himself with fives (occasional) and sixes (sometimes) on these behaviors.

The second leader in Adair Preschool had a little bit of a contrast to his orientation. Brock felt like he was reliable, dependable, and flexible. When talking about his preschool teacher he stated, "I am a little bit more flexible in providing opportunities for a release time if she needs that or coverage for this because I know that there's a lot going on." He recognizes that his preschool teacher is busy and wants to support her.

Brock also felt as though he was knowledgeable and supportive of his staff saying, "I have a good knowledge base of education. I support my teachers, support my parents, my kids. They [supervisors] don't hear much from me because I'm handling things and taking care of things in my world to where there's not going to be a need for a lot of parents knocking on their door saying, what's going on with Mister…?"

Brock also felt like his staff had good relationships with him stating, "I think they respect me. They can learn things from me as well as I can learn from them. So, it's that whole collaborative, cooperative team player kind of mentality they would probably rank me pretty high in those regards and colleagues would be the same I think as well."

In terms of naysayers, Brock was quick to point out that he didn't feel like there was any negativity at his school.

> Naysayers?…If I hear it I have a really good pulse on the teams here. Every grade level is a little different dynamic. If I explain to them why we're doing something with the rationale I'm at a point now they'll do it. They will be committed to that and they're very willing to do that. Naysayers though? They come to me. They should come to me. There shouldn't be any of this you know negative divide stuff. I'm open with them, I listen to them, we usually compromise again I go to the four P's which is what is our overall Purpose here why I'm asking you to do this? What is our Plan? Our plan together as a staff. My leadership decided we're going to do this. The Picture of what that looks like is going to be this, and what is your One Part? I'm just asking your one small part to get this launched. What do you want to start with?

Brock's LPI scores confirm that he felt he was dependable, respected by others, collaborative, open and honest as he scored himself with mostly 8's (Usually), 9's (very frequently) or 10's (Almost Always) on the following leadership behaviors: (1) praises people for a job well done, (2) expresses confidence in others abilities, (3) treats others with respect and dignity, (4) develops cooperative relationships, (5) sets example of what is expected, (6) gives team members appreciation and support, and (7) follows through on promises and commitments.

Adair Preschool was comprised of two different schools and each leader and classroom had similarities and differences in terms of leadership orientation. For example, each leader expressed the importance of early childhood programs and specifically the importance of social emotional development. When discussing how students who attend his preschool do compared to others Brock stated, "I think they get a pretty rigorous academic learning environment…and I think having them kindergarten ready [in terms] of academics and that social emotional piece is more important than

anything.” He also stated the importance of preschool when talking about how to get students kindergarten ready he stated, “learning how to build literacy development is critical and it's important but it's also takes a lot of time. We also utilize assessment data to kind of drive instruction and [we’re] finding that…preschool teachers have the ability to look at that and reflect on that and change their practices.” He further discussed the importance of a social emotional development stating, “I've also learned a lot about how to help kiddos through the conscious discipline (which is a social emotional curriculum) practices which is I think wonderful and very exciting and meaningful, but we need to carry that on to kindergarten, first and second grade so that it's more systemic and aligned.

While they were similar in their belief of the importance of early childhood and social emotional development they were different in their backgrounds. For example, Alpha’s leadership experience was mostly as an Athletic Director, and Brock had mostly been an elementary principal and had more background in being an elementary preschool than his colleague. They also differed in their orientations; Alpha was more of a task-oriented leader who felt like he was good at hiring, was realistic but was also approachable, and supportive. In contrast, Brock felt like he was dependable, respected, collaborative, and cooperative making him more of a people-oriented leader. Alpha and Brock’s LPI Self scores indicate that they rated themselves accurately in these areas.

However, the observer LPI scores for each leader were also very different. For example, Alpha’s LPI Observer scores were lower than the leader’s Self scores in all five Leadership Practices. The lowest being Encouraging the Heart. Encouraging the Heart

involves the leader recognizing the contributions that individuals make, they celebrate, and they make people feel like heroes (Kouzes and Pozner, 2001 p.4). Brock's Observer's scores were similar to his self-scores. The biggest difference being in the Leadership Practice of Enabling Others to Act with a five-point difference between the Leaders Scores and the Observer's scores. Enabling Others to act involves creating an environment of trust. Leadership behaviors for this skill relate to making people feel capable and powerful. The average observer score for Alpha was 30.2 compared to 48 for Brock. The total possible is 60 points.

The CLASS scores from Adair Preschool confirm that it is a positive environment for students as well as focused on the social emotional development of its students. The class domains that relate to these areas are the Emotional Support Domain (6.25 out of 7.0) and the Instructional Support Doman (5.84 out of 7.0). It's important to note that Adair Preschool had the highest Instructional Support Domain scores in the PDG Grant funded programs, indicating that the program uses discussion to promote higher level thinking, teachers provide feedback to students to expand their learning, and the teacher's use language stimulation techniques. See Table 4.1 for further explanation of each domain.

Bailey Preschool Leadership Orientation Evidence

Bailey Preschool leaders were also able to share their strengths and weaknesses. Carla at felt like she was more of a "bulldozer." It didn't come across that she felt it was a weakness rather she viewed it as her role. When asked to explain that further she stated,

> Well, if it's a regulation I don't make the regulations but it's my job to make sure it happens and it's my job to make sure that I talk to the staff about why we do things-- we just recently had some things happen and it's like I'm really sorry. [For example] We've had to enroll children. We're near the end of our school year and we've had to enroll children because it's under 30 days. So, in one classroom the child will be there for 11 days. I don't make the rules, but this is [going to] benefit the child.

Carla was referring to a Head Start regulation 1302.15 which requires a program to fill its open slots even if there are less than 30 days left in the school year. This statement was later confirmed by Doug who stated, “Some people they'll come talk to me, but they won’t talk to her…she's the boss and she carries a big stick…we nicknamed her the bulldozer because and it's good in a lot of ways because if she wants something done or if she needs something she gets it done and she goes after it.”

Carla also felt like some people feared her stating, “some of {my staff}, I don't know why, are scared. I just listen to them and it's like okay, so how can we fix this? What ideas do you got for me?” She also felt that because she is driven some people take things more personally than others. For example, when discussing her communication style, she said, “they [staff] just know that I'm driven and sometimes if I by chance [I] don't say hello it's nothing personal. Don't take it personal. I've got things I've got to get done for the program to make sure the program is still running.” Therefore, Carla felt as though she was someone who could complete tasks and follow and enforce regulations. These were higher on her list of priorities than relationships making her more of a task-oriented person.

Carla’s LPI scores also show that she is more of a task-oriented person. She scored herself high on the following task behaviors related to her comment of being a

"bull dozer": (1) ensures that people adhere to agreed-on standards and (2) sets example of what is expected. She scored herself with 9's (Very Frequently) on these behaviors. Her LPI scores also confirm her stated belief that sometimes "people are a little scared of her." She rated herself with mostly 6's (Sometimes) on the following leadership behaviors: (1) treats others with dignity and respect, (2) listens to diverse points of view, (3) appeals to others to share dream of future.

Doug explained his leadership style and behaviors in contrast to Carla. He felt as though he was fair and calm and didn't need to lead by asserting his authority, stating,

> I think I'm fair. I think I'm calm, for the most part….I don't think I lead with the sword. I think I try to lead by example…I'm here to help. I'm here to direct. Kind of the driver and if we're going down the wrong road then I need to be able to stop, change directions and move. So, I try to make sure we're taking the best path possible.

He continued to discuss why their leadership styles are different, "I don't think I'm a bulldozer. I think I'm a little more laid back and so between the two of us we're able to work with each other – it works out pretty good and it's a good balance. I don't think I'm a softy. Sometimes she [Carla] accuses me of being too nice." He further talked about his biggest weakness which is organization, "I think my weakness is probably organization. I'll come in the summer and my goal is to make things nice."

Doug's LPI scores confirm his belief that he leads by example, is there to help, direct, and be a driver of the direction the program is going in. He rated himself with mostly 8's (Usually) and 9's (Very Frequently) on the following leadership behaviors, which relates to his people-orientation leadership style: (1) is enthusiastic and positive, (2) develops cooperative relationships, (3) treats people with dignity and respect, (4)

follows through on promises and commitments, (5) recognizes people for their commitment to shared values, (6) praises people for a job well done, and (7) expresses confidence in people's abilities.

The final leader at Bailey Preschool is the superintendent. He discussed that he's a good listener. He is in a unique role in that he has to be the negotiator quite a lot because he is balancing Head Start needs with school district needs. He stated,

> I would say I listen to them because they [Head Start]-at times get upset and…they just need someone to listen to. So, my strengths are I think I'm pretty good at negotiating between the public school and the Head Start. Particularly, when there are issues that involve both. So, I think I'm pretty good at addressing those issues in a way that keeps this relationship going…

In terms of weaknesses Edgar stated that he needs to be more visible in the school as sometimes he doesn't get out to the preschool as often as he would like (he's located off campus in a different building). He said, "…being six stop lights away from there I don't get out there as much as I should. I try to get into every building every day, but sometimes you get over to the elementary and you don't get out of there right away or sometimes you get over to the high school." Edgar also talked about recognizing others. He stated that his staff would mark him as less than sometimes on this question (Referring to LPI questionnaire).

Edgar's LPI Self scores confirmed the statements that he was a good listener, he's a good negotiator, and that he struggles with recognizing others. He scored himself with 8's (Usually) on the following leadership behaviors: (1) takes imitative to overcome obstacles, (2) lets people choose how to do their work, (3) develops cooperative relationships. Further, his scores on recognition were his lowest scores, he scored himself

with 6's (Sometimes) on the following leadership behaviors: (1) praises people for a job well done, (2) recognizes people for commitment to shared values, (3) creatively rewards people for their contributions, and (4) finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.

Overall, the three leaders of Bailey Preschool all have different leadership orientations. Carla is mostly a task-oriented leader whose job it is to make sure people comply with regulations and rules. Doug and Edgar are more people-oriented and tend to put relationships with the staff at the forefront of their leadership. Further, each leader's OPI scores confirm their beliefs. When examining the observer LPI scores for each of the leaders, these understandings of strengths and weaknesses remain true. For example, on the Leadership Practice of Encouraging the Heart, Carla received the lowest score from her observers with a score of 44.8 compared to Doug and Edgar getting the same score of 51.5 out of 60 possible points, which confirms the belief that Carla has that some staff are scared of her and she needs to work on relationships. Further, Doug's highest score was in Inspiring Others to Act, with a score of 58 out of 60 and this confirms his belief that he's not leading with a sword but leading by example. Edgar's belief that he's a good listener and balances the needs of the both the programs is confirmed with the Leadership Practice of Enabling Others to Act, with a score of 53.3 out of 60 total possible points.

The CLASS scores for Bailey Preschool also confirm the leaders' belief that they are either task-oriented or people-oriented. For example, Bailey Preschool has high scores in terms of Behavior Management (6.75), Productivity (6.75) and Instructional Learning Formats (6.63), which are more task-type behaviors. These CLASS dimensions measure how well a teacher provides clear behavioral expectations, manages instructional

time and routines, and how the teacher maximizes student interest. Further, Bailey Preschool's scores in the Emotional Support domain are also very high. Positive Climate (6.50), Negative Climate (7.0), Teacher Sensitivity (6.75), and Regard for Student Perspectives (6.0). The highest score a program can get on each dimension is 7.0. This domain is about the positive feel of program and what is done to ensure that students are supported socially and emotionally.

Theme 2 – Candor

Candor can be defined as being frank, open, honest, and sincere in speech or expression (Merriam-Webster, 2018). When looking at candor and leadership it is sometimes described as the "biggest dirty little secret" (Welch, 2005 p. 25). Some people that a lack of candor prevents employees from good ideas, slows decisions, and costs money. However, if leaders use candor, it results in fast decisions and high productivity (Galpan, Whittington, 2009).

All the leaders in the sites discussed the importance of being open and honest with their staff especially when it came to regulations or rules that needed to be followed. For example, the PDG requires certain assessments be given at specific times and Head Start has their own regulations and standards of operations. Each leader expressed an ability to utilize the vision to keep the preschool classrooms on track and the importance of being honest.

Adair Preschool – Candor Evidence

Alpha felt like his job as a leader was to understand the requirements and then relay the information to his staff in small steps. He stated,

> I mean, nothing moves the needle better on student growth or performance than quality instruction. I think part of that is also helping be a buffer from everything that the state wants and saying let's filter that through…and get rid of those…and just worry about this. You know, first and foremost remember the why we're here – we're not here to fulfill a grant, we're here to help move kids.

Alpha also discussed the importance of figuring out the purpose and not getting lost in a bunch of tasks to be completed. He stated,

> Let's really focus on what our kids need and … you know, for me talking about the schedule has never been a big issue for me even as a teacher. It's more, what do I do during that time? What do I do in this space? This is my space, this is my ball game. These are my rules. What do I do with it? Instead of worrying about that piece, I really want to worry about the why. Why are we here? What are we doing?

Recognizing his own faults, Alpha discussed his communication and reflection of his delivery stating,

> I think that communication piece is probably something I will always have to work on. I think we – you try to communicate up. I do try to do a lot of communication up front on what we're doing and everything but it's that day to day communication and everything – that is the hard piece when the rubber hits the road for the day it's really hard to slow it down and say, did I communicate this correctly? Did I do that?

Alpha's LPI scores also show that he struggles with communication. For example, he rated himself low, with mostly 6's (sometimes) on the following leadership behaviors: (1) is enthusiastic and positive about the future, (2) listens to diverse points of view, (3) is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership. Further, his LPI scores on the behaviors of (1) takes initiative to overcome obstacles, (2) talks about future trends, and (3) lets people

choose how to do their work, with 8's (usually) confirm his belief that he is a filter for his staff.

Brock felt as though he needed to understand what was going on to really help his staff which helped him with his candor. He stated, "I make the hard decisions when they need to be made but then I give the teachers the opportunity to make the decisions that they feel are right when it's at that classroom-level…" Brock further talked about the need to delegate but also be involved, Brock said, " I need to take a break and kind of step back because I have a tendency of doing too much and delegation is one of those things that I learned over the last 6-7 years…it's like okay, I can do this, but I still want to be part of everything in a sense."

Brock further discussed the importance of providing feedback in order to help the teacher's move forward and also making sure they can understand the why's stating,

> I would say that I am a facilitator for learning…. I go in [to classrooms] as often as I can and give notes of things that I'm seeing that are helpful. [we] take the time to celebrate some of those things at staff meetings…we have a ton of initiatives and a ton of things that we're supposed to be implementing and you know it's just let's concentrate on one or two things, do it really well and then dig deeper to the next layer.

Brock's LPI scores confirm that he is becoming someone who delegates responsibility and allows the teachers to choose their own path. He scored himself with mostly 8's (Usually) and 9's (Very Frequently) on the following leadership behaviors: (1) challenges people to try new approaches, and (2) lets people choose how to do their work. These scores show that he believes he is delegating some tasks to his observers. Further, Brock discussed the importance of going in depth to learn what's necessary and to concentrate on a few things. His LPI scores of 7's (Fairly Often) and 8's (Usually) on

the following behaviors: (1) asks, “what can we learn?” (2) takes initiative to overcome obstacles, (3) describes compelling images of the future, show that he believes he asks the right questions to figure out what’s really needed in terms of grant requirements and what needs to get done.

Bailey Preschool Candor Evidence

Carla was the only leader that really hinted with the word candor throughout the interview stating, “I try to be as helpful and give them [staff] any information they need. I also have an open door with parents, with staff, with community. They call me at home. They open my door, you know, my door is open, and I think that's important to be transparent.” In this case, the leader was stating that being honest with her staff is important.

Carla discussed the process she follows when writing the grants. She stated,

> It's not done solely by myself because I have experts in those fields. I have education, I have health, I have family services and I have nutrition, all those components are experts in what they do so I bring all of them together and oftentimes we'll either write together or we will sit together and write it and we'll go back and forth, … this is what I think … give me what you think. Nope, [Carla], you're a little off on this.

Carla is the only leader that does not have a degree in education as her background and training is in communication. She has an Associate’s Degree in this field. She further discussed communication with her staff, parents, and community and the importance of getting information out.

> Head Start is all about communication. There is so much overflow. We obviously all have our Facebook pages and the public preschool has theirs, we have ours. Parents get a huge number of letters and personal contacts.

> They have little apps now where they can contact the parent, you know, just to let them know how their child was that day, how things are going.

Carla's LPI scores confirm her belief that she uses candor or is honest with her staff, and someone that can work with a group to get tasks completed. She scored herself with a 10 (Almost Always) on the leadership behavior of talks about future trends, and with a 9 (Very Frequently) on the behavior of supporting other people's decisions. Carla also scored herself with an 8 (Usually) on the behavior of lets people choose how to do their work, which confirm Carla's belief that when she's writing grants she listens to the group.

Doug discussed the importance of candor but more in a sense of helping the organization continue long past his tenure. He stated,

> I think we always start out the vision and goals. We start out with this is what we want to see. We've really pushed the data. We've pushed [individual] growth. If you have your red child, what are you doing for your red child? If you do have a green child, how are you working on the other end? So that's quite a big goal. That's the vision statement, at least from my perspective if I want one. When I retire and walk out of here, I hope we have a system in place that the next person can step into and just keep it going and keep the process moving and you have certain things that are kind of your – that's your climate control that's your continuing improvement. I mean, it's just – it is the nuts and bolts to make sure your system is well-oiled and functioning and that's kind of the dream.

Doug's LPI scores indicate that he is focused on creating something that lasts long past his tenure as Education Coordinator. He scored himself with an 8 (Usually) on the leadership behavior of (1) takes initiative to overcome obstacles, (2) takes initiative to overcome obstacles. He scored himself with a 9 (Very Frequently) on the leadership behavior of (1) speaks with conviction about meaning of work, and (2) ensures that people grown in their job.

Edgar was very honest in discussing his role in the preschool and stated that while he's involved – the day-to-day operations fall to the education coordinator. Edgar stated,

> He deals with a lot of any discipline issues we have or walk through evaluations. I really only make it to the building about once a week in the classrooms. I mean, I go over there probably a couple times a week but to actually be in the classrooms [it's] probably about once a week. So, they are kind of unfortunately on their own. So, I would say that my leadership in that area is lacking because they have concerns that they have, but we meet every month with just our public-school program and we have leadership meetings every month.

Edgar was very honest in his leadership of the preschool, indicating that the Education Coordinator is really the leader of the program. His LPI scores of 6's (Sometimes) and 7's (Fairly Often) on the following behaviors indicate that he relies heavily on the education coordinator: (1) appeals to others to share dream of future, (2) ensures that people adhere to agreed-on standards, (3) recognizes people for commitment to shared values, and (3) creatively rewards people for their contribution.

The leadership of Bailey Preschool each have their own versions of candor. Carla uses the rules and regulations, Doug was honest in stating that he wants to make sure that the system that he is currently working in continues long after he has left, and Edgar has candor in that he doesn't feel as though he has a lot to do with the preschool

Theme 3 – Relationships

Relationships were repeated throughout all the interviews and it was apparent that each leader valued the importance of relationships with staff, students, and community members. All of the leaders felt that relationships were key to the success of their programs and attributed to the higher CLASS scores. Further, each preschool site as

participated in Professional Development tied to Child Guidance. Child Guidance is referred to the actions that "guide correct, and socialize children towards appropriate behaviors" (OPI, 2016 p. 55). In order to do this a teacher needs to have positive relationships with her students. Therefore, comments and leadership behaviors tied to relationships were included in analysis.

Adair Preschool – Relationship Evidence

Alpha discussed the importance of a teacher developing a relationship with a child stating, "I'm going to stay out of your way so that you can do a good job. I'm not going to be here and micromanage you through anything and that I will always promote developing relationships with kids over anything."

Alpha also spoke about the importance of ensuring that he listened intently to really understand the issue but not necessarily problem solve. He truly didn't feel as though he treated the preschool classrooms any differently than the rest of the school stating, "I look at any situation that might arise…I will ask questions and make sure I understand the situation and then [ask] how do we just simply problem solve it?"

Alpha's LPI scores indicate that he believes he listens and wants his staff to develop relationships. He scored himself with a 7 (Fairly Often) on the behaviors of (1) listens to others point of view and (2) develops cooperative relationships.

Brock discussed relationships in relation to creating a family in his school. He stated,

> It starts with a family kind of feel here, not that we always have to be best of friends but that we all have a common goal that we're working on. So, I try to do that as much as possible and keep that on the forefront. I think that

> I'm very approachable and I'm one of them. So, I've never had the need or the desire to feel a lot of power in this role nor do I want that. I want to be in the trenches. I want to be experiencing the new things and the struggles and the practices and the curriculum that we are building in so that I have firsthand understanding on it and that I'm not just a person that sits in the desk and – you know is there to problem solve.

He further discussed his relationship with his staff stating, "I feel so connected with this staff. That's where this whole shift for me leaving is difficult and it was initially really difficult in January when they announced this, and it was hard and I even myself went through a little grieving process, so did everybody else." (Brock is moving to a new elementary school for the 2018-2019 school year).

Brock also discussed the importance of teachers having time to develop relationships with their students as well as their colleagues stating,

> I think they truly know that I want them to be teaching in their classroom and all this other stuff will get done eventually but it's not as essential as working with your kids, building relationships with your kids and-- hoping that they are actually making gains in their academic progress with growth. So, yes, I build in time for them to collaborate.

Brock's LPI scores also show that he values relationships with his staff and that he tries to solve problems. He scored himself with mostly 8's (Usually), 9's (Very Frequently) and 10's (Almost Always) on the following behaviors: (1) lets people choose how to do their work, (2) develops cooperative relationships, and (3) listens to diverse points of view.

Adair Preschool CLASS scores also indicate that relationships are key to their success. For example, On the Emotional Support Domain their overall score was a 6.25 which is higher than the National Average. Of interest are the dimensions that deal specifically with positive relationships. Their scores of a 6.0 in Positive Climate, 7.0 on

Negative Climate, and 6.0 on Regard for Student Perspectives indicate that the teachers in the two classrooms value positive climates and relationships with their students.

Further Adair Preschool's mission and vision statements each mention relationships in relation to environments. Alpha's mission statement reads, "…by creating supportive, challenging, and positive learning environments." Brock's mission statement also calls for positive environments. It states, "…we invest in our students learning by creating a supportive, challenging, and positive environment…" Each confirm theme of Relationships being an important part of an early childhood setting.

Bailey Preschool Relationship Evidence

Carla realizes the importance of relationships but sometimes time gets in the way. She stated,

> It's just like the other day we had our staff meeting and I usually make the birthday cake for the night before, but I was busy at home doing my own painting, etc. and I got up the next morning and I'm like, are you kidding me?…So, getting everything done that you need to and making sure that you're there for each of the staff to make sure that you build those relationships and keep those relationships valid. I mean, to let them know that you're there.

Carla's LPI scores also confirm that she feels that relationships sometimes get in the way. Her SELF LPI scores of 6 (Sometimes) on the following behaviors show that she acknowledges this is a struggle for her: (1) appeals to others to share dream of future, (2) treats people with dignity and respect, (3) and creatively rewards people for their contribution.

Doug discussed his role with the school district leadership as well as the teachers he works with at the combined site. He stated,

> We'll do walk throughs and I'll do pop ins. I try to go in at least daily and say good morning and say hi, but um I'm not in there observing as their supervisor… I have a good relationship with them, I think. I mean, we're friendly, we're positive. We talk to each other all the time. I can go in there and say hey, I suggest you do this, I suggest this, and this is what we're doing…Sometimes they run with it.

Doug's LPI SELF scores indicate that he believes he has good relationships with his observers. His scores of 9 (Very Frequently) on the following leadership behaviors confirm this belief: (1) develops cooperative relationships, (2) treats people with dignity and respect, (3) ensures that people grow in their jobs, and (4) gives team members appreciation and support.

Edgar talked about the teacher's being reflective and discussing the importance of the teacher-student relationship when discussing CLASS scores. He stated, "So I think a lot of it is our teachers are willing to reflect on what they can do better and you know we get good information from CLASS." He further stated, "I listen to their ideas and I evaluate their ideas. I mean, I think I try to find a way to a yes, if someone has a really good idea and paying for it is a hard option we still try to find a way to get to it because, there's some people with great ideas…"

Edgar's LPI SELF scores also indicate that he values being supportive and helpful to his staff and values relationships. His SELF scores of 8's (Usually) and 9's (Very Frequently) the following leadership behaviors confirm his stated belief: (1) takes initiative to overcome obstacles, (2) speaks with conviction about meaning of work, (3) develops cooperative relationships, and (4) lets people choose how to do their work.

Overall, Bailey Preschool's CLASS scores also indicate that they value relationships. They had the highest scores in Cohort I in the Emotional Support Domain

with a score of 6.56 as well as in the Emotional Support Dimensions of Positive Climate (6.50), Negative Climate (7.0), Teacher Sensitivity (6.75) and Regard for Student Perspectives (6.0). The total possible score is out of 7 points.

Finally, Bailey Preschool's mission and vision statement which was created jointly with Head Start and the school district also point to the importance of relationships. The mission statement reads in part that "…all children enter kindergarten ready" and uses the word we throughout indicating that they value working together as a joint entity.

Summary

This qualitative study examined the leadership approach and the instructional delivery model of preschools to determine if there is any effect on the quality of a program based on CLASS scores. CLASS scores, LPIs, Mission Vision Statements, and Leadership Interviews were collected for evidence. Three themes emerged from the data analysis: a leadership orientation of task versus people, the importance of relationships, and the importance of having candor with followers.

Adair Preschool and Bailey Preschool have obvious similarities and differences. Adair Preschool has leaders that have candor in that they filter information to not overwhelm their followers. Bailey Preschool leaders all have a different version of candor but, in a way, that allows each to complement each other in that they are all working towards the creation of one preschool program for the community. Further, both preschool sites have leaders that are task- and people-oriented. And finally, each site

values relationships with each other as well as with teachers and students. Further conclusions are discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the relationship, if any, between leadership approach and preschool program quality using Leadership Practice Inventories (LPIs) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) data of programs in Cohort I of a rural states Preschool Development Grant (PDG). It also wanted to investigate the relationship between a program's instructional delivery model and leadership. There are two instructional delivery models represented in this study. The first model is the Adair Preschool which is housed in two separate elementary schools in a K-12 environment. The second instructional delivery model is a mixed-delivery model. A mixed delivery model is where there are multiple funding sources within one building. For this study, the mixed delivery model preschool is the Bailey Preschool which has school district and Head Start students under one roof. The school shares some personnel. For example, a percentage of the Education Coordinator, Health and Family Engagement employees are paid for with school district PDG funds. Results from this study hope to continue to advance early childhood initiatives in the state and perhaps suggest a leadership model which leads to higher quality programs. This study also hopes to inform organizations that are planning on starting preschools within their community and the impact of program structure. There were two research questions that this study attempted to answer; (1) How does a preschool leader's approach to leadership influence preschool program

quality? (2) How does the instructional delivery model influence the leaders approach to program quality?

This study yielded the following themes: Leadership Orientation, Candor, and the Importance of Relationships. The themes were derived from program Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores, individual and program Leadership Practice Inventories or LPIs completed by both preschool leader(s) and teaching or support staff, mission and vision statements, site visits and anecdotal notes as well as transcribed interviews. Leadership orientation refers to whether leaders are task-oriented, or people-oriented. Task-oriented leaders tend to focus on getting work done and setting and meeting deadlines. People-oriented leaders are leaders that focus on getting work done but also want to please the employees (Leadership Orientation: Task-Oriented & People-Oriented, 2012). The second theme of candor can be defined as being frank, open, honest, and sincere in speech or expression (Merriam-Webster, 2018). The final theme of relationships refers to connecting people or actions that bring people together. The answers to the research questions are outlined below in the discussion section.

Discussion

Research Question 1: How does a preschool leader's approach to leadership influence preschool program quality?

To determine the quality of a preschool program, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was chosen as a quality indicator because it is already in place at the selected sites as a requirement of recipients of the PDG. CLASS is a tool that

focuses less on materials and more on the interaction that teachers, have with their students. It is organized into three domains and ten dimensions detailed in Figure 2. The three domains are Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. It's important to look at the domain scores because studies have shown that higher scores in certain domains indicate higher outcomes. For example, higher scores on the Instructional Support Domain indicate a preschooler's gain in the kindergarten year. High Levels of Emotional Support are associated with growth in reading and math achievement from kindergarten through fifth grade (CASTL, 2018).

Adair Preschool had the highest CLASS Program Average of the Cohort I schools. Adair Preschool had a program average of 5.9 where Bailey Preschool's overall program average was six tenths of a points below Adair Preschool's with a score of 5.3 out of 7 total possible points. Adair Preschool had higher scores in the Instructional Support Domain. The difference in Adair Preschool's program scores on the dimensions of Concept Development (CD), Quality of Feedback (QF), and Language Modeling (LM) compared to Bailey Preschool were at times more than one point higher. In CD, a dimension that measures a teacher's use of discussion and activities, Adair Preschool had a score of 5.38 compared to Bailey Preschool which had a score of 4.50. The difference between these two sites is .88. Both sites scored at the middle-range for this dimension which means that they occasionally use discussion and activities to encourage analysis and reasoning, that they sometimes provide opportunities for students to be creative and generate their own ideas, and that the teacher sometimes links concepts and activities to one another and to previous learning. The key word in these scores is the words

occasionally/sometimes. Adair Preschool also had a higher score on the dimension of Quality of Feedback (QF) with a score of 5.50 and Bailey Preschool was scored with a 4.13 resulting in a difference of 1.37. These scores were scored at the middle-range which means that the teacher occasionally provides scaffolding and dismisses responses as incorrect, occasionally queries the students to explain their thinking and rationale, occasionally provides additional information to expand on students' understandings and occasionally offers encouragement of students' efforts. The final dimension where Adair Preschool scored higher than Bailey Preschool was on Language Modeling. Adair Preschool had a score of 5.38 where Bailey Preschool had a score of 4.13, which is a difference of 1.25 points. Language Modeling assesses the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language facilitation techniques (Pianta et al, 2008). Bailey Preschool also had higher scores on several domains including Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. The Emotional Support Domain measures four dimensions including Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives. The two dimensions within this domain that Bailey Preschool did not have the same score as Adair Preschool were Positive Climate and Teacher Sensitivity. Adair Preschool scored 6.50 on Positive Climate but Bailey Preschool scored 6.0. This means that the program had higher scores in the areas of warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions. If a program has a Positive Climate it means that there were many indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships, that there are frequent displays of positive affect by the teacher/students, that there are frequent positive communications

between teachers/students and that the teacher and students consistently demonstrate respect for one another. The Classroom Organization Domain Measures Behavior Management, Productivity, and Instructional Learning formats. In Behavior Management, Bailey Preschool had a score of 6.75 and Adair Preschool had a score of 6.13. Behavior Management measures the following aspects of a preschool program: (1) if rules and expectations are clearly and consistently enforced, (2) if the teacher is proactive and monitors the classroom effectively, if the teacher redirects misbehavior by focusing on the positive, and (3) if there are any instances of misbehavior in the classroom. Bailey Preschool also had a higher score in Productivity with a score of 6.75 compared to Bailey Preschool which had a score of 6.00. Productivity measures if a teacher maximizes learning time, has clear routines, transitions are brief, and all materials are prepped, and the teacher knows the lessons. The final dimension of Instructional Learning Formats measures how well a teacher facilitates students' engagement in activities. See Table 4.0 and 4.1 for further information on individual program CLASS scores or definitions. It's important to note that both programs had higher overall Domain scores than the National Average Scores. Table 5.1 illustrates the CLASS dimensions where there was a difference between Adair Preschool and Bailey Preschool.

Table 5.l – Differences in CLASS scores by Dimension for Adair Preschool and Bailey Preschool

	Program Average	CD	QF	LM	PC	TS	BM	P	ILF
Adair Preschool	5.90	5.38	5.50	5.38	6.0	6.0	6.13	6.00	6.0
Bailey Preschool	5.84	4.50	4.13	4.13	6.5	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.63

Table 5.1 Continued

Difference between Adair and Bailey Preschool	.6	.88	1.37	1.25	-.5	-.75	-.62	-.75	-.63

Key
CD – Concept Development
QF – Quality of Feedback
LM – Language Modeling
PC – Positive Climate
TS – Teacher Sensitivity
BM – Behavior Management
P - Productivity

While there were differences between both programs' scores, there were also similarities. For example, Adair Preschool and Bailey Preschool had the same scores in Negative Climate (7.00), Regard for Student Perspective (6.00). Regard for Student Perspective measures the teachers' interactions with students and if the classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy (Pianta et al, 2008 p. 38). Negative Climate measures the overall expressed level of negativity in terms of teacher affect, punitive controls like yelling, threats, use of physical control, sarcasm, or sever negativity such as victimizing or bullying. Negative Climate is the only dimension that is scored opposite of the other CLASS dimensions. It is scored the opposite because of what it's measuring. Pianta et al (2008) states that Negative Climate "reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom; the frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and peer negativity" (p. 28). If a class with low negative climate scores a 1 (which is considered Low), then the domain score would be skewed and be lower. Therefore, the

rubric tied to this dimension has descriptions that are the opposite than the rest of the dimensions to reflect what is being observed.

It's important to note that each leader spoke about the importance of professional development and how it was key to their success. Schleicher (2012) stated that developing a successful school depends on individual responsibilities as well as access to appropriate professional development. Further, in order to make a high quality preschool program, one needs to invest in professional development that is focused on improving the quality of a program along with what research says is beneficial to teachers and students (Pianta et al, 2018). Therefore, each program was willing to seek out professional development opportunities within its school and ensured that it was successful. For example, Alpha stated,

> I think the professional development [that the] state [provided] has done a great job. I know that our that summer institute, our K-1,2 teams are up there and [they] even go through some of programming that we've done here (at the preschool). I've really tried to look at early ed as a PreK through 2 as a development piece …

Summer Institute is a conference offered in the summer for all the grantees in the state to further their understanding of quality preschool programs. Further, Brock stated,

> So I think and what I mean is [that] we have [a] significant opportunity for the professional development that's provided for us and they're teachers that are committed to those practices and I can speak primarily of my teacher who is very conscientious in wanting feedback and professional development.

The leaders at Bailey Preschool also spoke about the importance of professional development. Carla when doing a combined interview with Doug stated, "CLASS scores involve a lot of professional development. We have one classroom here that we're having

issues with this year and there's been a lot of professional development in that area and [will be] next year." Further, Edgar stated, "Our professional development is done in coordination with Head Start and some of what they do is in coordination with us which has been very important in our success."

There were several leadership approaches that many school leaders utilize to affect the quality of a program. One of these approaches is the Trait Leadership Approach. Trait Leadership is a list of characteristics that a leader possesses to make him/her successful (Zaccarro, 2007). Kouzes and Posner (2001) incorporated some aspects of Trait Leadership when they developed their Transformational Leadership Theory. In determining the traits of the leaders who participated in this study, individual LPI scores were utilized. Kouzes and Pozner (2018) stated that when leaders are at their best, they will (1) Challenge the Process, (2) Inspire a Shared Vision (3) Engable Others to Act, (4) Model the Way and (5) Encourage the Heart. All of these behaviors are assessed utilizing the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). Individual leader scores are detailed in Table 4.2 and 4.5. In examining the LPI SELF scores illustrated in Table 4.2. The leaders in Adair Preschool all have strengths in different areas. For example, Alpha's perceived strengths are (1) Enabling Others to Act, (2) Challenging the Process, and (3) Inspiring a Shared Vision. Brock's strengths are in Alpha's perceived weakness in that his strengths are in (1) Modeling the Way and (2) Encouraging Others to Act. The observers for these two leaders confirm Alpha's strengths in (2) Enabling Others to Act and (2) Challenging the Process but Brock's observers felt that his strengths were in (1)

Enabling Others to Act and (2) Challenging the process rather than (2) Modeling the Way and (3) Encouraging the Heart.

In contrast, Bailey Preschool's leader's scores, illustrated in Table 4.5, indicate that the leaders in this site have a perceived strength in Modeling the Way. They believe that they have created standards of excellence and then modeled it and set an example for others to follow. Further, Carla's perceived strengths in (1) Inspiring a Shared Vision and (2) Modeling the Way are balanced by Doug's perceived strengths in (1) Enabling Others to Act and (2) Encouraging the Heart and (3) Modeling the Way and Edgar's perceived strengths in (1) Enabling Others to Act, (2) Inspiring a Shared Vision, and (3) Modeling the Way balance each other's weakness. The observer scores for Bailey Preschool leaders are fairly similar and confirm strengths. For example, Carla's observers confirmed that she has a strength is Modeling the Way or setting the example she wishes others to follow. Doug's observers also believe that his strength is Modeling the Way, and Edgar's observers declared that Enabling Other's to Act was his strength.

It's important to note that while each Observer and Self LPI scores are somewhat different, it's not important that the scores are the same, rather that the leader understands that they are different and what it means for one's leadership. Kouzes Pozner (2001), stated that:

> Trust in a leader is essential if other people are going to follow that person over time. One of the ways that trust is developed is through consistency in leader behavior. Therefore, the closer your view of yourself to the view others have of you, the more likely it is that the others trust you (p. 7).

The overall Leadership Approach that seems consistent between both sites is the Leadership Practice of Modeling the Way. All the leaders scored in the moderate range. However, it's important that Alpha had the lowest Moderate score. Modeling the Way measures the following leadership behaviors:

1. Keep commitments and follow through on promises
2. Make sure their calendars, meetings, interviews, emails reflect what is important
3. Ask purposeful questions that keep people focused on the values and priorities that are the most essential
4. Share examples of exemplary behavior through stories that illustrate how people are and should be behaving
5. Publicly ask for feedback from others about how your actions affect them
6. Make changes and adjustments based on the feedback you receive

Modeling the Way also relates to the theme of Candor and Relationships. For one to Model the Way they need to understand their own philosophies or beliefs. Leaders who Model the Way are able to articulate their beliefs so the rest of the organization understands what is guiding their decisions. Kouzes and Pozner (2018), state that Modeling the Way is "about earning the right and respect to lead through direct involvement and action. People follow first the person, then the plan." (p. 26). Leaders who Model the Way have integrity and model professionalism. They are open and honest or have candor and their staff respects that honestly. However, to have candor one needs to ensure they are establishing relationships with each of their staff. Without relationships the candor may come off as rude behavior.

Another approach to leadership for quality results is the Behavioral Approach Theory which is two different kinds of behaviors: (1) task behaviors and relationships behaviors. Task behaviors are defined as things that are done to accomplish a goal and

relationship behaviors are things leaders do to help others feel comfortable in a group to accomplish a goal. This leadership approach relates to the theme of Leadership Orientation which for the purposes of this study was broken down into task-orientation and people-orientation. Most leaders tend to combine styles for the best result. For example, Adair Preschool had two distinctly different types of leaders. Alpha combined tasks and people orientations, but Brock was distinctly people orientated. Further, Bailey Preschool had a task-oriented leader in Carla, a people-oriented leader in Doug, and a combination of a task- and people-oriented leader in Edgar. Each of these leadership orientations complimented each other and helped to define how each leader approached early childhood in their prospective schools.

Further, each leader's experience with early childhood also affected their approach. For example, Alpha was a former Athletic Director and his scores were higher than his observers. He was a leader that did things to accomplish a goal or was a task-oriented leader. When he was being interviewed there was a list of tasks written on a whiteboard in his office. Each of these had a time attached to them. He allotted a certain amount of time to visit with the researcher and when the time was over he moved on to the next task. In contrast, Brock had experience in developing a preschool in a previous position and was very involved in community outreach activities. His interview was one of the longest at over 60 minutes and it appeared to the researcher that understood the relationship he had with his staff. At one point, Brock mentioned that he was being transferred to a different elementary school next year, which was hard for him and his staff. It was announced in the winter that he would be leaving, and at the time of the

interview he felt as though the entire school community was finally healing from this change.

Research Question 2: How does the instructional leadership delivery model influence the leaders approach to preschool program quality?

The purpose of this research question was to determine if the instructional delivery model: preschool-only classrooms which is Baily Preschool or preschools located in K-12 buildings a model similar to Adair Preschool influence the leaders approach.

The leadership at both preschools state that their leadership isn't any different in one classroom versus the next. All the leaders discussed what they have learned as a result of the training they have received and how it's changed their programs/sites. For example, Alpha and Brock discussed their new understanding of Social Emotional Development and the changes they have made and plan to continue to make it a focus in their K-2 classrooms. This was reiterated by the leaders in Baily Preschool. Both sites have started to push more social emotional learnings into their school district. This is part of something called Child Guidance. Child Guidance is referenced in the standards of quality that the rural state uses to determine quality. The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) for the state defines Child Guidance as adult actions that guide, correct, and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. To effectively accomplish this, teachers must employ a variety of positive guidance strategies that foster self-regulation, respect for others, and meeting the needs of individual children as well as the group (OPI, 2016 p. 66). As a result, all program leaders have participated in professional development

relating to social emotional learning and both sites are implementing a Child Guidance program in their primary elementary classrooms. Adair Preschool has started implementation during the 2017-2018 school year and Bailey Preschool plans to implement the same Child Guidance program in their elementary during the 2018-2019 school year. A key to Child Guidance is the relationships that the teachers have with their student's. A report published by the Department of Early Education and Care Technical Assistance (2018) states that

> Helping a child develop self-control is an enormous challenge and responsibility. Effective Child Guidance practices help children to form strong relationships with others. Positive relationships between adults and children are key to a child's social and emotional development (p. 1).

Therefore, Child Guidance is important but only works if there are positive relationships between staff and between teachers and students. Further, each program had extremely high scores on CLASS in the Emotional Support Domain. Adair Preschool had a score of 6.25 out of a possible 7 points, and Baily Preschool had a score of 6.56 out of a possible 7 points. See Table 4.0 for more information. Child Guidance directly relates to the theme of Relationships.

Similarly, each leader either discussed the importance of relationships or understood that relationships were a weakness. Each leader's LPI scores confirm these beliefs. Alpha felt as though he struggled a bit with relationships and he and his followers scored him the lowest in the Leadership Behavior of Encouraging the Heart. Alpha scored himself with a 37 out of a possible 60 points and his followers scored him with 16.2 points out of a possible 60 points. Therefore, he knows that this is a weakness and his followers agree. Brock scored himself in the moderate range for this behavior with a

score of 46 out of a possible 60 points and his followers gave him the same score. Therefore, he is behaving consistently at Encouraging the Hearts of his followers. Carla too expressed that she struggles with relationships. She knows that they take time and commitment and are important, but sometimes things get in the way. Carla's scores in Encouraging the Heart are in the moderate range with a score of 42 out of a possible 60 points. Her followers scored her at 44.8 out of a possible 60 points. Doug scored himself the highest in this Leadership Behavior with a score of 50 out of a total of 60 points and his followers agreed and scored him at 51.5 out of a possible 60 points. Finally, Edgar's score on Encouraging the Heart is lower that his followers. He scored himself with a 39 out of a possible 60 points, where his followers scored him at 51.5 out of a possible 60 points.

Further, the programs discussed why they were the best of the Cohort I schools, and Bailey Preschool expressed several times that they are successful because of their partnership. Bailey Preschool leadership strives to create the appearance of one preschool program under one roof. In reality, the two programs complement each other. For example, the school district gets to access Head Start's Health and Family Engagement personnel – positions that a school district wouldn't normally consider funding. Head Start gets to access the school district's professional development as well as its leadership to help move the program forward for the benefit of the community. Two of the leaders at Bailey Preschool indicated that the Education Coordinator is the individual that has helped to make the program a success. Yet, the Education Coordinator points to the Superintendent as the success maker. All three leaders indicated the importance of

utilizing their data to make decisions and for having a collaborative effort with the professional development offered at Head Start and the school district. Further, all the leaders of Bailey Preschool expressed the balance necessary to make their preschool work and each felt like their leadership complimented the work they were doing for the community but more importantly they stressed that they had relationships with each other and could be open and honest with each other. The leaders in Adair Preschool also felt like one of the reasons they were successful was due to the training and the partnerships that they are trying to develop within the community. Brock has been working with various organizations within the community to stress the importance of early education.

Implications for Practice

This study sought to determine if one approach helped create high quality preschool programs. Transformational Leadership seemed like the best leadership approach that would complement an early childhood setting. Biddle (2012) stated that transformational leaders in early childhood settings are the relationship leaders for families, teachers, children, and the community. However, each leader's LPI score, CLASS scores, and interviews show that there isn't a pattern of behaviors tied to Transformational Leadership. Rather each leader seemed to be more of a transactional leader. Transactional Leadership involves the leader focusing more on supervision, organization, and performance (Bryant, 2003). The moderate to low scores on the LPI for both programs indicate that the leadership for both programs is more task-orientation and the themes of leadership orientation, candor, and relationships seem to support this as well as they are transactional in nature.

This begs the question if Transformational Leadership is a Leadership Theory that is being replaced with another theory. Transformational Leadership has been studied extensively and shown to have higher outcomes for students in K-12, yet it's unclear whether it works for early childhood settings. What is clear is that Child Guidance has become more of a focus at both sites. Adair and Baily Preschool both expressed the importance of Child Guidance and their plan to implement it in different grade levels. Therefore, the structure made a difference at both sites moving Child Guidance into the K-12 world.

This study has shown that there isn't one leadership style that is better than the other in terms of early childhood programs. It's clear that Transformational Leadership Theory is just one of many Leadership Theories that produces high quality programs. Yet it remains unclear of its role in a preschool setting. The study has shown that Transactional Leaders seem to have success at producing programs with higher CLASS scores.

Further, it was apparent that Professional Development was key to each programs success. Therefore, investing in high quality professional development will also be key to ensuring a successful program.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was a snapshot of two high-quality programs participating in a Preschool Development Grant or MPDG. There were only five leaders and two sites which were used to answer the research question. A broader study is needed to explore all

the high-quality programs in the rural state to give a better indication of the type of leader within each program.

Also, further study needs to be done on the history and background of each site as it was apparent that each site had a different focus and need. For example, Adair Preschool is located in a larger city where there are other opportunities for preschool. Its preschool was one of many preschools within in the community. For example, there is a free preschool with Head Start, a grant funded preschool with Adair Preschool, and many private-pay preschools within the community. This understanding and further study would help understand the type of leader that is needed at the time. Perhaps, one site needs a transactional leader before it needs a transformational leader or vice versa. Understanding the history and the complexities of the needs of community will be key in understanding how each community or system affects the leader that is needed at the time.

Finally, a broader study could be completed utilizing CLASS scores and individual LPI's to determine which Leadership Practice correlates with which domain or dimension on the LPI. This would help indicate if leadership makes a difference on individual dimensions of a High-Quality Preschool Assessment.

Summary

This study sought to answer two research questions: (1) How does a preschool leader's approach to leadership influence preschool program quality? (2) How does the instructional delivery model influence the leaders approach to program quality? Results

indicate that leaders that have higher scores on the LPI in the Area of Modeling the Way tend to produce programs with Higher CLASS scores in the Domain of Instructional Support. Further, leaders that are transactional and focus on supervision, organization, and performance seem to produce programs with higher overall CLASS scores. In terms of a leader's approach related to an instructional delivery model – the data would indicate that the preschools at each site influenced the work that was being done in the K-6 environments.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your current leadership position—how were you prepared for the position and what do you focus on.

Prompts:

a. –education and professional development
b. –preschool leadership experience
c. --Recent leadership roles prior to this current position
d. –What you learned while in your current role

2. Tell me about the program/school that you lead.

Prompts:

a. How is the program/school organized or structured?
b. What changes might make the organization of the school/program more effective
c. What challenges does the school/program face?
    i. Turnover rate
    ii. Teacher qualifications
    iii. Parent expectations
    iv. resource issues
    v. Professional Development
    vi. Community expectations

3. How would you describe your leadership of the school/program?

Prompts:

a. Vision and goals
b. communication with staff, parents, community,
c. personal strengths and how you use them
d. personal challenges and how you seek to overcome them

4. Is your leadership style different in your preschool classrooms compared to other classrooms within in your school?

Prompts:

Building?
Program?
How?

5. How would others describe your leadership?

Prompts:

a. Your supervisor
b. Your colleagues
c. Your staff

d. Your parents and the community

6. Your CLASS scores are among the best in Cohort I, what do you attribute these high scores to?

Prompts:

a. What about the scores in each domain?

APPENDIX B

LEADERSHIP PRACTICE INVENTORY

How to obtain more information on the Leadership Practice Inventory

Leadership Practice Inventories are copyrighted material therefore if you would like to request a sample inventory you can go to leadershipchallenge.org and obtain information on how to request a copy.

Only partial items are reprinted here to protect the instrument's copyright.

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LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY [LPI]

OBSERVER

To what extent does this person typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the number that best applies to each statement and record it in the blank to the left of the statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always

He or She:

_____ 1. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his or her own skills and abilities.

_____ 2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.

_____ 3. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he or she works with.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY [LPI]

SELF

To what extent do you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the number that best applies to each statement and *record it in the blank to the left of the statement.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always

____ 1. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.

____ 2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.

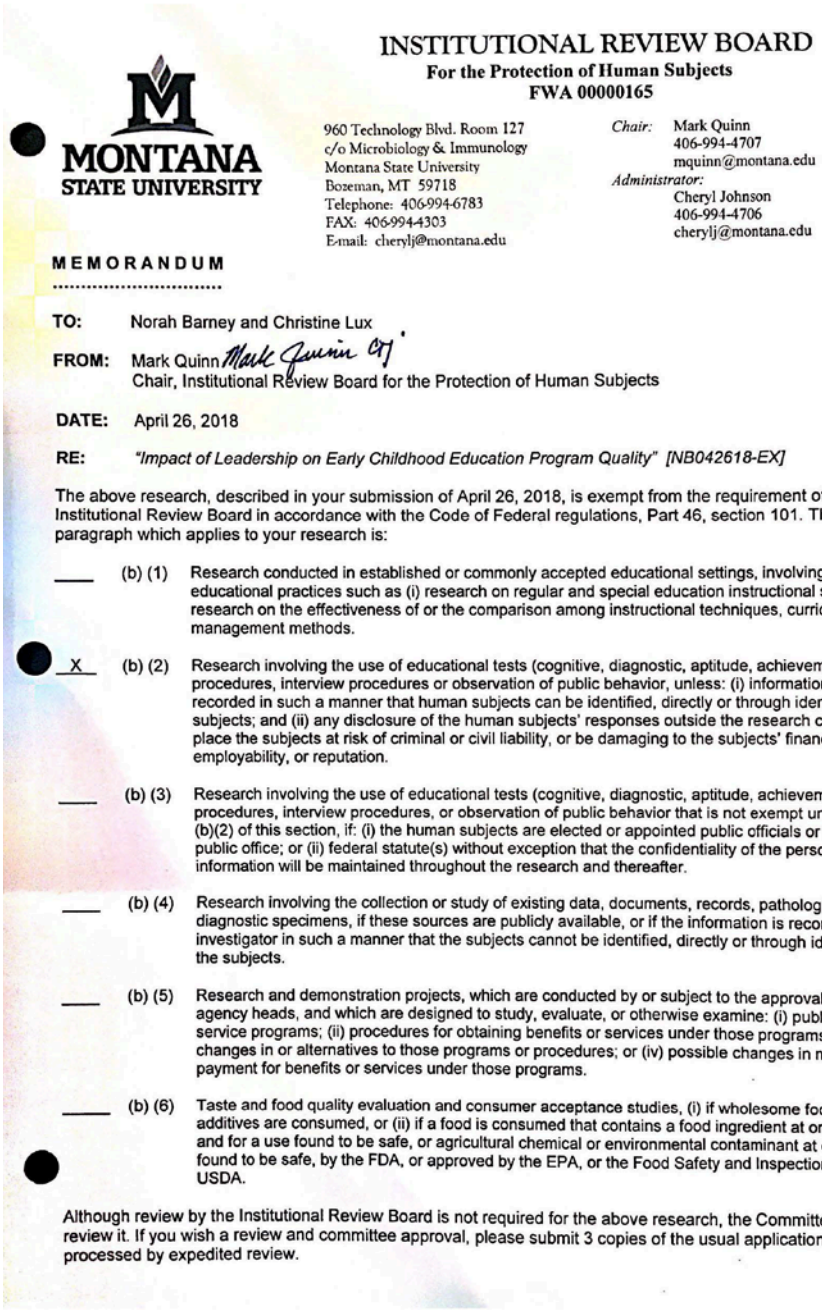
____ 3. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.

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APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board Approval



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
For the Protection of Human Subjects
FWA 00000165

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Norah Barney and Christine Lux

FROM: Mark Quinn Mark Quinn 04
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

DATE: April 26, 2018

RE: *"Impact of Leadership on Early Childhood Education Program Quality" [NB042618-EX]*

The above research, described in your submission of April 26, 2018, is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

___ (b) (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

_X_ (b) (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

___ (b) (3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

___ (b) (4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

___ (b) (5) Research and demonstration projects, which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

___ (b) (6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA, or approved by the EPA, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA.

Although review by the Institutional Review Board is not required for the above research, the Committee will be glad to review it. If you wish a review and committee approval, please submit 3 copies of the usual application form and it will be processed by expedited review.

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APPENDIX D

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM - OBSERVERS

Appendix B

Subject Consent Form – Observers

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
FOR
PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Preschool Program Leadership Influences on Program Quality

Norah Barney, Researcher
415 West 6th Street – Anaconda, MT – 406-498-4955
nbarney@hotmail.com

You are being asked to participate in a research study on preschool leadership and program quality. Results from this study hope to shed light on the impact and influence of program structure and leadership on preschool program quality.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a Leadership Practices Inventory or LPI on the leader of your early childhood program. The LPI will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The LPI's will then be collected and scored electronically. The results will be aggregated and an average score will be shared with the leader and used for data analysis.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in the research at any time, or to decline to answer any specific questions. **Your participation in this research study is confidential**. The results of the LPI inventory will be identified by a code number and this number will not be connected with your name in any fashion. If information you disclose is uniquely identifiable, this information will not be disclosed. There are no foreseen risks to participation in this research study.

If you have any questions regarding this research project you can contact me at 406-498-4955. Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the Chair of the MSU Human Subjects Committee, Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707, mquinn@montana.edu.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I, _____, agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signed: _____

Investigator: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED
MSU IRB
04/26/2018
Date approved

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APPENDIX E

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM - LEADERS

Subject Consent Form Leaders

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
FOR
PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Preschool Program Leadership Influences on Program Quality

Norah Barney, Researcher
415 West 6th Street – Anaconda, MT – 406-498-4955
nbarney@hotmail.com

You are being asked to participate in a research study on preschool leadership and program quality. Results from this study hope to shed light on the impact and influence of program structure and leadership on preschool program quality.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in one 60-minute interview regarding your leadership experiences. The interview and discussion will be audio-taped. The recorded interviews and discussion will then be transcribed verbatim and any information that might identify you personally (including your name) will be removed from the transcription. Only the interviewer will have access to the tape from your interview. You will also be asked to complete a Leadership Practice Inventory or LPI on yourself and choose 3-4 followers within your building to complete the LPI to provide multiple perspectives of your leadership behaviors.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in the research at any time, or to decline to answer any specific questions. **Your participation in this research study is confidential**. The transcription of your interview and LPI scores will be identified by a code number and this number will not be connected with your name in any fashion. If information you disclose is uniquely identifiable, this information will not be disclosed. There are no foreseen risks to participation in this research study.

If you have any questions regarding this research project you can contact me at 406-498-4955. Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the Chair of the MSU Human Subjects Committee, Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707, mquinn@montana.edu.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience, and risk of this study. I, _____, agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signed: _____

Investigator: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED
MSU IRB
04/24/2018
Date approved

Scanned with CamScanner