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PRE-K STUDENT AND TEACHER ACCESS TO AND USE
OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS

by
Michelle Tullio

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May, 2006

Approved by
Professor

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ABSTRACT

Michelle Tullio

PRE-K STUDENT AND TEACHER ACCESS TO AND USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS

2005/2006

Dr. Marilyn Shontz

Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which public schools in Southern New Jersey offered library services to preschoolers as well as the characteristics of those programs. The population, which was nonrandom and purposive, consisted of twenty library media specialists in public elementary schools in Southern New Jersey. Of the twenty surveys mailed out, a total of thirteen were returned with a response rate of 65%. Data were tallied and analyzed for the following information: types of services offered to preschoolers, number of preschoolers serviced per week, rating of current collection for use by preschoolers and teachers, rating of current facility for use by preschoolers and teachers, sources used to build preschool collection, and types of training received for dealing with preschoolers. Approximately 55% of the media specialists did not have a formal library program implemented for preschoolers; however, they did assist preschool teachers if asked. A total of 15% of media specialists offered no library services to their preschool population. Findings of this study prompted the conclusion that a majority of public school districts who service preschoolers were not requiring library services as part of their curriculum.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Significance of the Topic

Library service for preschoolers is a relatively recent development in library history. "It followed after library services for older children was firmly established and paralleled the rise of the American picture book along with the growth of the child study movement" (Carlson, 1991, p. 1). A study conducted by the United States Department of Education (1990) reported that over half of the total number of programs at a typical public library were made up of programs for children between three and five years of age. Public school districts in Southern New Jersey may offer some level of services to their preschool students as well as access to the school library media center. Previous research has shown that library services help preschoolers develop language and pre-literacy skills. Preschoolers in these districts may enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies, enhanced memory, better listening skills, and an understanding of the purpose of reading.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which public school districts in Southern New Jersey offered library services to preschoolers and the characteristics of those programs.

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

1. What library services were offered to preschool classes?
2. How many preschoolers were served by the library media center?
3. How well did the library media center's collection meet the needs of the preschoolers?
4. How well did the library media center's collection meet the needs of the preschool teachers?
5. What sources did the library media specialist use to build the preschool collection?
6. How did the library media specialist rate the current facility for use by preschoolers? Preschool teachers?
7. What type of training did the library media specialist receive for dealing with preschool aged children?

Definition of Terms

Southern New Jersey: For the purpose of this study the areas of Camden County and Gloucester County.

Preschoolers: For the purpose of this study, students who are between the ages of three and four years old and are attending a public school.

School library: A library in a public elementary school that serves the information needs of its students and the curriculum needs of its teachers and staff, usually managed by a school librarian or media specialist. A school library collection usually contains books, periodicals, and educational media suitable for the grade levels served. Synonymous with school media center, library media center, and media center (Reitz, 2004).

Media specialist: A person with appropriate certification under state requirements and broad professional preparation, in both education and media, with competencies to carry out a media program. The media specialist is the basic media professional in the school media program. Synonymous with learning resource specialist, educational media specialist, library media specialist, school library media specialist, teacher-librarian, and school librarian (Young, 1983, p.143).

Library services: For the purpose of this study, the curriculum followed and activities used by the media specialist to instruct the student population.

Preschool teacher: For the purpose of this study, a certified preschool teacher whose class consists of three or four year old students.

Assumptions and Limitations

The research study was limited geographically focusing on two southern of the twenty-one counties in New Jersey. Another limitation of this study was that it only focused on public school preschool aged children, teachers, and library media specialists. One assumption of this study was that participants were truthful responding to the survey.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of Library Services for Preschoolers

A review of current and relevant literature reinforced that there was not much research on library services for preschoolers who attend public schools. However, according to Ann Carlson (1991) the expansion of public library services for preschoolers began in the mid-1930s. Believing that services for preschoolers was a way of broadening public library services, a few children's librarians in the United States initiated a story hour for children who were not yet in school and called it preschool story hour (p.16). Four developments contributed to this:

- A sizeable selection of good picture books was becoming available.
- Parents began to demand story hours for their small children.
- Because school aged children were receiving library services in their school, preschoolers could fill the gap in public libraries.
- The child study movement was calling radical attention to the importance of the preschool period of development.

(Carlson, 1991)

With the initiation of federally funded Head Start programs in 1965, children's librarians found their expertise in children's literature and storytelling in high demand by staff of these programs. They also found that preschoolers in these programs were not

used to being read to and very simple books were needed to hold their attention (Greene, 1984).

By the 1970s, younger children (ages 18 months to 3 years old) were invited to participate in the traditional library preschool story hour format for 3 to 5 year olds (Green, 1984). A survey conducted by Ann Carlson in 1983 indicated that public libraries in 45 of the 50 states offered some form of literature sharing programs to children under the age of three. Five public libraries opened centers between 1972 and 1978 to specifically meet the needs and interests of preschoolers and their caregivers.

These centers were:

- The Media Library for Preschoolers of the Erie Public Library, Erie, Pennsylvania
- The Preschool Adventure Library of the Cambria County Library System, Johnstown, Pennsylvania
- The Center for Discovery of the Public Library of Columbus and Franklin County, Columbus, Ohio
- The Gail Borden Public Library Children's Center, Elgin, Illinois
- The New York Public Library's Early Childhood Resource and Information Center, New York City, New York

(Greene, 1984)

The "Leave No Child Behind Act" of 2001 represented a \$23.7 billion investment in improving American education. It was established that a child's literacy development begins early in life through language play and language practice around print; services they can receive in public library story hours. The design of library preschool story hours

was seen to be remarkably aligned to curriculum that supports the early literacy competencies. At the time of this writing, there was a proposal to add “Leave No Library Behind” in the “No Child Left Behind” campaign (Rosenthal, 2004). The relationship between public libraries and school readiness for preschoolers as they enter kindergarten developed into an ideal and natural partnership.

Every Child Ready to Read @ your library was a project of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children, divisions of the American Library Association that was started in 2002. According to Meyers and Henderson (2004), there were six pre-reading skills that children must learn in order to learn to read. The intent of this joint program was to firmly establish public libraries as a partner in the educational continuum, and to validate their contributions by linking their activities to relevant research and evaluation. Public librarians needed to agree to collaborate with the young child’s most important teachers – parents and caregivers – and to leverage their work in influencing a child’s development. The Public Library Association believed that these model programs would allow all libraries to be more productive and influential in their communities (Meyers & Henderson, 2004).

Public Libraries and Pre-Literacy Skills

A consensus in literature indicated that public libraries play a major role in helping preschoolers develop language and pre-literacy skills before kindergarten. Dr. Donna Celano and Dr. Susan B. Neuman (2001) conducted a study that examined how public library preschool programs in Pennsylvania contributed to children’s reading skills. This study consisted of a random sample of 25 libraries throughout the state. Observations of preschool and summer reading programs, interviews with librarians and

parents, and collection of relevant materials aided the analysis. Celano and Neuman (2001) found that “library programs did more than encourage a ‘love of reading.’ They offered priceless opportunities for children to develop literacy skills” (p. 36).

Four major findings were revealed by Celano and Neuman (2001). First, preschool library programs encouraged children to spend time with books. Children were not only reading, they were browsing stacks, listening to stories, and participating in book related activities. Observations and interviews revealed that children spent a substantial amount of time reading. In Scranton, Pennsylvania, preschoolers, who spent time with picture books, averaged spending time with over 100 picture books during the summer months. “Research has shown that the amount of time children spend with books is crucial to reading achievement, and ultimately, to school achievement in general” (p. 37). Second, events got people to the library. Not only did preschool and summer reading programs entice children to spend time with books, they also enticed children and their caregivers into the library. “Merely visiting the library encourages children to spend more time in a literacy-enriched atmosphere, thus setting up the opportunity for them to browse and check out books and other materials. These events, however, often take what children learn through the books and extend it into a richer literacy experience” (p. 37). Third, activities extended the reading experience. Preschool and summer reading programs encouraged children to hear books read aloud as well as read books by themselves. Often there was an activity to correspond to the book being read. “These activities are often the same exercises found in elementary school reading classes and in preschools throughout the country” (p. 38). Fourth, programs encouraged parents to

become involved in their children's reading. This helped parents to strongly invest in their children's reading achievement.

Steven Herb (2001) stated that public libraries and the school readiness goal was an ideal and natural partnership. He gave four major reasons:

1. From a professional standpoint, public libraries have identified themselves in that crucial role. Preparing preschoolers for learning was identified as one of the eight major roles that libraries can play in their communities in the Public Library Association's widely accepted planning and evaluation document, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries*.
2. From an advocacy perspective, the importance of this public library role as the preschoolers' door to learning was presented in a landmark paper entitled *Kids Need Libraries* developed by members of three youth divisions of the American Library Association for the Second White House Conference on Library and Information Services.
3. From a historical perspective, public librarians were working directly with preschoolers, providing story hours and additional readiness experiences, as well as supporting readiness by providing materials for preschoolers' parents, teachers, and caregivers.
4. From a practical viewpoint, public libraries were the hub of community wide efforts. The nature of the public library is to meet the needs of the individuals in the whole community the library serves (§5).

Herb (2001) further noted that public libraries delivered quality programs to underserved children and good books in the hands of all children. Public libraries also

increased preschoolers' opportunities to be read to by experienced readers and helped families support their young children's developing literacy.

School Library Media Specialist Opinions About Preschool Programs

While no research was found about preschool programs in school libraries, several prominent writers offered their opinions. Most school library media specialists chose their profession because of a love for books and reading. These school library media specialists have many opportunities with teachers and parents to provide rich literary experiences for preschoolers. Donna Shannon offered her opinions about the library's environment. School library media specialists can have a positive impact as a literacy leader by providing an inviting and interactive environment, access to a wide variety of resources, and activities that reinforce and extend what children are learning in the classroom (Shannon, 2004).

Shannon also maintained that school library media specialists needed to make it a priority to create and maintain an environment that fosters literacy development. Bookshelves and furniture should be the correct height for preschool bodies. An area designated for preschoolers and parents to read quietly or read aloud would be a welcoming sight and would help children to feel safe and secure. Literacy related learning centers should be a part of the media center. Such learning centers might include print materials for reading and writing, puppets and props to encourage dramatic play and storytelling, writing and publishing centers, audio recordings, and big books (Shannon, 2004).

Several other writers commented on resources available in the school library. Access to a wide range of books at the appropriate level of complexity and on subjects of

interest, associates books and stories with pleasure and an attitude and expectation that this will be a good time. To enhance literacy development it is imperative that children interact with a variety of print resources. Media centers should stock up on high demand picture books, preprimers, and phonics texts (Minkel, 2002). Leveled books may help to direct preschoolers to books that they are capable of reading (Shannon, 2004). Cloth books or board books help keep pages from being torn. Books with colorful pictures and repetitive texts help preschoolers to predict what comes next. Books where preschoolers have to find or search for something on each page help to keep their interest in the book (Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2004). When students are exposed to stories with interesting and exciting language and actively participate and discuss those stories, literacy development begins (Cahill, 2004).

Preschoolers should believe that reading is fun. Reading is not the time to insist on manners. Preschoolers should be encouraged to ask questions about text and interrupt if they so choose. School library media specialists should read to preschoolers and talk about what interests them in the book (Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2004). Finger plays, action rhymes, songs and chants not only excite children but also stimulate language growth, and phonological awareness. In addition to extending the reading, post book activities can foster gross motor and fine motor skills. Such activities may include drawing, dancing, threading and lacing (Cahill, 2004).

Summary

There was a wide variety of research and writing on public libraries and services for preschoolers. There was definitely a history of the importance of preschool education and the public library. However, no research was found to be available on preschoolers

and the role of the school library. Therefore, more studies need to be done in this area.

Perhaps Cahill stated it best.

The benefits of preschool storytime have far outweighed the problems. Both students and teachers enjoy the fresh perspectives and ideas that a library media specialist brings. Students are exposed to many more books than home or preschool could present. Best of all are the smiles on the children's faces, the giggles, and belly laughs during action rhymes, the rounds of applause after an especially favored reading, the hugs smothered on the library media specialist when she walks through the door, and the pride written on the young faces as they master early literacy challenges. (Cahill, 2004, ¶ 13)

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overall Design and Justification

This study was conducted as applied research, which used descriptive statistics. According to Powell and Connaway (2004), applied research tends to be more pragmatic and emphasizes providing information that is immediately usable in the resolution of actual problems (p. 53). This study included a mailed questionnaire. Powell offered many reasons for choosing a questionnaire. First, mailed questionnaires tend to encourage frank answers because anonymity is guaranteed. Second, the format of questionnaires tends to eliminate variation in the questioning process. Third, the manner in which a mailed questionnaire is distributed and responded to allows it to be completed, within limits, at the leisure of the participants. Finally, questionnaires can facilitate the collection of large amounts of data in a short period.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which public school districts in Southern New Jersey offered library services to preschoolers and the characteristics of those programs.

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

1. What library services were offered to preschool classes?
2. How many preschoolers were served by the library media center?
3. How well did the library media center's collection meet the needs of the preschoolers?
4. How well did the library media center's collection meet the needs of the preschool teachers?
5. What sources did the library media center use to build the preschool collection?
6. How did the library media specialist rate the current facility for use by preschoolers? Preschool teachers?
7. What type of training did the library media specialist receive for dealing with preschool aged children?

Variables

There were many variables to be considered in this study. Variables studied included:

- Type of library services offered
- Number of student visits to media center
- Instructional methods used by the library media specialist
- Methods for building preschool collections
- Type of training offered to library media specialists for dealing with preschool aged children
- Perception of collection and facility usability

Population and Sample

The sample and population for this study were nonrandom and purposive. The survey/questionnaire was sent via United States mail to twenty library media specialists in public elementary schools in Southern New Jersey. The elementary schools chosen for this study were comprised of schools that did include preschool level students. Public schools were found by searching, in the counties of Camden and Gloucester, on the New Jersey Department of Education web site (2005). The list of elementary schools that participated in this study is found in Appendix B.

Methods of Data Collection

A typed questionnaire (see Appendix A) that consisted of ten closed and four open-ended questions was utilized to collect data for this study. Some questions used were from the study done by Celano and Neuman (2001). Each library media specialist was asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher in the self-addressed envelope that was provided. Each questionnaire contained a different graphic to indicate which surveys had been returned. A cover letter (see Appendix C), which explained the underlying principles of the study, was mailed with the questionnaire to each participant. The cover letter also contained a statement of anonymity.

The first ten questions of the survey/questionnaire were closed questions. Question one provided background information for the researcher. Questions two, three, and four addressed details of the preschool library program. Questions five, six and seven specifically addressed the library budget and book selection for the preschool population. Questions eight and nine inquired about how the library media specialist would rate usability of the current collection and facility. Question ten requested

information on professional training for dealing with preschool aged children. Questions eleven through fifteen were open-ended questions. These questions gave the participant a chance to answer freely and without restrictions. Question eleven inquired about other library materials besides books. Question twelve asked about the presence or absence of district curriculum and/or state standards. Questions thirteen and fourteen were subjective and gave library media specialists a chance explain both the strengths and weaknesses of their preschool library program.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability was ensured because this study can be replicated at any other elementary school with preschool classes in a different region of New Jersey or in a different state. This study was also reliable because it was pretested by Dr. Marilyn Shontz and several colleagues teaching kindergarten classes in their school media centers. Results of this study were valid for the participants from Southern New Jersey public schools with preschool classes only.

Reference List

- New Jersey Department of Education (2005). *Welcome to the New Jersey school report Card for 2005*. New Jersey: New Jersey Office of Information Technology.
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Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Response Rate

On February 2, 2006, the researcher sent, by United States mail, 20 typed questionnaires to school media specialists who worked in public elementary schools with preschool classes. On February 6th, two surveys were returned. Five more surveys were returned on February 8th. Between February 9th and 10th, three surveys were returned. By February 15, the deadline, two more surveys were returned totaling twelve surveys in all. However, one more survey was returned on February 22nd. On February 25, the researcher closed the survey. Overall, the researcher received 13 responses. Based upon the number of participants, this resulted in a response rate of 65%. These 13 responses were input into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that was used to create charts.

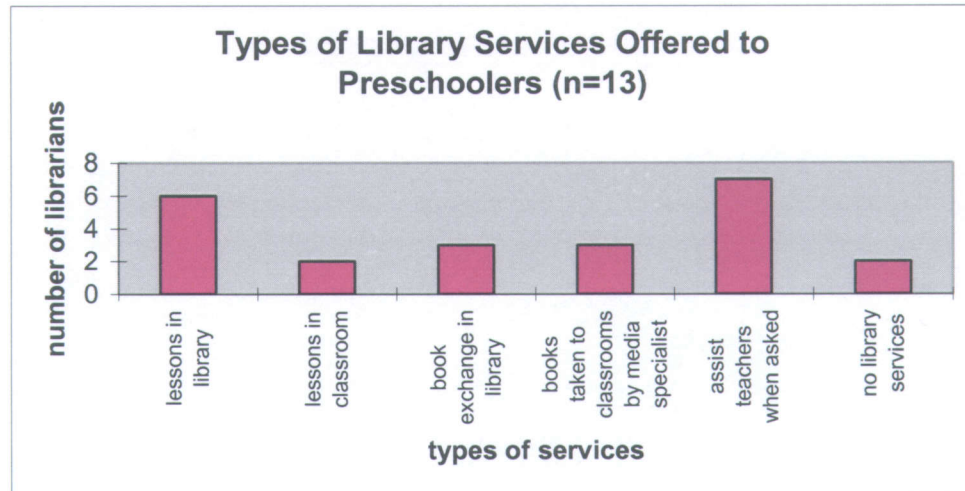
Presentation of the Results

The researcher developed the questionnaire; however, some questions were based upon the study of Celano and Nueman (2001). The researcher used Microsoft Excel to create charts and tables.

The first question was used to determine the types of library services offered to preschoolers in public schools. Respondents could circle all services that applied in their library. Of the 13 respondents, 7 assisted preschool teachers if asked, 6 provided lessons to preschoolers in the library, 3 had preschoolers come to the library to check out books,

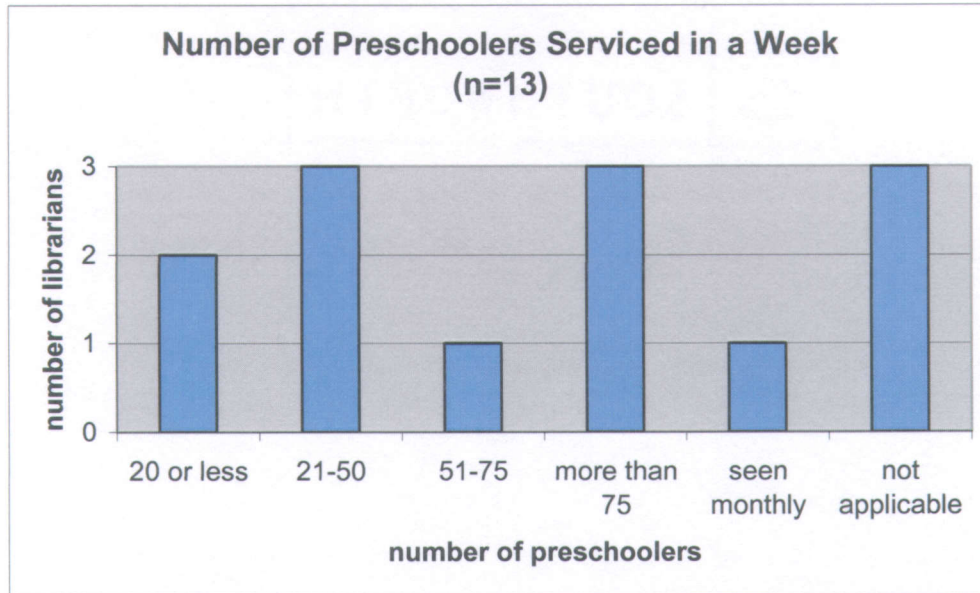
3 took books to the preschool classrooms, 2 provided lessons to preschoolers in their classrooms, and 2 did not provide any services to preschoolers. Results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



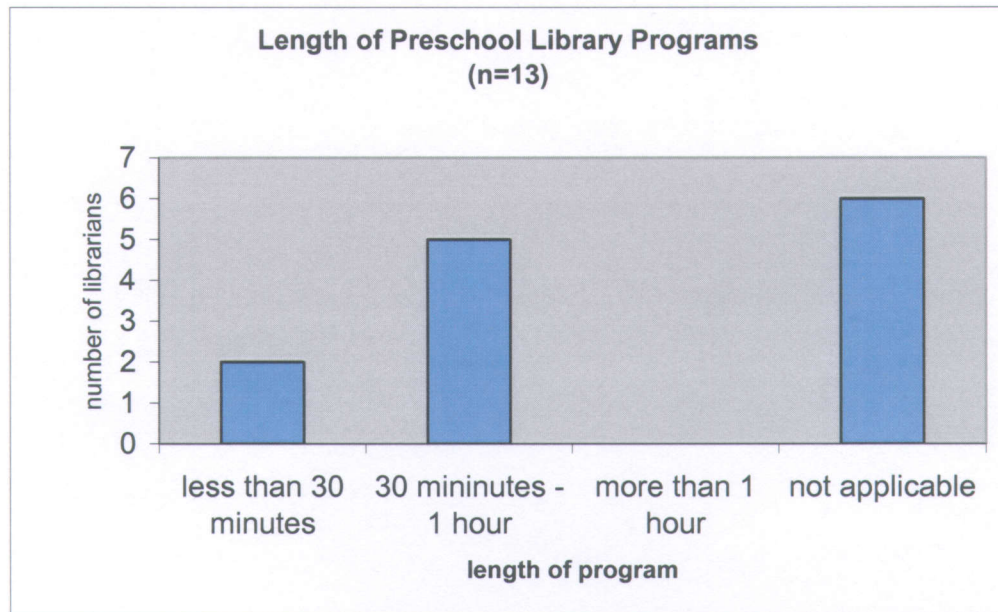
The second question was used to determine the number of preschool students serviced in public school libraries in an average week. Of the 13 respondents, 2 serviced 20 preschoolers or less, 3 serviced 21-50 preschoolers, 1 serviced 51-75 preschoolers, 3 serviced more than 75 preschoolers, 1 serviced preschoolers monthly, and 3 did not service preschoolers. Results are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2



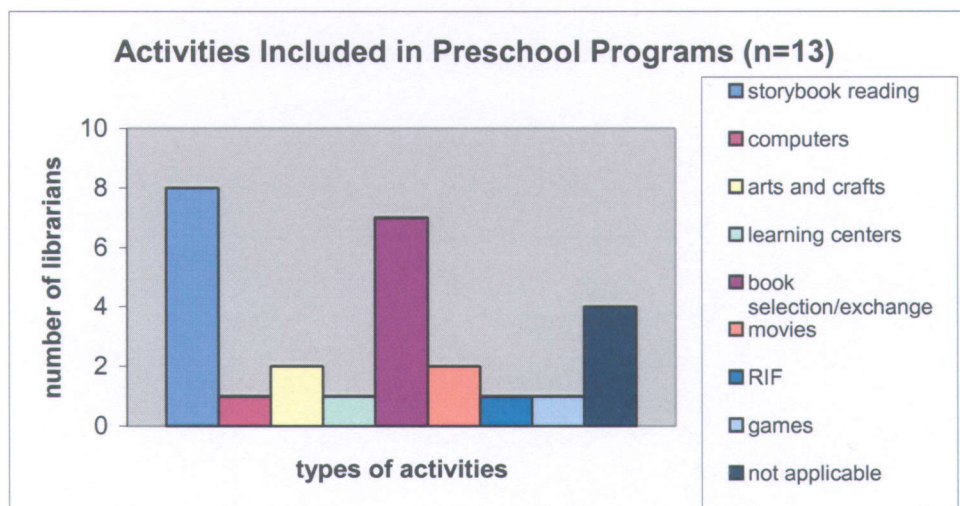
The third question was used to determine the length of a typical preschool library program or lesson. Of the 13 respondents, 2 conducted programs/lessons that were 30 minutes or less, 5 conducted programs/lessons that were 30 minutes-1 hour, none conducted programs that were more than one hour, and 6 did not conduct any type of program or lesson. Results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3



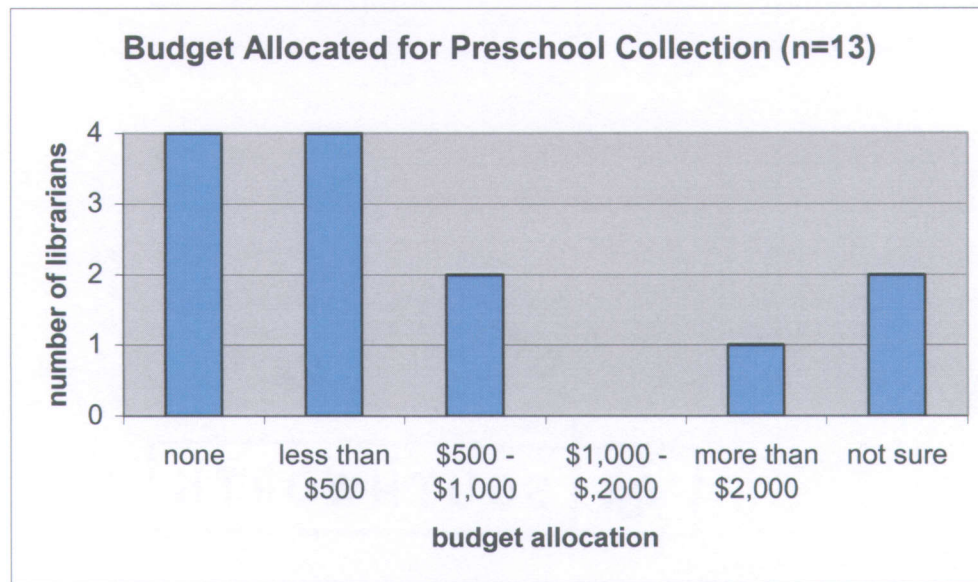
The fourth question was used to determine the types of activities included in the preschool library program. Respondents could circle all activities that applied to their program. Of the 13 respondents, 8 included storybook reading, 7 included book selection/exchange, 2 included showing movies, 2 included arts and crafts, 1 included learning centers, 1 included computer activities, 1 included games related to stories read, 1 included a Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) program, and 4 did not provide any activities. Results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4



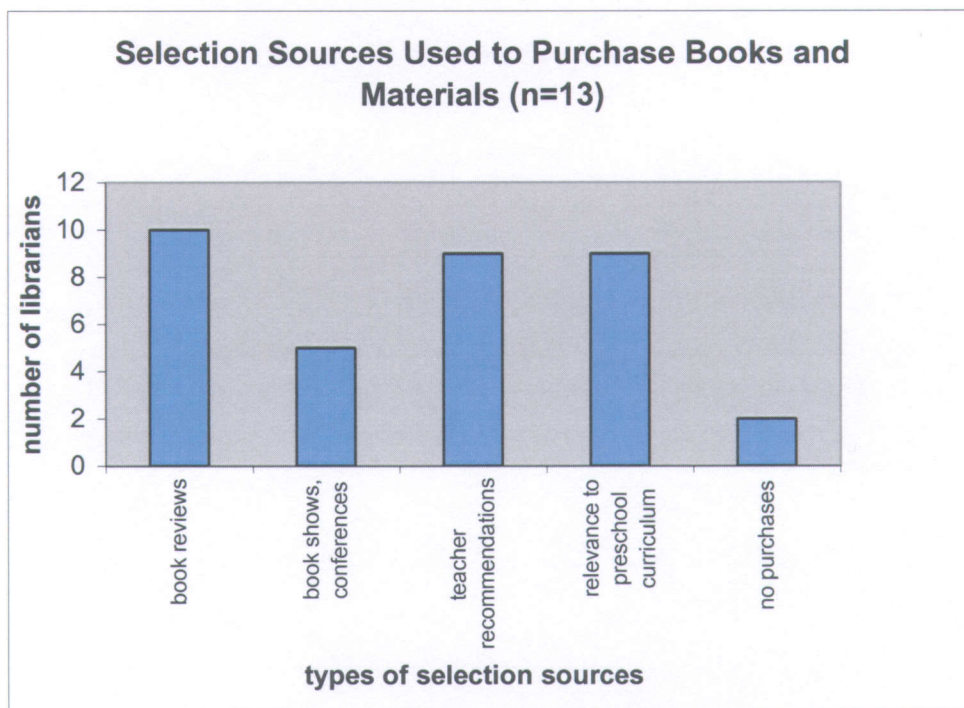
The fifth question was used to determine how much money from the library budget was allocated for the preschool population. Of the 13 respondents, 4 allocated no money for preschool the population, 4 allocated less than \$500, 2 allocated between \$500 and \$1,000, 1 allocated more than \$2,000, and 2 were not sure how much money was allocated for the preschool population. Results are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5



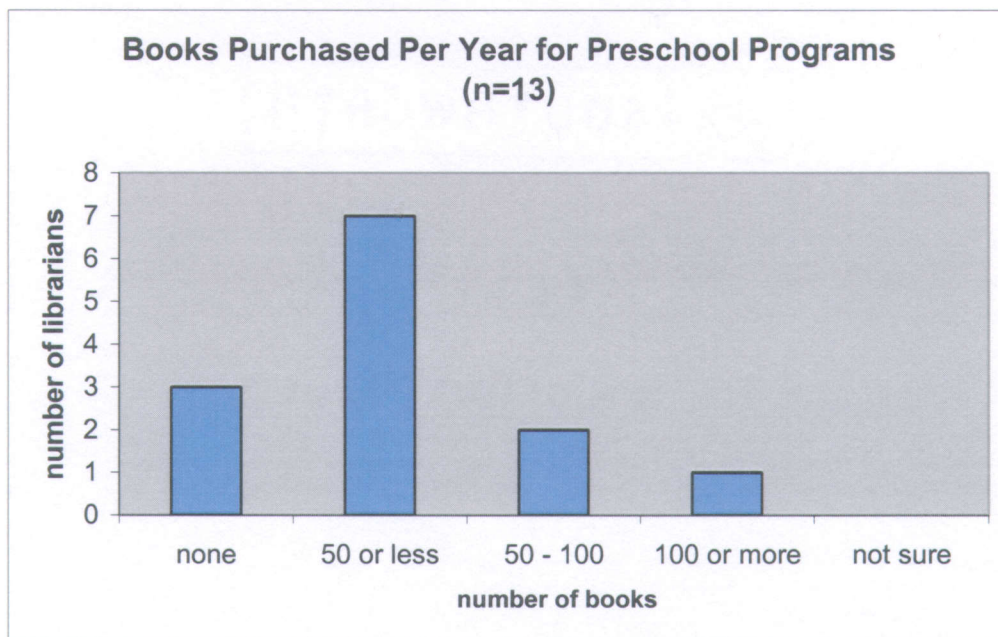
The sixth question was used to determine the types of selection sources used when purchasing preschool books and materials. Respondents could circle all answers that applied. Of the 13 respondents, 10 used book reviews, 9 used relevance to preschool curriculum, 9 used teacher recommendations, 5 used book shows and conferences for purchasing books and materials, and 2 made no purchases. Results are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6



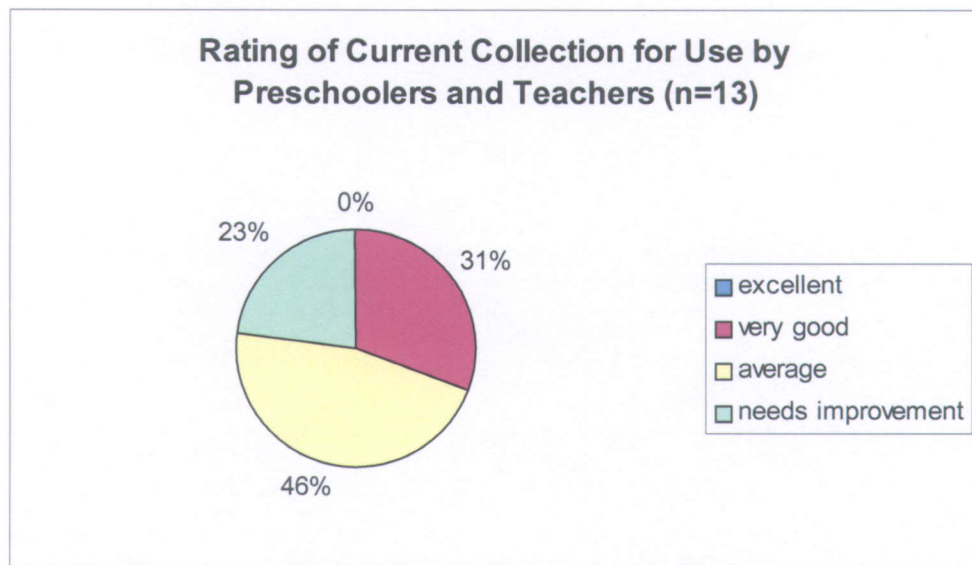
The seventh question was used to determine approximately, how many books per year were purchased for the preschool population. Of the 13 respondents, 3 did not purchase any books, 7 purchased 50 books or less books, 2 purchased between 50-100 books, and 1 purchased 100 or more books. Results are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7



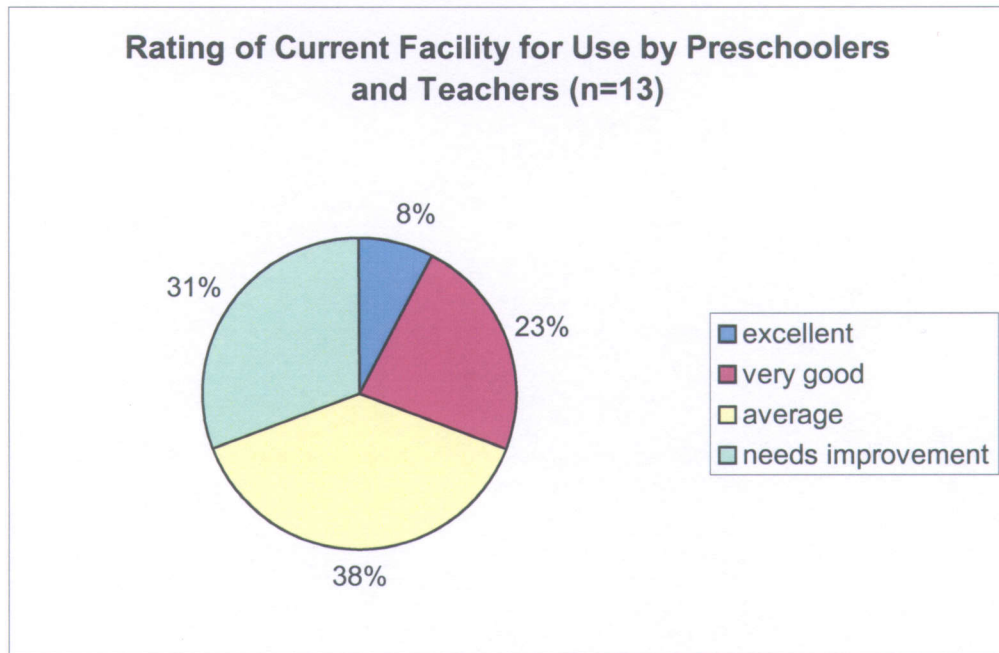
The eighth question was used to determine how the respondents rated their current collection for use by preschool teachers and preschool students. Of the 13 respondents, 46% rated their collection average, 31% rated their collection very good, 23% rated their collection as needs improvement, and none rated their collection as excellent. Results are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8



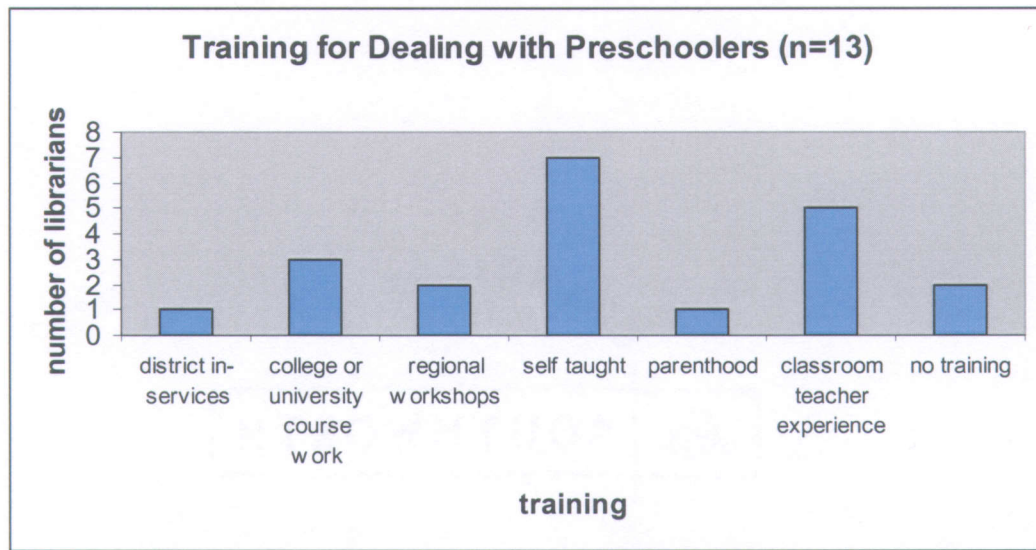
The ninth question was used to determine how respondents rated their current facility for use by preschool teachers and preschool students. Of the 13 respondents, 38% rated their facility average, 31% rated their facility needs improvement, 23% rated their facility as very good, and 8% rated their facility excellent. Results are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9



The tenth question was used to determine the type of training the respondents received for dealing with preschool students. Respondents could choose all types of training that applied. Of the 13 respondents, 7 were self-taught, 5 received training from classroom teaching experience, 3 received training from college/university coursework, 2 received training from regional workshops, 1 received training from district in-services, 1 received training from parenthood, and 2 did not receive any type of training. Results are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10



The next section of the survey consisted of four open-ended questions.

Respondents were asked to answer the questions as completely as possible. Question 11 asked respondents to list what material formats, other than books, were purchased for preschoolers. Materials listed by respondents included, VHS/DVD movies, books on tape, storytelling kits, puppets, puzzles, magazines, art supplies, and weekly readers (see Appendix D).

Question 12 asked respondents what curriculum or state standards were used when planning preschool library lessons. Respondents reported classroom themes, holidays, seasons, book care, and kindergarten readiness as part of their curriculum. Others reported using the Language Arts, Literature, and Social Studies New Jersey state standards as part of their curriculum (see Appendix E).

Questions 13 and 14 allowed respondents to describe the strengths and weaknesses of their preschool program. Six respondents did not list any strengths because they skipped the question. Others reported book care, book exchange

(kindergarten readiness), exposure to the library and librarian, developmentally appropriate program, teacher outlook toward the library, collaboration with teachers, and weekly preschool programs as their major strengths. Eight respondents did not list any weaknesses since they skipped the question. Major weaknesses of the preschool programs included not being able to service all the preschoolers weekly because of scheduling issues and class sizes, facility inappropriate for little bodies (furniture, shelving issues), and needing an updated collection (see Appendix F).

References

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which public school districts in Southern New Jersey offered library services to preschoolers as well as the characteristics of those programs. The population, which was nonrandom and purposive, consisted of twenty library media specialists in public elementary schools in Southern New Jersey. Of the twenty surveys mailed out, a total of thirteen were returned and used for data analysis. This resulted in a response rate of 65%. Data were tallied and analyzed for the following information: types of services offered to preschoolers, number of preschoolers serviced per week, rating of current collection for use by preschoolers and teachers, rating of current facility for use by preschoolers and teachers, professional sources used to build the preschool collection, and types of training librarians received for dealing with preschoolers. Totals and percentages were computed on charts using Microsoft Excel.

Approximately 55% of the media specialists did not have a formal library program implemented for preschoolers; however, they did assist preschool teachers if asked. A total of 15% of media specialists offered no library services to their preschool population. Over half of the respondents serviced between 21 to over 75 preschool students per week. One respondent serviced preschoolers only monthly and 3 of the respondents did not service preschoolers. A total of 46% of the media specialists rated

their collection for preschoolers and preschool teachers as average, 31% rated their collection as very good and 23% rated their collection in need of improvement. A total of 38% of media specialists rated their facility for use by preschoolers and preschool teachers as average, 23% rated their facility as very good, 31% rated their facility as in need of improvement, and 8% rated their facility as excellent. While only 2 media specialists made no preschool book purchases, the other 11 media specialists used book reviews, book shows and conferences, teacher recommendations and relevance to preschool curriculum as sources to assist in purchasing books and materials. Of the 13 media specialists surveyed on types of training received, over half were self-taught. Five media specialists had additional training from classroom teaching experience, 6 from college/university coursework and regional workshops, and district in-services. Two media specialists did not receive any type of training.

Conclusions

Results of this study provided data that prompted the conclusion that a majority of public school districts who did service preschoolers were not requiring library services as part of their curriculum. This finding, although sad, was not unexpected. This may be attributed to the fact that library services for preschoolers were a relatively recent development in school library history. Literature reviewed reinforced that public libraries played a major role in helping preschoolers develop language and pre-literacy skills before kindergarten. One would hope that public schools would see this benefit and start implementing library services for their preschool populations. Unfortunately, with lack of funding, training, and flexibility in scheduling classes, this may not happen any time soon.

Many media specialists, who had preschoolers in their building, did make it a priority to service these three and four year olds, even though it was not required. They did this by assisting teachers when asked, taking books to preschool classrooms, and allowing preschoolers to check out books.

For those media specialists who did service preschoolers, there were many activities included in their program to enhance a love of literature. Learning centers, arts and crafts, computers, and games were a few activities included in their preschool library programs. The library collection, as well as the facility itself, needed to be appropriate for the younger children. Smaller tables, chairs, and book shelves need to become a part of the media center. If the media center is to be the hub of the school, services should be made available to entire school population.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research could be replicated throughout New Jersey to determine if other preschoolers in New Jersey are receiving public school library services and the extent of their programs. Further study could be done to compare kindergarten readiness of those preschoolers who do receive school library services as compared to those preschoolers who do not receive school library services. In addition, it is apparent that library media specialists need to receive some type of training on dealing with the preschool population.

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APPENDIX A SURVEY

Survey on Preschool Access To and Use of the School Library Media Center

1. In what ways do you and your library media program work with the preschool children in your school? Circle all that apply.
 - a. Preschoolers come to the library for lessons
 - b. Library media specialist goes to the preschool rooms for lessons
 - c. Preschoolers come to the library to check out books
 - d. Library media specialist takes books to preschool classrooms
 - e. Assist preschool teachers if requested
 - f. Other (please specify) _____
2. What is the number of preschool children served in an average week? Circle one.
 - a. 20 or less
 - b. 21 to 50
 - c. 51 to 75
 - d. More than 75
3. What is the average length of your typical preschool library program or lesson?
 - a. Less than 30 minutes
 - b. 30 minutes to 1 hour
 - c. More than 1 hour
 - d. Not applicable
4. What activities do you include in your preschool programs? Please circle all that apply.
 - a. Storybook reading
 - b. Computer activities
 - c. Arts and crafts
 - d. Learning centers
 - e. Book selection/exchange
 - f. Other (please specify) _____
 - g. Not applicable
5. How much money from the library budget is allocated for the preschool population?
 - a. None
 - b. Less than \$500
 - c. \$500 - \$1,000
 - d. \$1,000 - \$2,000
 - e. More than \$2,000
6. What selection sources do you use when purchasing preschool books and materials? Please circle all that apply.
 - a. Book reviews
 - b. Book shows, Conferences
 - c. Teacher recommendations
 - d. Relevance to preschool curriculum
 - e. Other (please specify) _____
 - f. Not applicable
7. Approximately, how many books per year are purchased specifically for the preschool population?
 - a. None
 - b. 50 or less
 - c. 50 – 100
 - d. 100 or more
 - e. Not sure

8. How would you rate your current collection for use by preschool teachers and preschoolers?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Very Good
 - c. Average
 - d. Needs Improvement

Comments:

9. How would you rate your current facility for use by preschool teachers and students?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Very Good
 - c. Average
 - d. Needs Improvement

Comments:

10. What type of training have you received for dealing with preschoolers? Please circle all that apply.
- a. District in-services
 - b. College or university course work
 - c. Regional workshops
 - d. Self taught
 - e. Other (please specify) _____

Please answer the following questions as complete as possible.

11. Besides books, what other material formats do you purchase for preschoolers? Please list.

12. What curriculum or state standards do you use in planning your preschool lessons?

13. What do you consider to be the strengths of your preschool library program?

14. What do you consider to be the weaknesses of your preschool library program?

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete my survey! I really appreciate your help.

Mrs. Michelle Tullio
Pine Acres Early Childhood Center
720 Purdue Avenue
Box #100
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090
(856) 464-1260 ext. 104

APPENDIX B
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATED IN SURVEY

Elementary Schools That Participated in Survey

J. Harvey Rodgers School
301 Georgetown Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Billingsport School
441 Nassaue Avenue
Paulsboro, NJ 08066

J. Fithian Tatem School
1 Glover Avenue
Haddonfield, NJ 08033

John F. Kennedy School
228 Mt. Vernon Avenue
W. Berlin, NJ 08091

Union Valley Elementary School
1300 Jarvis Road
Sicklerville, NJ 08081

Baldwin Early Childhood Learning Center
3901 Sharon Terrace
Pennsauken, NJ 08110

Laurel Springs Elementary School
623 Grand Avenue
Laurel Springs, NJ 08021

Signal Hill School
33 Signal Hill Drive
Voorhees, NJ 08043

Parkview Elementary School
101 Birch Street
Westville, NJ 08093

Dr. Albert Bean School
70 East 3rd Avenue
Pine Hill, NJ 08021

Central Early Childhood Center
1447 Delsea Drive
Deptford, NJ 08096

Oakview Elementary School
101 Birch Street
Westville, NJ 08093

Berlin Community School
215 S. Franklin Avenue
Berlin, NJ 08009

APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER



January 31, 2006

Dear School Library Media Specialist,

As part of the requirements to earn a master's degree in the School and Public Librarianship program at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey, I am in the process of writing a master's thesis under the direction of Dr. Marilyn L. Shontz. My research involves preschool access to and use of the school library media center.

Within the past few years, public school library service to preschool children has expanded at a remarkable degree. Previous research has shown that library services help these three and four year olds develop language and pre-literacy skills. The purpose of my study is to determine the extent to which public school districts in Southern New Jersey offer library services to preschoolers and the characteristics of those programs.

Please respond to the attached survey and return it to me in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope by February 15, 2006. The survey should not take you more than 15 minutes to complete.

Your response will greatly assist me in achieving my goals for the project and of serving the preschoolers of Southern New Jersey. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at tullio.m@deptford.k12.nj.us or Dr. Shontz at shontz@rowan.edu. Enclosed you will find a bookmark as token of my appreciation for your time and effort.

Thank you in advance, for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Michelle Tullio
Library Media Specialist
Pine Acres Early Childhood Center
720 Purdue Avenue
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090
(856) 464 – 1260 ext. 104

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO QUESTION 11

Participant Responses to Question 11

1. Books on tape, VHS, DVD, storytelling kits
2. DVDs
3. Videos, puppets, storytelling kits, puzzles
4. Puppets, interactive story props, books on tape
5. Videos for classroom use
6. None, we have a very small budget for library books unfortunately
7. N/A
8. Magazines, puppets, videos, art supplies (including crayons, paper, glue, pencils, scissors)
9. Videos
10. Weekly Reader
11. None
12. Books on tape
13. None

APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO QUESTION 12

Participant Responses to Question 12

1. NJ Core Curriculum Standards
2. N/A
3. Literature, holidays, social studies, seasons
4. My philosophy for Pre-K students is to introduce library, book care, love of books to prepare students for Kindergarten.
5. I plan my lessons/read alouds according to classroom teacher's themes.
6. Language Arts
7. N/A
8. The standards specific to early childhood, from the NJ Core Curriculum Standards. I also consult with the classroom teachers to see what curriculum needs I can support.
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. I do not service preschoolers.
13. N/A

APPENDIX F
PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 13 AND 14

Participant Responses to Questions 13 and 14

Strengths:

1. Developmentally appropriate
2. N/A
3. We do a book swap program where every child gets a free book and if they bring in others they can trade.
4. Children have a good, basic understanding of libraries and their uses.
5. Collaboration with classroom teachers
6. Students are able to come to the library and check out books.
7. Exposure of students to materials and librarian and concepts of checking out books and care of books.
8. The preschool teachers' outlook toward the library is the strength. They value the learning that takes here. I see preschool children each week for a lesson and book exchange which is another strength.
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. N/A

Weaknesses:

1. Updated collection
2. I don't have a program!
3. More time, they need to come to the library
4. I would like to have an area for Pre-K where they can sit comfortably such as small chairs, couch, etc.
5. I meet with 75 preschoolers once a month. Kindergarten- 5th grade classes take up the rest of my teaching time. (I'm on a 6 day cycle)
6. We can't service all the preschoolers because of the library schedule. I am the media specialist at both elementary schools in our district.
7. N/A
8. No weaknesses
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. N/A

