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Attitudes and Perceptions of Early Childcare Professionals in Community-Based Programs in Regard to Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Attitudes and Perceptions of Early Childcare Professionals in Community-Based
Programs in Regard to Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

by

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A Thesis

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Preschool educators continue to struggle with their role in serving children with disabilities. Two very important pieces of legislation, the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) and the American Disability Act (ADA), mandate that children with disabilities be given the opportunity to participate in normalized classroom settings, enabling them to learn in a least restrictive environment (LRE) (Howard, Williams & Lepper, 2005). In support of this, several studies have shown that children with developmental disabilities in inclusive classrooms make improvements in language, cognitive, and motor development that are above or comparable to peers in special education classrooms (Baker-Ericzen & Mueggenborg, 2009). In addition, several studies reaffirmed the powerful impact of teachers' attitudes on academic and developmental outcomes for children with disabilities (Buysse, Wesley & Keyes, 1998). However, it has been reported that 67% of preschool special education coordinators indicated that teachers' attitudes about inclusion could be problematic in placing preschoolers with disabilities in normalized settings (Buysse, Wesley & Keyes, 1998).

Problem Statement

Clearly there is a pressing need to better understand early childhood educators' attitudes of perceived obstacles to the inclusive process (Mulvihill, Shearer & Van Horn, 2002). Thus, the question arises whether the attitudes of childcare professionals are significant obstacles in the inclusion process and if so, in what ways (Mulvihill et al., 2002). The literature suggests teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs affect their

behavior (Mulvihill et al., 2001). In this regard Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provided the theoretical framework to explore the research questions.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model explained the effects that one's surrounding subsystems can have on their lifestyle and their beliefs, therefore influencing their actions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to determine why early care and education facilities are not identified as inclusive. This study compared the differences in attitude toward inclusive programming among directors, preschool teachers, and infant/toddler teachers in early care and education facilities. This study addressed two questions in regard to the attitudes and perceptions of early childhood professionals. First, what are the attitudes of early childhood professionals toward advantages and disadvantages of inclusive classrooms and how their attitudes may differ depending on staff position? Second, what are the major obstacles identified by early childhood professionals to inclusive programming and how they correlate with the child's degree of disability? It was predicted that infant and toddler teachers would demonstrate more positive attitudes toward the advantages of inclusive classrooms than directors or preschool teachers. It was also predicted that the major obstacles to inclusive programming identified by early childhood professionals would correlate with the child's degree of disability. The limitations foreseen were that the study collected data only during a specified time from a sample group in a specific geographical area that was selected for convenience.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The definition of inclusion has been both debated and researched over the past twenty years. The general definition referred to the full participation of children with disabilities in the same programs and activities as typically developing children (Mulvihill et al., 2002). Early childhood educators play a significant role in the development of policies and practices that support or hinder inclusive programming for young children (Gruenberg & Miller, 2010). This quantitative study surveyed early childhood professionals working in licensed early care and education programs in south Mississippi. The survey compared the differences in attitudes regarding inclusive practice among early care and education directors as compared to preschool teachers and infant/toddler teachers, thereby drawing conclusions to why more community-based early care and education programs do not identify themselves as being inclusive.

Understanding the attitudes of early childhood professionals towards inclusion provided additional insight into this ongoing educational transformation. Research has identified that teachers' behaviors are affected by their attitude, perceptions, and beliefs regarding inclusion (Mulvihill et al., 2002). Though there have been numerous studies testing teacher perceptions in early childhood programs (Sze, 2009), few have dealt with community-based early care and education programs (Brown, Odom, Li & Zercher, 1999). Studies focused on inclusion are quite outdated, which displayed the need for more current material and clarification to be provided (Brown et al., 1999; Buell, Gamel-McCormick & Hallam, 1999). "The inclusion of children with disabilities ages birth to six in community-based child care and preschool settings is a legal mandate and civil

right articulated by natural and least restrictive environment provisions under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) and reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)” (DeVore & Russell, 2007, p. 17). Research reveals that inclusion in community-based early childhood programs is more likely to be successful when there is a proper collaboration between a designated team of professionals and the family (Devore & Russell, 2007). Some of the earlier literature even discusses the perceptions, attitudes, and perceived characteristics of inclusive programming, along with the barriers and support factors; however, each article discusses the need for further research when expressing final thoughts (Baker-Ericzen, Mueggenborg & Shea, 2009; Buell et al., 1999; Cross, Traub, Hutter-Pishgahi & Shelton, 2004; DeVore & Russell, 2007; Mulvihill et al., 2002; Sze, 2009; Terpstra & Tamura, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Several previous research studies concerning inclusion of children with disabilities in early care and education facilities have been framed using Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical contribution to developmental psychology (Brown et al., 1999). Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory was the theoretical guide for this research study. Bronfenbrenner’s model acknowledges the importance of the four interlocking ecological systems and the impact and influence they have on each other (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). These four social systems, Microsystem, Mesosystem, Excosystem, and the Macrosystem, consist of the relationships and social experiences that impact an individual’s life (Puckett, Black, Wittmer & Petersen, 2009). The ecological model attempts to frame a reflective process by which early childhood

professionals could examine their attitudes and perceptions in regard to inclusive programming (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Professional Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Programming

Sze (2009) indicated in recent research, “teachers’ beliefs about students’ abilities will transform their behaviors in ways that confirm the initial expectations.” Teachers appeared to have a critical influence on the successful outcomes of children with disabilities in inclusive programs (Cross et al., 2004). This is why a positive or negative attitude from the professional can make a difference in the success of the inclusive program (Sze, 2009). This also included the administrators because they set the attitudinal tone for the effective implementation of inclusive programs (Cross et al., 2004). Sze (2009) explains, “teachers who feel negatively toward students with disabilities or who have not been trained in the appropriate strategies are less likely to be successful,” (p.54). Also, when there is a general lack of knowledge it tends to have negative effects on the attitude of the professionals (Sze, 2009). At the same time, positive attitudes toward inclusion, as expressed by teachers, were linked with intentions to act in a positive manner toward children with special needs (Baker-Ericzen et al., 2009). Many teachers report they are hesitant about leading inclusive classrooms because they have never had to deal with children with disabilities and or they feel they do not have the resources or training needed for successful instruction of an inclusive classroom (Sze, 2009, Cross et al., 2004). Mulvihill et al., (2002) suggested, “The attitudes of community-based child care teachers may be related to their willingness to include children with disabilities in their programs designed for typically developing children.” These influential attitudes regarding inclusion may develop in an array of

ways and through a variety of processes (Mulvihill et al., 2002). A few of the various ways to influence attitudes are through examining experience, pre-existing ideas, and collaborating with the individual and or programs (Mulvihill et al., 2002).

Successful Inclusion

In inclusive classrooms, children with and without disabilities are combined in a least restrictive environment (LRE) (Mulvihill et al., 2002). There are a few articles that discussed ways in which teachers could facilitate an inclusive classroom in order to obtain ideal results through interactions with children with disabilities. The first action would be to promote social interaction among all of the children (Terpstra & Tamura, 2007). This could be done through incorporating interactive strategies (Terpstra & Tamura, 2007). Another way teachers can ensure a successful inclusive atmosphere is to further their education and training with a focus on children with special needs (Terpstra & Tamura, 2007; Baker-Ericzen et al., 2009; Sze, 2009).

Cross et al., (2004) stated that there are four key elements to successful inclusion: a) to understand the ability of children with disabilities to attain outcomes specified by their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP); b) to realize that successful inclusion is not solely identified as meeting IFSP goals but growing as an individual and excelling in the regular educational curriculum; c) to recognize the need for social interaction with peers; d) the satisfaction of the parents and the collaboration of professionals with the family.

Contrary to success the literature identifies obstacles to the inclusive process. Two of the leading and most common obstacles that were reported throughout all of the

articles were the knowledge of the professional and negative attitudes (Baker-Ericzen et al., 2009; Buell et al., 1999; Cross et al., 2004; Mulvihill et al., 2002; Sze, 2009).

Negative attitudes are shown to have negative effects on the outcomes while positive attitudes and proper preparation are shown to have positive effects on the outcomes of inclusive programs (Baker-Ericzen et al., 2009; Buell et al., 1999; Cross et al., 2004; Mulvihill et al., 2002; Sze, 2009).

Summary

Inclusion is a beneficial practice that is currently mandated by the Federal Government (DeVore & Russell, 2007). Though there have been numerous research studies conducted concerning professionals' attitudes pertaining to inclusion and working with children with disabilities, most research has expressed the need for further research to be conducted (Baker-Ericzen et al., 2009; Buell et al., 1999; Cross et al., 2004; DeVore & Russell, 2007; Mulvihill et al., 2002; Sze, 2009; Terpstra & Tamura, 2008). There is also a lack recent studies on community-based early care and education facilities. The professional's attitude plays an intricate part in the success of the children in the class (Sze, 2009). It was the purpose of this study to evaluate attitudes and perceived obstacles toward inclusion among community-based early care and education providers in south Mississippi.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Early childhood educators play a significant role in the development of policies and practices that support or hinder inclusive programming for young children

(Gruenberg & Miller, 2010). Understanding the attitudes of early childhood professionals towards inclusion provided insight into this ongoing educational transformation. Though there have been numerous studies on teacher perceptions in early childhood programs (Sze, 2009), few have dealt with community-based early care and education programs (Brown et al., 1999). This quantitative study surveyed the attitudes of early care and education professionals working in programs in south Mississippi. The survey compared the differences in attitudes regarding inclusive practice among early care and education directors, as compared to preschool teachers and infant/toddler teachers, thereby drawing conclusions regarding what the perceived obstacles to inclusive practice are and why more community-based early care and education programs do not identify themselves as being inclusive.

Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design. This design yielded data that addressed (a) the psychometric properties of the Scale of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) questionnaire in a sample of preschool personnel, and (b) the differences between infant/toddler teachers, preschool teachers, and preschool directors concerning their attitudes regarding the advantages/disadvantages of inclusive education, and philosophical issues related to inclusive education (See Appendix). Results were used to promote the discussion of potential inclusive practices and encourage the development of strong, community-based early care and education programs to serve diverse populations. This study also served as a pilot project to establish reliability for the revised STATIC within a preschool setting. Upon completion

of this pilot project, the revised STATIC survey instrument will be used in a dissertation that addresses these concepts in a more thorough manner.

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of early childhood professionals in the southeastern region of the State of Mississippi. Early childhood professionals who work as teachers in infant/toddler classrooms, preschool classrooms, and directors of early childhood centers of four programs were recruited as participants in this study. Early childhood programs were sampled using a single-stage, convenience sampling method within the identified population. It was anticipated that a survey sample size of at least 50 participants would be obtained. The early childhood professionals will vary in age, gender, education, ethnicity, race, experience, and length of service.

The researcher secured the permission of the director of the early childhood programs to use the facility and staff as research participants. The researcher also secured permission of each participant prior to survey distribution. Finally, the researcher obtained approval from the University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board to conduct research using human subjects.

Instrument

The researcher used a modified version of the Scale of Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) to determine early childhood professionals' attitudes regarding inclusive programming. The STATIC was developed to examine differences in teachers' attitudes toward students with special needs (Cochran, 1999). In

a first attempt to develop this measure (1993), it was labeled the TATI (Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion), piloted with 30 items to 31 teachers, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) revealed 8 scales with poor overall reliability (by eliminating 7 items, reliability was raised to $\alpha = .91$). In a second pilot study (1996), the 30-item TATI was administered to 118 teachers and found to have acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .71$). Ten items were removed ($\alpha = .88$) and EFA revealed a 6-factor solution. After these 2 pilot studies, the measure was revised to include only 20 items and was renamed the STATIC. In subsequent factor analyses, it was determined that the STATIC had 4 factors. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients recorded the following for the four factors. The first factor, Advantages and Disadvantages of Inclusive Education had 7 items ($\alpha = .87$), the second factor, Professional Issues Regarding Inclusive Education, had 5 items ($\alpha = .83$), the third factor, Philosophical Issues Regarding Inclusive Education, had 4 items ($\alpha = .57$), and the fourth factor, Logistical Concerns of Inclusive Education, had 4 items ($\alpha = .62$). The overall STATIC measure, containing all 20 items, resulted in an overall alpha reliability coefficient of .89.

For the current investigation, modifications were made to the STATIC by updating its language to use more acceptable special education terms as reflected in current literature. The STATIC consists of twenty questions in four scales. Though the entire modified STATIC was piloted on the survey, only 2 of the 4 scales (11 items) were used in the current investigation's analyses: Scale 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Inclusive Education, and Scale 3: Philosophical Issues Regarding Inclusive Education (see Appendix A for the full measure). Answers to each item on the survey were given on a Likert-type scale as follows: (0) strongly disagree, (1) disagree, (2) not sure, but tend

to disagree, (3) not sure, but tend to agree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Items 3, 4, 7, 9, 13 and 15 in the STATIC survey utilize reverse-coding to reduce the likelihood of a response set (Cochran, 1997; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Those items will be recorded appropriately prior to data analysis.

Procedures

An online survey was created utilizing a professional online survey tool, Survey Monkey. The survey instrument consisted of a modified version of the STATIC. A survey format fits well with this study as surveys provide a basic methodology for asking people about themselves, attitudes and or behaviors (Cozby, 2009).

Limitations

This study is subject to the following limitations: (a) This research survey collected data from only a sample of early childhood professionals in the specific geographic area, and (b) This research survey was a convenience sample obtained during a specified period.

Data Analysis

A first objective of this study was to pilot the modified version of the STATIC in a new population (i.e., preschool teachers/directors) and, consequently, to investigate its psychometric properties. Principal Components Exploratory Factor Analysis was utilized to test the potential structure of this measure. A reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was used to establish whether the STATIC and its subscales fit together well. The second objective of this study was to compare the attitudes toward inclusion of 3 groups of

preschool personnels: 1) infant/toddler teachers, 2) preschool teachers, and 3) center directors. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Scheffe post-hoc tests were used to examine whether the attitudes of these 3 groups concerning 1) advantages/disadvantages, 2) philosophical issues, and 3) overall STATIC score are statistically different from each other.

Summary

The evidence clearly indicated the advantages and positive outcomes that inclusion brings and identifies the supports necessary for success (DeVore & Russell, 2007; Purcell, Horn & Palmer, 2007; Stahmer, & Carter, 2005). Expectations and programming must be designed to support high quality outcomes for all educators who work with young children with disabilities. This study provided data and insight to promote the discussion of inclusion and make way for more community-based early care and education programs to serve diverse populations.

Chapter Four: Results

This quantitative study surveyed the attitudes of early care and education professionals working in programs in south Mississippi. This study compared the differences in attitude toward inclusive programming among directors, preschool teachers, and infant/toddler teachers in early care and education facilities. The first objective of this study was to pilot the modified version of the STATIC in a new population (i.e., preschool teachers, infant-toddler teachers and directors) and, consequently, to investigate its psychometric properties. The second objective of this

study was to compare the attitudes toward inclusion of 3 groups of preschool personnel: 1) infant/toddler teachers, 2) preschool teachers, and 3) center directors. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Scheffe post-hoc tests were used to examine whether the attitudes of these 3 groups concerning 1) advantages/disadvantages, 2) philosophical issues, and 3) overall STATIC score are statistically different from each other. The return rate and demographic participation has been provided throughout this chapter. Additionally, the descriptive and inferential statistical results acquired through this research study are provided.

This study surveyed early care and education professionals (N = 41) working in five early care and education facilities in a local southeastern city. Each facility provided consent for the researcher, an undergraduate Honors College student, to visit each facility and survey the staff. Each staff member that participated provided written consent prior to taking the electronic survey. The researcher provided a lap top computer with Internet access during the visit. Each participant was allowed to log on to the survey and completed the survey independently.

The participants in the STATIC-pilot survey were preschool teachers (n = 19), infant/toddler teachers (n = 18), and directors (n = 4). Each child care center was licensed by the state and provided full-time care for children birth to 4 years old.

Descriptive Statistics

The demographic aspect of the survey revealed that the 48.8% of the participants were part of community-based non-profit early childcare facilities and that 51.2% were part of community-based for profit early childcare facilities (see Table 1).

Table 1

Description of Participants by Child Care Center Designation

		Center		
		community based non-profit	community based for-profit	Total
Position	preschool	11	8	19
	infant/toddler	7	11	18
	director	3	1	4
	Total	21	20	41

Each participant indicated on the demographic section of the survey the highest level of education obtained (see Table 2).

Table 2

Educational Level of Participants

		Degree				
		CDA	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Doctorate Degree	Total
Teaching Position	Preschool	7	6	4	0	17
	Infant/Toddler	4	3	4	0	11
	Director	3	4	1	1	9
	Total (4)	14	12	9	1	41

Note: (4) participants did not indicate educational level.

Inferential Statistical

The Cronbach's alpha was recalculated for each subscale and for the overall STATIC. The overall Cronbach's alpha was calculated at .454 for full measure. Reliability for factor one was calculated at .666, for factor two at .619, for factor three at .737 and for factor four at .358. The pilot study's population was small and thus did not demonstrate reliability for three of the factors or for the overall reliability. This indicated that the subscales in this measure and the measure as a whole did not hold up with this new population and was not considered reliable.

An ANOVA was conducted with the independent variable, which included three levels (a. preschool teachers, b. infant/toddler teachers, c. center directors) and the dependent variable, subscale three of the STATIC. Assumptions of ANOVA were tested. All samples were independently drawn from the sample population. To test for normality, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the preschool teacher's group was not significant ($D(19) = .147, p = .200, p > .05$). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the infant/toddler teacher's group was not significantly different from normal ($D(18) = .110, p = .200, p > .05$). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the center director's group was significantly different from normal ($D(4) = .214, p = .0, p < .05$). Levene's Test was used to test for Homogeneity of Variance. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated, $F(2,38) = 1.031, p = .366, p > .05$, thus the data was normally distributed. The findings did not indicate a statistically significant difference in the means [Preschool Teachers ($M= 3.35$); Infant/Toddler Teachers ($M=3.10$) and Center Directors ($M= 3.10$)] for subscale three. No additional statistical tests were conducted

because the other subscales and the overall STATIC measure did not demonstrate reliability. The results of the one-way ANOVA are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

One-Way ANOVA Summary Table for Early Care and Education Professionals' Philosophical Issues Regarding Inclusive Education

Subscale Three: Philosophical Issues Regarding Inclusive Education	<i>df</i>	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	.635	.317	1.024	.369
Within Groups	38	11.778	.310		
Total	40	12.412			

$p < .05$

Summary

This study captured the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and early childcare providers. The results of this study reestablished Cronbach's alpha for each subscale and as a whole indicated a difference. This study surveyed early care and education professionals working in five early care and education facilities in a local southeastern city. The participants in the STATIC-pilot survey were preschool teachers, infant/toddler teachers, and directors. Survey participants consisted of 48% from community-based non-profit early childcare facilities and 51.2% from a community-

based for profit early childcare facilities. The pilot study's population was small and thus did not demonstrate reliability for three of the factors or for the overall reliability. This indicated that the subscales in this measure and the measure as a whole did not hold up with this new population and was not considered reliable. No additional statistical tests were conducted because the other subscales and the overall STATIC measure did not demonstrate reliability.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This quantitative study surveyed the attitudes of early care and education professionals working in programs in south Mississippi. The survey compared the differences in attitudes regarding inclusive practice among early care and education directors, as compared to preschool teachers and infant/toddler teachers, thereby drawing conclusions regarding what the perceived obstacles to inclusive practice are and why more community-based early care and education programs do not identify themselves as being inclusive. A modified version of the Scale of Teacher's Attitudes Towards Inclusive Classrooms was utilized in an online survey format and reliability for the subscales and complete measure were calculated. The results revealed that the STATIC, in its current form is not a reliable measure for this population of early care and education professionals. Additionally, there were no statistical differences in mean scores between the groups of preschool teachers, infant/toddler teachers and center directors.

Conclusion and Discussion

A first objective of this quantitative research study was to pilot the modified version of the STATIC in a new population and, consequently, to investigate its psychometric properties. Principal Components Exploratory Factor Analysis was utilized to test the potential structure of this measure. The means established through the Exploratory Factor analysis were created in order to explain variance among established factors. These means revealed no significant differences from the norm outlined through the analysis as well as by the Scale of Teacher's Attitudes Towards Inclusive Classrooms. This lack of statistical difference in the results implies no apparent differences in attitudes and perceptions amongst position levels. The second objective of this study was to compare the attitudes toward inclusion of 3 groups of preschool personnel: infant/toddler teachers, preschool teachers, and preschool directors. An ANOVA was conducted with the independent variable, which included three levels of positions, and the dependent variable, subscale three of the STATIC. Assumptions of ANOVA were tested. Subscale three was the only factor to prove reliable. This subscale evaluated at higher than a 3.0 on a 6.0 scale revealing the population as whole surveyed to have a moderately positive attitude towards inclusion. Previous research revealed that teachers appear to have significant influence on the outcomes of children with disabilities in an inclusive program (Cross et al., 2004). This significant influence is why even a moderately positive attitude contributes to the success of a child with disabilities in an inclusive program (Sze, 2009).

Recommendations for Policies and Practice

The overall mean was moderately positive suggesting that early care and education professionals hold some positive beliefs and attitudes toward providing inclusive programs. It is important that all young children have equal opportunities in quality learning environments. Inclusion for young children provides benefits for both the child with the disability and the “typically” developing child. This need has already been legally recognized by the IDEIA and the ADA stating, “The inclusion of children with disabilities ages birth to six in community-based child care and preschool settings is a legal mandate and civil right articulated by natural and least restrictive environment provisions under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) and reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)” (DeVore & Russell, 2007). However, research has shown that a teacher’s belief in the abilities of his or her students has the ability to transform behaviors in attempts to confirm established expectations (Sze, 2009). Program directors and teachers’ attitudes and perceptions set the tone for program outcomes (Cross et al., 2004). The need for equal opportunities for children with and without disabilities has already been recognized nationally. The next step in the successful outcomes of children with disabilities is policies of positive attitude and education in regard to inclusion of children with disabilities in typically developing early childcare programs. Previous research has shown lack of knowledge to be a factor in negative attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities (Sze, 2009). Further research in the area of attitudes and perceptions regarding children with disabilities and outcomes could benefit and educate early childcare providers in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study tested the Scale of Teacher's Attitudes Towards Inclusive Classrooms on a small population size revealing a lack of reliability throughout and a small moderate difference in mean pertaining to attitudes and positions. Future research will benefit from the discovery the STATIC testing format is not applicable in such a small survey population and that perhaps a qualitative or case study may be more beneficial to cater the results desired from a similar study. A qualitative study would provide long term insight on specific programs and link teacher's attitudes and perceptions to outcomes of students participating in these programs. A case study would provide specific descriptive information on a specified case allowing the results to act as a valid basis for future policies and procedures in early childcare programming.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Survey of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Classrooms

Demographics

Directions: The purpose of this instrument is to obtain information about your attitude toward the inclusion of students with special needs into regular education classrooms. There are not correct or incorrect answers. Your responses are completely autonomous and confidential. You should mark your response to each item on the computer scan sheet provided. Also, please adhere to the simple guidelines below when completing your response sheet.

In the **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** section, provide the information to items lettered **A-J**. Be sure to fill in the circle containing the number corresponding to your response.

- A. In the **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** section of the answer sheet, mark the response that BEST describes your teaching assignment for this year.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 0. Urban (100,000 or more) | 3. Community (5,000-29, 000) |
| 1. Suburban (30,000-99,999) | 4. Rural (less than 5,000) |

- B. In the **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** section, mark the response that BEST identifies your primary teaching assignment for this year.

- | |
|---------------------------|
| 0. Preschool Teacher |
| 1. Infant/Toddler Teacher |
| 2. Center Director |

3. Other _____
- C. In the **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** section, mark the response that identifies the number of years of your experience you have in your current assignment as recorded Question “B” above.
- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----|--------------------|
| O. | Preservice or Student Teacher | 3. | 4-5 years |
| 1. | 0-1 year | 4. | 6-10 years |
| 2. | 2-3 years | 5. | More than 10 years |
- D. Mark the response that identifies the number of years of experience you will have as a teacher at the end of the school year.
- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----|--------------------|
| O. | Preservice or Student Teacher | 3. | 4-5 years |
| 1. | 0-1 year | 4. | 6-10 years |
| 2. | 2-3 years | 5. | More than 10 years |
- E. Fill in the response that best describes your average class size.
- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------------|
| 0. | 1-10 Students | 3. | 21-41 Students |
| 1. | 11-20 Students | 4. | More than 40 Students |
| 2. | 21- 30 Students | | |
- F. Fill in the response that identifies the highest degree that you have earned.
- | | | | |
|----|-----|----|-----------------|
| 0. | CDA | 3. | Master’s Degree |
|----|-----|----|-----------------|

1. Associates Degree
 2. Bachelor's Degree
 3. Doctor of Education/ PhD.
 4. Doctor of Education/ PhD.
- G. Fill in the response that most closely identifies your racial/ethnic background.
0. Asian
 1. Black
 2. Hispanic
 3. Caucasian
 4. Other
- H. Fill in the response corresponding to the number of children that are included in your classroom this year who have been identified with disabilities.
0. 0 children
 1. 1 child
 2. 2-3 Children.
 3. 4-5 Children
 4. More than 5 Children
- I. Fill in the response that best describes the special need(s) most closely associated with children in identified in **SECTION G**.
0. Learning differences
 1. Behavioral differences
 2. Health or physical differences
 3. None of these
 4. All of the above
- J. Fill in the number corresponding to the statement that best describes you.
0. I do not have a child with special needs living in my home

1. I do have a child with special needs living in my home. *(If you came from a family where there was a person with special needs, mark this option.)*

Survey Questions: The modified STATIC survey will consist of twenty questions with answers based on a Likert Scale (0 -5). The Likert Scale measures are : (0) strongly disagree, (1) disagree, (2) not sure, but tend to disagree, (3) not sure, but tend to agree, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.

1. I am confident in my ability to teach young children with special needs.
2. I have been adequately trained to meet the needs of young children with disabilities
3. I become easily frustrated when teaching young children with special needs.
4. I become anxious when I learn that a child with special needs will be in my classroom.
5. Although children differ intellectually, physically and psychologically, I believe that all children can learn in most environments.
6. I believe that academic progress is possible in children with special needs.
7. I believe that children with special needs should be placed in a special education classroom.
8. I am comfortable teaching a child with a physical disability.
9. I have problems teaching a student with cognitive challenges.
10. I can adequately handle students with mild to moderate behavioral challenges.

11. Children with special needs can learn social skills that are modeled by students in an inclusive setting.
12. Children with special needs have higher academic achievement when included in an inclusive preschool classroom.
13. It is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in a non-inclusive setting.
14. Self-esteem of children with special needs is increased if children with special needs are in an inclusive, early childhood classroom.
15. Including students with special needs in an inclusive, early childhood classroom hinders the academic progress of other children.
16. Special in-service training for early childhood professionals teaching children with special needs should be required.
17. I don't mind making special physical arrangements in my room to meet the needs of children with special needs.
18. Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of children with special needs.
19. My program director is supportive in making needed accommodations for teaching children with special needs.
20. Children with special needs should be included in inclusive, early childhood classrooms.