

The purpose of this research study was to find out whether or not children who attended preschool have advancements in their communication and social skills. The method used was survey research. The researchers handed out questionnaires to the student's parent or guardians. The student's who were being researched were 3 year olds and 4 year olds either in preschool or who haven't attended preschool. Seven of the children were in preschool and seven of the children were not in pre-school. The results determined that the hypothesis was accepted.

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

A Survey Research

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In today's economy, both parents typically need to work to support the family by paying bills, purchasing groceries, and have spending money. Most parents find it necessary to enroll their children in daycare prior to pre-school leading to children attending pre-kindergarten programs. "Communication is the foundation of social interaction, the essential means through which people initiate and maintain social relationships," (Hazen & Black, 1989). Traditionally children between the ages of 3- and 4- years old who attend pre-school enhance their communication and social skills in preparation for kindergarten. The purpose of this study is to examine whether or not sending a child to preschool will increase communication and social skills.

Pre-School:

Preschool is an educational environment that a child attends to strengthen motor and educational skills to prepare for kindergarten. Generally, the child is between the ages of 3 and 4- years old. The classroom time can be either a half-day or full day of attendance. The younger

children typically attend two days per week, whereas the older children attend three days per week.

There is research that supports attending pre-school, “can help minimize the gaps in social, behavioral, and academic skills,” according to Kristen L. Bub (Bub, 2009). She also states that children who have attended preschool are more likely to be in a typically classroom setting rather than in a special education program, graduate high school, and not have a fate as a juvenile delinquent (2009).

Communication Skills:

Communication is the way people send messages about what they are thinking or feeling. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the correspondent advice (Wikipedia Foundation, Inc., 2010). Communication skills start to become evident as early as infant age when the child starts to point to recognizable objects. The toddler will also point to an object, and say “that”. However, a preschool aged child will be capable to use descriptive wording when talking about a particular item. This will then progress to the child being able to recognize emotions of the people surrounding them and react in an appropriate behavior (Matthews, Lieven, & Tomasello, 2007).

Social Skills:

Social skills are a way people communicate through interaction with others. These actions might be verbal or nonverbal (Wikipedia Foundation, Inc., 8). These skills involve the ability to interact with fellow students, follow directions, and participate in group activities (Bub, 2009). People who are in different situations or have a problem then learn how to overcome

them when they know how to socially respond to the issue. This will reinforce the person that he or she does have the skills to overcome their issue. In a graduate study done at a southwestern university, the students were asked to fill out a questionnaire on verbal and nonverbal immediacy with their teacher assistant (Roach, 1999). This shows that not only in preschool are schools concerned about how the teacher or assistant communicates with the students verbally and nonverbally but they are concerned with college students as well.

Children learn how to socially interact with others at a very young age. Some children learn to work better with others when he or she has a sibling. First born children may have a difficult time learning how to communicate and socialize with others due to shyness, nervousness, and anxiousness. The results of a study completed by Timothy Curby, Jennifer LoCasale-Crouch, Timothy R. Konold, Robert C. Pianta, Carollee Howes, Margaret Burchinal, Donna Bryant, Richard Clifford, Diane Early, and Oscar Barbarin observed in a classroom, identified that teacher-student relationship has a major influence on the academic and social skills (Curby, et. el. 2009). Another hypothesis that was being completed and proven correctly was to predict teacher management communication style and affective learning would be positively correlated (Chory, 1999).

Behavior skills also go hand in hand with social skills. The child's social skills might reflect their behavioral skills. Social skills can be measured by how well a child works with others or how one reacts (Wikipedia). According to Jan Hughs' study, *The Study of Identifying Quality in Pre-School Education* revealed that if a new generation of teachers has emotional and instructional support for their students, the students will have improved behavior patterns (2010). Jeffrey Pickens executed a study on children that did not attend preschool. His findings were that those children most likely had to attend an extra year of kindergarten. This helped the child

improve their academic and social skills; forcing their negative behavior to decline. However, he also determined that the children who attended preschool had shown improvement in social interaction, social cooperation, and social independence (Pickens, 2009).

It is perceived in society that if a child does not attend preschool prior to enrolling into kindergarten, the child will have delayed development in their communication and social skills. This statement is said since the children did not have prior education and interaction with other children, they will not know how to interact with children their age. This study collects data to support the hypothesis that children attending preschool will have a greater development of communication and social skills rather than those children who do not attend preschool.

Hypothesis:

Children who attend preschool will better their communication and social skills than children who don't attend pre-school.

Methods

Subjects:

There were twelve students as our subjects, six that did not attend preschool and six that did attend preschool. The survey research was done single-blind. The parents of the students did not know what the hypothesis was or what the researchers were looking for in the questionnaire.

Dependent Measures:

The study was done by using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by the student's parent or guardian. Each questionnaire was anonymous, as for the researchers to not know what student reached what goal at a particular age. For communication and social skills, we used the responses to the question, "How well does your child interact with others?" (Excellent – 5, Good – 4, Kind of Shy – 3, Shy – 2, Doesn't like group play – 1).

Refer to Appendix A

As a secondary study that was apparent on our questionnaire were cognitive skills. This was determined by four questions. Referencing to appendix A, questions 4, 5, 6 and 9. Question four is measured by age 1 being four points, age 2 being three points, age 3 being two points and age 4 being one point. Question five is measured by age as well, 1 years old being four points, age 2 being three points, age 3 being two points and age 4 being one point. Question six is being measured by 10 being one point, 20 being two points, 30 being three points and 40+ being four points. The last question we measured for cognitive skills was number nine on appendix A. Yes was two points and no was worth one point.

The questionnaires were given to parents or guardians through random sampling. At one establishment for a place of employment, there is a range of different classes of people, such as, high class, middle class, and low class. Also, the employees at this establishment range in how far they exceeded in their educational training. The range is from earning a high school diploma to a master's degree. At this point, employees with children or grandchildren were notified if they would like to participate, they could fill out a questionnaire. The child had to be 3 or 4-years old.

Results

Independent Variable:

The independent variable in this research was whether or not the child attended preschool.

Test of hypothesis:

In order to test our hypothesis the researchers did survey research. The questionnaire was handed out to the parent or guardian of the 3 year old or 4 year old. There were ten questions altogether on the questionnaire (refer to appendix A). The dependent variable in the research was the child's communication and social skills.

Acceptance of subordinate's decision. The researcher's hypothesis exceeded the research. The critical value for the one-tailed hypothesis at .05 was 1.761. The researchers calculated T value was 1.96. This proved that students who attend preschool are enhanced in their social and communication skills. Children who didn't attend preschool are less likely to be advanced in their communication, social and cognitive skills.

Did not attend Pre-School

Did attend Pre-School

Score	Deviation	Deviation Squared	Score	Deviation	Deviation Square
1	-2.86	8.18	5	3.92	15.37
4	0.14	0.02	4	2.92	8.53
5	1.14	1.30	3	1.92	3.69
5	1.14	1.30	4	2.92	8.53
5	1.14	1.30	3	1.92	3.69
4	0.14	0.02	5	3.92	15.37
3	-0.86	0.74	5	3.92	15.37
3.86		12.86	1.08		70.55

$$\frac{3.86 - 1.08}{\sqrt{\frac{12.86 + 70.55}{7+7-2} \cdot \frac{7+7}{7 \cdot 7}}} = \frac{2.78}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{83.41}{12}\right)\left(\frac{14}{49}\right)}} = \frac{2.78}{\sqrt{(6.95)(.29)}} = \frac{2.78}{\sqrt{2.02}} = \frac{2.78}{1.42} = 1.96$$

Degree of Freedom = 7 + 7 - 2 = 12

Critical Value = 1.761 (one-tailed)

Cognitive Skills:

Did not attend Preschool

Did attend Preschool

Score	Deviation	Deviation Squared	Score	Deviation	Deviation Square
6	-2.86	8.18	14	1.86	3.46
9	0.14	0.02	13	0.86	0.74
10	1.14	1.30	8	-4.14	17.14
9	0.14	0.02	14	1.86	3.46
10	1.14	1.30	12	-0.14	0.02
8	-0.86	0.74	10	-2.14	4.58
10	1.14	1.30	14	1.86	3.46
8.86		12.86	12.14		32.86

$$\frac{12.14 - 8.86}{\sqrt{\frac{32.86 + 12.86}{7+7-2} \cdot \frac{7+7}{7 \cdot 7}}} = \frac{3.28}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{45.72}{12}\right)\left(\frac{14}{49}\right)}} = \frac{3.28}{\sqrt{(3.81)(.29)}} = \frac{3.28}{\sqrt{1.10}} = \frac{3.28}{1.05} = 3.12$$

Degree of Freedom = 7 + 7 - 2 = 12

Critical Value = 1.895 (one-tailed)

Discussion

Whether or not a child attends preschool has an impact on the child's communication, social and cognitive skills. The results that we came up with supports the hypothesis which was children who attend preschool will better their communication and social skills than children who don't attend preschool.

Social Skills:

When looking at the surveys if the child attended preschool their score on question ten (reference appendix A) was a lot higher than children who did not attend preschool. Referencing back to appendix A, questions two and ten were used to measure the child's social skills. As previously stated, question two was asking whether or not the child attended preschool; yes being two points and no being one point. Question ten was asking how well their child interacts with others, excellent being five points, good equaling four points, kind of shy was three points, shy equaling two points and doesn't like group play equaling one point.

Cognitive Skills:

As a second way to determine whether or not a child who attended preschool is more advanced, was to take a look at cognitive skills. We did this, in the same questionnaire, by asking questions such as if they could identify primary colors, what age the child started counting, how high he or she could count, and what age they could recite the alphabet (reference appendix A, questions 4,5,6 and 9). The perfect cognitive score was fourteen. There were approximately three children who attended preschool that receive an ideal score. None of the children who did not go to preschool achieved a perfect score. The highest score for three

children who did not attend was ten. The cognitive scores were more effective to finding out the results of our hypothesis and proven it correctly.

On the basis of this study, we would suggest to other researchers to ask more questions about social skills on the questionnaire. Even though we received a proven hypothesis, we only asked one question based on social skills. Another suggestion would be to use a different method. Since we didn't have too much time to do an observation, we believe that method would be just as effective. A problem the researcher may run into would be if a child, who is social and works well with other has an off day. That would affect the results of the research. But there are always risks in research, such as our questionnaire. The parent or guardian might have lied about their child knowing their primary and secondary colors, counting or knowing their alphabet at such a young age. One more issue that might make a negative influence on the research is if the child is from a different county. If he or she is from another country or born in a different country, their social skills may differ from other children their age. Just like in the study from *Development of communication skills in Finnish pre-school children examined by the Children's Communication Checklist* article, the researchers studied Finnish children and their communication and language development which many not progress the same way in different languages (Yliherva, Loukusa, Vaisanen, Pyper, & Moilanen, 2009).

In conclusion, there are many things that could affect the results of a research but there are always risks involved and if the results don't come out as planned; a researcher is able to do their study over. In our study, we proved that children who attend preschool are more advanced in their communication and social skills than children who do not attend preschool.

Appendix A

1. How old is your child?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

2. Did your child attend preschool?

- Yes
- No

3. How many school-age children do you have (K-12)?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

4. What age did your child start reciting the alphabet?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

5. At what age did your child learn to count?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

6. How high can your child count?

- 10
- 20
- 30
- 40+

7. If your child attended daycare was there any stay at home parents in the house?
- N/A
 - Yes
 - No
8. If your child attends preschool is there any stay at home parents in the house?
- N/A
 - Yes
 - No
9. Can your child identify primary and secondary colors?
- Yes
 - No
10. How well does your child interact with others?
- Excellent
 - Good
 - Kind of shy
 - Shy
 - Doesn't like group play

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