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**THE EFFECTS OF DAYCARE ON CHILDREN'S SOCIALIZATION IN THE  
FIRST THREE YEARS OF SCHOOL**

By

Alison Theresa Pomykacz

A Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Psychology  
College of Special Education Services/ Instruction

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of

Master of Arts

At

Rowan University

April 25, 2011

Thesis Chair: Dr. John Klanderma, Ph. D.

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Alison Pomykacz

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my supportive family and my parents,

Joseph and Maureen Pomykacz.

## **Abstract**

Alison Pomykacz

### **THE EFFECTS OF DAYCARE ON CHILDREN'S SOCIALIZATION ON THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF SCHOOL**

2010/11

Dr. John Klanderman, Ph.D.

Master of Arts in School Psychology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role that daycare may play in a child's socialization during his/her first three years of school (K-2). In particular, this study focused on the time spent in daycare per week compared with various social and academic realms. Information was obtained through parent and teacher questionnaires. While there appeared to be a wide variation among the children's hours per week spent in class, when these numbers were compared to the teacher observations, there was no apparent significance.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction 1**

Many studies have been done to test the apparent differences among children who attend full time daycare and those who do not attend daycare. The research of the Effects of Daycare is intended to show the social perspectives of children between the ages of 5-8, and how they adjust to school settings. Today, the term daycare takes on different forms in Head Start Programs, Learning Centers and Child Care. Ultimately this study will show, from the teacher's point-of-view, the social adjustment made by student's from these various background's, as well as children who have not attended daycare before being enrolled in schooling (prior to the age of 5).

The concept of daycare has been around for quite some time. What was researched more in depth in this study is how attending any kind of daycare facility prior to the age of four can affect one's level of socialization when entering school. This study will lend support to the topic of daycare and how it can be useful or helpful for children in the school setting.

#### **1.1 Hypothesis**

The basis of this study will show the relationship between time spent in daycare and social behavior in a school based setting. The greater the time spent in daycare, the better the cognitive and social abilities of the child. This will be particularly evident during the early years of schooling; grades K-2. A questionnaire was given to the parent's of individual children regarding the child's experiences prior to entering school. These covered the form of child care that the child received, as well as the amount of time spent

there per week. The questionnaires were given to the teacher's to rate each child's behaviors from an academic and social perspective. Any information obtained remained confidential. Any notes and/or documents were destroyed after the study.

## **1.2 Background**

The school years are a time of introducing children into socialization and forming relationships outside of the family. Lifespan Development introduces us to the adolescent years, in which children are subjected to the "social clock." How well a child does in school stems from how well they are taught to face the difficulties and challenges in their lives. This period can also be stressful on an adolescent because they tend to experience that feeling of being alone, and not having their parents as solace. When bad events occur they tend to be inflated in the child of an adolescent, making coping with the situation more difficult. How children react to the social environment around them in school can be influenced on their social experiences prior to the school aged years.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory suggests "that all cultures offer some form of instruction to children at this age reflects a major tenet of Eriksonian theory, that of the mutuality ("cogwheeling") between the developing individual and society." (Kowaz and Marcia, 1991)

"Psychoanalytic theory points to the very early years prior to the child's entry into elementary school as the crucial formative years of the child's development of self and internalization of society's values and practices." (Klass, 1983) It is during these years that children learn that there are expectations of them from society, and how to warrant

their behaviors. So having experienced the social ideals of a daycare facility should elicit desirable behaviors from children in the school setting.

### **1.3 Definitions**

While there is not universal definition of a daycare facility, daycare will be defined in this study as an informal setting, with a less structured surrounding than that of learning centers or head start programs. Learning centers, therefore, will be defined as a setting in which limited structure occurs. Head start, finally, will be defined as more structured than that of daycare or learning centers.

### **1.4 Assumptions**

So much emphasis is placed on the socialization of a child's schooling years. This study does not account for home/family environment, which may too have an effect on a child's socialization. The child's temperament may, too, have an effect on his/her social adjustment.

### **1.5 Limitations**

This study can lend support to the social adjustment aspect of schooling endured each year by children across America. This study may not relate to all school aged children, regardless of time spent in daycare or in the home.

### **1.6 Summary**

Research has shown an ambiguous relationship between children who attend daycare and overt behavior. Some studies contest that daycare can lead to aggressive behavior, while others state the opposite. "Several studies have shown that early daycare entrance may actually enhance certain abilities, including cognitive and social behaviors." (DiLalla, 1998)

What will be portrayed through the coming chapters is what, if any at all, influence having attended daycare prior to the school aged years can have on a child. Head Start Programs and Learning Centers will also be investigated as they are an ever increasing form of child care in today's society.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Research has long been investigating the effects of daycare from various perspectives. However, there seems to be conflicting studies on topics such as time spent in daycare, age at which daycare begins, and whether the child attends daycare, a learning center or a head start program. DeSchipper, Tavecchio, De Schipper, Tavecchio, vanIJzendoorn, and Linting (2003) identified three types of instability at child care: (a) daily instability, or the stability and availability of trusted caregivers throughout the day and the presence of regular routines within a single care arrangement; (b) long-term instability, which refers to both within-arrangement changes, such as caregiver turnover, and changes in and out of different care arrangements over time; and (c) arrangement multiplicity, or the number of separate child-care arrangements a child regularly experiences during a single day or week. (Morrissey 2009)

Today we tend to rely a lot on formal daycare, such as daycare centers. These changes mean that the majority of young children in the U.S. are currently being raised in a dual, home–daycare context. (Shpancer, 2002)

“Over half of the children in the United States under the age of six have mothers who are in the workforce and require child care for their children.” (Warash, Markstrom, Lucci, 2005) With the ever changing concept of the nuclear family, more and more mothers are venturing into the working world. Be it because of divorce rates or increasing numbers of single parent homes, children are being exposed to various forms of daycare.

## 2.1 Social and Cognitive

Over the years, many researchers have sought to uncover the relationship between the social and cognitive behaviors of children who have attended daycare. “Non-parental daycare may enhance cognitive development for some children.” (Melhuish, 1987) Is this similar to the effect that school has on a child? Are children more inclined to listen to those who are not their parents? In particular children that are at high risk, tend to profit more from “high quality daycare.” (Melhuish, 1987) From the gender, temperament perspective, Melhuish sought to understand the influence that this can have on a child’s experience in daycare. From this study, researchers concluded that children who received daycare outside of the home (particularly girls), tended to shy away way being approached by female strangers. “This relative indifference probably reflects the greater experience of a wide range of people that these children have as a consequence of their daycare experience and, therefore, they felt less excitement in meeting new people.” (Melhuish, 1987) When temperament is taken into consideration, both boys and girls faired the same during separation.

Child care has typically shown positive attributes as a result of group interaction. Such areas that show positive attributes are: school adjustment, ability to communicate, and readiness for school. (Christian, *et. al.* 1998)

Because of the ever changing demands of daycare and the laws/regulations associated with it, the social factors, too, are constantly changing themselves. “By the time daycare research has managed to map out with sufficient precision the complex forces that interact to produce a certain outcome, social and demographic conditions will

likely have changed enough to require a reworking of the whole enterprise.” (Shpancer, 2006)

While one can argue each side of the daycare and at home care debate, children at home tend to receive more attention from adults than children in daycare (Melhuish, Mooney, Martin,&Lloyd, 1990). Centers, on the other hand, offer children more opportunity for diverse peer interaction (Clarke-Stewart, 1991), and interaction with multiple adults (Howes, 1983). literature suggests that the child’s environment—and experience—are multilayered and that different individual and environmental characteristics may predict and affect different aspects of the child’s overall experience and adaptation across contexts and time. (Shpancer 2002)

The constant transition between the home and child care facilities can sometimes have aversive effects on children. Anhert and Lamb, however, suggested that if a parent is confident in the child care that they have selected, it can be assumed that they will tend to interact more with their child as a result. However, they also found that children who attend child care experience higher levels of stress than those who are reared within the home; the child needs more sensitivity from their mothers to equilibrate their mood especially after having attended extended time in child care. It is also said that caregivers interact with children in relation to the group as a whole, not based on the individual child’s needs. “Adaptive behavior is largely a function of the balance between the stresses and supports experienced by children. This balance can easily be disrupted when stress is not modulated by supportive parent–child relationships because parents lack adequate opportunities or misinterpret their children’s distress signals.” (Anhert & Lamb 2003)

The article, *Public School Aggression among Children with Varying Daycare Experience*, addresses the topic of “aggressive, assertive, and negative behavior.” (Haskins 1985) Children were observed, after having attended daycare, on an average of 2-3 years of public schooling. Children were grouped according to the amount of daycare that they have received as well as the age at which they entered daycare. There was also a control group, in which some of the children did attend daycare, but not as nearly as much as the children in the experimental group. Researchers, with the aid of the children’s teachers, rated the children’s aggression using the Classroom Behavior Inventory in four settings: the playground, hallway, lunchroom and classroom. “Children in the experimental group were reported by teachers to be more aggressive than the children in the control group.” (Haskins 1985) Also, different types of aggression were observed in this study. There were a number of similarities and differences among the experimental and control groups. For one, “children in the experimental group were rated (by teachers) as more likely to use the aggressive acts hit, kick and push than children in the control group.” (Haskins 1985) As a similarity, “children in the experimental group were not more difficult to manage than children in the control group.” (Haskins 1985)

In Field’s (1991) study, *Quality Infant Day-care and Grade School Behavior and Performance*, she wanted to test the level of socialization among children who have attended daycare on the grade school level. Children in the study were given a self-questionnaire (Piers-Harris Children’s Self Concept Scale), and the parents were given the behavior rating scale to see if their level of introversion/extroversion had an effect on the child. Through a correlational model, the researchers were able to “suggest that children with more time in quality infant day-care are showing more social interaction in



the form of friends and popularity, greater assertiveness (and less aggressivity), and greater emotional well-being.” (Field 2001) “Individual differences in the degree to which children successfully negotiate their functional emotional developmental capacities are also important.” (Greenspan 2003) It is apparent that the high levels of cortisol experienced by children who attend daycare can have aversive effects on their ability to cope with stressful situations. On the days that daycare children are at home, their cortisol levels tend to fall, like that of home-reared children. (Greenspan 2003) Bates, et. al. sought to find the relation among varying experiences in daycare and social and cognitive aspects of kindergarten. In particular, Bates, et. al. took 35 different factors into consideration that have an association with adjustment.

Development of language may be an aversive effect of the quality of daycare that a child has received.

The relationship between the caregiver in the daycare setting and the individual child can have an effect on the emotional well being of the child. Development of language may be a direct result of the child’s interaction with the caregiver. An experiment by McCartney (1984) tested the effects of the quality of daycare on children’s development of language. In the study, children were observed for more than six months. The daycares were interviewed to determine quality. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used to assess the children’s verbal intelligence. It was hypothesized that “the amount of verbal interaction with caregivers would be a particularly important determinant of language skill, given this consistent finding in studies of mother-child interaction, intervention, and day care.” (McCartney 1984) While it is still unclear what constitutes as a quality daycare (which environment is best

conducive for child intervention), the results of this study showed that "...quality of the day care environment does affect children's language development... day care exerts a profound effect on language development." (McCartney 1984)

A study done by O'Connell and Farran (1982), tested the effects of daycare on children of low socioeconomic families. These particular children were at risk for developing mental retardation. Their study included observing young children interacting with their mothers and recorded "intentional behavior which included: showing off, giving/showing/pointing, ritualized signal and linguistic symbol." (O'Connell & Farran 1982) Results of this study show that "High-risk infants attending day-care intervention initiated communicative behaviors to their mothers more often than did infants receiving no day-care intervention." (O'Connell & Farran 1982)

Broberg, Wessels, Lamb and Hwang (1997) tested the long term effects on children who attend daycare versus children who receive at home care. They recruited children between the ages of 12-24 months old. Approximately half of them were in daycare and the other half received at home care. The children were followed for 7 years and observed and tested five times within those 7 years. They measured the children verbal and mathematical abilities. In the final follow up, the children were given a standardized cognitive test. The researchers concluded that "high quality out-of-home care has positive effects on children's cognitive development in several cultures, including the United States." (Broberg et. al. 1997)

Goldstein, Arnold, Rosenberg, Stowe and Ortiz (2001) discuss the topic of aggression among children attending daycare. They believed that aggression among children in a daycare will produce acts of aggression among other children. They

observed the children during free-play time. Acts of aggression and reactions to aggression were recorded during this time, so as to find out if the aggressive acts were contagious. After data was collected, researcher randomized the data. “As predicted..., a child was more likely to aggress if another child had just performed an act of aggression than if no aggression had occurred.” (Goldstein, et. al. 2001)

In a study by Blanchard and Main (1979), researchers studied the effects of daycare on children’s level of avoidance. The child was first observed within the daycare, and the observer noted different social behaviors that the child exhibited while attending daycare. Researchers tested for avoidance in two situations the child-parent interaction in a strange situation and in daycare. The results of the observations showed that there was “no difference among centers for avoidance under either condition.” (Blanchard & Main 1979) There was also an apparent effect on social- emotional adjustment. “The more months spent in substitute care, the greater the social-emotional adjustment apparent in the daycare situation and the less likely the infants were to avoid the parent on reunion in the center or in the laboratory.” (Blanchard & Main 1979)

Another study sought to discuss the effects of daycare intervention in kindergarten children. In particular they wanted to observe language development. “Researchers predicted that “low-income children who had participated in an educational daycare intervention program (daycare group), would respond more adequately to adult initiations than low-income children who had not participated (nonintervention group)...”

## **2.2 Daycare Social Behaviors**

Some researchers have sought to investigate the influence that the daycares social environment can have an effect on children.

What Finkelstein, et. al. wanted to research was “children’s social experience in an infant daycare program.” (Finkelstein, Dent, Gallacher, and Ramey 1978) Infants and toddlers were observed in the daycare facility that they attended. Social interactions were observed. The results of this study revealed that in the daycare facility “older children spent more time in social behavior with peers and less time in social behavior with teachers than did the younger children.” (Finkelstein et. al. 1978)

## **2.3 Head Start, Learning Centers and Other Preschool Programs**

When researching a child’s role in school, one question that can often arise is what constitutes a child for being ready for school? Sure, age is a definite factor in our society that says when a child should start school, but another aspect aside from age and academic ability is a child’s ability to socialize with his/her peers. For some the socio/emotional aspect of education is just as important as the academic.

With that said, does attending a Head Start, Learning Center, or related program prior to schooling have an effect on a child’s socialization skills? “The first 5 years of life influence school readiness and achievement; high quality preschool experiences can enhance development” (Ramey 1999). One can argue that the quality of programs, such as Head Start can provide a child with an academic advantage over his/her peers.

Head Start can be particularly effective for children of economically disadvantaged families. “This preschool education program continues to offer hope for ‘breaking the cycle of poverty’ by raising poor children’s levels of social and educational

competence.” (Lee, Schnur, & Brooks-Gunn 1988). The Study by Lee, Schnur and Brooks-Gunn sought to find out the effectiveness that Head Start Programs can have on economically challenged children compared to children from economically stable families that attend other forms of preschool. In this study children were given various assessments. Results of the study show that “even with the larger gains for the Head Start subjects, exposure to this program has not eliminated the deficit (which we might attribute to their relatively disadvantaged background).” (Lee, Schnur & Brooks-Gunn 1988)

Still, though, the constant struggle between what constitutes as high quality daycare, without implying high costs often imposes a catch 22. Some social scientists argue that for those of low SES (socioeconomic status) may fair better from high quality daycare. “Poor neighborhoods are scarce in neighborhood institutions.” (Small & Stark 2005) To many parents, proximity may be the most important factor when searching for a daycare for their child. Having a quality daycare within a decent radius regardless of the neighborhood is often a difficult find. Small and Stark wanted to investigate child care centers as a neighborhood institution. What they found is that the higher the level of poverty in a community, the more likely they are to have public child care facilities rather than private facilities.

#### **2.4 Effect of Early Intervention on Children with Disabilities**

If a child care center provides adequate care for a child, ultimately the lasting effects can be beneficial to the child. Standards of child care quality have a large range of mandates across the United States. In a study done by the NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, the researchers wanted to see if “children enrolled in child care center

classes that met more professionally recommended standards would perform better on measures of cognition, language and social competence than children enrolled in classes that met fewer of these standards.” (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 1999) Researchers met with different child care centers to observe how they met various standards (child-teacher ratio, staff training, etc.) “Children in classes that met more recommended standards displayed higher school readiness and language comprehension scores and fewer behavior problems”...depending on the age of the child at the time of attendance. (NICHD 1999) Using a revised version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Warash, et. al. observed various aspects of child care centers before and after implementation of the revision. They observed personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interactions, program structure, parents and staff and spaces and furnishing. With the exception of spaces and furnishing, “scores improved from pre to post test.” (Warash et. al 2005)

Ultimately, earlier experience in a daycare facility can provide a child with sustainable individual attention that can be beneficial to an individual’s needs. Research has shown that successful early childhood programs can individualize their services; use a family-centered, community—based approach; and employ providers who have the necessary knowledge and skills to develop relationships with children and families facing difficult circumstances. (Olsen & DeBoise, 2007)

Some will argue that attending a child care center earlier in life can have positive long-term effects on children with behavior problems. “Teacher in child care centers and family daycare homes find the most challenging work is with children who exhibit behavioral and/or emotional problems.” (Alkon, Ramler, MacLennan 2003) Mental

health consultation in child care center can be seen as a particularly useful advantage for children.

## **2.5 Parenting**

Parenting styles can have an effect on children's social ability and experience in non-maternal care can also influence this. Adi-Japha and Klein (2009) addressed the issue of time spent with parent and time spent in child care in relation to a child's receptive and expressive language as well as school readiness. What the researchers found was that parenting quality in conjunction with medium amounts of child care yielded the best results among children. "Stronger associations between parenting quality and school readiness scores were found for children who experienced medium amounts of care." (Adi-Japha & Klein, P.S. 2009)

Also, attachment styles of mother's can produce different results in a child's daycare experience. Koren-Karie investigated the effects of maternal attachment on children who attend center care and those who remain at home. Results show that more educated mother's with careers tend to prefer in home care for their children. "83% of home-care mothers were classified as secure; only 61% of the centre-care mothers were classified as such. This significant difference suggests that within the centre care group, there is a larger proportion of insecurely attached mothers than in the home group." (Koren-Karie 2001)

Studies by researchers have resulted in child care having positive effects on children from lower SES, particularly in areas such as math and letter identification. (Christian, et. al. 1998)

The long-term effects of varying daycares have, too, been long debated by researcher, but little progression has been made towards this research. Some will argue that children will outgrow the effects within a few years, other say that these effects can persist across much of one's lifetime. Vandell, *et.al.* examined children in both high quality daycares and those in poor quality daycare. Four years after their observation of the children in daycare (at age 4), the researchers observed the children in a play setting designed to elicit certain social behaviors. "Daycare quality also significantly predicted observers' ratings of the 8-year-olds' social competence and positive effect, with children from better quality care rated more positively.

Finally, day-care quality added a significant increment to the peers' shy nominations, with children from poorer quality care receiving more shy nominations." (Vandell, *et. al.* 1988)



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the methodology used in collecting the data that addressed the research question posed: **What, if any, effect does daycare attendance prior to age 5, have on children’s socialization in their first three years of school?** Chapter III discussed the design, setting, the participants, the reliability and validity of the survey instruments, as well as the procedures of the study.

This research relied on the comparison of teacher’s perceptions of the student in the classroom and the information provided by the parents regarding their child’s experience with daycare prior to age 5. This was done through surveys given to both the parents and the teachers.

#### **3.1 Participants**

Participants included in this were kindergarten, first and second graders who attended a Catholic elementary school during the 2010-2011 academic school year. The ages of these children ranged from 5-8 years old. These children were from a school in which the demographic was about: 85%- Caucasian, 8%- Black, 3%- Asian, and 4%- Other. Attendance in a daycare was not required in order to participate in this study. Approval from the parents/guardian was obtained in conjunction with the parent survey.

#### **3.2 Setting**

This study’s setting was in one Catholic elementary school in Pennsylvania, US. The environment included three classrooms (K-2) in a regular education setting.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Through the surveys obtained from both the teachers and the parents, a One Way Between Subject ANOVA was conducted to show the relationship between those students who attended daycare, and those who did not. There was one independent variable, time spent in daycare. There was one dependent variable, socialization in the kindergarten, first or second grade.

### **3.4 Measures**

The survey instruments used were one parent questionnaire and one teacher questionnaire for each student (refer to Appendix A&B). The parent questionnaire was used to account for the length of time that the student spent in daycare as well as the daycare facility that the child attend, if they attended one at all. The teacher observation was used to measure the child's academic performance, appropriate social skills, conversation initiation with their teacher and their peers, expressive language and receptive body language. Teacher and parent responses assisted in determining the relationship between daycare attendance and socialization in the classroom.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are an important aspect in any research. The more confidence you have in your research the closer you are able to get to the objective of your research. Qualitative research relies heavily on the validity and reliability of research techniques. The importance of ensuring the validity of qualitative research is found throughout the literature that espouses qualitative methods (Lewis, 2009).

Reliability in quantitative research has focused on the concept of consistency, which primarily concentrated on instrumentation and outcome (Lewis, 2009).

This study used data collected from a structured classroom environment. The reliability of the study was a bit weaker since the survey used was an established measurement.

### **3.6 Collection of Data**

Data was collected through a distribution of surveys to the teachers and parents. Parent surveys were sent home to the parents by the students teachers and included a consent form as well as availability of contact to the researcher should clarification be needed. Teacher surveys were distributed to the teachers of the kindergarten, first and second grade teachers. Names were placed on each survey for accordance between the parent and teacher surveys. Upon completion by teachers and return of surveys from parents, the surveys were placed in a brown envelop and sealed. They were then picked up personally by the researcher.

### **3.7 Procedures**

This study's methodology used parent and teacher questionnaires that enabled the researcher to gain insight into the effect that daycare may have on a child's early experiences on school from the perception of the teacher. The distribution of the surveys to the participants included availability of contact to the researcher to clarify any questions teachers or parents may have had about the study. Once the participants were identified, the surveys were distributed to the teachers and parents.

### **3.8 Summary**

Chapter 3 was a discussion of the methodology used in the study. This included a detailed summary of the design, setting, participants, instrument and collection of data.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

This chapter will discuss the results of the study, in which the researcher was looking to find the effects of daycare in children's socialization during the first three years of school. In particular, the results were looking to see if the hypothesis presented by the author, that the more time a child spends in daycare should increase his/her academic and social abilities, was consistent with the findings.

Chapter IV presents the data findings resulting from the questionnaires that were distributed to the teachers and parents. The surveys, which were collected and organized, were analyzed and then transcribed into tables and figures which were then used as a basis for interpreting the findings from this research. The participants in this study consisted of 3 teachers, 40 parents/students.

The teacher and parent surveys were used to conduct a statistical analysis of the data. In particular the time spent in daycare per week, prior to preschool, was compared to teacher observation scores. The teacher survey consisted of 8 questions pertaining to each individual child's age, grade and academic/social performance (See Appendix A). The parent survey consisted of 4 questions regarding their child's daycare experience, if any at all (See Appendix B). The mean age of the children was 6.43 (n=40), at the time the study was conducted.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of the number of hours spent in daycare per week prior to entering pre-school on children's academic and social attributions. The one-way between subjects ANOVA yielded the

results  $p=.766$  ( $p<.05$ ) (See Figure 1). This indicates that there is not a significant effect of time spent in daycare on children in their first three years of school (K-2). The graphs pertaining to this particular data follow.

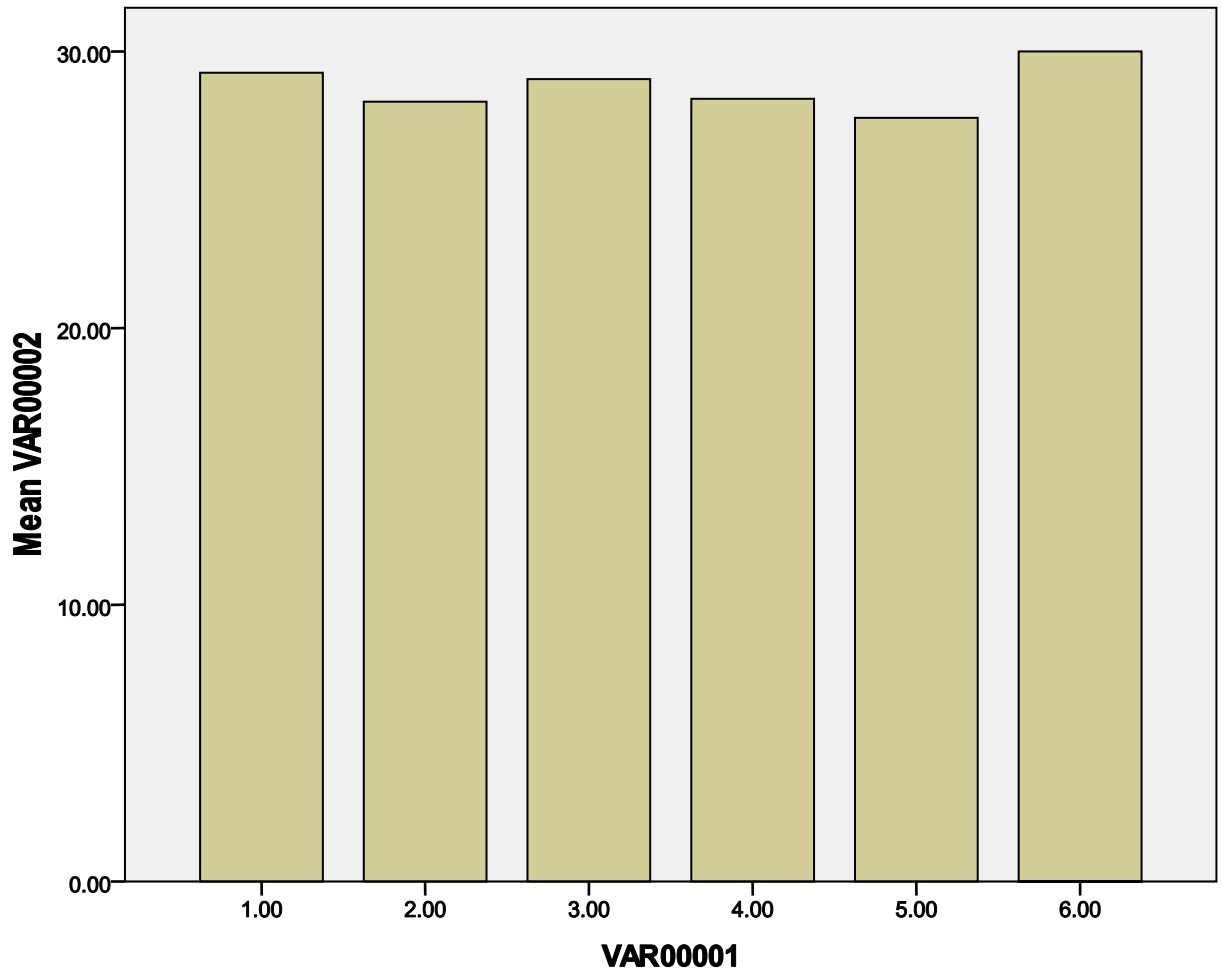


Figure 1: Teacher ratings compared with hours spent in daycare

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was also run for each grade (K-2) individually. The results of these tests were  $p=.913$  ( $p<.05$ ) for kindergarten (see Figure 2),  $p=.253$  ( $p<.05$ ) for first grade (see Figure 3) and  $p=.994$  ( $p<.05$ ) for second grade (see

Figure 4). These numbers, too, show that there is no significance among each grade individually in regards to time spent in daycare and socialization in school. However, it should be noted that there does appear to be a significant difference when comparing kindergarten and second grade to the first grade class. This could be the result of the particular teacher observation, or other confounding variables.

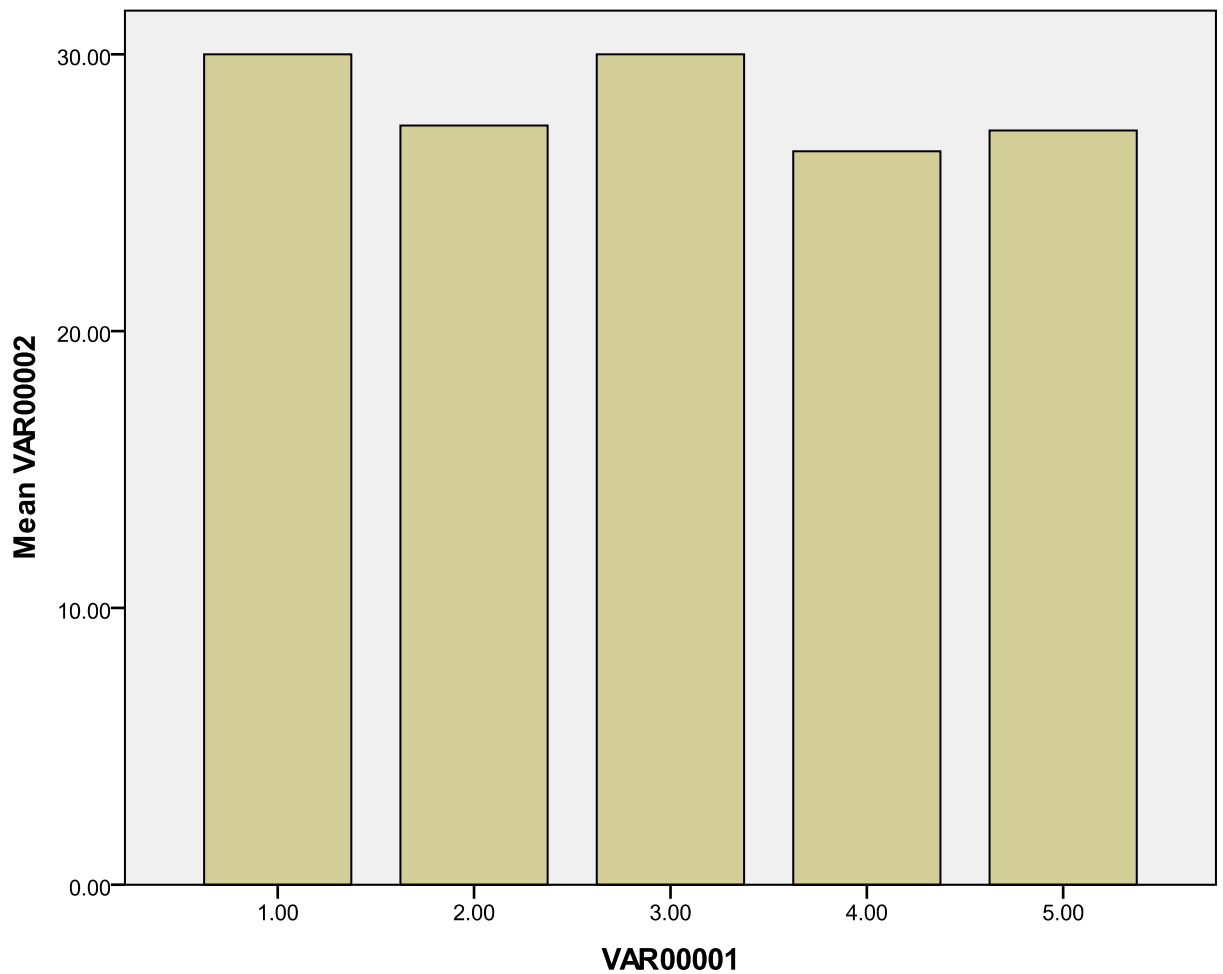


Figure 2: Teacher rating compared to hours spend in daycare for Kindergarten class

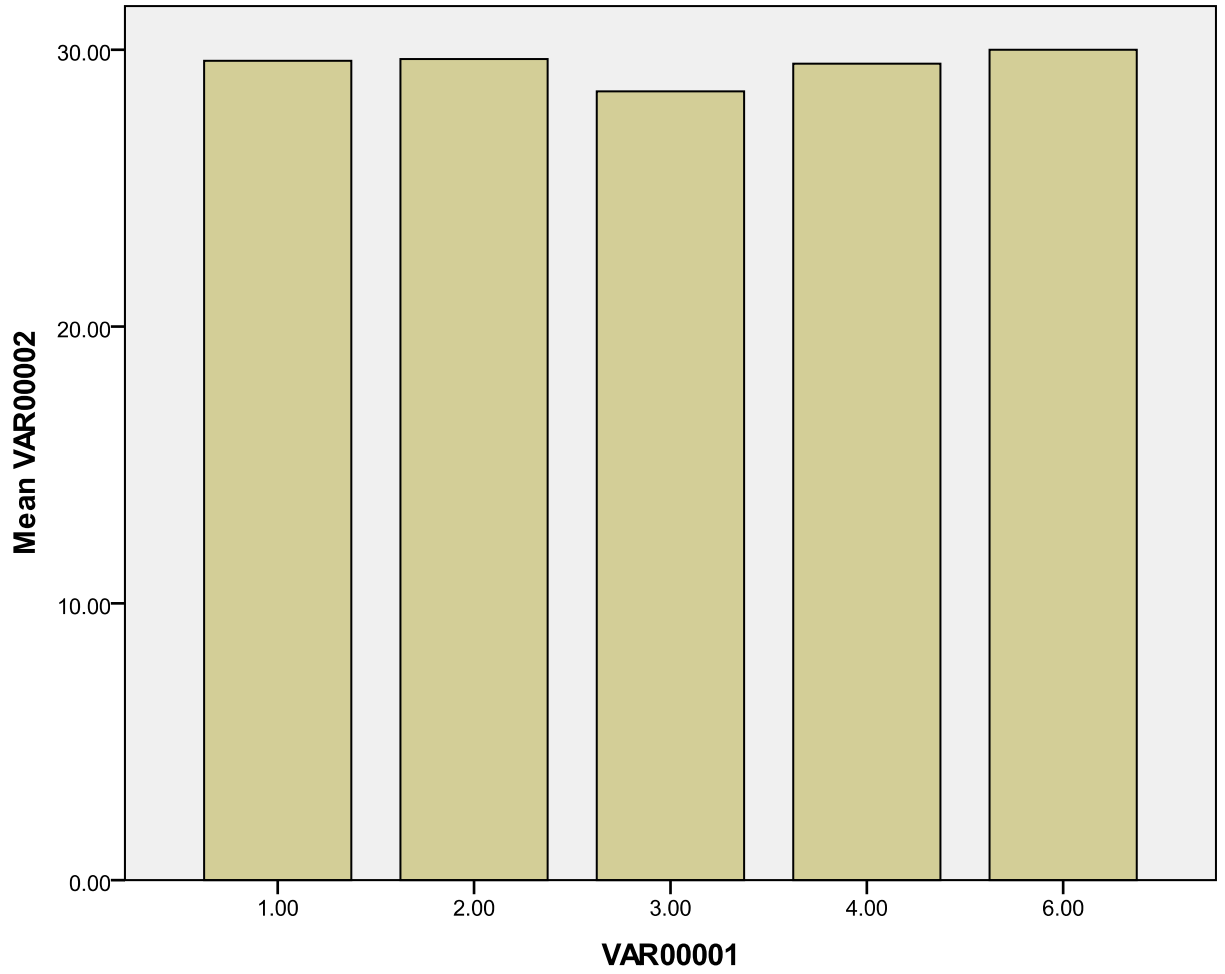


Figure 3: Teacher rating compared to time spent in daycare for First grade



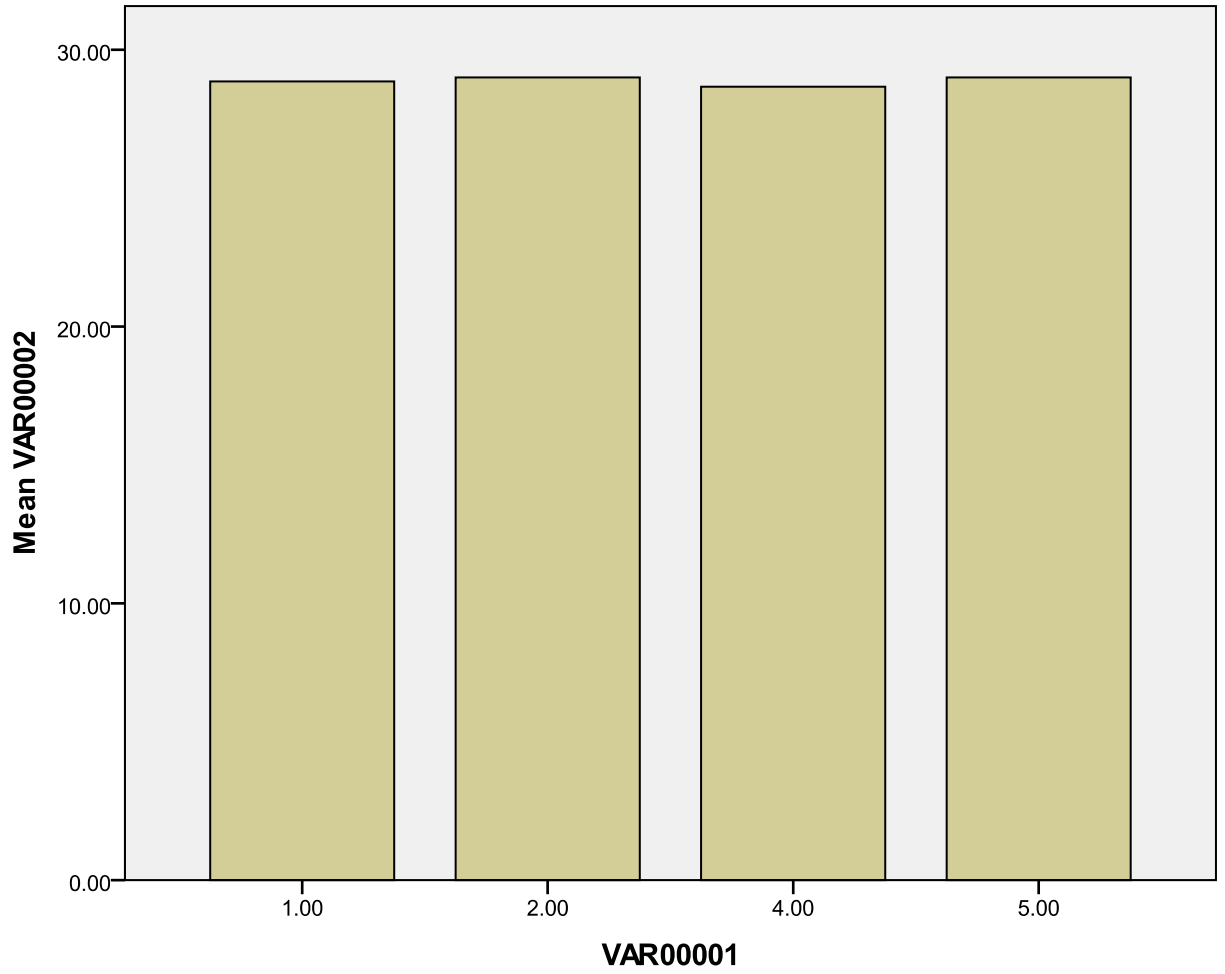


Figure 4: Teacher rating compared to time spent in daycare for Second grade

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion

The Effects of Daycare, was based on a Catholic elementary school in southeastern Pennsylvania. The research question presented in this study was: **What, if any, effect does daycare attendance prior to age 5, have on children's socialization in their first three years of school?**

#### 5.1 Summary

Since so much focus is placed on the social aspect of the early years of schooling, this researched wanted to investigate how much of a role exposure to daycare may have on this aspect. This study focused on the hours spent in a daycare setting per week prior to entering school. This information was obtained through parent questionnaires, and was then compared to teacher questionnaires regarding the individual child's academic and social (among teacher and peers) performance in the classroom setting. What was found through this study was that there is no apparent effect on children's social or academic given the amount of hours per week spent in a daycare setting with the subjects in the study. While there appeared to be a wide variation among the children's hours per week spent in class when viewing the data, when these numbers were compared to the teacher observations, there was no apparent significance. There could be a number of factors that play into the results obtained through this study. For instance, when viewing the results for the individual classes (Figures 2-4), there appears to be a major difference from kindergarten to first grade and from first grade to second grade. These differences could

be a result of the participants for that particular grade, or a result of the teacher observation.

## **5.2 Discussion**

While the early years of education tend to be pivotal for the socioemotional and academic development of children, it is still somewhat unclear as to how much of a role daycare attendance has during this crucial time period.

Previous research has suggested conflicting results when investigating daycare and its role in a child's academic/social performance in school. The social demands of daycare seem to be ever increasing, causing somewhat of a shift in regulations placed on daycare/child care centers. In addition, there are many varying options for parents when placing their children in childcare, therefore, resulting in varying degrees of social/academic adjustment.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate if more time spent in daycare would have an effect on a child when he/she enters the school age years. It was hypothesized that the more time that a child spends in a daycare setting prior to entering preschool, the more likely he/she is to adjust to the social setting of school. After conducting the research, and comparing the time spent in daycare to a child's social performance, it appears that experience in a daycare setting may not necessarily have a bearing on how a child performs socially or academically, for the subjects in this study. Given the many variables associated with child development, accounting for these discrepancies often poses a difficulty.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Since so many factors come into when focusing on child development, many pathways can be taken when researching this topic. Future research could suggest focusing on specific types of childcare facilities, i.e. Head Start or learning centers. Also, focusing on specific maladaptive behaviors exhibited in children and comparing those to daycare experience may, too, elicit quality information. Since this study only focused on one particular school, results could be skewed because of the surrounding community, etc.

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Appendix A: Teacher Questionnaire

Age of child:					
Child's grade:					
Child's academic performance	1	2	3	4	5
Displays appropriate social skills for age:	1	2	3	4	5
Child Initiates conversation with teacher:	1	2	3	4	5
Child Initiates conversation with peers:	1	2	3	4	5
Child's expressive language is clear:	1	2	3	4	5
Child's receptive body language is clear:	1	2	3	4	5



## Appendix B: Parent Questionnaire

Child's Name:

From birth to prior entering school, did your child attend:

- A. Daycare
- B. Child Care
- C. Learning Center
- D. Head Start

If Yes, how many years?

If Yes, approximately how many hours per week were spent in this facility?

- A. Less than 10
- B. 10-20
- C. 20-30
- D. 30-40
- E. 40 +

If No, did he/she stay in the home with a caregiver? How many years?

\*All Information Will Remain Confidential\*

Appendix C: Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the School Psychology Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Roberta Dihoff as part of my master's thesis concerning how children interact socially within the classroom as a result of attending/not attending daycare. I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. The goal of the study is to observe how children interact with their peers and teachers after being introduced to the socialization of daycare.

I attached a questionnaire asking a few questions regarding your child's experience to daycare or a similar experience. In addition I have given a questionnaire to your child's teacher. Your child will not be questioned or approached by myself as a researcher, and all questions will be directed to the parent/guardian or the teacher.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his/her class. At the conclusion of the study a summary of the group results will be made available to all interested parents. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or you may contact Dr. Roberta Dihoff at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.3783. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alison Pomykacz

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to your child's teacher by Feb. 1.

\_\_\_ I grant permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this study.

\_\_\_ I do not grant permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Parent/Guardian signature)

(Date)