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Challenging Behaviors: Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives on Young Children's Self-Regulation

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CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS: EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S SELF-REGULATION

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Title: Challenging Behaviors: Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives on Young Children's Self-Regulation

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Early childhood teachers are reporting increasing concerns about young children who appear to need significant support in developing the social and emotional skills necessary for school success and lifelong learning. The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine early childhood teachers' self-reported experiences and attitudes that have shaped their beliefs about guiding young children's behavior, as well as the strategies they use to promote children's self-regulation and their reflections on those practices.

The 11 participants who volunteered to participate in this study taught in preschool programs in three early childhood settings; a public school, a Montessori school, and a center-based childcare program. The two methods of data collection used to gather information from the 11 participants were semi-structured interviews and Anderson's (2007) Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS). Hatch's description of typological analysis was used to analyze the interview transcripts. Descriptive statistics and frequency tables of the 11 strategies the participants recommended in response to the three types of challenging behaviors (e. g., physical aggression, verbal aggression, and noncompliance) were created using the SPSS 16.0 statistical software.

The interview data suggested that whether the 11 participants in this study primarily cited positive or negative experiences with their first teachers, those early experiences influenced their child guidance approaches in the classroom and the ways they incorporated these experiences into their teaching. Participants also cited self-regulation skills as important behaviors critical for young children's transition into kindergarten.

The survey data indicated that when addressing verbal aggression and noncompliance the teachers were least likely to recommend suspension. However, when addressing physical aggression, several of the teachers indicated they would likely recommend suspension citing safety concerns for the other children in the class. Modeling appropriate behavior was the most frequently recommended strategy for addressing both verbal aggression and noncompliance. The findings of this study have implications for teacher education programs and childcare providers. This study stresses the need for teachers to become reflective practitioners so they can respond helpfully and appropriately to young children's challenging behaviors.

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I dedicate this dissertation to our nine beautiful grandchildren, Alexa, Logan, Scott II, Baylin, Travis, Baustin, Tucker Ray, and twins London and Barron. May God shower you with his blessings, and may you all grow up to make a difference in the lives of those around you.

I would like to thank my dissertation Committee, Dr. Mary Renck Jalongo, Dr. Beatrice Fennimore, and Dr. Laurie Nicholson, for their support and direction throughout my doctoral studies and during the long journey through the dissertation process. Your encouragement and challenging demands compelled me to complete a goal which I would have never dreamed possible, that of receiving my doctorate of education after thirty five years of teaching as an elementary teacher.

In addition to the Committee, I would also like to thank Dr. James Hooks and Mr. William Daugherty at IUP Northpointe Regional Campus Library for the countless hours they spent helping me to access numerous books and research articles for this dissertation. Their expertise is deeply appreciated. And most importantly,

Deo gratias ago.

I bring thanks to God.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Early childhood teachers are reporting increasing concerns about young children who appear to need significant support in developing the social and emotional skills necessary for later school success (Boyd, Barnett, Bodrova, Leong, & Gomby, 2005; Campbell, 1995; Hemmeter, Santos, Ostrosky, 2008). Young children's ability to self-regulate in the early childhood setting is important because it is related to all aspects of development and supports school readiness, academic achievement, and lifelong learning (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004; Shonkoff & Williams, 2000). Since the consequences of challenging behaviors affect not only the child but those around him, teachers, researchers, and childcare providers are examining the environments which influence and shape young children's behaviors, in order to respond appropriately and helpfully (Anderson, 2007; Meier, DiPerna & Oster, 2006).

An approach that can be used to examine young children's behavior and the influence of the environments that surround the child is that of Uri Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective. Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development focuses on the "nested environments" that surround and impact children's lives. Bronfenbrenner's first context of development is the *microsystem* and includes the everyday experiences that a child has with his family, peers, and teachers in a given setting. The *mesosystem*, or the second context, focuses on the interrelationships that a child has within the *microsystem*. This would include the child's interactions between home and school, family and peer group, and in the neighborhood. The third context, the *exosystem*, is the social setting which influences a child's development, but over which

the child has no direct control. Examples would be the parents' place of work, the activities of the local school board, community health services, extended family, and the media. Finally, the *macrosystem*, is the fourth context that encompasses the child. It includes the laws and customs of the child's culture, ethnic, or social class that shapes his/her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Today many parents are struggling economically and need to be employed outside the home. Welfare policies also require parents to be employed or attend school. Thus, there is an increased reliance on preschool programs and child care centers (Wolery, Brashers, & Neitzel, 2002). The Children's Defense Fund (2008) indicates that six in ten preschool-age children, and seven in ten school-age children have parents currently employed in the labor force. While the number of children enrolled in childcare facilities continues to grow, many preschool programs are serving diverse groups of young children with academic, social, and behavioral needs (Grishman-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Fronctczak, 2005; Jacobs, 2008). Since the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 and the reauthorization of IDEA in1997 and 2004, school systems are required by law to address the needs of students with a wide range of disabilities in the general education environment (Center for Education & Employment Law, 2006).

In addition to the increasing need for child care and the increasing diversity of our child population, children's challenging behaviors are often associated with multiple risk factors, some of which are maternal depression, complications during pregnancy, developmental disabilities, inadequate child care, drug abuse and harsh parenting (Campbell, 1995; Qi & Kaiser, 2003). However, these disorders can be found in

"children belonging to all socioeconomic, cultural, and religious groups, and in every family structure" (Brennan, Bradley, Ama, Cawood, 2003, p. 7). Also, another area of great concern among today's parents, teachers, and child care providers is young children's exposure to violent television programming and the use of new media technologies (Bickham, & Rich, 2006; Jordan, 2004: Levin, 1998).

It is understandable that there are many variables in young children's environments, from government regulations, embedded within the macrosystem, to violent neighborhoods, embedded within the exosystem, that affect their behavior. Because teachers and schools are a significant part of children's microsystem, they play a critical role in supporting young children's social and emotional development. However, many teachers report that they lack the necessary skills and training to effectively address challenging behaviors (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003). A strategy that is often overlooked in addressing challenging behaviors, and supporting young children to control their emotions and develop self-regulation, is teachers' understandings of themselves and their relationships with the children in their class (Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007). Jalongo and Isenberg (2008) suggest that "one of the most powerful tools for improving teaching is thinking about our own thinking or reflection" (p. 11). Thinking about our own thinking, or reflection, is important when working with children who exhibit challenging behaviors since the teachers' feelings affect not only their own behaviors and classroom practice, but also the behaviors of the children (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007).

Problem Statement

The focus of this study is to examine early childhood teachers' reflections of their approaches to young children's challenging behaviors so that they can help children learn appropriate ways to express their needs and emotions. In other words, how can reflective practice support teachers in their day-to-day struggles with young children who exhibit challenging child behaviors? Even though early childhood teachers may realize the importance of fostering social competency in young children, they may feel overwhelmed by the disruptive behavior (Logue, 2007). Oftentimes, teachers resort to traditional methods, that parent or former teachers used, or negative forms of discipline, such as yelling, time out, punishing, and reduced playtime to curb this behavior (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008; Logue, 2007). Although these responses may initially be effective, they do not bring about long-term changes that support young children's social competence (Bingham, 2001; Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008; Lamm, Grouix, Hansen, Patton, & Slaton, 2006).

Because the early childhood years are a critical time for the development of social competency, early childhood teachers play an important role in mediating and intervening on behalf of young children exhibiting challenging behaviors (Eastman, 2001; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007). According to Dunlap, Strain, Fox, Carta, Conroy, Smith et al. (2006) if challenging behaviors are not addressed in the early years, they almost always escalate. However, Dunlap et al. further acknowledged that many children have good behavioral outcomes, despite not having intervention. Nevertheless, Logue (2007) emphasized that the costs of challenging behaviors are high, not only for the disruptive child who is often excluded from participating in social and academic learning experiences, but for the loss

of valuable instructional time for the other children who are behaving in the learning environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine early childhood teachers' reflections on their approaches and responses to young children's challenging behaviors so that they can help children learn appropriate ways to express their needs and emotions. When teachers are reflective regarding their own beliefs and feelings, they are able to "think about teaching and children in a critical, sustained way" (Ayers, 1993, p. 39). Thinking about both positive and negative behaviors that young children exhibit may provide early childhood teachers with valuable insights as to how these feelings affect not only their own behaviors and practices in the classroom, but the behavior of their students as well. This study also examines the social and emotional behaviors that early childhood teachers identify as instrumental to young children's successful transition to kindergarten.

Questions to be Researched

The research questions include (1) How do early childhood teachers describe their child guidance philosophy and what do they identify as the sources for those beliefs? (2) What social and emotional behaviors of children do early childhood teachers consider to be most influential in the young child's transition into kindergarten? and (3) What specific strategies do early childhood teachers report to promote self-regulation in young children and what are their reflections on those practices?

In order to answer these questions, this researcher examined early childhood teachers' self-reported experiences, attitudes, and values that have shaped their beliefs

about guiding young children's behavior, as well as the specific strategies that they use to promote self-regulation in young children and their reflections on those practices. Since teachers' attitudes and previous experiences significantly affect the outcomes for young children's challenging behaviors, the specific goal of the study is to investigate teachers' present practices which may in turn encourage a deeper understanding of how they can respond appropriately and helpfully to children's challenging behaviors.

Definition of Terms

Challenging behavior is "any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in prosocial interactions with peer and adults" (Powell, Fixsen, Dunlap, Smith & Fox, 2007, p. 83).

Ecological child development focuses on the contexts or the "nested environments" in which the child lives and the interactions within and among these settings that influence and shape his/her development. These contexts are referred to as "the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22).

Media Literacy "is a 21st century approach to education that provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms—from print to video to the Internet" (Center for Media Literacy, 2002, para. 4).

Media violence is the "portrayal of violence in the media that glamorize and/or sensationalize violent acts toward other human beings or animals and show them as acceptable behavior" (Grossman & DeGaetano, 1999, p. 121).

Pro-social programming is programs that focus on social interactions that are non-violent and positive in tone (Mares & Woodard, 2001).

Reflective practice is taking the necessary time to rethink, reconsider, reflect, and rework one's craft, all the while making informed and logical decisions on educational matters and assessing the consequences of those actions for all stakeholders in the process (Glickman & Aldridge, 2001; Taggart & Wilson, 2005).

Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's behavior so as to withstand impulses, maintain focus, and undertake tasks even if there are other more enticing alternatives available (Boyd et al., 2005).

Social-emotional development involves the ability to form close, secure relationships and to experience, regulate, and express emotions (Downs, Blagojevic, Labas, Kendrick, & Maeverde, 2005).

Teacher expectations are the behaviors and skills that teachers identify as important to cognitive, social and emotional development, and lifelong learning.

Significance of the Study

This study may contribute to the knowledge base that teachers use in their professional practice by providing a glimpse into the day-to-day struggles that teachers of young children have with challenging behaviors and their self-reported ways of supporting self-regulation in preschool children. Bowman (1989) argues that both formal knowledge (scientific knowledge) and subject knowledge (personal knowledge) is essential for sound professional practice in early childhood education. However, Bowman stresses the need for teachers to expand and change their personal knowledge, in order to accommodate new ideas and new experiences. In other words, teachers must become reflective practitioners. Kaiser & Rasminsky (2007) agree with Bowman and emphasize that when teachers understand their feelings about young children's behaviors,

it can support their emotional well-being. When teachers are able to control their own actions and emotions, they can focus on the outcomes that their teaching has for young children and their teaching becomes more student-centered (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008). An emphasis on student-learning not only improves student achievement and social success, but presents a model of teacher behavior that all children can learn from and emulate (Howes & Ritchie, 2002).

Along with the increasing diversity of our child population and the growing demand for childcare in the United States, research indicates that good educational experiences in the preschool years are critical to all aspects of a children's development (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). This study emphasizes the importance of having certified teachers in the early childhood setting who have been trained in reflective practices and behavior management strategies. Bowman et al. assert that teachers need a firm foundation in child development and must be knowledgeable in the content and methods of early childhood education, if they are to design curricula and plan interactions that meet the individual and group needs of young children.

Finally, if we are to have teachers who think systematically about their practice and learn from experiences, as stated in Proposition Four of The National Board for Professional Standards (1996), it is important for teachers to examine their beliefs and experiences so they can make informed decisions, in order to improve their teaching and student learning. By becoming reflective practitioners, teachers can address children's challenging behaviors, and at the same time, promote young children's ability to self-regulate.

Limitations of the Study

There were three limitations of this study. First, it could not be generalized beyond the target population of the study, which included 11 early childhood educators currently teaching in early childhood programs in a public elementary school, a Montessori school, and four center-based child care facilities within southwestern Pennsylvania.

The survey was a second limitation of the study. Because each teacher's recommendation to use a specific strategy is influenced by their prior experiences, training, and knowledge, the responses to the survey's questions may not accurately reflect what all early childhood teachers would suggest in managing physical aggression, verbal aggression, and noncompliant behavior.

A third limitation of the study was that it relied on the self-reported descriptions of the teachers' beliefs and past experiences regarding children's social and emotional behaviors, and the results of the study may have been affected by the accuracy of the participants. Eby and Kujawa (1994) contend that reflective thinking involves a "personal examination of why you do something, how you can do something better, and an honest look at the effects of your actions from others' points of view and can result in feelings of discomfort" (p. 5). According to Peters (1991) reflective practice not only involves a personal risk, but there is a great deal of sensitivity associated with one's beliefs, values, and feelings. Thus, the participants may have been uncomfortable and reluctant to share personal beliefs and feelings thereby limiting or withholding information important to the study.

Summary

The focus of this study was to explore early childhood teachers' reflections of their approaches and responses to young children's challenging behaviors so that they can help children learn appropriate ways to express their needs and emotions. Since early childhood classrooms offer many opportunities for children to learn how to live with others, teachers play a significant role in supporting young children in the school environment (Logue, 2007). Bredekamp (as cited in Kaiser and Raminsky, 2007) suggests that it is the responsibility of early childhood educators to prevent challenging behaviors, address them effectively when they occur, and support children's self-regulation through a variety of strategies.

The literature review that follows will take an in-depth look at the history of reflective practice, challenging behaviors and the importance of self-regulation in the early childhood setting, the social and emotional behaviors that early childhood teachers identify as important to young children's transition into kindergarten, and the strategies that early childhood teachers use to address challenging behaviors and promote young children's self-regulation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature that has been done in preparation for this study focuses on four important issues related to young children's social and emotional development: the history of reflective thinking, challenging behaviors in early childhood, teachers' expectations of young children's social and emotional behaviors, and the strategies that early childhood teachers use to promote young children's self-regulation.

Because teachers' understandings of themselves affect how they teach and respond to young children with challenging behaviors, it is important that teachers examine their beliefs about child guidance. In order to do this, teachers must become reflective practitioners. Therefore, the first section of the review examines the history of reflective thinking through a discussion of prominent reflective theorists.

The second section focuses on challenging behaviors in the early childhood setting and the importance of self-regulation. The third section discusses teachers' expectations for young children's social and emotional behaviors as they transition from preschool to kindergarten. The fourth section investigates the strategies that early childhood teachers use to address challenging behaviors and promote young children's ability to self-regulate.

The History of Reflection

During the early 1900s Dewey began writing about reflective thinking, but it was not until 1910 that Dewey published his first book, *How We Think.* A revision of *How We Think* was published in 1933, *How We Think: Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process.* Years later, Donald Schon (1955), a

student at Harvard University, focused his Doctoral dissertation on John Dewey's theory of inquiry. Schon's (1983, 1987) books, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professional Think in Action* and *Educating The Reflective Practitioner* further expanded on the work of Dewey. However, it was during the mid-1980s that the concept of reflection "struck the consciousness of educationalists" and continues to influence program development and teacher education today (Richardson, 1990, p. 3).

Although researchers and educators of reflective teacher education have adopted various definitions of reflection over the years, for the purpose of this study, reflective thinking is defined as "taking the scarce time to rethink, reconsider, reflect, and rework one's craft, all the while making informed and logical decisions on educational matters and assessing the consequences of those actions for all stakeholders in the process" (Glickman & Aldridge, 2001; Taggart & Wilson, 2005, p. 20).

Proponents of the Process of Reflective Thinking

Various theorists who have generated ideas concerning reflective thinking are grouped into two divisions or classes: those theorists who focus on the process in which individuals proceed through in the reflective cycle and those theorists who focus on the mode or level of thinking at which individuals operate. Although the proponents of reflective thinking agree that reflection involves a cyclical process, the steps taken to solve a problem vary according to the individual theorists and are outlined in Table 1. A discussion of each of the theorists follows Table 1.

Table 1

Proponents of the Reflective Thinking Process

Proponent	Perspective	Process
Dewey (1910, 1933)	Reflective inquiry model—mirrors scientific method	1.A problem or experience 2.Interprets the experience 3.Possible solutions 4.Reasoning/explanations 5.Experimentation leads to acceptance or rejection
Schon (1983, 1987)	Reflective thinking approach	Reflection-in-action 1.Problematic situation 2.Frame/reframing 3.Experimentation 4.Review consequences
Pugach and Johnson (1990)	Peer collaboration model	1. Reframe by questioning 2. Problem summary 3. Generate solutions 4. Evaluate and reconsider
Eby and Kujawa (1994)	A model of reflective thinking	1. Observe 2. Reflect 3. Gather data 4. Consider moral principles 5. Make judgments 6. Consider strategies 7. Action
Taggart (1996)	Reflective thinking model	1. Identify the problem 2. Frame/reframing problem (consider context/schema) 3. Interventions 4. Experimentation 5. Evaluation/accept or reject
Korthagen (1985)	ALACT Model	1. **A**ction 2. **L**ooking back on action 3. **A**wareness of essential aspects. 4. **C**reating alternative methods of action 5. **T**rial
Korthagen and Vasalos (2005)	Core Reflection Model (A supplement to ALACT Model)	1. Problematic situation 2. a. Awareness of ideal situation b. Awareness of limitations 3. Awareness of core qualities 4. Actualization of core qualities 5. Experimenting with new behavior

Source: Lee, 2005, pp. 701-702; Taggart, 1996, pp. 11-12.

Dewey's Reflective Inquiry Theory

Dewey (1910) defined reflection as "the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it" (p. 6). In order to develop reflective thinking habits, Dewey (1933) emphasized the following three attitudes: (1) open-mindedness; (2) whole-heartedness, or the willingness to become involved in an issue or cause; and (3) responsibility, which is the willingness to be accountable for our beliefs.

Dewey's reflective inquiry model involved five steps, but because it resembled the scientific method, his theory was criticized for being too technical in nature. Educational researcher, Richard Paul (1984) argues that moral and intellectual issues cannot always be solved by using a scientific approach, as proposed by Dewey. Paul emphasized the need for dialogical reasoning in teacher education programs which he defined as "thinking critically and reciprocally within opposing points of view" (p. 10). University professors, Ross and Hanay (1986), agreed with Paul and stressed a critical approach to investigating social issues, which considers the application of principles, instead of procedures. Van Manen (1977), an educational theorist who will be discussed in a later section, questioned Dewey's theory, especially in regard to the curriculum.

Schon's Reflection-in-Action

Years later, Schon (1983) proposed the reflective thinking approach in which he identified knowing-in-action as the "actions, recognitions, and judgments which we know how to carry out spontaneously" (p. 54). Individuals may be unaware of having learned to do these things—they just simply do them. Reflection-in-action differs from knowing-in-action in that reflection-in-action implies thinking about what is being done while

doing it. Phrases like “thinking on our feet,” and “learning by doing” are examples of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983, p. 54). Statements such as, Mr. Brown is “in tune” with his class and “Mrs. Smith has eyes at the back of her head” would suggest teachers who reflect in the midst of a situation and make adjustments or changes.

Schon (1987) asserted that practitioners reflect *on* their knowing-in-practice after a situation or experience has occurred. For example, a group of teachers may think back on a project they have undertaken, discuss or make notations as to what aspects of the project were successful or unsuccessful, and decide what changes, if any, will be made in the future. More importantly, the act of reflecting-on-action enables the group to develop questions and ideas about their practice and consider different ways of framing the problem. Schon (1983) refers to these ideas, images and understandings that practitioners have acquired from past experiences as their “repertoire” (p. 138).

Pugach and Johnson’s Peer Collaboration Model

While both Dewey and Schon proposed an individualistic notion of reflection, researchers Pugach and Johnson (1990) argued that reflective thinking can be achieved and enhanced by peers. Based upon the Vygotskian perspective, that reflective thinking is developed in socially interactive settings, Pugach and Johnson (1990) suggested a four step peer collaboration process. The researchers posit that by working closely with their peers, teachers are encouraged to draw on their own experiences and develop creative and alternative ways of approaching instructional and management issues in the classroom.

Eby and Kujawa’s Reflective Action Model

Eby and Kujawa’s (1994) seven step model suggests that reflective action builds on a foundation of *withitness*, which they defined as “a combination of caring and

perceptiveness that allows teachers to focus on the needs of their students" (p. 3). However, the idea of *withitness* was first proposed in 1970 by Kounin in his study of classroom management, in which he identified four critical dimensions of effective classroom management: *withitness,* enthusiasm during lesson presentation, student's knowledge of acceptable behavior, and variety in student seatwork. *Withitness*, or the teacher's sensitivity to disruptive or potentially disruptive behavior, was the key element that Kounin identified in teachers who were excellent classroom managers. Eby and Kujawa indicate that teachers demonstrate *withitness* when they move about the room responding to students' verbal and nonverbal behavior as they use eye contact and facial expressions while continuing to teach the lesson.

Taggart's Reflective Thinking Model

Realizing a lack of training materials in regard to teacher reflection, Taggart (1996) created a reflective thinking training guide that supports teacher educators in enhancing the reflective thinking of pre-service and in-service teachers. Taggart also proposed the five step Reflective Thinking Model which is similar to the reflective thinking processes of the other theorists. However, Taggart's second step, the definition stage, not only involves the framing and reframing of the problem, but also takes into consideration the context of the problem and the schema.

Korthagen's ALACT Model

Another model designed for teacher education was proposed by Korthagen (1985) and is named after the first letter of the five phases through which student teachers progress in the reflective process: (1) **A**ction; (2) **L**ooking back on the action; (3) **A**wareness of essential aspects; (4) **C**reating alternative methods of action; and (5) **T**rial.

Figure 1 illustrates the stages inside the circle in which student teachers advance, while the supervisor's interventions are outside the circle (Korthagen, 1985, p. 8). Examples of questions the supervisor may ask to support student teachers' reflection are, "What did I want?" "What do I think the pupils wanted, thought, did?"

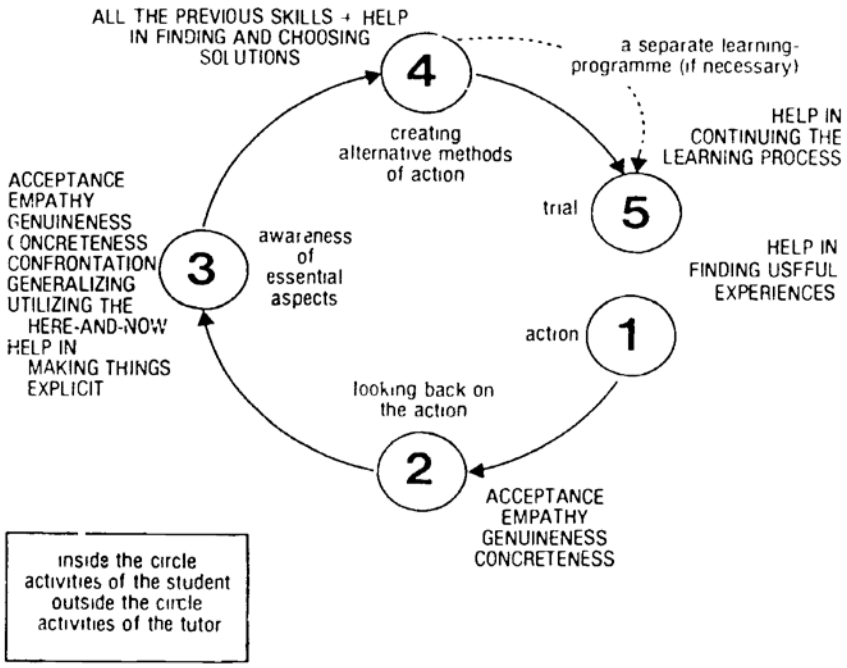


Figure 1. The ALACT Model.

Korthagen and Vasalos Core Reflection Model

With the aim of deepening the levels, as well as the contents of reflection, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) supplemented the ALACT model with the Core Reflection Model. Based on positive psychology, the core reflection approach emphasizes people's strengths or core qualities, such as courage, love, sensitivity, and compassion, rather than their weaknesses. As prospective teachers proceed through the core reflection model, questions about the ideal situation they would like to achieve and the limiting beliefs that prevent them from achieving that ideal are asked, in order to deepen reflection.

Proponents of the Levels of Reflective Thinking

Taggart (1996) proposed that models of reflective thinking delineated various levels of reflection, but the most common were the technical, contextual, and dialectical levels as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Proponents of the Levels or Modes of Reflective Thinking

Proponent	Perspective	Level/mode
Van Manen (1977)	Levels of Reflectivity	1. Technical rationality-the practical and technical problems teachers confront 2. Deliberative rationality- teachers' beliefs and assumptions 3. Critical rationality- moral and ethical issues
Valli (1990)	Images of Teaching	Moral Reflection 1.Deliberative-moral development 2. Relational-creating caring communities 3. Critical-how schools perpetuate social inequality
Grimmett, Mackinnon, Erikson, & Riecken (1990)	Perspectives on Reflection in Teacher Education	1.Technical-reflection as instrumental mediation of action 2. Deliberative-reflection among competing views of education 3. Dialectical-reflection as reconstructing experience
Taggart (1996)	Reflective Thinking Pyramid	1. Technical Level-acquisition of technical knowledge 2. Contextual Level- situations and problems in the context are examined 3.Dialectical Level ethical, moral, and political issues
Lee (2005)	Depth of Reflective Thinking	1. Recall-recalls and interprets the experience 2. Rationalization- generalizes experiences 3. Reflectivity- anticipates change

Source: Lee, 2005, pp. 701-702; Taggart, 1996, pp.11-12.

Van-Manen's Levels of Reflectivity

As previously mentioned, it was on the technical level that Van Manen (1977) questioned the scientific model proposed by Dewey, especially in regard to the curriculum. Instead of the curriculum focusing on students' needs and experiences, the scientific model focused on the "measurement of learning outcomes, the quantification of achievement, and the management of educational goals and objectives" (Van Manen, 1977, p. 209). Van Manen contended that this practical approach to curriculum prevented important questions from being asked, such as the instructional strategies that would engage most students and the experiences needed in order for students to learn.

Van Manen's second level, deliberative rationality, requires teachers to confront their underlying beliefs and the effects on their classroom practice. One can understand how this level could apply to young children's challenging behaviors. Finally, Van Manen's (1997) critical approach to curriculum considered social conditions and relationships necessary for "genuine self-understanding, emancipatory learning, and critical consciousness" (p. 221). Examples of concerns that teachers might have at this level would be those of confronting moral issues and racism.

Valli's Moral Perspective

Although most of the theorists stressed moral and ethical issues at the highest level of reflection, Valli's (1990) model centered entirely on the moral foundations of teaching. In fact, Valli emphasized that teacher education programs at the deliberative level should stress "rightness of conduct, general questions of valuation, and the pursuit of desirable ends" (p. 40). In other words, teachers are obligated to their students to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and to develop curriculum in which the end

goal is morally upright. Creating a community of learners, in which kindness and respect are stressed, even more so than teaching content knowledge, is the concept Valli proposed in his second or relational level.

Valli's critical approach to reflective practice is drawn from political philosophy, primarily Marxism, which argues that schools, as social institutions, help support a society based on "unjust class, race, and gender relations" (Valli, 1990, p. 46). This perspective contends that teachers have a moral obligation to reflect on, and change, teaching practices that maintain these ideals.

Valli (1990) presents an example of the critical approach implemented by Zeicher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in which elementary student teachers are encouraged to review prominent solutions to educational problems, not from what has traditionally been acceptable, but from the moral basis of those practices. After examining multiple perspectives, the student teachers discuss issues such as ability grouping, or the consequences of student labeling, in an effort to better understand their perceptions and attitudes. Valli (1990) asserted that through these assignments, teachers can analyze conventional wisdom and use their personal experiences to deconstruct biases, in order to transform education.

Perspectives of Reflection

With the goal of developing a system of categorization for examining studies in Teacher Education, Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, and Riecken (1990, p. 35) grouped reflective practice around three perspectives as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Epistemological Commitments for Three Perspectives on Reflection in Teacher Education

Perspectives on Reflection	**Source of Knowledge for Reflection**	**Mode of Reflective Knowing**	**Purpose of Reflection**
1. Reflection as instrumental mediation of action	External authority (mediated through action)	Technical	Directs practice
2. Reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching	External authority (mediated through context)	Deliberative	Informs practice
3. Reflection as reconstructing experience	Context (mediated through colleagues/self)	Dialectical	Apprehends and transforms practice

Source: Grimmett et al., 1990, p. 35.

In the first perspective, the purpose of reflection is to support teachers to replicate classroom practices that empirical research has found to be effective. Journal articles and research-tested theories of education serve as the knowledge source for this type of reflection. For example, if a teacher wanted to learn more about a new behavioral intervention strategy that could be implemented in the classroom, that teacher could consult a research journal. This knowledge would be reflected upon and then applied to practice in the classroom in an instrumental manner. Thus, the knowledge gained by the teacher through reflection is used for the purpose of directing practice.

Grimmett et al. (1990) second perspective involves a deliberation of the competing views of good teaching and an examination of those views, in light of the results of the action. This perspective is very similar to Valli's critical approach, in which teachers are responsible for reflecting and making changes, in order to inform their practices.

The third perspective proposed by Grimmet et al. is reflection as a reconstruction of experience, which leads to new understandings of "action situations, self-as-teacher,

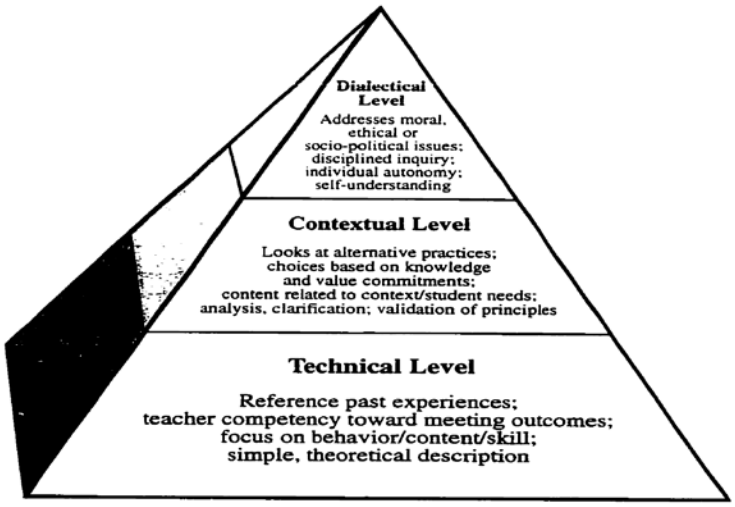
and the taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching" (p. 27). At this level the source of knowledge can be mediated either though teaching colleagues or the self, so that the teacher can take into account her/his knowledge and personal understandings of the situation in order to transform practice.

An example of a teacher education program which demonstrates Grimmett's perspective is that of Cruickshank's *Reflective Teaching* at Ohio State University (Richert, 1987; Taggart, 1996). In this laboratory-based teacher education program, four or more student teachers are assigned to take turns teaching a 15 minute Reflective Teaching Lesson (RTL). One person is designated as the "teacher," and is given a lesson plan which includes all the materials and objectives. When considering young children's challenging behaviors, the RTL could be a lesson on how to design a behavioral intervention plan. Learner achievement and satisfaction are measured at the conclusion of the lesson by administering a post test and a learner satisfaction form. The aim of Cruickshank's (1987) model is for teachers to study teaching intentionally, in order to "develop life-long assurance that they know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and what will happen as a result of what they do" (p. 34).

Taggart's Reflective Thinking Pyramid

In addition to Taggart's Reflective Thinking Model discussed in a previous section, Taggart (1996) also created the Reflective Thinking Pyramid, which is illustrated in Figure 2. As teachers proceed through the reflective process, solving problems and making decisions, not all of them function at the same level. For example, Taggart asserts that because preservice and novice teachers have limited life experiences to draw upon, they usually function at the technical or practical level, and then move to the

contextual or deliberative level, as they become more experienced. At the technical level, teachers could address challenging behaviors by implementing lessons which emphasize respect, cooperation, and manners, while at the deliberative level, teachers could examine their personal biases regarding young children's inappropriate behaviors. Finally, at the highest level of reflection, the critical or dialectical level, teachers are involved in formulating moral, ethical, and political decisions. When applying this level to challenging behaviors, early childhood teachers could consider the different perspectives that parents of other cultures may have regarding acceptable and unacceptable child behaviors.



Reflective Thinking Pyramid

Reflective Thinking Pyramid, Copyright, Taggart, G., 1996.

Figure 2. Taggart's Reflective Thinking Pyramid.

Lee's Depth of Reflective Thinking

In order to assess the depth of reflective thinking of teachers, Lee (2005) developed the following criteria: Recall level (R1): one describes and interprets the situation based on recalling their experiences; Rationalization level (R2): one looks for

relationships between experiences and comes up with basic assumptions; Reflectivity level (R3): one approaches and analyzes their experiences with the intention of changing and improving in the future.

Lee's summary of the effects of these levels on teaching practice is similar to Grimmet et al. (1990) Perspectives on Reflection in Teacher Education and Taggart's (1996) Reflective Thinking Pyramid. Since Lee emphasizes that the practical/technical domain, or R1, directs practice, this level could address the methods that early childhood teachers use for fostering positive behavioral outcomes. The R2, or deliberative level, which informs practice, could support early childhood teachers as they examine the beliefs that guide their choice of actions and behaviors in the classroom. Finally, R3, dialectical reflection, could transform early childhood teachers' practice by challenging their moral, political, and ethical beliefs regarding young children's behaviors.

Although the theories of the proponents of the process of reflection and the proponents of the levels of reflection have been described, it is important to understand that several of the theorists, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005), Lee (2005), and Taggart (1996) view reflection together. As teachers progress toward a solution to the problem, both the process and the level of awareness of that process must be considered. Therefore, the practice of reflective thinking is a valuable tool that teachers can use in order to examine their past beliefs and experiences and, at the same time, support young children's social and emotional development.

Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood

The development of young children's social and emotional skills begins with the early relationships that children have with the people around them (Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Kaiser & Rasminisy, 2007). As first teachers, parents have the responsibility to provide for their children's physical needs as well their social and emotional well-being. As young children progress from the home to the school and community, teachers and caregivers, like those within the family, become a significant part of the children's environment. In fact, the American Psychological Association (1997) has emphasized the importance of teachers and caregivers in providing a foundation of attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors, in order to promote young children's healthy development.

However, in a survey conducted by Child Trends (2003) of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (1998-1999), teachers reported that 20% of all students entering kindergarten lack the social and emotional skills necessary for success in the school setting. Moreover, teachers indicate that inappropriate or challenging behaviors are one of the most common problems present in childcare settings today (Center for Evidence-Based Practices, 2004; Powell et al., 2007). The National Center for Evidence-Based Practices: Young Children with Challenging Behaviors (2004), a nationally funded research center, identifies challenging behaviors and the effects these behaviors have on others and the environment. These behaviors may include physical and verbal aggression, destructive behaviors, noncompliance, and withdrawal.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of young children with challenging behavior are being expelled from early childhood programs (Gilliam, 2005; Perry, Dunne, McFadden, & Campbell, 2008). Data gathered from the 2005 National Prekindergarten

Study (NPS) on the expulsion rates in state prekindergarten programs indicated that prekindergarten students are expelled at a rate more than three times that of older students in the K-12 grades (Gilliam, 2005). Follow-up research conducted by lead author of the NPS, Walter Gilliam, and research associate, Christa Marchesseault (2005) concerning teacher education, experience, and compensation revealed that seven out of ten teachers in state-funded kindergarten programs earn salaries in the low-income category and that one in four prekindergarten teachers did not have a bachelor's degree.

Another report based on the data from NPS found that 7.7% of prekindergarten teachers reported an expulsion in the past year when there were fewer than eight students per adult in the class (Sparks & Bennett, 2008). In classes where there were 12 or more children per adult, the rate of expulsion was 12.7%. Program duration was also found to influence expulsion. In a 12 month period, children who attended half-day prekindergarten classes were expelled at a rate of 7.1% compared to 9% for school-day classes and 13.2% for extended-day classes of eight or more hours per day. Additionally, prekindergarten teachers reporting a high level of job stress were more likely to expel children. These studies that not only suggest that teacher stress, program duration, and adult to child ratio have a critical impact on prekindergarten expulsion, but also point to the importance of having experienced and highly qualified teachers who are well-compensated. Teachers who support young children in learning appropriate ways to express their needs and control their emotions in the preschool setting, play an important role in affecting positive outcomes for children's challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2008; Perry et al., 2008).

Consequences of Challenging Behavior

Logue (2007) contends that in addition to a loss of instructional time on the part of the teacher and the children who are behaving, challenging behaviors limit children's opportunities to practice and participate in valuable social interactions. Boyd et al. (2005) agrees with Logue and suggests that challenging behaviors such as biting, temper tantrums, and noncompliance limit young children's social competence and increase the risk of academic failure. Furthermore, the outcomes for children exhibiting challenging behaviors indicate numerous short and long-term consequences ranging from school expulsion in the elementary grades, to gang involvement and drug abuse in adolescence, to imprisonment in adulthood (Bickham & Rich, 2006; Bingham, 2001; Center for Evidence-Based Practice, 2004). Dodge (1993) also contended that a strong relationship exists between young children's social and emotional development during the preschool years, and the development of later challenging behaviors. However, Dunlap et al. (2006) argued that data linking early problem behavior to later developmental and social difficulties are correlational in nature, and should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, Dunlap et al. acknowledged that when young children's challenging behaviors are not addressed during the early childhood years, "the future likelihood increases for academic failure, peer rejection, mental health concerns, and adverse effects on their families, their service providers, and their communities" (p. 33).

Children who lack social and emotional skills are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors as they grow older, for at least three reasons: (1) their teachers view them as less competent, both academically and socially, and may provide fewer opportunities for positive interactions and experiences (Bingham, 2001; Kaiser &

Rasminsky, 2007; Logue, 2007); (2) they are often rejected by their peers, which also results in fewer opportunities to engage in positive play behaviors and cooperative activities (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007; Raver, 2002); (3) these early experiences of rejection, by both teachers and peers, influence the way young children see themselves as learners, which may lead to a dislike for school, frequent absences, and poor future outcomes (Boyd et al., 2005; Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008; Raver, 2002).

Since young children are learning to regulate the development of aggression during the preschool years, it is an especially sensitive period and "the best window of opportunity for helping children at risk" (Trembly, 2008, p. 4). As previously cited, there are both biological and environmental influences that can increase children's risk for developing challenging behaviors. Because television plays a dominant role in our culture today, concerns about the effects that media has on children's behavior and their learning has significance for teachers and parents alike (Eastman, 2004; Levin, 1998; Moses, 2009).

The Role of Media in Young Children's Social and Emotional Development

According to researcher, Amy Jordan (2004) at the Annenberg Public Policy Center, the role of media, especially television, is an important aspect to consider in the ecological context of young children's lives. Media are the various means of mass communication including television, radio, newspapers, books, satellites, computer games, VCRs and the Internet (Huntemann & Morgan, 2001). As new and accessible technologies become available, parents and teachers are presented with challenges and pressures that were unknown to previous generations.

While the average child growing up in the 1970s had one family television with four channels, the average child today has four television sets, access to dozens of channels, a VCR/DVD player, video games, and computers (Woodard, 2000). The Kaiser Family Foundation in its *Executive Summary: Kids and Media and the New Millennium* reported that children and adolescents, aged 2-18 years, spend an average of 4 hours a day with electronic media, while spending only 44 minutes a day with print media (Roberts, Foehr, Rideout, & Brodie, 1999). Levin (1998) supported the findings of Roberts et al. and further contended that children spend more time in front of the television than they spend doing anything but sleeping. In their study of media and families, Rideout and Hamel (2006) reported that each day, 83% of children, ages 6 months to 6 years, watch some form of screen media such as television, videos, and DVDs. Clearly, children are spending an increasing amount of time "on screen."

However, the influence of television on children's development can be negative or positive, and is often the cause of debate among many teachers and researchers. No aspect of this debate is more heated than that of violence in the media and how it affects young children's aggressive behavior (Levin, 1998). Eastman (2004) also argued that the impact of television violence is global in nature and "influences all children whether they live in North America or the Mediterranean" (para. 4). Because of the prevalence of television in young children's lives today, it is important to explore its effects on children's antisocial and prosocial behaviors.

Antisocial Behavior

The National Television Violence Study (NTVS), a project widely recognized as the largest scientific study of media violence in the United States, conducted a content

analysis during the 1990s of how violence is shown on television. Samples of more than 8,000 hours of programming on cable and broadcast television, collected for three consecutive years between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M., seven days a week, revealed that about 60% of the programs contained violence (NTVS, 1997).

Speaking before a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in June of 2007, Kunkel, one of the researchers who led the NTVS, stated that the harmful influence of media violence dates back to the 1950s and 1960s, and continues to be a significant concern today. Kunkel further emphasized that the scientific research gathered by the NTVS, which included the U.S. Surgeon General, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics and many other public health organizations, stressed that violent media may cause aggressive attitudes and behavior, desensitization, or lack of sympathy towards victims of violence, and nightmares or exaggerated fears of being harmed.

Several evidence-based conclusions were drawn from the NTVS study. First, violence is prevalent across the television landscape. The NTVS identified 6,000 violent interactions in a single week of programming across 23 channels. Second, most violence on television is presented in a manner that increases its risk of harmful effects on children. For example, more than a third of violent interactions misrepresented the severity of the injury and showed low levels of pain and suffering. The violence was also performed by attractive role models who were justified for acting aggressively and suffered no remorse for their actions. In other words, “the violence was sanitized and glamorized” (Kunkel, 2001, para. 11). Third, the overall presentation of violence on

television has remained stable over time. Across the entire study of 10,000 programs, the content measures, which examined the extent of violence, varied no more than a percent or two from year to year (NTVS, 1997).

In his concluding remarks to the U. S. Senate Committee, Kunkel indicated that even though the scientific evidence of the effects of television violence on children is substantial, he could not advise them as to how to address these problems. Nevertheless, Kunkel stressed that television violence harms large numbers of children in this country and significantly increases violence in our society.

Diane Levin, an advocate for continued research into the negative effects of violent media, has also cautioned parents, teachers, and policy makers as to the effects of violent media on young children's social and emotional development. Levin, a professor of education at Wheelock College in Boston, became interested in how media, toys, and popular culture influence children's development when her son, Eli, was born in 1982.

Levin (1998) asserted that the effects of violent media on young children can be attributed to the deregulation of children's television in 1984 by the Federal Communications Commission. Along with deregulation, it became possible to market toys and products that were associated with the TV programs. Within one year of deregulation, nine of the ten best selling toys were related to the TV shows and seven of those shows were violent. As if these statistics were not challenging enough, the sale of violent toys, which included action figures with weapons, soared more than 600% in three years (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1990). Then specific shows, such as Mutant Ninja Turtles, GI Joe, and Mighty Morphin Power Rangers became popular. Not only did these shows focus on violence, but they contained scary content, and each show produced

entire lines of toys and other licensed products. Levin contended that this new marketing approach created "a dramatic and worrisome change in the social and play environment of young children" (p. 11). Because of growing concerns as to the detrimental influences of television on the social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children, Levin and Carlsson-Paige (1994) advocated that developmental appropriateness should be the criterion used for evaluating television programs. Levin and Carlsson-Paige created a developmental framework for assessing television which includes the following three categories: developmental issues, what children see on TV, and what children should see.

As the quantity of violent programming continued, another study conducted by Carlsson-Paige and Levin in 1995 revealed that 90% of the teachers indicated that Mighty Morphin Power Rangers contributed to violent behavior in play, and in how young children solved problems in their classrooms. Instead of children using their playtime to create imaginative play of their own, children were imitating the violence of the superheroes and the characters they saw on the screen. Along with the violent media-linked toys, action figures with highly exaggerated gender characteristics were also being marketed. Several years after deregulation, Levin (1998) asserted that the "phenomenon of remote control childhood gained momentum" (p. 12), as video-game systems and electronic games for home computers were introduced and quickly became popular.

In their study which reviewed the research of televised violence and aggression on young children, Bushmann and Huesmann (2001) prefaced their discussion by explaining three important points as to what past research has revealed about the causes of violent behavior in general. First, aggressive behavior is not comparable to assertive behavior,

but is behavior that is intended to harm another individual. Second, biological tendencies and a wide range of community, peer, and family characteristics can increase or decrease young children's aggression. Situational factors in the child's environment, or microsystem, such as violent neighborhoods, guns, and insults, over which the child may have little control, (the exosystem and mesosystem), can also motivate aggression or nonaggression. Third, the foundation for lifelong aggressive and nonaggressive lifestyles is formed during childhood. Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, and Walder (1984) contend that children who are aggressive at a young age usually grow up to be more aggressive adolescents and adults.

In addition to reviewing past research, Bushman and Huemann also asserted that researchers have made considerable progress in understanding how media affects young children's thought processes and suggest the following findings:

> Children who watch TV violence imitate the aggressive scripts they see; they become more condoning of violence; they start to believe the world is a more hostile place; they become emotionally desensitized to violence; the violence they see justifies to them their own violent acts; the arousal of the violence they see arouses them; and the violence they see cues aggressive ideas for them (p. 248).

Finally, Bushman and Huemann concluded that no matter what age, television violence has a short-term stimulating effect on aggressive behavior.

Of course, the influences of television on children's behavior can be both positive and negative. The next section explores the positive effects of media on young children's social and emotional development.

Prosocial Behavior

The many benefits and advantages of television cannot be denied. While much attention has focused on evidence that media contributes to violence, there is less attention as to the positive effects of television on children's prosocial attitudes and behaviors (Jordan, 2004; Mares & Woodward, 2001).

One of the early studies which examined the effects of aggressive, neutral, and prosocial television programs on preschool children's social interactions was conducted in 1973 by Friedrich and Stein at Penn State University. A total of 93 preschool children, enrolled in a nine-week nursery school session, were shown one of three types of television each day, during the middle four weeks of the session. The programs were aggressive cartoons (Batman and Superman), prosocial programs (Mister Rogers' Neighborhood), and neutral films. Prosocial behavior was conceptualized into two categories: interpersonal activity and self-regulation. Prosocial interpersonal behaviors included cooperation, helping, sharing, friendship, affection, and verbalizing feelings, while self-regulation included persistence at difficult tasks, accepting rules, tolerance of mild frustration, and independence (Friedrich & Stein, 1973).

Concealed observations of aggressive and prosocial interpersonal behavior, and self-regulation in free play were carried out during the entire nine week session. The effects of the programs were assessed by changes that occurred from the baseline period to the time during and after exposure to the programs.

Results indicated that children who saw the aggressive programs such as Batman and Superman showed a decline in tolerance of delay and rule obedience. However, those children who watched Mister Rogers' Neighborhood showed higher levels of task

persistence and somewhat higher levels of rule obedience than those in the neutral group. Friedrich and Stein further asserted that these differences were especially noticeable for children with above-average intelligence.

A later study by Friedrich and Stein (1975) suggested that the context in which Mister Rogers' Neighborhood was viewed could also make a difference. In order to help kindergarteners learn the content of the program, two types of adult mediation were used, namely, verbal labeling and role playing. Hand puppets were used to reenact scenes, while another group, described how the characters felt. The results indicated that children learned more of the prosocial content in the experimental conditions when compared to the control group, in which the children play unrelated games. Friedrich and Stein noted that the verbal labeling condition was most effective for girls and the role-playing condition was most effective for boys. The researchers hypothesized that this may be attributed to the fact that girls are more comfortable sitting and listening while boys are more physically active.

Nevertheless, Eastman (2004) and Jordan et al. (2006) agreed with Friedrich and Stein (1975) that the influence of television on young children's development depends on whether an adult is present to help them mediate the content. Eastman suggested that by taking a hands-on approach and viewing programs with their children, parents are able to develop television literacy. Moses (2009) contended that co-viewing also provides opportunities for both parents and teachers to help children connect what they see on television to their own lives, to explain ideas or situations that may be confusing, and to discuss any concerns or questions that children may have.

In addition to the importance of co-viewing, a review of the research conducted by Moses (2009) on the effects of television viewing on young children's early literacy skills, asserted that parents and teachers need to be selective about what children watch. Not only should they be aware of any inappropriate content, but they must also consider the commercials and claims about any program-related products.

Moses indicated that educational programs such as Sesame Street and Between the Lions can make a difference in supporting young children to develop important literacy skills and behaviors because they form the foundation for later literacy learning. However, she concluded that television can influence literacy development in positive or negative ways depending on the program, the amount of time spent watching television, and, as already cited, whether an adult watches with children.

In their study, Mares and Woodard (2001) indicated that television viewing can have positive effects on young children's social interactions. Their study reviewed the conditions under which these effects are the strongest. The researchers contend that the negative effects of viewing are explained by two basic mechanisms. The first is that we learn appropriate ways to do things by observation. The second is that when watching television, we have emotional responses that affect our responses to real-world events. Because prosocial content is more in agreement with these established norms than antisocial content, Mares and Woodard asserted that prosocial content could possibly have stronger effects on viewers. Thus, the researchers conducted meta-analyses comparing prosocial and antisocial effects.

Two conclusions emerged from Mares and Woodard's research on the types of content that is most effective. First, the more specific the model, the more effective it

appeared to be. In other words, if children were shown the exact steps for positive behavior, immediately before they were given the opportunity to imitate the model, the effect sizes were high. The second conclusion is that a combination of aggression and prosocial themes are particularly harmful to young children. Mares and Woodard assert that this is highly problematic and many questions remain unanswered as to how to design effective prosocial content. However, one of the more consistent findings in their research was that when adults watch television with children and actively expand on the program content, the prosocial effects are much stronger and persistent.

While this discussion is not a comprehensive study of the effects of television on children's antisocial and prosocial behaviors, it emphasizes the importance of parent and teacher involvement in thinking and talking with young children about what they see on the screen. Both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Canadian Pediatric Society have posted recommendations on their websites for parents and caregivers that may be used to guide children's media use in the home. National campaigns have also been launched by the Center for Media Literacy (CML), the National Parent Teachers Association (PTA), and numerous other organizations promoting media literacy education. In addition to supporting young children's media literacy, early childhood teachers are instrumental in helping young children develop the ability to self-regulate.

The Importance of Young Children's Self-Regulation

Young children's social and emotional development includes the ability to understand one's own feelings, as well as the feelings of others, to manage and express strong emotions in a constructive manner, and to initiate and form lasting relationships with peers and adults (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005).

In fact, Boyd et al. (2005) asserted that one of the most important skills that young children develop is that of self-regulation or "the ability to manage one's behavior, so as to withstand impulses, maintain focus, and undertake tasks, even if there are other more enticing alternatives available" (p. 3). Shonkoff and Williams (2000) emphasized that the growth of self-regulation is critical to all aspects of young children's healthy development. Boyd et al. (2005) further highlighted self-regulation as a skill that "underlies performance in all domains, from reading to getting along with others" (p. 4). For example, in the school setting, if the teacher is presenting a lesson, a child needs to ignore distractions and concentrate on what the teacher is saying.

Along with the ability to control emotions and listen without interrupting, Leong and Bodrova (2003) indicated that self-regulation also included the ability to reason and to plan ahead, to work independently, to solve problems, and to "remember things on purpose" (p. 3). Consequently, these skills support a number of positive behaviors, beginning in the toddler years and extending into adulthood (Boyd et al., 2005; Leong & Bodrova, 2003).

Self-Regulation and School Readiness

Research indicates that children who lack the ability to self-regulate are not only at risk for school failure and later disciplinary problems, but are also less likely to make a successful transition from preschool to kindergarten (Stormont, Beckner, Mitchell, Richter, 2005; Webster-Stratton, Reid & Stoolmiller, 2008). According to Raver and Knitzer (2002), young children's ability to self-regulate in first grade is often a more accurate indicator of future school success than cognitive skills and family background. In their recent study of academic resiliency and early reading, McTigue, Washburn, and

Liew (2009) indicated that literacy skills and socio-emotional skills are equally important in supporting young children's success in learning to read. Because novice readers often encounter many frustrating moments, children who have the ability to self-regulate can maintain a positive attitude and persist in spite of these difficulties. However, many children with problem behaviors are provided with limited instruction and support to help them acquire the skills needed for a successful transition to kindergarten (Boyd et al., 2005; Stormont et al., 2005).

Since the 1990 National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) indicated that by the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn, there has been an increased concern regarding school readiness. In addition to providing a national framework for education reform, the NEGP further elaborated on five dimensions of school readiness: (1) physical well-being and motor development: (2) social and emotional development; (3) approaches to learning; (4) language development; and (5) cognition and general knowledge.

However, Matthews (2008) argues that even though the NEGP (1990) and other initiatives and organizations have identified the various domains of school readiness, the field lacks a clear definition of readiness. Another concern is that many teachers and researchers emphasize academic skills in relation to school readiness, while less attention has been given to young children's social skills and the influences of their environments (Ramey & Ramey, 1994; Raver, 2002). Webster-Stratton et al. (2008) described readiness as "emotional self-regulatory ability, social competency, the absence of behavior problems, and parent-teacher involvement" (p. 471). In their book, *High-Risk*

Children in Schools, Pianta and Walsh (1996), proposed a contextual definition of readiness which they explained as follows:

> Children are ready for school when, for a period of several years, they have been exposed to consistent, stable adults who are emotionally invested in them; to a physical environment that is safe and predictable; to regular routines and rhythms of activity; to competent peers; and to materials that stimulate their exploration and enjoyment of the world and from which they derive a sense of mastery (p. 34).

Furthermore, Pianta and Walsh argued that their criteria for defining readiness does not focus on the child's skills or problems within the child, but on the child's interactions with other children, adults, and resources. In other words, rather than using assessments designed to evaluate the specific skills that children know, such as naming letters and numbers, Pianta and Walsh considered children's interactions and relationships with the peers and adults in their environment more important than letter and number recognition.

Ramey and Ramey (1994) agreed with Pianta and Walsh, as they contended over a decade ago, that that the growing diversity of our nation's population has challenged the belief that children are not the only ones who need to be ready for school. There is also a need for readiness to be displayed on the part of parents, teachers, and communities. Ramey and Ramey emphasized four principles that characterized positive learning environments:

> First, learning is a lifelong process and the child has an effect on his/her environment; second, the child must be embedded in a responsive environment that takes into account the child's needs, preferences, and individual stage of

development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979); third, the environment must be interesting and complex to capture and hold the child's attention; and fourth, the environment must be trustworthy and comprehensible from the child's vantage point (p. 6).

The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative (2005), a multi-state initiative, also considered readiness from Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective as they adopted the "Ready Child Equation." Realizing the importance of young children's interactions with the peers and adults in their environments, the ready child equation states, "ready families + ready communities + ready services + ready schools = children ready for school" (NSRII, 2005, p. 12). In other words the NSRII recognizes that in order to improve school readiness, it is necessary to address children's development, as well as the environments in which they live.

The next section explores the social and emotional behaviors that early childhood teachers consider to be most influential in young children's transition to kindergarten.

Teachers' Expectations of Young Children's Social and Emotional Behaviors

Because research suggests that children's social competency supports academic achievement and lifelong learning, teachers need to communicate their expectations of the behaviors and skills necessary for students to perform successfully in the classroom ((Birch & Ladd, 1997; Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Lane, Stanton-Chapman, Jamison, & Phillips, 2007). When children do not have clear expectations as to how they are to behave, they become confused and may behave inappropriately. Having clear expectations of behaviors in the early childhood setting fosters close relationships between the child and the teacher, sets boundaries for children, and promotes self-regulation (Howes & Rithie, 2002; Lane et al., 2007).

Qualitative Studies of Teachers' Expectations

Cartledge and Milburn (1978) conducted one of the first reviews of the research regarding social behaviors related to academic achievement and social success during the 1960s and 1970s. Behaviors which correlated highly with academic achievement included attending, remaining on task, volunteering answers, complying with teacher requests, and interacting with teachers and peers about schoolwork. Cartledge and Milburn also argued that the classroom is an ideal setting for teaching social behaviors, and there is a need to incorporate social skills in the schools' curriculum. Although acknowledging that many social behaviors are taught informally through the unarticulated or "hidden curriculum," the researchers asserted that the goals of social behaviors should be clearly defined, just as in the academic curriculum. According to Cartledge and Milburn, building instruction, especially in the areas of interpersonal and task-related social skills, into the school curriculum results in enhanced student learning and improved child-teacher relationships.

A study which also stressed the importance of classroom instruction in the learning of social skills was that of Lilian Katz, Professor Emerita of Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois. The focus of Katz's 1986 study was on young children's development of language, dispositions, social competence, and intellect. Considering all four categories, Katz (1986) indicates that children attending preschool and kindergarten should be provided with opportunities for involvement in projects. Since working on a project involves social competence and interactions with peers, it provides children with experiences to strengthen their social skills. Katz (1986) asserted that social competence has the "characteristics of a recursive cycle," (p. 7) meaning that

whatever competencies or incompetencies a child has, the more likely that others will react in such a way that he/she will get more of it. In addition to emphasizing the enhancement of social skills through classroom instruction, both Katz's (1986) study and Cartledge and Milburn's (1987) study are noteworthy because they specifically found a positive correlation between social skills and academic achievement (Brigman & Webb, 2003).

An ethnographic interview study conducted by Hatch and Freeman (1988) examined the kindergarten philosophies and practices from the perspectives of teachers, principals, and supervisors responsible for implementing kindergarten programs in 12 school districts in Ohio. An analysis of the interviews with the 36 participants (3 in each district), revealed that the kindergarten programs were predominantly skill-centered, academically orientated, and designed to prepare children for first grade work. A second finding indicated that the educators responsible for implementing these programs did not necessarily believe that their kindergarten met the needs of young children. In other words, Hatch and Freeman explain that these individuals experienced a philosophy-reality conflict. Their values, attitudes, and beliefs of education did not agree with, or were in direct conflict to, their everyday classroom practice.

It is noteworthy that in the 1980s, when Hatch and Freeman were conducting their study, the American kindergartens were in a state of transition, and educators were just beginning to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of all-day kindergartens and all-day programs. Because of the strong emphasis on academics in kindergarten and lack of attention to play and social development, a counter movement resulted (Hatch & Freeman, 1988). Several national organizations, such as The National Association for the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC), advocated that hands-on activities and experiences are more appropriate for young children at this age than skills instruction. Noted educator and professor, David Elkind (1986) asserted that high-pressure academic programs place too much stress on young children and could result in long-lasting negative effects. Therefore, Elkind urged educators to advise parents toward developmentally appropriate programs.

Perry, VandeKamp, Mercer and Nordby's (2002) study used observations, in the form of running records, followed by semi-structured interviews to investigate what teachers say and do to support young children's self-regulated learning during reading and writing activities in their classes. Observations of teachers and students in five classrooms during the 1998-1999 school years in a suburban school district in British Columbia involved recording the events, actions, and verbatim speech in teacher-student and student-student interactions. Their research not only provided evidence of children in kindergarten through third grade engaging in self-regulated behaviors, such as planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating, but revealed a difference in young children's motivation profiles that is similar with older children. Perry et al. argued that because their investigation was "in situ" (p. 5) or in the natural setting, it provided important insights into the support that young children need as they become self-regulated learners.

In order to investigate teachers' beliefs about what children need prior to entering school, focus group interviews were conducted with 81 early childhood teachers serving low-income children in Los Angeles County by Lara-Cinisomo, Fuligni, Ritchie, Howes, and Karoly (2008). Their study involved three types of settings: public center-based

programs, private center-based programs, and family-based child care centers. Results indicated that being healthy, well-nourished, and well-rested were the most important aspect of readiness in all groups. Across program settings, teachers indicated that in order to ensure school readiness, the following three levels should be addressed: child, parent, and teacher. Each of these three levels was made up of domains and sub-domains. At the child-level, personal characteristics, (health, motivation, confidence, security), social skills, (impulse control, the ability to get along with others, being accountable for his/her own actions, and being able to share with others), basic skills, (colors, shapes, numbers, letters, alphabet), and reasoning skills (understand consequences, reflects on actions) were the four domains. While the private focus groups reported that impulse control was an important behavior for school readiness, the family focus group indicated that both impulse control and sharing with others were important social behaviors. The majority of the public focus groups reported children's ability to get along with others as a behavior necessary for school readiness.

In regard to the parents' role and school readiness, public-center based focus groups indicated that providing a stimulating learning atmosphere was very important, compared to private and family focus groups. As to the importance of teacher-parent relationships, there were no consistent differences between the center-based programs and the family-based programs (Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2008). However, the study did indicate that more emphasis was placed on collaboration between teachers and parents in the family-based programs than in the center-based programs. The researchers attributed this to the fact that family-based programs are smaller and more intimate and therefore more conducive to dialogue.

National Surveys of Teachers' Expectations

The first national study that focused on children's early school experiences, beginning in kindergarten and following children through middle school, was the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort 1998-1999 (ECLS-K) conducted by the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2002). In addition to supporting the research regarding the importance of the early years as a critical period for the social and emotional development of young children, the ECLS-K investigated 3,305 kindergarten teachers' perceptions related to school readiness. Specific behaviors necessary for the success in the school setting reported by the teachers included expressing feelings, following directions, sitting still and attending, taking turns and sharing, completing tasks, not being disruptive, and being sensitive to others (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003). The researchers also indicated that teachers' age, gender, and geographic region influenced their readiness expectations, as kindergarten teachers from the South held higher expectations of academic preparedness than the rest of the nation.

Another national survey of over 3,500 kindergarten teachers conducted in 1995 examined teachers' judgments as to the prevalence and types of problems children present upon entering kindergarten (Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000). Teachers reported that 33% of the students in their classrooms had some problems making the transition to school and 16% had difficult adjustments due to serious concerns such as district poverty level and school minority composition. Data from the study also indicated that 36% of the teachers reported that children lacked academic skills, while 20% of the children had poor social skills. All of these rates were higher for teachers

from urban areas, districts with high rates of minority students, and also districts with high rates of family poverty (Rimm-Kaufmann et al., 2000). Nevertheless, the self-reported perceptions, as described in the study, may be biased and should be interpreted with caution.

Recent research by Mashburn, Pianta, Harne, Downer, and Barbarin (2008) examined the development of the academic, language, and social skills of 2,439 four – year olds enrolled in 671 public prekindergarten programs in 11 states. The three methods used to measure pre-K quality were program design and infrastructure, (teacher training, child-to-teacher ratio, curriculum, class size), observations of the overall quality of classroom environments, and observations of teachers' interaction with the children. After adjusting for prior skill levels and child and family characteristics, the findings emphasize that improving teacher-child interactions through policies, program development, and professional development can significantly foster children's school readiness and academic success.

Small-Scale Studies of Teachers' Expectations

Lane, Givner, and Pierson's 2004 study included 126 primary and intermediate teachers in two ethnically diverse, suburban school districts in Southern California. Both general and special education teachers were asked to rate the importance of 30 social skills items from the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliott, 1990) that they viewed as critical for success in their classrooms. The social skills were derived from three domains: assertion, self-control, and cooperation. Results indicated that more than 50% of the teachers identified seven specific skills within the self-control and cooperation domains as critical to success in their classrooms. The seven social skills

which teachers identified are as follows: "(1) follows directions; (2) attends to instructions; (3) controls temper with adults; (4) controls temper with peers; (5) gets along with people who are different; (6) responds appropriately when hit, and (7) uses free time in an acceptable way" (Lane et al., 2004, p. 108).

Penn State researchers, Meier, DiPerna and Oster (2006) extended the work of Lane et al. (2004) in their study of 50 first through sixth grade teachers working with a racially diverse student population (55% Caucasian and 45% minority) across six elementary schools. The Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliott, 1990) was again used to gather information in three domains: cooperation, assertion, and self-control. Initial importance ratings were completed by the teachers one month into the academic year, and a second set of importance ratings were collected during the final month of the academic year. Results indicated that teachers viewed cooperation and self-control as being more important in the classroom environment than assertion, which is consistent with the findings of Lane et al. (2004). The only differences in the findings were the addition of four social skills identified as critical for success in the classroom: responds appropriately to peer pressure, uses time appropriately, cooperates with peers, and ignores peer distractions. There were no significant differences of teachers' importance rating between the beginning and end of the school year (Meier et al., 2006).

Teacher and Parent Expectations

In order to present the views of non-Caucasian families in regard to kindergarten readiness skills, Diamond, Reagan, and Bandyk's (2000) study is noteworthy because of its deliberate oversampling of families from African-American and Hispanic backgrounds. Using data from the second National Household Education Survey

(NHES), conducted in 1993 by the National Center for Education Statistics, Diamond et al. investigated parents' school readiness beliefs of 2,509 households with 4 to 6 year old children who had not entered kindergarten. Parents' beliefs were examined in three areas: "(a) readiness skills for children in general, (b) concerns about their own children's readiness for kindergarten and (c) decisions to delay their children's entry into kindergarten" (Diamond et al., 2000, p. 95). When applied to children in general, the findings suggest that parents have a global view of kindergarten readiness, but when making the decision as to their own child's readiness for kindergarten, emphasis was placed on academic ability. Other findings indicated that parents' racial and ethnic background influenced their decision to delay their child's entry into kindergarten, but Caucasian parents were more likely to act on their concerns by not enrolling their child for an additional year.

A study conducted in Charlottesville, Virginia by Lane, Stanton-Chapman, and Phillips (2007) examined the similarities in, and the differences between, the types of social skill expectations of parents and of teachers of preschool children being educated in schools that serve families from at-risk neighborhoods. Thirty five teachers of students ranging in age from 2 to 6 years old and 124 parents of these students completed the Social Skills subscale of the preschool version of the *Social Skills Rating System* (SSRS; Gresham & Elliott, 1990). Teachers and parents rated the following three social skills as critical for success in school: "(a) follows your directions, (b) controls temper in conflict situations with adults, and (c) controls temper in conflict situations with peers" (Lane et al., 2007, p. 94). Results also suggest that while teachers and parents share similar

expectations in the value placed on cooperation skills, they differ in the importance placed on self-control and assertion skills.

Several studies of parent and teachers' expectations of children's readiness skills for kindergarten revealed that parents placed more importance on academic skills than social skills. Knudsen-Lauder and Harris (1989) reported that parents rated counting, reading, and writing as being significant to children's success while teachers rated motivation to learn and independence as important competencies. The three skills that most teachers and parents agreed upon were listening, the ability to follow directions, and feeling confident. Further studies conducted by Olmsted and Lockhart (1995) and Harradine and Clifford (1996) also supported Knudsen-Lauder and Harris's research that parents view academic skills as more important than social skills. In all three of the studies the teachers stressed appropriate behaviors and communication skills as critical to success in kindergarten

In order for young children to be successful as they transition from the early childhood setting to kindergarten, it is clear that early childhood teachers rate self-regulation, cooperation with peers and adults, and listening as critical social and emotional skills for young children. Because teachers play a pivotal role in the development of these skills, it is important to examine the strategies that teachers use to address young children's behaviors in the early childhood setting.

Strategies Teachers' Use to Promote Young Children's Self-Regulation

Understanding young children's development requires teachers to consider the influences of the child's family, school, community, and the larger society as to how these environments impact children's learning and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009) also contends that teachers need to be aware as to "how their own cultural experience shapes their perspective and to realize that multiple perspectives, not just their own, must be considered in decisions about children's development and learning" (p. 13). In other words, reflective practice can support teachers to understand their beliefs about child guidance, as well as the viewpoints of other cultures, ethnic, and religious groups.

Because early childhood teachers differ in their beliefs and perspectives as to how to manage young children's challenging behaviors, they will implement different strategies to address the inappropriate behaviors. While some teachers will use techniques such as redirecting negative behavior and modeling, other teachers will use positive reinforcement or limit setting. Research also indicates that many teachers become frustrated when children do not behave appropriately and may lack the confidence or knowledge to support children in correcting these behaviors (Bingham, 2001; Lamm et al., 2006). Oftentimes, teachers resort to "old fashioned discipline" such as a combination of rewards and punishments (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008, p. 351). Rewards may include stars, treats, or extra time to enjoy special activities. Punitive measures may involve loss of playtime and unpleasant experiences. Other responses that teachers often use are pleading, directing, or punishing (Lamm, et al., 2006).

On the other hand, Logue (2007) contended that many discipline approaches are subtle and are integrated into daily classroom routines. These approaches include giving out stickers for good behavior, making it clear who the "good children are and who the bad children are," and writing names on the board indicating the number of strikes or poor behaviors exhibited by a certain child. Of course, physical punishment, such as

spanking or paddling is never acceptable. Toronto psychologist, Tom Hay (1995), also cautioned that threatening, scaring, humiliating, yelling, embarrassing, insulting, teasing, and intimidating are unacceptable practices and can be even more damaging than minor physical punishment.

Sugai, Hornet, Dunlap, Hieman, Lewis, and Nelson (2000) indicated that interventions involving children who exhibit problematic behaviors are usually reactive in nature and focus on disciplinary measures, such as time out, being sent to the principal's office, and expulsion from school. Although negative teacher reactions such as pleading, directing, punishing, and time out may prevent problem behavior temporarily, these measures do not bring about long term changes that help children become socially competent (Kemple, David, Hysmith, 1997; Lamm et al., 2006; Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008). Bingham (2001) suggested that when children are removed from the situation, they fail to discover problem solving techniques and negotiating skills. Logue (2007) agrees with Bingham and argues that unless teachers intervene and provide young children with a chance to practice alternative behaviors, they will likely continue to receive "more punishment than teaching" (p. 35). Then too, while these interventions may support a particular child exhibiting problem behaviors, Benedict, Homer, and Squires (2007) emphasizes that it fails to address the needs of all the children in the class. When teachers reflect on their early beliefs of child guidance, this reflective practice may lead to a deeper understanding of children's challenging behaviors and the ways in which they can support all children to develop positive social skills.

Teachers' Beliefs and Challenging Behaviors

When children have difficulty self-regulating in the school setting, it creates a barrier between the teacher and the child, making it difficult for the teacher to like the child and establish a relationship with him (Birch & Ladd, 1998). The child's behavior often causes negative feelings of fear within the teacher, including the fear that a child may get hurt, fear of a loss of control over the classroom environment, fear of failure and incompetency, and frustration that planned activities cannot be carried out (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007). Bowman et al. (2001) contended that teachers respond to these interactions between adults and children by referring to their own beliefs, values, and prior experiences. Isenberg (1990) agrees with Bowman et al. (2001) and suggests that teachers need to recognize the influence of their beliefs on their instruction since it serves as a basis for their decisions in the classroom. Working with children who exhibit challenging behaviors is often stressful and requires teachers to make daily decisions as to how they can stay calm and in control of the situation, and at the same time respond appropriately to these behaviors (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007). Therefore it is necessary that early childhood teachers consider two sources of their beliefs, that of parental influence and the influence of first teachers.

Parental Influence

Since the 1960s Diana Baumrind has conducted observational studies on parental control and parental disciplinary practices. Baumrind's (1966, 1978) research describes three parenting styles as follows: (1) authoritative, in which the parents are highly responsive and highly demanding, but affectionate and communicative; (2) authoritarian, in which the parents are highly demanding, but less responsive and communicate less

effectively; and (3) permissive parents who may be loving and responsive to their children, but are lax in their discipline techniques and not very demanding. Although authoritative parents are strict and set clear limits on their children's behavior, they are willing to negotiate with their children and encourage dialogue, while authoritarian parents are strict and demand complete obedience from their children. In other words, authoritarian parents have a "do as I say, no questions asked" attitude. On the other hand, permissive parents place few limits on their children's behavior, often permit their children to regulate their own activities, and usually do not use physical punishment to control their children (Baumrind, 1966).

A later study by Baumrind (1991) suggested that parental style not only influences children's social competence, but also is related to academic performance and problem behavior. For instance, children of authoritative parents often demonstrate positive outcomes such as good social skills, high academic achievement, and the ability to self-regulate. Although children of authoritarian parents tend to do moderately well in school, they often lack social skills and may exhibit signs of anxiety and anger. Baumrind also suggests that children of permissive parents perform less well in school, are likely to have uncontrolled and impulsive behavior, and may have poor social skills.

Because many factors can interact and modify the effects of parenting, Broderick and Blewitt (2006) advise caution when interpreting the relationships between parenting styles and children's behavior. Firman and Castle (2008) also emphasize that Baumrind's model of authoritative parenting is based on the values of most Western and European cultures, and other ethnic groups and cultures may find a combination of parenting styles more adaptable to their values and lifestyles. Nevertheless, it is

understandable that teachers' early relationships and experiences with their parents can affect their response to challenging behaviors in the classroom (Pianta, 1999). In addition to parent influence, former teachers also play a significant role in shaping teachers' beliefs of child guidance.

Former Teachers' Influences

In his book, *Schoolteacher*, Dan Lortie (1975) suggested that teachers form their views of teaching and learning long before they enter teacher education programs. Lortie calls this an "apprenticeship of observation," (p. 61) and notes that it occurs during the many years that students spend in the classroom observing their teachers and professors. However, Lortie points out two limitations of his assumption. First, the students see the teacher as an authority figure, and they are not privileged to the teachers' personal goals and intentions; second, the students are assessing the teacher's actions from their own imaginative views and not from a pedagogical perspective. Therefore, Lortie asserted that what students learn about teaching is intuitive and is based on the personality and mood of the teacher, rather than on principles of sound teaching. Instead of acquiring technical or specialized knowledge, students become imitators of teachers. In Lortie's words, "It is a potentially powerful influence which transcends generations, but the conditions of transfer do not favor informed criticism, attention to specifics, or explicit rules of assessment" (p. 63). Whitbeck (2000) agreed with Lortie (1975), as he also suggested that the many years students spend observing teachers may be one of the reasons why so many pre-service teachers have a simplistic view of the teaching profession. In other words, pre-service teachers tend to ignore the complexities of pedagogy and mistakenly believe that their years of schooling have provided them with

useful information about how to teach. Rogers and Freiberg (1994) echoed Lortie and Whitbeck's perspectives as they proposed that teachers often model their former teachers as to discipline techniques and teaching strategies.

While traditional beliefs concerning discipline may initially be effective, they do not support long-term changes that foster young children's social skills (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008; Lamm et al., 2006). Consequently, Ayers (1993) recommends that teachers must "draw on their own knowledge," or self-knowledge, in order to understand how early beliefs and experiences affect their classroom practice and behaviors.

Summary

Research indicates that there are a growing number of children entering early childhood programs who appear to need significant support in developing the social and emotional skills necessary for success at school and throughout life. The increasing diversity of our child population, welfare policies that require parents to be employed or attend school, and the reauthorization of IDEA (1997, 2004), which requires schools to address the needs of students with a wide range of disabilities, has placed an increased reliance on preschool programs and child care centers.

Because young children's social and emotional skills are related to academic achievement, school readiness, and future success, it is important that teachers provide opportunities within the preschool environment for children to interact with others and develop their social competencies. However, research suggests that many teachers feel that they are inadequately prepared for, and lack the confidence to handle inappropriate behaviors in the classroom environment (Benedict et al., 2007; Hemmeter et al., 2008; Kemple et al., 1997). While some teachers may use positive interventions, many teachers

resort to punitive methods such as time out, loss of privileges, and threats (Logue 2007; Sugai et al., 2000). In order for early childhood teachers to respond helpfully and appropriately to young children's challenging behaviors, and promote children's self-regulation, teachers need to examine their early beliefs and experiences of their child guidance approaches. When teachers practice self-reflection, it can empower them to make the necessary changes which can lead to more effective teaching and student learning.

Examining early childhood teachers' self-reported experiences, attitudes, and values that have shaped their beliefs about guiding young children's behaviors requires methodology that is both thorough and diverse. The next chapter will describe the methods and procedures that were used to obtain information from 11 subjects and the strategies they use to address challenging behaviors and promote young children's self-regulation in the early childhood setting.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Although early childhood teachers may realize the importance of early prevention and intervention of young children's challenging behaviors, they may lack the knowledge, skills, or training to effectively address them. Consequently, teachers may spend more time focusing on classroom management issues and not enough time is devoted to the tasks of teaching. In order to understand early childhood teachers' attitudes and values that have shaped their beliefs about guiding young children's behavior and their reflections on those beliefs, the researcher had to choose her methods carefully. This chapter provides a description of the research methodology employed in the study and is divided into eight sections: exploratory research design, participants, setting, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, researcher's role and ethical considerations.

Exploratory Research Design

Sekaran (2003) explains that studies may be either exploratory in nature, descriptive in nature, or may be conducted to test a hypothesis. The first type, exploratory research, may be undertaken when not much is known about a subject or situation, and more information is needed to fully understand the topic in order to build a theory and test the hypothesis (Kotler, Brown, & Armstrong, 2006; Sekaran, 2003). For instance, in marketing research, exploratory studies about organizationally relevant differences in race, ethnicity, and national origin are currently being conducted in order to better understand how to manage diversity in the workplace (Kotler et al., 2006). Whether it is a business or a school system, it is understandable that learning to value

differences and adopting new styles of management is important to organizational success. Data in exploratory studies are usually collected through observation, focus groups, or interviews.

The second type, descriptive research, is undertaken to learn about and describe the characteristics of a group or a situation (Sekaran, 2003). For instance, descriptive studies are often conducted in schools focusing on teachers to learn about their educational level, number of years taught, and any training or professional development courses taken. Schutt (2001) suggests that studies of this type examine "how people get along in the setting under question, what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them" (p. 12).

The third type, studies that engage in hypothesis testing, usually explain the nature of certain relationships, or confirm the differences between two or more aspects of a situation (Schutt, 2001; Sekaran, 2003). Kotler et al. (2006) refer to these studies as "casual research," since the objective is to test hypothesis about cause-and-effect relationships. For instance, would adding 10 minutes of math instruction time each day over the period of a semester result in an increase in the math scores of freshman students? Sekaran (2003) further emphasizes that as the situation or topic under investigation proceeds from the exploratory study to a hypothesis-testing study, the methodological rigor, as well as the costs of research, increases.

This was an exploratory descriptive study because it was concerned with the perceptions of early childhood teachers' child guidance approaches, the strategies teachers use to promote young children's ability to self-regulate, and the teachers' reflections on those beliefs and strategies.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants in this study. Among Patton's (1990) 16 purposeful sampling strategies, 3 types are suggested for selecting participants in qualitative studies—homogenous samples, maximum variation samples, and intensity sampling (Hatch, 2002). The first type, homogeneous sampling, is useful for studying small subgroups in depth and is made up of participants who share common characteristics. The second type, maximum variation sampling, is the opposite of homogeneous sampling, because the participants are selected based on the differences of their characteristics. According to Patton, studies that search for central themes, and that are shared by a diversified group of participants, may use maximum variation sampling. The third type, intensity sampling, identifies participants who reveal a passionate interest in certain phenomena. Patton explains that heuristic, or trial and error research, uses intensity sampling because it draws on the researcher's intense personal experiences, such as experiences with loneliness or jealousy.

The 11 participants in this study were selected by homogenous sampling because they shared the following common characteristics: (1) they were early childhood teachers currently teaching young children who were 3-6 years old, (2) they taught in a public or private early childhood program, and (3) they had received early childhood training or attained a degree in early childhood or elementary education. Because of the preponderance of females in child care, all of the subjects were women. Four of the eleven participants taught in a public elementary school and are certified full-time teachers, two taught in a Montessori school and hold International and American Montessori certification, and five taught in a center-based child care program and hold at

least an associate degree in early childhood education. All of the subjects in this study are Caucasian and have 2 to 30 years of experience at the early childhood level. Table 4 is a Profile of the Participants in this study.

Table 4

Profile of the Interview Participants

Participants	Setting	Degrees Attained	Years of experience at early childhood level
IP 1	Public School	B. S. in Elementary Ed	2 years
IP 2	Public School	B. S. in Elementary Ed Master of Education	3 years
IP 3	Public School	B. S. in Elementary Ed Master of Education Reading specialist certification	20 years
IP 4	Public School	Early Childhood Certification B. S. in Child Development and Child Care	8 years
IP 5	Private School	International and American Montessori Certification	30 years
IP 6	Private School	International and American Montessori Certification B. S. in Interior Design	14 years
IP 7	Center-based Child Care	Associate in Early Childhood Education	3 years
IP 8	Center-based Child Care	Associate in Early Childhood Education	14 years
IP 9	Center-based Child Care	Associate in Early Childhood Education	22 years
IP 10	Center-based Child Care	B.S. in middle school Spanish B.S. in Elementary Ed	2 years
IP 11	Center-based Child Care	Associate in Early Childhood Education	3 years

IP=Interview Participant

Setting

Three different early childhood settings were selected for participation in this study—a public elementary school, a Montessori School, and a center-based childcare. Because the researcher is a retired elementary teacher and familiar with local school districts and childcare providers, former colleagues were contacted for recommendations of early childhood programs that would be suitable as study settings. The three administrators who were initially selected for the study agreed that, pending Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), the researcher would be permitted to ask their teachers to participate in the study. Letters of site approval from the administrators of each of the settings can be found in Appendix B (public elementary school), Appendix C (Montessori School), and Appendix D (center-based child care). The following section describes each of the settings in more detail.

Public School

The public school where the study was conducted is one of four elementary schools with a total of 277 students in grades K-3 and is located in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Pre-K program is Monday through Friday and offers a morning session from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and an afternoon session from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Pre-K program is federally funded by Title I and enrollment is open to all children residing in the school district who are four years old on or before September 1st. Children are selected to participate in the Title I Pre-K program based on the results of the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning—3rd Edition (DIAL-3) which measures Motor, Concepts, Language, Self-Help Development and Social

Development. Children with the greatest educational needs are selected first, based on the outcome of test results.

Montessori School

The Montessori school is located in a suburban area in southwestern Pennsylvania and offers classes to children beginning at the toddler level (2-3 year olds) to the advanced elementary level (9-12 year olds). The school serves approximately 128 children and the school year runs according to the public school calendar from September to June. The hours of operation for school-age children are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 3: 15 p.m. Half-day and full-day sessions are offered for toddler and preschool children. Times vary according to parental preferences, ages, interests, and needs of the children. The school is registered with the Department of Education under Private Academic Schools and is accredited by the Middle States Association. Because it is a private school, there is no state or federal funding and families are charged a monthly or annual rate.

Center-Based Child Care

The center-based child care operates seven early childhood centers located throughout a southwestern Pennsylvania county of 360,000. Child development programs are offered year round Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. to over 450 children, ages 6 weeks through 12 years old, and include full or part-time child care. Before-school and after-school programs during the school year and full day programs during the summer are provided for kindergarten and school-age children. Head Start, for children ages 3-5 years, and Early Head Start, for children ages birth to 3 years, is

available for families who meet specific eligibility requirements. In addition, support services are also provided to families of children with special needs.

Funding for attendance in the childcare programs is provided from a variety of sources. The Title XX funding program provides for families that meet eligibility guidelines. Also, funding is accepted from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Head Start, Early Head Start, Children's Bureau and private sources.

Instrumentation

Two different types of instruments were used to gather data from the early childhood teachers in this study. One instrument, the Interview Guide (Appendix F), was based primarily on questions from Jalongo and Isenberg's (2008) *Exploring Your Role: A Practitioner's Introduction to Early Childhood Education*. Two questions were used from Jacob's (2008) dissertation, *Equitable Education for Students with Disabilities: Teachers' Attitudes and Perspectives* and are explained in more detail in the following section. Creswell (2003) suggests that when the researcher assembles an instrument from any part of another instrument, permission needs to be obtained. Permission to modify Jacob's interview guide can be found in Appendix H.

The second instrument, a survey (Appendix G), was generated by Anderson's (2007) *Managing Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood: Effect of Theoretical Orientation on Strategy Recommendation.* This researcher-designed instrument was selected because of its demonstrated reliability and validity scores. Creswell (2003) indicates that when using an existing instrument, validity is established when "one can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instruments" (p. 157). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) further indicate that when a researcher borrows an

instrument that has been used in a similar study, reliability, or the extent to which a study can be replicated, is achieved. To conduct this study, the researcher obtained permission (Appendix I) to use Anderson's (2007) Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS).

The Interview Guide

Since many of the questions in Jalongo and Isenberg's (2008) book, *Exploring your Role: A Practitioner's Introduction to Early Childhood Education*, focused on the teacher as a reflective practitioner, questions regarding teachers' beliefs and past experiences were used in the interview guide to gather information on their child guidance philosophy and the strategies they use to promote young children's self-regulation. For instance, Jalongo and Isenberg's (2008) questions in Pause and Reflect about First Teachers, such as, "What were the most important lessons you learned from them?" (p. 8) was revised to read, "Did any of your first teachers affect the way you pattern your approaches to challenging behaviors in the classroom?" The modifications made to these questions added to the clarity of the study.

Because Jacob's (2008) research, *Equitable Education for Students with Disabilities: Teachers' Attitudes and Perspectives*, examined teachers' attitudes and perspectives of children with disabilities and was similar to the researcher's study which examined teachers' perspectives of children's challenging behaviors, two questions were selected and revised for the present study. For example, question 5, "Describe any challenges you experienced while implementing inclusion" (Jacobs, 2008, p. 132) was revised by the researcher to read, "Describe a particularly frustrating experience you've had when dealing with young children's challenging behavior." Jacob's interview guide

was designed based on recommendations and suggestions by Rubin and Rubin (2005). Jacob contends that in an effort to obtain richness, open-ended questions were selected for her researcher-designed interview guide.

The semi-structured interview format was used because of its flexibility to expand on the topic being discussed. Segal, Coolidge, and Heinz (2006) emphasize that structured interviews can be divided into one of two types: fully structured and semi-structured. Questions in a fully structured interview are asked verbatim, the probes used to follow up on initial questions are specified, and the interviewers are trained to follow a specific format. However, in a semi-structured interview, even though the questions are specified and also asked verbatim, the interviewer has considerable leeway to follow up on responses (Segal et al., 2006). For example, the interviewer may ask the participant to provide not only an example of a certain behavior strategy they used, but also why they used it, and how it supported that particular student. Or the interviewer may ask a new question which can provide a creative approach to the topic under discussion. The open-ended questions also guided the researcher to "translate the research topic into terms that the conversational partner can relate to and discuss" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 135).

Anderson's Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS)

The second instrument, Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional's Survey (BCECE: PS) (Appendix G) was designed by Anderson (2007) to examine the effects of the theoretical orientation of experts in the field of early childhood education (constructivists) and early childhood special education (behaviorists) on the

behavior strategies they would recommended for managing specific challenging behaviors.

Anderson's previous study, Behavior Challenges in Early Childhood Education (BCECE) focused on the types of challenging behaviors faced by direct service providers and administrators working in childcare settings and the strategies used to manage the behaviors. On the BCECE, participants were asked to describe the strategies they would use for a particular behavior, but a specific description of the behavior was not provided. Therefore, this allowed for individual interpretation as to the seriousness and frequency of the occurrence of that particular behavior. As a result, Anderson revised the study and used cases or scenarios, in an attempt to control for individual interpretations of each behavior. Participants were presented with two scenarios that described each of the three targeted behaviors, (physical aggression, verbal aggression and noncompliance) for a total of six scenarios. The two scenarios describing the same behavior included only subtle differences (e.g., gender of child, age of child, focus of challenging behavior, etc.) to ensure an accurate description of the targeted behavior. Because the researcher's purpose was to examine early childhood teachers' responses to the strategies they would use to manage challenging behaviors in the classroom, and not their theoretical orientations, as is the case in Anderson's study, one scenario was selected from each of the three groups—physical aggression, verbal aggression and noncompliance, for a total of three scenarios.

In order to examine the validity and reliability of the survey, Anderson used research professors and graduate students at a university from each of the two-targeted fields, constructivists and behaviorists, to pilot the BCECE: PS. A focus group was

conducted with 10 volunteers to solicit feedback regarding the relatedness of each scenario to the behavior represented and to suggest revisions that would improve the comprehension and completion of the survey. During the focus group, a rating scale was completed and opened-ended feedback was gathered in order to guide the modification of each of the scenarios. Anderson contends that the purpose of this process served to increase the specificity and accuracy of the scenarios.

After the necessary modifications were made, Anderson conducted test-retest reliability analyses to examine the reliability of the rating of strategies in response to each scenario. Using SPSS 10.0, the test-retest reliability for each of the six scenarios was examined. The Pearson product-moment correlation for each scenario, one through six, was above .80, and was .879, .876, .859, .821, .820, and .848, respectively.

Procedures

Once the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (Appendix J) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the administrators of the three early childhood settings were contacted to schedule a time to meet and discuss the study with the teachers. As previously noted, the teachers were identified through purposeful sampling. A Methods and Procedures Flowchart outlining the steps taken to implement this study is found in Appendix A.

At a prearranged meeting, the researcher met with the early childhood teachers at each site, reviewed the purpose of the study, and addressed any questions or concerns. The consent forms (Appendix E) were then distributed. The participants were informed that if they wished to participate in the study, they were to sign and date one copy and to keep the second copy for their records. The participants were also told that they were

free to withdraw from the study at any time by calling or e-mailing the researcher using the information provided on the consent form.

Because some of the teachers asked for more time to think about participating in the study, they were given two copies of the consent form along with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope and were instructed to return, within a week, one copy signed (agreement to participate), or unsigned (non-participant), to the researcher. If forms were not returned within a week, a follow-up phone call was made to the center asking that forms be returned. After a two-week period, the researcher stopped collecting consent forms. Of the nineteen consent forms distributed, a total of eleven teachers agreed to participate in the study, indicating a 58% response rate. The group included four public school teachers, two Montessori teachers, and five center-based-child care teachers.

Interviews were conducted after school, during lunch and planning time, or after the centers were closed for the day. All interviews were audio taped. The first two questions of the interview guide were designed to elicit background information, while the ten remaining questions were designed to assess the teachers' beliefs related to child guidance and young children's challenging behaviors. After the interviews were conducted, the second phase of the data collection was implemented.

Anderson's BCECE: PS was administered following the interviews. Participants responded to a Likert scale (e.g., 1= never, 6 = always) as to how often they would recommend a particular strategy (e.g., ignore, redirect, verbal instruction, time-out, fix-it, responsibilities, modeling, talk with parents, reinforcement, suspension/expulsion, prevention) to manage the behavior described in three scenarios (e.g., physical aggression, verbal aggression, and noncompliance). After completing the Likert scale,

participants were asked to list additional strategies they would recommend, and then complete an open-ended question regarding what factors (e.g., child, teacher, or environmental) may have influenced their recommendation.

Once the interviews and surveys were completed, the participants were reassured of the confidentiality of the study. No identifies would be disclosed within the study and the audio tapes and surveys would be secured in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office for at least three years in compliance with federal regulations.

Data Analysis

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed within 1 to 2 days by the researcher. The researcher typed the transcriptions as Microsoft word documents. Once the interview transcriptions were complete, the researcher listened to each interview in its entirety, in order to make any additions, deletions, and corrections and to ensure accuracy. Then the typed transcriptions were coded.

Hatch (2002) suggests nine steps in the data analysis process. The first step involves dividing the overall data set into categories based on predetermined topologies. According to Hatch, "typologies are generated from theory, common sense, and/or research objectives, and initial data processing happens within those typological groupings" (p. 152). The data were divided into the following typologies: family beliefs about child guidance, former teachers' influence, teachers' expectations of children's behavior, and strategies teachers reported using to promote young children's self-regulation.

After the typologies were identified, the second step was "to read the data, marking entries related to your typologies" (p. 153). The researcher read through the data

several times, and each time highlighted, in a specific color, anything that addressed a particular topology. For instance, any data set related to family beliefs about child guidance was highlighted in purple. Any data set related to former teachers' influence was highlighted in yellow, and so on until all topologies were represented.

The third step involved reading the entries by topologies and recording the main ideas in each entry on a summary sheet (Hatch, 2002). A summary sheet was created for each participant. After reading the data, a brief statement of the main idea was written on the summary sheet. For instance, all data sets related to the teachers' families beliefs about child guidance were cut and pasted onto a separate sheet and labeled, so the researcher could determine from which interview transcript each data set was obtained from**.**

After the main idea was recorded, the fourth step entailed looking for patterns, themes and relationships within the typologies. Transcripts were reviewed and similarities, differences, and frequencies in the data were noted by means of a special code in brackets. Hatch suggests that themes are integrating concepts and recommends that at this point the researcher should ask, "What broad statements can be made that meaningfully bring all of this data together?" (p. 156).

The fifth step involves determining what data fit into the established topologies and keeping a record of the data by noting the interview name, date or page number.

After rereading and coding the data, step six requires searching for examples of excerpts that do not fit into any of the categories, such as nonexamples or patterns that are not supported by the data. Hatch suggests that at this point the researcher ask the guiding question: "Is there anything in the data that contradicts my findings?" (p. 158).

In the seventh step, themes are reviewed and similarities across categories are noted. For instance, words that are similar, such as strict and stern, were used in different categories. Therefore, the researcher examined the data to see if any patterns or themes were related.

In order to organize and clarify the data, for the researcher's benefit, as well as for others, Hatch suggests as the eighth step, to write the patterns as one sentence generalizations. The ninth and final step involved rereading the interview transcript and selecting data excerpts that support the generalizations.

In collaboration with the Applied Research Lab at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), the researcher analyzed the data from the Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Surveys (BCECE: PS) using SPSS 16.0 statistical software. As the participants completed the surveys, the researcher input their responses as to the 11 strategies (e.g., ignore, redirect, verbal instruction, time-out, fix-it, responsibilities, modeling, talk with parents, reinforcement, suspension/expulsion, prevention) they recommended for each scenario (e. g., physical aggression, verbal aggression, and noncompliance) into the SPSS file. Surveys were labeled with a number to match the number in the SPSS file and frequency charts were created.

Descriptive statistics for a particular strategy recommendation were described for each of the three different cases or scenarios: physical aggression, verbal aggression, and noncompliance. Following each scenario, the participants were asked to list additional strategies they would recommend, and then complete an open-ended question regarding what factors (e.g., child, teacher, or environmental) may have influenced their choice. The responses to these questions were read and then coded according to Hatch (2002).

Researcher's Role

When discussing the researcher's role, Creswell (2003) recommends that the researcher should include "statements about past experiences that provide background data through which the audience can better understand the topic, the setting, or the participants" (p. 184). After 35 years of teaching at the early childhood level, the researcher brings the knowledge and the experience of her own classroom practices relating to young children's cognitive and social-emotional development. However, relying on this knowledge and experience alone does not "take into consideration the years of educational research that was produced" throughout the researcher's years as an educator (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008, p. 12). With this in mind, the researcher returned to the university setting to continue her studies in a doctoral program.

When reflecting on a topic for her dissertation proposal, the researcher thought about the thousands of children she had encountered during her teaching career. Many of those students have gone on to become successful and productive citizens. In addition, there were other students who, despite harsh parenting, physical challenges, and developmental delays, overcame many difficulties and continued to make a positive difference in the lives of the people around them. However, a problem that would consistently surface was the children whose behaviors were so disruptive that they made life in the classroom difficult for their caregivers, teachers, and peers. Even though parents were contacted, administrators and colleagues were consulted, and behavior plans were implemented, there was little, if any, improvement in their behavior. In addition to the feelings of frustration and guilt experienced by the researcher, there was a continual

searching for answers or solutions to help the children who exhibited inappropriate behaviors.

With a past interest in psychology and human behavior, the researcher read about reflective practice and how self-understanding, or the willingness to take the time to reflect on one's own beliefs and past experiences, can influence a person to make changes, adjust thinking, and question long-held convictions. And so the quest began of digging deep into my personal philosophy of teaching and learning. Upon reflection, the researcher revisited her beliefs of child guidance and children's behaviors and realized that teacher-centered classrooms would no longer serve the academic and socio-emotional needs of 21st century students. It became apparent that in order to support teachers to help young children express their needs and emotions in appropriate ways, the researcher should focus on the need for teachers to become reflective practitioners. When teachers understand their own behaviors and feelings about children's challenging behaviors, they may be able to bring about positive changes in young children's social and emotional development.

Ethical Considerations

At a prearranged meeting at each of the settings, the researcher met with the participants and discussed the purpose of the study, answered any questions they had, and asked the participants to sign a consent form indicating their desire to volunteer for the study. The researcher made every attempt to treat the participants with "respect, concern, and consideration" (Hatch, 2002, p. 52) by allowing the participants to select the time, date, and location for the interview where they could speak freely without being overheard or interrupted. This was done to increase the opportunity to respond candidly

to the questions. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time by calling or e-mailing the researcher using the information provided on the consent form.

Ethics were upheld by assigning an alpha-numeric code to protect the identities of the participants. The participants were also reassured that the researcher was the only individual who collected and analyzed the data, and that no one else had access to the data. Finally, in compliance with federal regulations, participants were informed that the audio tapes of the interviews and the survey data would be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office for a period of three years following the completion of the study.

Summary

Because describing teachers' child guidance philosophies involves reflection about personal experiences and early beliefs concerning family, friends, and teachers, the process of designing an exploratory study can be challenging. The researcher took time to explain to the participants their roles and responsibilities in the study, the procedures that would be followed throughout the study, and the methods of data collection.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of this study, the researcher used two different instruments, an interview guide and a survey, to gather data for this study. Data from the interviews were analyzed using Hatch's steps in topological analysis, while the data from the surveys were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 software in collaboration with the Applied Research Center at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Realizing the sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher encouraged the participants to respond candidly to the questions concerning their early beliefs and

classroom practices so that the findings of the study would lead to a deeper understanding of how early childhood teachers can respond helpfully and appropriately to young children's challenging behaviors.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

By conducting semi-structured interviews with 11 early childhood teachers and then administering Anderson's Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS), the researcher was able to gather two different forms of data for analysis. Data were then examined by studying the four issues reviewed in Chapter Two related to young children's social and emotional development (1) teachers' reflections of child guidance beliefs, (2) challenging behaviors in early childhood, (3) teachers' expectations of young children's social and emotional behaviors, and (4) the strategies that early childhood teachers use to promote young children's self-regulation. Although much of the data confirmed the results of previous research in the area of children's challenging behaviors and teachers' expectations, new themes developed that offer interesting insights into the social and emotional development of young children.

The data will be used to address the three research questions that are restated below:

1. How do early childhood teachers describe their child guidance philosophy and what do they identify as the sources for those beliefs?
2. What social and emotional behaviors of children do early childhood teachers consider to be most influential in the young child's transition into kindergarten?
3. What specific strategies do early childhood teachers use to promote self-regulation in young children and what are their reflections on those practices?

True to the research of Bowman et al. (2001) and Isenberg (1990) that teachers often respond to young children's challenging behaviors by referring to their own beliefs and prior experiences, all 11 of the early childhood teachers in this study indicated that either their parents, former teachers, or both, influenced their child guidance practices in the classroom or in their own homes. Because young children's challenging behaviors can be stressful, understanding the sources of early childhood teachers' beliefs concerning child guidance may support them in remaining calm and in control of the situation while at the same time responding appropriately to these behaviors (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 1999, 2007).

Parental Influences on Teachers' Beliefs

According to Baumrind's (1966, 1978) research, the participants in this study described their parents' style of discipline as strict and loving (authoritative), severe and demanding (authoritarian), or lenient and unresponsive (permissive). The researcher also found that two of the participants who described their parents as being authoritarian, and one participant who described her mother as being permissive, indicated that it did not affect their discipline practices in the classroom, but instead had an impact on their families and the way they were raising their own children.

While Baumrind's study described three styles of parental discipline, Morrison (2009) asserts that parent behavior varies widely and does not often fit into select groups or categories. Furthermore, Morrison suggests that parent behavior is influenced by four major factors: domain, history, time, and surprises. For example, a parent may be warm and relaxed when reading a bedtime story to a child, but will be more demanding in

another context such as when the child is doing his/her homework. Also, parents who are usually strict with bedtime routines may alter family schedules when a child is sick.

In his review of four articles of past research examining the relationship between parental educational levels and children's academic development, Morrison contends that his research is a first step toward understanding the true nature of parenting and its effects.

> In my view, parenting on a day-to-day basis (or week-to-week) does not follow the neat, tidy prescriptions that have emerged from the research evidence thus far. While global distinctions may characterize some parents as more or less responsive than others or more or less directive in managing their children's behavior, the reality is very likely more complex and messy (p. 371).

Firman and Castle (2008) agree with Morrison (2009) and caution that Baumrind's parenting model is based on the values of Western and European cultures and other ethnic groups and cultures may find a combination of the various styles of parenting to be more fitting to their lifestyle.

Authoritative Parents

Of the 11 early childhood teachers in this study, 8 of them, (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11) described their parents' discipline style as authoritative or strict, but loving. Baumrind (1966, 1978) emphasized that authoritative parents are highly demanding, affectionate, understanding, and communicative.

Participant 1, a kindergarten teacher with two years of early childhood experience, suggested that she was raised to listen to and respect her elders. As a result, she is "a big stickler for that in the classroom."

Participant 2, who has been teaching at the preschool level for three years, emphatically stated that her parents *absolutely* affected her beliefs of child guidance. She contends that her parents taught her and her siblings to respect others, to use proper manners, and to listen to adults. She states, "I got a lot of my teaching ways—the strengths that I have from my parents approach to helping us." When asked to provide examples of these strengths, she emphasized the following:

> I am very structured compared to other preschools and I think that is very helpful for children going into kindergarten that never had that structure before. I am compassionate because we have very sensitive children at this age. I am still willing to learn. If they ask me questions I don't know, I tell them I'll find out. I try my best to work with the parents because we have a lot of interactions with them. It is not easy, but I think I am getting better at it.

Participant 3, a kindergarten teacher who has been teaching for 20 years, was an only child and described her parents' discipline style as strict but loving.

> I was an only child so I didn't have any siblings growing up with me. I don't remember rocking the boat too much—I did what I was told. When I went out with friends I called my parents and told them where I was. I guess in a sense they were strict because they expected me to do that, but I never felt they were mean. I felt a loving strictness.

While Participant 3 strives for consistency in her behavior expectations in the classroom, she indicated that her parents definitely influenced the way she raised her two sons.

> Early on I gave them boundaries that they knew they couldn't go beyond. I tried to watch what they were doing—not leaving them unattended. I tried to supervise

when they were with friends. I tried to redirect them if their behavior was inappropriate.

Participant 4 was also an only child. She described her childhood as very quiet and one in which there were a lot of adult experiences. "I had a lot of adult experiences because whenever my parents went out they took me along and expected me to behave. So I went out to dinner with them and whatever they were doing I did." Although Participant 4 stated that her parents' discipline style influenced her teaching in that she likes her classroom to be calm and organized, she felt that it had more of an impact on the way she raised her family.

> I expected my own children to behave. I use to call it "party behavior." When we were going somewhere they knew they were suppose to sit and obey the rules and behave. They still tease me about that and they're in their 20s—party behavior! So there were things I expected and I had three boys so it was tough.

Unlike Participants 3 and 4 who were only children, Participant 5 described being brought up as the youngest child in an Italian family.

> It was a very loving atmosphere that I was raised in. My parents weren't too strict. I was the youngest so my parents were a little bit looser with me. We had dinner together every evening. You tried to be open and you talked. I think family dinner every night and things like that are important. Those kinds of values make a big difference when you are raising children.

Because she was corrected in a loving way, she models her parents' discipline style in both the classroom and in her home. However, she admitted, "The one thing, I

don't remember as a child was being read to and that's important to me. I am big on reading and working with my children."

Participant 6, a preschool teacher of 14 years, described her parents as being very verbal. "They did a lot of talking with me and a lot of explanations so you understood behaviors and why you were being punished or disciplined." When asked about the influences that her parents might have on her classroom discipline practice, she stated, "I notice that I do this in the classroom too. You have to give the child an explanation of the kinds of behaviors you expect."

Although Participant 7 and Participant 11 both described their parents' style as authoritative, they suggested that they did not think their parents' child guidance beliefs affected their classroom practices. Participant 7 stated that her "mom was not big on physical punishment. She taught us to use our words and to work out our own problems." However, Participant 7 stressed the need for children to be independent as they transition from preschool to kindergarten which requires children to problem solve. It is probable that her mother did influence her teaching even though she was not aware of it.

Participant 11 described her parents as being somewhat strict but caring. **"**I really don't think my family—I mean my mom wasn't really too strict. I was good as a kid so there wasn't too much disciplining that really happened." She described her discipline style with her family as being very similar to the way she was raised.

> As a parent with my children I will only let them watch certain shows because I wasn't allowed. It wasn't appropriate for me. I use to get so mad, but I turn

> around as a parent and I realize that I just did what my parents did! You are guided by your parents without even asking them.

Participant 11 also stated that her parents did not influence her classroom management. "I really wouldn't say they affected me in the classroom too much." Nevertheless, just as she was guided by her parents discipline style in raising her own family, she may have translated it to her teaching practice.

Authoritarian Parents

Two of the 11 teachers, Participant 9 and Participant 10, described their parents as being authoritarian. Baumrind (1966, 1978) contends that authoritarian parents are highly demanding, and are often unwilling to communicate and negotiate with their children. As previously indicated, it is important to keep in mind that parenting styles can overlap and often do not fit into one model (Firman & Castle, 2008).

Participant 9, who has been teaching at the preschool level for 22 years, described her mother as very strict, "she believed in paddling and not talking things out." However, when raising her own family she states that she did just the opposite.

> When it came to my own children, they have never been paddled. I have two sons and I did the opposite of what my mom did. They don't know what a smack is. We just talk about things. They were good kids. We talked about why you don't do certain things. I don't know—they just always listened.

Participant 10, who has been teaching for 30 years, but only 2 years at the preschool level, also described her parents as being authoritarian. Furthermore, she agreed with participant 9 that while her experience as a child with strict parents did not affect her classroom practice, it did affect her parenting style:

> The way that I raised my children was not the way I was raised. The way my parents raised me helped make me the person that I am today. I am an older child so I followed the rules and all that. My parents were both in the military. My father was a drill instructor—they were very tough. I remember we had paddles with our names on them and when we were told to get them we did listen. I don't believe in corporal punishment and I haven't with my children. They are *A students* and they haven't been in any trouble. It's funny but I think you can help them be good people without corporal punishment.

While Participant 9 and Participant 10's descriptions of their strict upbringing supports the literature that authoritarian parents demand complete obedience from their children (Baumrind, 1966; Firman & Castle, 2008), the opposite is true of permissive parents. Permissive parents may place few limits on their children's behavior, and usually do not use physical punishment to control their children (Baumrind, 1966; Firman & Castle, 2008).

Permissive Parents

Participant 8 had a younger brother and described her mother's parenting style as permissive:

> My parents divorced when I was real small and my dad was gone. Truthfully, my mom raised me, but she was never around. I kind of just raised myself. My mom worked two jobs so she wasn't home very much. There was a neighbor who lived next door and if there was a problem we could go there.

Like Participant 9 and Participant 10, Participant 8 indicated that her mother's parenting style definitely influenced the way she is bringing up her own children.

> I have three children and because I work full time, I try to spend as much quality time with them as possible. I try to do a lot more stuff in the community with them. We go bowling, we go to the movies and to the park whereas my mom would just give us money and we would go on our own.

Even though Participants 8, 9, and 10 suggested that their parents' discipline style did not influence their classroom discipline, it is apparent that the reactive measures used by the authoritarian parents and the disinterested approach of the permissive parent could not be incorporated into their teaching practice. However, just as the participants were influenced to use a positive approach in guiding the behavior of their own children, it is probable that they would use these same methods when addressing children's challenging behaviors in the classroom.

Table 5 describes a summary of the influences of parenting styles on the participants' discipline practices and the ways they incorporated these experiences in their teaching. The section that follows Table 5 examines the influences of first teachers on the participants' teaching practices.

Table 5

Summary of Influences of Parenting Style on Participants' Teaching Practice

Participant	Parenting Style	Ways participants incorporated this experience into their teaching
1	Authoritative-I was raised to listen to and respect older people.	I'm a big stickler for that in the classroom.
2	Authoritative- My parents taught us to be respectful, to use our manners, and to listen to adults.	I think I got a lot of my teaching ways—the strengths that I have from my parents approach to helping us. I am structured. I try my best to work with parents.
3	Authoritative- I never felt they were mean—I felt a loving strictness.	My parents influenced the way I raised our sons. I try to be consistent in the classroom
4	Authoritative- I had a lot of adult experiences because whenever my parents went out they took me along and expected me to behave.	I expected my own children to behave. I called it "party behavior." In the classroom I like it to calm and organized.
5	Authoritative- I was raised in an Italian family and you had to have dinner together every evening. It was a very loving atmosphere.	One thing that I don't remember is being read to as a child and that's important to me. I am big on reading and working with my students.
6	Authoritative- My parents were very verbal. They did a lot of talking with me so you understood behaviors and why you were being punished or disciplined**.**	I notice that I do this in the classroom too. You have to give the child an explanation of the kinds of behaviors you expect.
7	Authoritative- My mom taught us to use our words and to work out our problems.	Children need to be independent as they transition from preschool to kindergarten.
8	Permissive- My mom raised me, but she was never around. I kind of just raised myself.	I try to spend quality time with my children. I try to do a lot more stuff in the community with them.
9	Authoritarian-My mom believed in paddling and not talking things out.	When it came to my own children, they have never been paddled. I did the opposite of what my mom did.
10	Authoritarian-My parents were in the military. My father was a drill instructor—they were very tough.	The way that I raised my children was not the way I was raised. I don't believe in corporal punishment.
11	Authoritative- My mom wasn't really too strict. I was a good kid and didn't need a lot of discipline.	I turn around as a parent and I realize that I just did what my parents did!

First Teachers' Influences on Teachers' Beliefs

Lortie (1975) contended that the years students spend in the classroom observing teachers affects and shapes their views of teaching and learning. While Lortie suggests that this view may be somewhat distorted, because it is often based on the personality of the teacher rather than the principles of sound teaching, he nevertheless admits to its influence on teachers' practices in the classroom.

LaParo, Siepak, and Scott-Little (2009) support Lortie's research as they also assert that teacher beliefs guide their actions and have a powerful impact on teacher behavior. LaParo et al. assessed the beliefs of 63 preservice teachers in a 4-year birth-kindergarten teacher preparation program using the Teacher Belief Q-Sort (TBQ). According to the researchers, the TBQ is based on Q-Sort methodology and is an exercise in forced choice. Respondents were instructed to prioritize a set of statement cards into a category based on the degree to which the statements represented or did not represent their views. There were 60 statements divided into three separate Q-Sorts: Beliefs about Behavior Management (QS1), Beliefs about Teaching Practices (QS2), and Beliefs about Children (QS3). The resulting Q-sort is an indication of the participant's personal feelings about the topic being investigated such as their approaches to child guidance or their beliefs about teaching and children. Since beliefs are not observable, the researchers contended that Q-Sort methodology provided an innovative approach to examine the subjective viewpoints of preservice teachers.

Interestingly, one of LaParo et al. findings was that the student teaching experience does not appear to significantly alter preservice teachers' beliefs. This finding supports

Lortie's (1975) contention that teachers remember their early experiences and tend to model former teachers as to discipline techniques and teaching strategies.

It is understandable that first teachers play a significant role in shaping the teaching practices of their students. Table 6 is a summary of the participants who attended preschool and kindergarten.

Table 6

Summary of Teachers Who Attended Preschool and Kindergarten

Participant	Preschool	Kindergarten
1	Yes	Yes
2		Yes
3		
4		
5		Yes
6	Yes	Yes
7		Yes
8	Yes	Yes
9		
10	Yes	Yes
11	Yes	Yes

Positive Influences of First Teachers

Six of the participants in this study, including participants 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10 described their early school experiences and teachers as positive and nurturing. Participant 1 remembers both her preschool and kindergarten teachers as being very warm and welcoming and a lot of fun. "I loved them—we did a lot of singing!" When asked if her first teachers affected her approaches to challenging behaviors in the classroom, she replied, "No, because I don't think there were as many challenging students back then. I don't remember there being problems." However, Participant 1

acknowledged that she likes "making centers with her students and making the learning fun and enjoyable."

Even though Participant 3 fondly remembered reading stories with her first grade teacher, she suggested that she was frightened of her second grade teacher. "I do remember being a little afraid of my second grade teacher, but not that anything happened. She just had a reputation for being very stern and strict so I was a little afraid." Participant 3 also agreed with Participant 1 as to the occurrence of challenging behaviors when she was in grade school.

> I don't think that the challenging behaviors that I saw in my elementary years can be compared with the challenging behaviors we see now. So I don't know if I have a frame of reference because I don't think they had to deal with many of the things that we are faced with. I don't know how they would have handled them.

Nevertheless, when addressing children's behavior in her home or at school, Participant 3 indicated that she strives to be consistent.

Participant 7 remembered her first teachers as kind and loving. "They are the ones I remember the most. They taught me everything and they explained things very well." She emphasized that her early teachers *definitely* influenced her approaches to handling challenging behaviors in the classroom and provided the following examples:

> I think I tolerate a lot more than most teachers. I don't ignore bad behavior, but I try not to let the little things bother me. If a child doesn't want to share a game, I don't make a big deal of it. But I do interfere if it's a safety issue where someone could get hurt.

Like Participant 7, Participant 8 described her first teachers as kind and loving. She credits her nursery school teacher with making her feel important.

> I remember my nursery school teacher. She was a very small woman—very petite, very plain—no make-up. She wore big rimmed glasses (this was during the early 70s) and her blouse and skirt always matched. And I loved her! She made me feel special. She made me feel that the pictures I made were the best pictures. She made me feel like I mattered.

When asked about her kindergarten teacher, Participant 8 exclaimed, "Oh, she was nice too. I was a sad little girl and whenever we went outside she would hold my hand—that made me feel very safe." In addition to her first teachers, Participant 8 was the only participant who mentioned the influence of a media figure—the late Fred Rogers of the television program, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.*

> I'm not from here [Latrobe] I am from Pittsburgh, but I watched him all the time when I was growing up. I didn't have a dad. I listened to his songs and I could really relate to them. It made me feel like he was talking to me. I really loved Mister Rogers. I had an opportunity to meet him years ago at St. Vincent College before he passed away. I told him what a difference he made in my life and he clasped his hands around mine and everything I felt when I was little came rushing through me. He, along with my other early childhood teachers, really influenced me. Some of my friends tell me I am dorky because I live in Latrobe now and still talk about Fred Rogers!

When asked to describe the influences of her first teachers, Participant 8 suggested that she is more tolerant of difficult behavior than other teachers. "I am more understanding

of why children act the way they do. I know there is a reason for their behavior—whether it is good or bad—I am kinder because of my own background."

Although Participant 6 and Participant 10 both had positive experiences with their first teachers, they were unable to recall any influences on their teaching. Participant 6 reflected on the fond memories that she had of singing and circle time with her preschool and kindergarten teachers. She stressed patience when working with children's challenging behaviors. "It's the long-term—it just doesn't happen in an instant—with some children you have to explain**."**

Participant 10 stressed that she loved her preschool and kindergarten teachers so much that she chose teaching as her vocation. She recalled the happy times she and her younger brothers and sisters had playing school. As to the effects that her early teachers had on her discipline practices in the classroom, Participant 10 stated that she is sure there were challenging behaviors, but she just couldn't remember. She attributed this to the fact that the teachers probably handled it so smoothly that she was unaware of any particular negative behaviors.

Negative Influences of First Teachers

Three participants, Participant 2, 5, and 9, reported having negative experiences with their early teachers. Although Participant 2 could not remember anything about her kindergarten teacher, she remembers having to go to the bathroom in first grade and relates the following incident.

> It was a bad experience. I remember you weren't allowed to raise your hand and I had to go to the bathroom. She wouldn't let me go because we had a test and I had an accident. That's one of the first memories that I have. Isn't that horrible?

> She wouldn't let me go to the bathroom so that's honestly one of the first things I remember. I didn't like her after that.

When asked if her first teachers affected the way she approaches challenging behaviors in the classroom she replied, "No, but we have a bathroom in our room and if they have to use it they can go anytime**."**

Participant 5 and Participant 9 both reported crying all the time in school. Participant 5 indicated that she couldn't recall anything about her kindergarten teacher. "I remember crying all the time. It is a shame but I don't remember my kindergarten teacher. I wanted my mom—she dragged me." In first grade Participant 5 attended Catholic school and described the nuns as "being very stern." Although she suggested that her first teachers did not affect her child guidance approaches, she discussed how they affected her instructional strategies:

> I had reading problems as a child and could never catch up. If you didn't get it the whole class moved on. But here, if a child is having difficulty, I make the material for him and I stay with him until he is ready for that next step. So from my early experience I do the opposite.

Participant 9, who has 22 years of teaching at the preschool level, remembers crying in school so much that her first grade teacher let her sit beside the neighborhood boy. She described her teachers as being very strict and verbally abusive with the children who had behavior problems. Because she was well-behaved she never got paddled, and suggested that her early teachers had little, if any, influence on her approaches to challenging behaviors in the classroom.

Positive and Negative Influences of First Teachers

Two participants, Participant 4 and Participant 11, described their early teachers as both positive and negative experiences. Participant 4 did not attend preschool or kindergarten, but remembers her first grade teacher as being very nurturing and providing a safe and comfortable environment for the students. "My first grade teacher just made you feel good about being in school. She was very comforting and she was pretty low-key—she made you feel like you were welcome and safe."

On the other hand, she described her second grade teacher as being mean and imposing unfair and inappropriate rules.

> My second grade teacher was very mean and I didn't feel she was very fair in her discipline of children. For example, if one person in your row did something bad then everybody in the row had to suffer. Everybody in your row had to miss recess and she stood kids in the corner all the time. It was a bad experience.

When asked if this negative experience influenced her approach to challenging behaviors in the classroom Participant 4 described how discouraged she felt.

> I would never do things like that. So it was a feeling of never wanting to be like her. It was a bad experience that year. That is a way I did not want to be. I remember the way I felt and I would never treat children that way.

Thankfully, Participant 4 indicated that her third grade teacher was very nice and fair in her discipline approaches.

> My third grade teacher was very nice and I liked the way her classroom was run. She was fair, she took the time to listen to you, and she never pushed you away or said I can't talk to you right now. She was a good experience.

When asked how the positive experiences with her first and third grade teachers influenced her teaching, Participant 4 stressed a calm and orderly environment.

> I like it to be calm and I like organization in the classroom. I like to be very fair with the kids. When I look at them, I don't see black, white, boy, or girl. They're kids and the rules are the same for all of them. And I expect it to be orderly and you know I like everything in a row.

Like Participant 4, Participant 11 recalled having both positive and negative experiences with her first teachers. Although she could not remember her preschool teacher, she recalled her kindergarten and first grade teachers as being warm and friendly. "We did a lot of things like we do here at preschool. Kindergarten was playing and learning social skills and all that." However, a negative experience occurred in second grade which she described as follows:

> In second grade, the teacher was the assistant principal and she was mean. She would walk around with that yardstick in her hand and smack down on your desk when you were doing something you weren't supposed to do. So I remember sitting on pins and needles**.**

While Participant 11 stated that her early teachers did not influence her discipline approaches to challenging behaviors in the classroom, she did suggest that, as a parent and from watching other teachers, you know how you want to be perceived as a teacher.

Table 7 presents a summary of early teachers' influence on the participants' classroom discipline practice and the ways they incorporated these experiences into their teaching. Although several teachers indicated their early teachers did not influence their discipline practice, it is understandable that these early experiences may not have

translated that well into their classroom management style. For instance, Participant 9 indicated that her early teachers were reactionary in their discipline measures towards students who exhibited challenging behaviors, and this experience probably influenced her to take a more positive approach in her own teaching.

Likewise, even though Participant 2 and Participant 5 indicated having negative experiences with their first teachers, it had just the opposite effect on their discipline strategies and teaching practices. Because Participant 2 was not permitted to use the bathroom when she was in first grade, she is sensitive to young children's needs and allows her students to use the bathroom whenever necessary. On the other hand, Participant 5 explains how she had a reading problem as a young child and could "never catch up." As a result, she takes the time to work with students who have reading difficulties until they are on grade level. In fact, she readily admits, "From my early experience, I do the opposite!"

Finally, although Participant 4 and Participant 11 shared both positive and negative experiences, it is clear that their negative experiences also influenced their teaching practice. Participant 4 strives for equality for all children in her classroom, while participant 11 admitted that she wants to be perceived as a teacher who encourages her children in positive ways.

Table 7

Summary of First Teachers' Influences on Participants' Classroom Discipline Practice

Participant	First teacher experience	Ways participants incorporated this experience into their teaching.
1	Positive- I loved my teachers—they were a lot of fun.	I like making centers with my students and making the learning fun and enjoyable.
2	Negative- I had to go to the bathroom and she wouldn't let me go because we had a test and I had an accident.	We have a bathroom in our room and if they have to use it they can go anytime!
3	Positive- I remember stories with my first grade teacher—she was caring.	I try to be consistent with my discipline both at school and at home.
4	Positive-My first grade teacher was very nurturing. She just made you feel good about being in school**.** Negative-My second grade teacher was very mean. If someone in your row did something bad then everyone in your row had to suffer.	Positive- I like it to be calm. I like organization in the classroom. I like to be very fair with the kids. Negative-I would never do something like that. I remember the way I felt and I would never treat children that way.
5	Negative-I attended Catholic school—I remember the nuns being very stern. I had reading problems as a child and could never catch up. So if you didn't get it the whole class moved on.	If a child is having difficulty I make the material for him and I stay with him until he is ready for the next step. So from my early experience, I do the opposite!
6	Positive- I remember their kindness and the circle time and singing.	I don't think it affected my discipline practice, but I try to be patient.
7	Positive-They taught me everything. They were kind and loving. They explained things very well.	I think I tolerate a lot more than most teachers. I don't ignore bad behavior…I do interfere if it's a safety issue.
8	Positive-My nursery school teacher made me feel special. She made me feel like I mattered. My kindergarten teacher made me feel safe.	I am more understanding of why children act the way they do. I know there is a reason for their behavior whether it is good or bad.
9	Negative-I don't remember much except I use to cry in school, so the teacher let me sit beside the neighborhood boy.	They didn't influence my teaching. The teachers back then were very strict with children who had behavior problems and verbally abusive.
10	Positive- I loved my teachers—that's why I became a teacher!	I can't say that they influenced my teaching…I just don't remember anything specific.
11	Positive-Both my kindergarten and first grade teachers were warm and friendly. Negative-My second grade teacher was mean. She walked around with a yardstick in her hand and smacked it on the desk if you were doing something wrong.	I don't think they had a lot to do with my discipline practices. I just know that as a parent and from watching others teachers you know how you want to be perceived as a teacher.

Teachers' Beliefs about Family Expectations Today and Children's Behavior

All 11 early childhood teachers reported that family expectations of young children's behavior today have taken a downward trend compared to that of previous generations and cited excessive television viewing, lack of parenting skills, lack of family time, and children's fears as negative influences on the behavior of today's young children.

Excessive Television Viewing

Of the 11 participants in the study, 6 of them, Participants 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11 cited excessive viewing of television and video games as having an influence on young children's behavior. This supports the findings of Levin (1998) and Rideout and Hamel (2006) that many young children are spending an increasing amount of time on screen. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2009 Policy Statement on Media Violence, children between 0 and 6 years of age spend an average of almost two hours each day using screen media such as television, movies and computers. The Kaiser Family Foundation 2010 Study, *Generation M^2: Media in the Lives of 8-to-18 Year-Olds*, reports that this number increases to 6 hours and 21 minutes as children grow older (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Certainly, understanding the role of media in young children's lives is a concern for teachers, parents, and policy makers.

Participant 4 cited her concern that excessive television viewing has a negative impact on children's social skills and their ability to pay attention in class.

> Kids today are getting tougher. They're getting more distractible. They have fewer life experiences that they can pull from when you are trying to bring up

> prior knowledge. I wonder if parents are reading with their kids**.** I think people are so busy now so these kids are by themselves. I hear a lot about Play Station. I hear a lot of Wii. They're plugged in a lot and then it is tough for them in social situations in the room to deal with each other. They don't know how to play games. I don't think there's a lot of that going on at home so that taking turns, following rules, and all of these things seem to be getting harder and harder every year for them to do.

In addition to her belief that excessive television viewing is a related to young children's lack of social skills and inattention, Participant 4 also contends that today's children lack self-regulation.

> They don't seem to have self-control and have difficulty following rules. There's not as much discipline when they come through the door as there use to be so you have to do that as well. They don't sit in their seats as well as before. And they are not very nice to each other a lot of times. Social skills are not very developed. Manners—it doesn't seem to be important to people anymore. It is scary because I wonder what kind of adults they are growing into when they come already at five—a lot of their ideas are already made and they are already set in their ways.

Participant 6 echoed Participant 4 as she also expressed her concern that children today lack social skills and do not play independently. She states, "They like all these blinking lights and stimulus that we have nowadays. It's not like the olden days where they can play on their own more. They are being entertained with too many toys and too much TV."

On the other hand, Participant 7 suggested that young children's use of inappropriate language today is related to television programming.

> Children today have a bigger vocabulary and use a lot of words they should not know. They see a lot more on TV and they try to relate to it and the words they use are coming from TV shows that they watch. What concerns me is that they think because they see something on TV that it is okay to say or do.

While Participant 7 indicated her concerns as to what children see on TV and the ways in which it is apparent in their language and actions, Participant 9 questions excessive television viewing and its negative impact on children's lack of physical activity and outside play.

> I think parenting skills are declining, but sometimes I wonder why kids aren't playing outside any more. When I was growing up we were outside playing—we were socializing. Now these kids are sitting in front of a TV—here's your sandwich, here's your supper. Children's behavior is on the decline—parents are not parenting. There's too much TV, computers, and video games and not enough outside time and socialization. And now, when there is socialization outside, it seems like it is a competition. I can see this with my nieces. Because they are in dance class they are getting socialization skills, but this mom wants her daughter in this or that so it is a big parenting thing.

The overwhelming responsibilities of single parents, such as raising a family and holding down a job, were cited by Participant 10 as reasons for permitting young children to watch more television. "I can understand that it is easier for a parent to say go watch

TV, do whatever you want to do—I have to do this or that," she stated. "I see a lot more of that now and I think it is because society is changing."

Participant 11 not only voiced her concern about lenient parenting practices today, but also agreed with Participants 4, 6, and 9 that children are watching too much television and are not getting enough of physical activity.

> You know there is a lot of technology involved now so kids have video games, and they have their computers, and they have their TVs on all the time. They don't play outside like they use to. Like you have to force a child to get up and run around outside and enjoy themselves. They get home and they sit in front of that TV. You have to give kids something to do and not let them sit in front of the TV. They learn things off those video games like the wording, the language, and the violence. I really think that a lot of kids these days just don't know how to have fun.

In addition to concerns about excessive viewing of TV being associated with young children's lack of social skills and physical activity, several of the participants pointed to a lack of parenting skills as having a negative influence on children's behavior today.

Lack of Parenting Skills

Three of the 11 participants, Participants 1, 2, and 3, cited a lack of parenting skills when comparing children's behavior today and family expectations with children from previous time periods. Participant 1 suggested that teaching children is much more challenging today. She questioned the increasing number of children in day care and the lack of parenting skills.

> I just don't know if there is as much family time as there was years ago. I know my sisters both work. My parents worked too, but my grandparents watched us when they worked. Maybe it's because there are a lot more children in day care. Some parents don't watch their kids as closely as they should—they don't have as high as expectations as I would.

Participant 2 agreed with Participant 1 that today's parents do not have as high expectations as parents in the past and, as a result, she claims that it is making it more difficult to teach.

> I think that the expectations are now placed on the teachers. I know I am constantly teaching manners and following the rules and listening—just listening in general either to their peers or listening to us. And I know that growing up myself, or even the neighbor kids or my cousins, we were brought up to be respectful and to follow the rules and to listen to those things and you don't see that much anymore.

Participant 2 further pointed out how teachers today have to teach children simple behavior problems like sitting in their seats and following directions. "When a child comes from a home that has done those things they don't have those problems," she stated. "Those are the little things that are springing up now that are hindering their education—academically and socially."

Participant 3 echoed both Participants 1 and 2 that family expectations of children's behaviors today are not as demanding as in previous time periods. She also expressed her concern about the young age and immaturity of many of today's parents.

> It seems like more and more families are not demanding the behaviors that we demand here at school. They haven't been taught, like I was taught, to be respectful to adults. They are not good listeners. I don't think they've learned to follow directions at home. I don't think there is much consistency. I don't think some of the parents have those behaviors themselves. I think some of the parents became parents when they were very young and so they're just growing up themselves. Their child is not their number one priority so they are still taking care of things that they want to do themselves.

In addition to the excessive viewing of television and on screen media, the lack of parenting skills, and the immaturity of today's parents, one participant cited the busy life style of today's families and the lack of family togetherness as influences on young children's social and emotional development.

Lack of Family Time

Participant 5 suggested that children today are involved in many outside activities and as a result there is less quality time spent as a family. Because she was raised in a loving atmosphere in a large Italian family where everyone ate dinner together and family discussions were open, she stressed the importance of the family unit.

> Too fast paced—much too fast. I appreciate the qualities of having sports and all those things, but I think just being outside and playing at home is important. You don't have to have all those fancy places. I think that it makes a difference when you can have quality time together.

Although Participant 5 indicated a lack of family time as a negative influence on young children's behavior, she emphasized that there are ways in which we are progressing

because children know so much more today than in previous times. However, she stressed, "My only problem is I think there is not enough family—the importance of family in their life—and grandparents."

Children's Fears

In comparison to when she was growing, up Participant 8 indicated that today's children have a lot more concerns and fears. She cautioned, "Kids have more on their shoulders today. It is just not a safe world anymore. Young kids worry about a lot of things—they have a lot more concerns and fears than when I was growing up."

Although Participant 8 did not point out any specific fears that young children have today, she indicated that the world is not safe anymore. Interestingly, Levin and Carlsson-Paige's (1994) Developmental Framework for Assessing Television for young children cite Erikson's (1950) first stage of psychosocial development, "To establish a sense of trust and safety" (p. 43) as critical for what children view on television. Levin and Carlsson-Paige explain that instead of children seeing the world as a place where people can be trusted to help each other and where fears can be overcome, what children *see* on TV is "The world is dangerous; enemies are everywhere; weapons are needed to feel safe" (p. 43). Certainly the daily news on TV about school violence, catastrophic events, terrorism, and war also contribute to the feeling for both children and adults that the world is not safe anymore.

Table 8 is a summary of the teachers' beliefs of parental expectations of young children's behavior today and those of previous time periods.

Table 8

Summary of Parent Expectations of Children's Behaviors Today Compared with Previous Time Periods

Participant	Influences on young children's behavior today.	Comparison of parent expectations of children's behavior today with children from previous time periods
1	Lack of parenting skills.	Some parents don't watch their kids as closely as they should—they don't have as high as expectations as I would.
2	Lack of parenting skills.	I think that the expectations are now placed on the teachers. I know I am constantly teaching manners and following the rules and listening.
3	Lack of parenting skills.	I think some of the parents became parents when they were very young and so they're just growing up themselves.
4	Excessive viewing of TV and on screen media.	I hear a lot about Play Station. They're plugged in a lot and then it is tough for them in social situations in the room to deal with each other.
5	Lack of family time.	I think just being outside and playing at home is important. I think that it makes a difference when you can have quality time together.
6	Excessive viewing of TV and on screen media.	They like all these blinking lights and stimulus that we have nowadays. They are being entertained with too many toys and too much TV.
7	Excessive viewing of TV and on screen media.	They see a lot more on TV and they try to relate to it and the words they use are coming from TV shows that they watch. What concerns me is that they think because they see something on TV that it is okay to say or do.
8	Children's fears	It is just not a safe world anymore. Young kids worry about a lot of things—they have a lot more concerns and fears than when I was growing up
9	Excessive viewing of TV and on screen media.	There's too much TV, computers, and video games and not enough outside time and socialization.
10	Excessive viewing of TV and on screen media.	I can understand that it is easier for single parents to say go watch TV—I have to do this or that. I think it is because society is changing.
11	Excessive viewing of TV and on screen media.	There is a lot of technology involved now so kids have video games, computers, and TVs on all the time. They don't play outside like they use to.

Teachers' Training in Classroom Management

Teachers were asked to describe any training that they had taken in child guidance strategies or classroom management. Seven of the 11 participants, Participants 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 indicated that they had participated in classes or in-service training offered through their school district, center-based programs, or at the local community college. Four of the 11 participants, Participants 1, 4, 5, and 6 indicated that they had not received any specific training in classroom management. Table 9 is a summary of the participants' training in classroom management along with their comments.

Table 9

Summary of Teachers' Training in Classroom Management

Participant	Name of Course/ Training Program	Comments
1		I took one class—it was a special needs class in college. And that was about all I had.
2	Could not recall name of course.	We were trained last year. I can't remember the name of the program.
3	Lee Cantor	Over the years we have had workshops about discipline. I believe one was Lee Cantor.
4		No, nothing.
5		Experience, but no formal training. I had child development classes which covered everything.
6		When I went through Carlow, they did a summer program.
7	Two hour video training	Yes, actually I just finished watching a two hour video last week, *Secrets for Preventing Behavior Problems.*
8	Could not recall name of course	I have taken a lot of courses. They would be in my PDR (Personal Development Record), but to name them off-hand I just can't remember.
9	Training at centrally located office.	We get training every year through our Center. We were part of a study with a local university and the instructor taught us how to do behavior plans and work with challenging behaviors. We have a behavior specialist too.
10	T-Base Training	I took T-Base training two years ago through the community college. It is about behavior change.
11	Behavior Change Plan	We do a BCP (Behavior Change Plan) training here that helps us to work with children's challenging behaviors. We also have a behavior consultant we can contact.

Teachers' Expectations of Young Children's Social and Emotional Behaviors for a Successful Transition to Kindergarten

The transition from preschool to kindergarten is a time of increased expectations for cognitive and social and emotional skills and can be stressful for many young children (Lane et al., 2004). Because children who lack appropriate social skills are viewed less competent, academically and socially, by their teachers, they are placed at an even greater risk for school failure (Perry & Weinstein, 1998; Stormont, et al., 2005). By identifying the social competencies necessary for a successful transition to kindergarten, teachers can intervene early in the child's schooling and support young children to acquire these skills at the preschool level.

The researcher found that consistent with the findings of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort 1998-1999 (ECLS-K) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2002) and recent research by Lara-Cinisomo et al. (2008), all 11 participants in this study stressed self-regulation skills (e.g., expressing feelings, sitting still and attending, taking turns and sharing, independence) as important abilities for young children's successful transition from preschool to kindergarten. Two participants not only identified the importance of self-regulation skills, but also expressed their belief that kindergarten is becoming more and more academic and skill-centered.

Self-Regulation Skills

Participant 1 indicated that young children should be able to express their emotions in positive ways. "Like instead of handling their emotions by crying—you know they could still cry, but maybe verbally say why they are feeling sad or angry."

Participant 2 echoed Participant 1 as she emphasized sharing, taking turns, and communicating feelings are essential behaviors that are influential for young children's successful transition to kindergarten.

> Being able to verbalize positive things as well as things that are upsetting them is important—just being able to get words out as opposed to hitting, throwing, or just crying. I think being able to share is very social because they don't understand how to take turns. I think that would be very beneficial. I definitely require my kids to raise their hand when they want to talk.

On the other hand, Participant 3 stressed communication skills such as making eye contact while speaking and permitting others to speak without interrupting, "I would like them to be able to make eye contact when I speak to them." "I would like them to let the other person complete their thought without interrupting—I have a problem with that this year." Participant 3 also mentioned the following social competencies:

> I would like them to be able to sit still a reasonable amount of time—15-20 minutes. I would like them to keep their hands to themselves and I don't mean that in a negative way. It's not because they are hitting. Some children just don't like to be touched. Others are very touchy and like to hug. I would hope they could control their temper—no hitting or pouting.

Participant 4 stressed that children need to learn how to express empathy and understanding for the people around them.

> I think they should learn how to respect people, adults and their peers as well. They need to be fair with each other and share things which they have trouble doing. Taking turns and understanding how other people feel because they don't

seem to censor what they say at all anymore. They just say whatever they want without regard to how it is going to make somebody else feel. So those things have to be taught. If they are not using those skills when they get here you have to do that when they get here. I think social skills are so important because if they are not sitting in their seats and listening then they are not going to learn anything. Playing for them is work. It is so important. They learn a lot of social skills when they are with each other.

Participants 4 not only emphasized social skills, but stressed the fact that kindergarten is becoming more and more academic.

Preschool is very important. And if they don't have it you can see a difference when they come here. They don't know how to interact with each other and you waste a lot of time doing those things. Kindergarten is so academic anymore, that we have to get down to it as soon as they get here. We don't waste a day. We start from the beginning. So it is difficult those first couple of weeks when you have to teach all of those other things that they should come with.

Participant 5 agreed with Participant 4 as to the importance of social skills and also stressed that young children should be able to sit quietly during circle time, raise their hand if they would like to speak, and take turns. She described these behaviors as being part of the school's curriculum.

Social is very big. Grace and courtesy is what it is called in Montessori. We give them the language that they need—'Oh excuse me!' 'Could you please help me?' There is such a kindness that I see in these children. If somebody needs something there are 3 or 4 children that will help—'Oh I have two—do you want

to use mine?' And I think that is a lot of habit and they see that. We role play things like that. If somebody drops something or bumps somebody instead of yelling—'hey you hit me,' we would ask them, 'now what is a nicer way of saying that?'

Participants 6 and 7 both agreed that, in addition to social skills, children need to be independent. Since Participant 6 teaches in a multiage program, kindergarten children are included along with the preschoolers. Participant 6 feels that this is an advantage because children's social skills can be practiced over a longer period of time and also modeled for the younger children. She emphasized, "A good work ethic, a self-starter, working independently, and problem solving—that's what I try to instill in my students."

Participant 7 not only stressed the need for young children to be independent, but also emphasized academic skills. She stated that, "Children need to be able to write their name and count to 10. They should be able to sit still for short periods of time. Being socially ready is a huge part of kindergarten."

Communicating their needs and cooperating with their peers were also important behaviors stressed by Participant 8.

Children need to be able to play with each other. They also need to carry on a conversation with their friends and adults. They need to communicate their needs. And, of course, their toilet habits have to be in place.

Participant 9 emphasized that young children must possess both cognitive and social skills in order to make a smooth transition to kindergarten.

I think one of the most important things for students going to kindergarten is that they should be able to follow routine. They should be able to wait their turn.

> They should have social skills like how to get along with other children. They need cognitive skills**.**

It is interesting that Participant 9, like Participant 4, also stressed that kindergarten is becoming more and more academic.

> Actually, I am part of the kindergarten transition team. We meet twice a year and we talk about their expectations. They [the kindergarten teachers] want them to be able to write their first name, know their address, know their phone number—basic things like that. And they have also told us that what use to be taught in first grade is now being taught in kindergarten. I really don't know how children who don't have a good home background can step into kindergarten without preschool and learn all this. It takes them a few years to catch up and the teachers say they can always tell who comes from a good preschool.

Participant 10, a preschool teacher, indicated the importance of respect for others and their belongings.

> I don't think it is the academics so much, I really think that you need to stress the personal social aspects at the preschool level. Respecting others and their property is important. We don't hurt people, we don't yell in their face, we follow directions, we wait our turn, and we share. I think those kinds of things need to be in place. If that is in place when they get to kindergarten, I know the kindergarten teachers will be happy because everything else will be so much easier once those types of issues are addressed first.

Participant 11, a preschool teacher, also stressed socialization skills. She explains that "you can't sit down and learn in an environment if you don't have the social skills

you need to be in a group." Participant 11 further emphasized that she focuses on social skills in preparing her preschoolers for kindergarten.

> Playing nicely together as a group—not just side by side parallel play. Just being able to express their feelings without acting out is so important. That is something we definitely work on everyday—using their words instead of screaming out at the top of their lungs when they want something. You can't do that when you go to off to public school. So we work on that a good bit. It all goes hand-in-hand. I mean you need your social skills to go to school and learn.

She described a peace making program that is currently part of the curriculum for the center-based child care called, *I Care Cat*.

> I don't know if anyone else mentioned it, but we do *I Care Rules* here every day. We have a specific book that we have that we go through and by the end of the year they are suppose to be able to work out their own problems. If you can't get pass a certain rule you stick with it until every child has accommodated it. So this year we are still practicing keeping our hands to ourselves. A lot of the kids are younger, but we work on it every day—using our *I Care* language.

Although two participants in this study described a particular social skills program as part of their curriculum, several other participants indicated that manners, sharing, and problem solving are some of the social skills stressed throughout their daily activities. Table 10 is a summary of the social and emotional behaviors that the early childhood teachers identified as being critical to young children's transition to kindergarten.

Table 10

Summary of Social and Emotional Behaviors Early Childhood Teachers Consider Influential for Young Children's Successful Transition to Kindergarten

Participant	Social and emotional behaviors influential for children's successful transition to kindergarten
1	Young children should be able to express their emotions in positive ways. Instead of handling their emotions by crying—you know they could still cry, but maybe verbally say why they are feeling sad or angry.
2	Being able to verbalize positive things as well as things that are upsetting them. So just being able to get words out as opposed to hitting, throwing, or just crying is important.
3	I would like them to be able to make eye contact when I speak to them. I would like them to let the other person complete their thought without interrupting. I would like them to sit still a reasonable amount of time.
4	I think social skills are so important because if they are not sitting in their seats and listening then they are not going to learn anything. Kindergarten is so academic anymore, that we have to get down to it as soon as they get here. We don't waste a day. We start from the beginning.
5	Social is very big. We give them the language that they need—Oh excuse me or could you please help me? We role play things like that. If somebody drops something or bumps somebody instead of yelling—hey you hit me, we would ask them, now what is a nicer way of saying that?
6	A good work ethic, a self-starter, working independently, and problem solving—that's what I try to instill in my students.
7	Children need to be able to write their name and count to 10. They should be able to sit still for short periods of time. Being socially ready is a huge part of kindergarten.
8	Children need to be able to play with each other. They also need to carry on a conversation with their friends and adults. And, of course, their toilet habits have to be in place.
9	I think one of the most important things for students going to kindergarten is that they should be able to follow routine. Actually, I am part of the kindergarten transition team. The kindergarten teachers have told us that what use to be taught in first grade is now being taught in kindergarten**.**
10	I don't think it is the academics so much. I really think that you need to stress the personal social aspects at the preschool level. Respecting others and their property is important. We don't hurt people, we don't yell in their face, we follow directions, we wait our turn, and we share.
11	You can't sit down and learn in an environment if you don't have the social skills you need to be in a group.

Strategies Early Childhood Teachers Use to Address Young Children's Challenging Behaviors

Both the interview and survey data were analyzed as to the specific challenging behaviors that the teachers identified in their classrooms and strategies they used to address young children's challenging behaviors. Bowman (1989) contends that when teachers reflect on their practices, "they can make their understanding of classroom events more explicit, and therefore more amenable to control and direction" (p. 445).

Interview Data

The interview data revealed that the behavior strategies the 11 teachers implemented in their classrooms fit into the following four categories: preventative techniques, positive reinforcement, talking with parents, and multiple techniques.

Preventive Techniques

Of the 11 teachers who participated in this study 5 of them, including Participants 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9 suggested and provided examples of preventative measures to support young children's ability to self-regulate in the early childhood setting.

Participant 1, who has been teaching for 2 years, described several strategies that she used to manage the behavior of a young boy in her kindergarten class who was having difficulty sitting in his seat and listening.

> I tried a couple of different things with him. I moved his seat to the front of the room. I gave him jobs in the room—like helping to clean up and putting the names of the people who were absent for the morning on our chart. It worked for a while. He did improve but then we got new students in the room and they

started acting up so he started acting up again. I also used positive reinforcement too such as praise and encouragement.

Although participant 1 noted that there was some improvement, she lamented that she often felt frustrated and at times "just didn't know what to do."

Participant 2 described a situation in her classroom involving a child who had difficultly self-regulating and often exhibited temper tantrums.

> There was a girl last year that would freak out if she didn't get her way—take her shoes off, throw her shoes, take her ties out of her hair and throw a temper tantrum. Usually it happened when we were choosing a center. If a center was filled up before she had a chance to get there or if we were playing a game and she couldn't stand by someone she wanted to or if she didn't win a game, she would freak out. So I tried to do a lot more preventive stuff with her. We would always let her choose two different centers she wanted to go to and then let her pick. We would work around it and give her several choices.

Fortunately, because of the teacher's intervention, the little girl was able to reduce the number of temper tantrums. "I would say that within time she was kind of able to get over the fact that she would not always get her own way," she suggested. Nevertheless, participant 2 indicated her frustration that teachers today are experiencing more and more inappropriate behaviors in today's classrooms and that "a lot of the kids don't want to be around the kid that is causing problems or who is getting into trouble."

Participant 3 described a child in her kindergarten class living with her father, who was homeless. Although the little girl was very intelligent, Participant 3 explained that she exhibited several challenging behaviors.

> She was extremely bright and could read, color, and write. She was very impulsive and would shout out constantly. She was loud, loud, loud. She had very little self-control. When I would remind her about her behavior, she would say, 'okay, okay,' and then two minutes later she would do the same thing again. She just had no structure at home. I don't think she was fed regularly. Her father didn't have a job. We were told all he would do was play video games. Just so much untapped potential for this little girl—she is just so very bright. We tried to make contact with the father, but there was no phone. Then they got a phone, but there would be no answer. He wouldn't come in for conferences because there was no car, no transportation, so there was no support there.

Although Participant 3 described some of the strategies that were taken to support the little girl, she acknowledged that they were not developmentally appropriate.

> So what I do here is she sits at the back of the room away from people, which I hate to do, because she has to learn to control her behavior with people, but it is at the point where it bothers everyone. It interferes with the other children's learning so I have to put her back away from the group a little bit. She's still in a row by herself with no one on either side of her. We tried rewarding her, tried being positive, and tried taking things away—it was so frustrating.

Participant 3 further described a traffic light strategy that she uses with all of the children in the room to instill positive behavior skills.

> When she gets too loud we have a system in our classroom with a traffic light. Everybody starts on the green light in the morning and after a warning they go to the yellow light, after another warning, they go to the red light. Then they have to

> give up 5 minutes of center time or recess time. But honestly she is not a mean child, she just can't control herself. And even when she misses things she doesn't like missing them, but the next day she still struggles to control herself. She can do it for a few minutes. She just looks like she is going to pop out of her skin—everything is going.

Participant 8 described a little girl in her preschool class who was having difficulty self-regulating and would become so distraught when she couldn't get her way that the staff was afraid she would hurt herself.

> We had a child in our classroom this year—actually that child is still with us. She had a challenging behavior of lashing out at others whenever she couldn't get her way. She would scream and even bang herself against the wall. We were afraid she would hurt herself. What we started doing with her was holding her and stroking her arm. We talked softly to her near her ear. Sometimes we held her for a half hour just talking softly and stroking her arm. She would sob and be really sweaty. Gradually she would become calm. Sometimes she even fell asleep. The behavior didn't stop right away. It continued for about two months. But instead of happening four or five times a week it now happens two or three times a month.

Thankfully, Participant 8 was successful in supporting the little girl who gradually was able to reduce the number of temper tantrums.

On the other hand, Participant 9 described a little girl who was very shy and would not speak at all. Thinking that the little girl had a speech problem, Participant 9 requested testing, but the child refused to talk with the speech therapist. After having the

little girl's mother tape record her at home, Participant 9 indicated that it seemed like the child did have some "speech issues" and related the following incident:

> When we paired her up with other children she wouldn't talk, but she would play with them. I even paired her up with a child who is a non-stop talker and instead she got him to follow her hand signals. I had an opportunity to see her when she was enrolled in kindergarten, so she did get some social skills with us even though she wouldn't speak. She was seeing a psychologist when she was here with us. They thought it could be selective mutism and you don't hear that very often. She was a very bright child and could do any non-speaking skill that you would ask her to do.

While the majority of the participants described preventive techniques, such as moving the child's seat, calming techniques, and limiting the number of choices presented to children, several participants stressed positive reinforcement.

Positive Reinforcement

Of the 11 participants in the study, 3 of them, Participants 4, 7, and 10 used positive reinforcement, such as special jobs and responsibilities, praise, behavior charts, and stickers as a strategies to address young children's challenging behaviors.

By asking for help from the parents of a child in her kindergarten class early in the school year, Participant 4 was able to support a little boy who had difficultly staying on task.

> I knew he was going to be quite a handful. I know the parents so I talked to them right away and they got right on board with me so that was good. We put a chart on his desk and every time he could make it, only one period (forty minutes),

without disrupting others and staying on task he got a sticker. If he got five stickers at the end of the day, he got a green light which they like and he got to take that home. At the end of the week if he had five green lights then she rewarded him by taking him out for ice cream. So he had double rewards.

Participant 7, like Participant 4, also enlisted the support of parents in order to promote positive social skills in her classroom. In addition to assigning special jobs, such as line leader and flag holder, she used behavior charts and stickers.

> One thing that we do with all of the children that I especially like is a behavior chart. When a child does something nice for another child or has been an especially good listener, we have them get a sticker out of the prize box and put it on their chart. We keep the charts inside their cubby so only the child, the teacher, and the parent know what the situation is. That way if a child is working to correct a negative behavior, it is not 'out there' where other children can see what is happening. And best of all, the child can visibly see how well he is or is not doing. We also have parent input to see if the behavior carries over to the home or vice versa.

Giving extra responsibilities to a child who had difficulty self-regulating was a successful strategy used by Participant 10. She described the child as the ringleader in her class and, because he was older, the other children admired him.

> He had a challenging behavior and there were 4 or 5 other children who looked up to him so they would follow along. He wanted to be the star so he became my assistant. He got to wear a vest, he got to carry a clipboard—he got to help me all the time. If he acted out and regressed, I had an assistant to take over his duty for

> that activity. It seemed to work. He loved being the leader and after a while as we phased out he was even able to select other students to carry out his assistant duties.

By giving the child responsibilities and intervening early in the school year, Participant 10 was able support the child in his efforts to develop positive social skills and, at the same time, model appropriate behavior for the other children in the class.

Talking with Parents

Both Participant 5 and Participant 6 agreed that their preschoolers were well-behaved and challenging behaviors in their classes were minimal. "I've had such great classes, but it's really important to stay in close contact with the parents," Participant 5 stated. "If you work with a parent and they cooperate and they are reinforcing each other, and it's just a behavior then it can be worked through." She went on to describe a little boy in her class who was very fearful.

> I have a boy who has a lot of fears. He doesn't want a lot of attention on himself. He makes little mistakes and doesn't want to try. He doesn't want to take risks. It's like parenting. You push a little bit and then you have to be there because you want them to be strong for next year. If you push too hard then they may break down. So it is a balancing act.

With the continued support and encouragement of Participant 5 throughout the year, the little boy was gradually able to reach a level where his fears diminished and he was able to become more independent.

Participant 6 described supporting a child in her class to help her overcome her shyness. She emphasized that it takes much time and patience when working with

children who are shy. "I match them with another student who would be kind, gentle, and also pull them out." She also stressed the importance of working with parents.

> You have to realize that we don't have these extreme behaviors. We are very fortunate here. A lot of times if we do have that kind of trouble with a child we speak with the parents. A lot of times we get a feeling of where that child is coming from, whether they need outside help, extra support, or to set up the same structure that we have here at home. So we do a lot of talking with the parents.

While the participants in the study described preventive strategies, positive reinforcement, and talking with parents as strategies they used in the classroom to instill positive social skills, one participant used a number of techniques.

Multiple Techniques

Participant 11 stated that her strategies changed from day to day to fit the needs and behaviors of the children in her class.

> If I use a specific tactic for that day and it works for them, I am happy. But then the next day comes and we start all over again. And that's sort of where I've been this year, but it just changes every day. So as long as I can get this child through the day without a huge melt down then I'm happy. That's how I deal with challenging behaviors. So as long as it ends in a good note, we are good to go.

Fortunately, there are many ways that teachers can intervene to support young children's ability to self-regulate. Table 11 describes the strategies that the participants in the study used to address young children's challenging behaviors.

Table 11

Summary of Strategies Teachers Use to Address Children's Challenging Behaviors

Participant	Type of behavior addressed	Participants' description of strategy
1	Lack of focus/ Disruptive	I moved his seat to the front of the room. I gave him jobs in the room. He did improve but then we got new students in the room and they started acting up so he started acting up again.
2	Temper tantrums	We would always let her choose two different centers she wanted to go to and then let her pick. We would work around it and give her several choices.
3	Impulsiveness—shouting out in class	She sits at the back of the room away from people, which I hate to do, because she has to learn to control her behavior with people, but it is at the point where it bothers everyone.
4	Lack of focus	I know the parents so I talked to them right away. We set up a behavior chart. At the end of the week if he had five green lights, his mom rewarded him by taking him out for ice cream.
5	Child fearful of taking risks and making mistakes.	It's like parenting. You push a little bit and then you have to be there because you want them to be strong for next year. So it is a balancing act.
6	Shyness	I match them with another student who is kind, gentle, and would also pull them out.
7	Behavior charts to address behavior of all students.	We keep the charts inside their cubby so only the child, the teacher, and the parent know what the situation is. If a child is working to correct a negative behavior, it is not "out there" where others can see.
8	Severe temper tantrums	Sometimes we held her for a half hour just talking softly and stroking her arm. She would sob and be really sweaty. Gradually she would become calm.
9	Possible selective mutism—child would not speak	When we paired her up with other children she wouldn't talk, but she would play with them. I even paired her up with a child who is a non-stop talker and instead she got him to follow her hand signals.
10	Disruptive behavior	He got to wear a vest, he got to carry a clipboard—he got to help me all the time. If he acted out and regressed, I had an assistant to take over his duty for that activity.
11	Multiple techniques for all students.	If I use a specific tactic for that day and it works for them, I am happy. But then the next day comes and we start all over again. It changes everyday.

Survey Data

Anderson's (2007) Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS) involved three different cases, each targeting a specific behavior—physical aggression, verbal aggression and noncompliance. The descriptive statistics for one particular strategy recommendation will be described for each of the three cases. Child factors, (gender, classroom/academic performance) teacher factors, (beliefs, expectations) and environmental factors (classroom support, resources) which influenced the teachers response to the scenarios will be examined. An analysis of the responses to the open-ended question, "If there are other strategies you would recommend, please describe here" will also be explored.

Descriptive Statistics for Case One—Physical Aggression

Table 12

Case One-(Physically Aggressive Child) Strategy #10—Suspension

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Never	5	45.5	45.5
Hardly ever	2	18.2	18.2
Occasionally	3	27.3	27.3
Almost always	1	9.1	9.1
Total	11	100.0	100.0

Table 5 shows that well over half or 63% of the 11 teachers who participated in this study indicated they would *never* or *hardly ever* suspend or expel a physically aggressive child. On the other hand, three teachers, or 27% would *occasionally* suspend,

while one teacher indicated she would *almost always* suspend a physically aggressive child. The data regarding suspension is noteworthy because it is the only behavior, (physical aggression), in which four of the 11 teachers indicated that they would recommend suspension or expulsion for a child who is physically aggressive. The participant who would *almost always* recommend suspension or expulsion cited the school policy of zero tolerance for biting as her reason for selecting this strategy. However, she indicated that suspension can often be avoided and wrote the following comment, "this could have been prevented—once you see a child's frustration or anger start to rise, step in before it gets out of control."

All 11 of the teachers agreed that they would never ignore aggressive behavior, citing their beliefs that all children in the class should feel safe. One preschool teacher wrote that she would not permit an aggressive child to continually hurt others and would recommend that the child wait another year before entering the preschool program. The child's age (3 ½) and environmental factors, such as the time the behavior occurred, also influenced teachers' decisions to recommend other strategies rather than suspension.

Analysis of Open-Ended Responses to Case One

Five of the 11 participants indicated that other strategies they would recommend in response to a physically aggressive child would be the implementation of a behavioral intervention plan that involved parents, the school supervisor, or a behavior consultant. One preschool teacher wrote that their center has a behavior specialist that helps the staff and parents deal with challenging behaviors while the other four teachers recommended a behavioral plan that involved parents or the school administrative staff. Two of the 11 teachers indicated that they would encourage classroom communities by planning special

lessons about friendship and also role playing as to how our behaviors affect others. A preschool teacher suggested that she would help the physically aggressive child frame his/her apology by stating "I'm sorry that I hurt you, bit you, etc." "I know it must hurt—I won't do it again." Another preschool teacher wrote that children have to learn to respect their peers, but many children have never seen or been asked to do that. One teacher did not response to the open-ended question regarding the physically aggressive child.

Descriptive Statistics for Case Two—Verbal Aggression

Table 13

Case Two (Verbally Aggressive Child) Strategy #6—Responsibilities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Never	1	9.1	9.1
Hardly ever	2	18.2	18.2
Occasionally	3	27.3	27.3
Often	1	9.1	9.1
Almost always	3	27.3	27.3
Always	1	9.1	9.1
Total	11	100.0	100.0

Table 13 is noteworthy because it shows the greatest variation of teachers' responses to strategy six, giving the verbally aggressive child responsibilities or alternative activities (being the line leader, let them participate in other activities). While over half of the 11 participants, or 54% of the teachers, indicated they would *never*, *hardly ever*, or *occasionally* give the child responsibilities, 45% of the teachers suggested they would *often*, *almost always*, or *always* give the child responsibilities. Of the three

teachers who said they would *never* or *hardly ever* give a verbally aggressive child responsibility one kindergarten teacher wrote, "Since this child is not limited by ability, he should be able to understand that this behavior is unacceptable. He should not be rewarded by being a line leader until his behavior improves." A preschool teacher suggested that she would first try positive reinforcement and ignoring the behavior. Another preschool teacher indicated that children need to learn routine and social skills before they are given responsibilities.

The five teachers who suggested they would *often, almost always, or always* give the child responsibilities cited child factors and environmental factors as their reason for selecting this strategy. Three teachers suggested that the child was young and that this was his first preschool experience, while two teachers had concerns that the child was not aware of the behavior expectations in the preschool classroom. "Does the child know what he needs to do in this type of environment?" asked one teacher while another teacher wrote, "He needs to be taught and talked to about appropriate ways to treat others."

Analysis of Open-Ended Responses to Case Two

Five of the 11 participants indicated that they would recommend talking with the parents of the verbally abusive child. One teacher wrote that she would need to talk with the parents to find out why the child was so angry. Three teachers recommended getting in touch with the parents to find out if there are other behavior problems or situations going on at home. "I would be concerned as to why he was saying I hate you," wrote one teacher, while another teacher stressed the need to "communicate with the parents to make sure everyone was on the same page."

Discussing the problematic behavior at the next teachers' meeting in order to get input from colleagues, stressing classroom community (we help each other), praising children in the class who are making good choices, and emphasizing positive behaviors were some of the other recommended strategies. Two of the 11 teachers did not respond to the open-ended question regarding a strategy recommendation for the verbally aggressive child.

Descriptive Statistics for Case Three—Noncompliance

Table 14

Case Three (Noncompliant Child) Strategy # 4—Timeout

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Never	3	27.3	27.3
Hardly ever	5	45.5	45.5
Occasionally	2	18.2	18.2
Often	1	9.1	9.1
Total	11	100.0	100.0

Table 14 shows that almost 73% of the 11 teachers who participated in this study were unlikely to recommended strategy 4, *timeout* (removal from activities, take child away from the class), as a method that they would use to support a noncompliant child, while three teachers or 27% suggested they would *occasionally* or *often* recommend timeout.

Since the child voluntarily withdrew himself from participating in many class activities and centers by sitting in a corner and pouting, it is understandable why 73% of the 11 participants in this study did not suggest timeout as a recommend strategy.

However, it is interesting that of the three factors (child, teacher, and environmental) influencing their overall decisions to case three, the participants selected teacher factors or their beliefs and expectations. Four teachers emphasized that they expect children to follow rules and routines. "Following rules and routines are expected—that's why we have them," said one teacher. A preschool teacher suggested she would avoid a "power struggle" with the child by making the activities exciting and fun. Another teacher cited her belief that children must learn when they come to school—"they get to make some choices, but not all."

On the other hand, two teachers cited their beliefs as to the freedom of choice. "You can't force a child to attend activities," wrote one teacher while another teacher stressed "giving the child choices."

Analysis of Open-Ended Responses to Case Three

Five of the 11 participants suggested that other strategies they would recommend in response to a noncompliant child would be to focus on the child's interests in order to encourage him to participate in the classroom activities. One participant emphasized,

> Circle time can be held in every corner of the room—why not have it in the block area? Teacher needs to make sure circle time is a fun activity. If not, why would Jimmy or any child choose it over playing?

One preschool teacher suggested, "work through the problem, find out his interests" while a kindergarten teacher wrote, "I would start by ignoring the pouting and encouraging him to move on." Another teacher emphatically stated that "if it's not interesting, it is the teacher's fault, not the child's."

Three participants stressed giving the child signals or five minute warnings before the activity is to end. "I would let the child be the timekeeper," wrote one teacher while another teacher suggested letting the child move a clothespin on a traffic light from the green to the yellow (warning) position to announce that an activity would soon end. Two of the eleven participants did not respond to the open-ended question regarding the noncompliant child.

Summary

This chapter presented the data analysis on teachers' perspectives of young children's challenging behaviors in the early childhood setting. The researcher focused on the reflections of the early childhood teachers' child guidance philosophies, the social and emotional behaviors that teachers considered to be important as young children transition to kindergarten, and the strategies teachers used to promote self-regulation in young children. Although the participants described situations and events that were unique in many ways, they all shared similar beliefs, experiences, and feelings concerning young children's social and emotional development. The similarities that the participants described are important because they have implications for teacher education programs, child-care-centers, and private and public preschool programs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESARCH AND CONCLUSION

The need for teachers to become reflective practitioners in order to respond helpfully and appropriately to the increasing number of young children who exhibit challenging behaviors in the early childhood setting, was the purpose of this study. Although research indicates that young children's challenging behaviors tend to continue into later childhood, adolescence, and even adulthood (Bickham & Rich, 2006; Bingham, 2001; Center for Evidence-Based Practice, 2003), it also suggests that children who exhibit challenging behaviors can learn appropriate ways to behave (Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 1999; 2007). Since young children are learning to regulate the development of aggression during the preschool years, Trembly (2008) suggests that it is an especially sensitive period and an opportune time for supporting children's social and emotional growth.

Because teachers play a pivotal role in shaping all aspects of young children's healthy development, the strategies they use to address challenging behaviors and promote young children's ability to self-regulate has lifelong implications for them, as well as society as a whole.

In this chapter the findings of the study will be discussed. The researcher will make recommendations based on conclusions drawn from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the survey data.

Summary of Findings

While the present study may contribute to the early childhood literature on teachers' reflections as to the strategies they use to address challenging behaviors and promote young children's ability to self-regulate, the findings should be interpreted with caution. One must remember that the participants in this study are a small sampling of early childhood teachers who teach in public and private schools in southwestern Pennsylvania. Both the interview data and the survey data collected by the researcher indicate the following findings.

Interviews

First, when reflecting on the sources of their beliefs of child guidance, the majority of the teachers in this study cited their parents' values and disciplinary styles as important influences on their approaches and responses to young children's behavior in the classroom. This finding is consistent with the research of Bowman et al. (2001) and Isenberg (1990) who contend that teachers often refer to their family beliefs and prior experiences as a source for the manner in which they react to young children's challenging behaviors.

Second, true to the research of Baumrind (1966, 1978) on parents' style of discipline, eight of the participants in this study described their parents as authoritative, or strict and loving, two of the participants described their parents as authoritarian, or tough and demanding, and one participant described her mother as being permissive or lenient and indifferent. However, Morrison (2009) and Firman and Castle (2008) challenge Baumrind's neat categorical styles of parenting and contend that parenting

styles vary widely depending on the context, the child's previous patterns of behavior, and unexpected changes in daily or weekly routines.

While current research indicates the importance of ongoing studies on parenting and children's development, the researcher found that all of the participants in this study were compatible with Baumrind's (1966, 1978) traditional parenting styles. The eight participants who described their parents' disciplinary style as authoritative indicated that their parents influenced their compassion for young children's well being, their fairness to treat children of all races equally, and even their classroom organization and structure. The two participants who described their parents as being authoritarian, and the one participant who described her mother as being permissive, indicated that it did not affect their discipline practices in the classroom, but instead had a positive impact on their families and the way they were raising their own children. In other words, instead of enforcing strict rules, as in the case of the authoritarian parents, or being very lenient, as was the case of the permissive parent, the participants were implementing positive approaches within their families such as open discussions, spending quality time with their children, and attending and participating in community events.

Furthermore, although the three participants suggested that their parents did not influence their classroom discipline, it was apparent that the reactive measures used by the authoritarian parents and the disinterested approach of the permissive parent did not translate well into their teaching practice. It is also likely that, just like their parents' style of discipline influenced the participants to use positive approaches with their own children, it also shaped their child guidance approaches in the classroom. This supports

Bowman (1989) who asserts that whether teachers are aware of it or not, they are influenced by their beliefs, values, and feelings.

Third, whether the 11 participants in this study cited positive or negative early experiences with their first teachers, or both, they indicated that it not only influenced their approaches to young children's challenging behaviors, but also influenced their instructional strategies. This finding is consistent with Lortie's (1975) research which suggests that views about teaching and learning are established during the years that students spend in the classroom and are often translated into their teaching practice. Recent research by LaParo et al. (2009) with preservice teachers also supports Lortie that teachers' early educational experiences contribute to their beliefs. Furthermore, Rogers and Freiberg (1994) asserted in their book, *Freedom to Learn*, that as teachers, "We tend to teach the way we've been taught and discipline the way we've been disciplined" (p. 241).

The six participants who cited positive experiences with their first teachers emphasized that they are consistent in their classroom discipline rules and policies, they make an effort to treat all children fairly, and they encourage confidence in their students by providing an environment that is safe, loving, and nurturing. One participant indicated that she chose teaching as her profession because she loved her preschool and kindergarten teachers so much.

The three participants who cited negative experiences with their early teachers indicated that they chose to use these negative experiences to their advantage by turning them into positive experiences for their students. For instance, one participant described the outrage she experienced when her second grade teacher would stand children in the

corner or frighten the whole class when one child disobeyed a rule. As a result, she puts forth an extra effort to be fair and consistent in her discipline practices. Another participant reported how her early teachers affected her classroom instruction practices. As a young child she had reading problems, but because she did not receive additional support she was always reading below grade level. Therefore, when children in her room are experiencing academic difficulties, she provides additional support until the child can function at grade level.

Fourth, when compared to family expectations of young children's behavior today and that of previous times, all 11 of the teachers indicated a downward trend. Six participants cited excessive viewing of television, three participants cited lack of parenting skills, one participant cited lack of family time, and one participant cited children's fears as negative influences on the behaviors of today's young children. Although the impact of parenting skills, lack of family time, and children's fears were not addressed in the current study, the increase of young children's television viewing is consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2009 Policy Statement on Media Violence which reports that children between 0 and 6 years of age spend an average of almost 2 hours a day using screen media, such as TV, videos, and computers. An earlier study conducted by Rideout and Hamel (2006) for the Kaiser Family Foundation reported that children ages 6 months to 6 years were spending an average of one and a quarter hours watching some form of screen media.

Fifth, consistent with both national and small-scale studies of teachers' expectations (Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2008; Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002, all 11 of the participants in this study stressed

self-regulation skills (e. g., sitting still and attending, taking turns, independence, expressing feelings, being sensitive to others) as important social competencies for young children's successful transition from preschool to kindergarten. In addition to the aforementioned social skills, two of the participants cited their concerns that kindergarten is becoming more academic and skill-centered. Both participants suggested that cognitive skills are being emphasized in the curriculum rather than play, which limits young children's social interactions and their ability to get along with others.

Sixth, the 11 participants in the study cited preventive techniques (e.g., moving the child's seat, giving the child choices), positive reinforcement (e.g., praise and stickers), and talking with parents as the strategies they most often use to address children's challenging behaviors. Although the use of these strategies are inconsistent with the research of Gilliam (2005), Kemple et al. (1997), Lamm et al. (2006) and Sugai et al. (2000) that teachers' interventions are usually reactive and focus on disciplinary measures such as threats, pleading, time-out, or expulsion from school, it is understandable that the participants may not want to share these unacceptable practices with the researcher. It can also be argued that the use of positive reinforcement such as praise, stars, stickers, prizes, and extra time to enjoy special activities can be viewed as old fashioned discipline—a combination of rewards and punishments (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2007). Nevertheless, one teacher indicated that even though she realized that her decision to separate a little girl who exhibited impulsive behavior in a row by herself was not developmentally appropriate, she did so in order to provide instruction to the other children in the class.

Finally, two of the participants, who taught in a public school, reported an increase in the number of children who exhibited challenging behaviors in their classrooms, while two participants who taught in a private school, indicated that challenging behaviors in their classrooms were minimal. Although the purpose of this study was not to compare the three different programs, it is interesting to note that Gilliam's (2005) National Prekindergarten Study indicated that expulsion rates varied widely by setting. For example, rates were lowest in classrooms located in public schools and Head Start Centers and highest in faith-affiliated centers, for profit childcare, and other community-based settings.

Surveys

In addition to the findings of the semi-structured interview data, the Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS) was also administered to the 11 participants. The survey involved three different scenarios or cases, each targeting a specific behavior—physical aggression, verbal aggression and noncompliance. The findings of the particular strategies (e.g., ignore, redirect, verbal instruction, time-out, fix-it, responsibilities, modeling, talk with parents, reinforcement, suspension/expulsion, prevention) that the participants recommended to address each of these behaviors are discussed in this section.

Physical Aggression

When specifically examining physical aggression, all 11 of participants were least likely to recommend ignoring the behavior. The participants cited their belief that all children need to feel safe and secure in the classroom setting. Suspension or expulsion in

response to a physically aggressive child was the only behavior in which four of the participants indicated they would recommend this strategy.

Strategies that were most likely to be recommended were positive reinforcement, modeling appropriate behavior, redirection, verbal instructions, talking with parents, and making the child fix the problem in that order. Although three of the participants indicated that they would have recommended preventative techniques (e.g., more than one teacher in the room; have enough toys) as a strategy for a physically aggressive child, they did not do so because of a lack of resources in their school or center.

Verbal Aggression

When responding to children who are verbally aggressive, the least likely strategy that all 11 of the participants recommended was suspension or expulsion. The strategy, giving the child responsibilities or alternative activities (e.g., being the line leader, let them participate in other activities), indicated a variation of six different responses ranging from never to always. The strategies that were most likely to be recommended were modeling, positive reinforcement, talking with parents, verbal instruction, and redirection, in that order.

Noncompliance

As with verbal aggression, all 11 of the participants indicated that they were least likely to recommend suspension or expulsion for noncompliant behavior. The strategy, time-out, (e.g., removal from activities, take child away from the class), was the second least likely strategy that the participants recommended. The strategies that participants were most likely to recommend were modeling, positive reinforcement, verbal

instruction, redirection, giving responsibilities or alternative activities, and talking with the parents, in that order.

Overall, the current findings suggest that when addressing verbal aggression and noncompliant behavior, all 11 participants indicated they would least likely recommend suspension or expulsion. When addressing physical aggression, all of the participants indicated that they would least likely recommend ignoring the behavior. As previously stated, suspension or expulsion in response to a physically aggressive child was the only behavior in which four participants indicated they would recommend this strategy. The participants cited safety concerns for the other children in the class as their reason for recommending suspension, while one teacher cited her school's zero tolerance policy. Therefore, this finding suggests that when children become physically aggressive, they are at a greater risk of being suspended or expelled.

Modeling appropriate behavior was the most recommended strategy for addressing both verbal aggression and noncompliance in this study, and the second most recommended strategy for addressing physical aggression. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors ranked as the first strategy recommendation for physical aggression and the second for both verbal aggression and noncompliance. Interestingly, the interview data also revealed that positive reinforcement was the second most recommended strategy in responding to challenging behaviors

Open-Ended Responses

Participants were also asked to identify additional strategies they would recommend for managing each of the identified challenging behaviors. In regard to managing physical aggression, the majority of the teachers recommended the use of

behavioral plans, role playing, and consultation with a behavioral specialist. Participants who responded to verbal aggression recommended discussing the inappropriate behavior with colleagues and creating a caring community within the classroom. Responses to noncompliant behavior included focusing on the child's interests, giving ample warning before an activity is to end, and preventative efforts, such as giving the child a special seat or a special job.

Implications

Teachers' reflections' of their beliefs and early experiences on their child guidance practices and the strategies they use to support young children's social and emotional development has implications for teacher education programs, child care centers, and public and private preschool programs. This section of Chapter Five will examine each of these entities and provide suggestions as to how early childhood teachers can promote young children's social and emotional development.

Teacher Education Programs

If teachers are to think systematically about their practice and learn from their experiences, as stated in Proposition Four of The National Board for Professional Standards (1996), it is important that teacher education programs provide training in the practice of reflection. Ideally, this should be offered as a separate course and not embedded into core methods courses for several reasons.

First of all, by recalling and reflecting on their childhood, their past experiences, and their feelings, preservice teachers can begin to craft their philosophy of education or personal history. This philosophy can serve as a framework as to how their beliefs and experiences have shaped the theories they apply to teaching and learning (Nolan, 2008).

According to Larrivee (2000), unless teachers associate their teaching decisions to their beliefs about the teaching and learning process, teachers will have only isolated techniques. In other words, teachers should critically engage in reflection so that they will not "stay trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations" (Larrivee, 2000, p. 294). When teachers examine their personal beliefs as to their expectations of children's acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and question their approaches to address the behaviors, they can implement effective practices to support young children's social and emotional development.

Second, coursework in reflective practice can improve preservice teachers' ability to reflect, by providing a supportive environment where teachers feel comfortable sharing their innermost thoughts and feelings. Taggart (1996) suggested that "time to reflect and time to dialogue" (p. 56) are two important factors of successful training programs. When teachers reflect and share their thoughts in a supportive environment, they become aware of not only their own thoughts and feelings, but the thoughts and feelings of others In fact, Bowman (1989) contends that the ability to sense the personal feelings of another is at the "heart of human understanding" and is critical if adults are to understand young children.

Third, once they are hired, preservice teachers will need to make many decisions regarding both their child guidance practices as well as their instructional strategies. Consequently, reflection coursework can support teachers to make decisions which can direct, inform, or transform their practice (Grimmett et al. 1990; Lee, 2005; Valli, 1990). These decisions will often involve moral, political, and ethical issues.

As previously citied, many children who exhibit challenging behavior are often viewed by their teachers as less competent academically and socially, resulting in fewer opportunities for them to engage in positive interactions and experiences (Bingham, 2001; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007; Logue, 2007). Children's challenging behaviors are also associated with multiple risk factors, which place them at an even greater disadvantage of achieving academic and social success (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007; McCabe & Frede, 2007). Despite these challenges, Fennimore (2000) asserts that teachers must make every effort to meet the educational needs of all young children and must make an ethical choice as to how they discuss the problems of their students, as well as their families. In other words, teachers should consider their attitudes and judgments regarding children's challenging behavior and strive to establish a positive relationship with both the children and their families. This doesn't mean that teachers should not have high expectations for children who exhibit inappropriate behaviors. However, teachers must take responsibility to provide all young children with the academic and social and emotional skills that they need to be successful in school and in life. Therefore, reflective practice can serve as a valuable tool for teachers to question how they talk about young children's problems and articulate a positive approach in the way that they describe and respond to young children's behaviors and their families.

Fourth, reflective practice coursework could support teachers to examine their beliefs of young children's challenging behaviors in relation to their ethnic, cultural, and racial background. Gay and Kirkland (2003) assert that culturally responsive teaching and self-reflection should be included in both pre-service and in-service staff development because "teachers need to have a thorough understanding of their own

cultures and the cultures of different ethnic groups, as well as how this affects teaching and learning behaviors" (p. 182). Ramirez and Soto-Ninman (2009) suggest that when teachers examine their beliefs and attitudes and investigate students' cultures and communities, they can eliminate misconceptions and combat stereotypes. This promotes communication between teachers and parents and increases family involvement in schools. The willingness to learn and change on the part of teachers demonstrates to families and students that the teachers do not believe that their culture is superior, but they want all students to learn and succeed (Ramirez & Soto-Ninman, 2009).

Fifth, in addition to coursework in reflective practice, teacher education programs need to provide training in classroom management. Hemmeter et al. (2008) asserts that preservice preparation programs "should offer a context for providing students with opportunities to learn content and practice skills related to promoting children's social-emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors" (p. 322). Although seven of the teachers in the study indicated that they had taken training or coursework in classroom management, three of them could not recall the names of the programs and further suggested that their training had lapsed over a period of time. Four of the teachers reported that they had not received any formal training in behavior or classroom management. Phrases such as "it was very frustrating" or "I didn't know what to do," indicated that the participants would benefit from in-service training or professional development in classroom management.

Child Care Centers and Public and Private Preschool Programs

Because preschool education varies from program to program, often ranging from private preschools, faith-based nursery schools, and family child care, to federally funded

classes within public schools, these entities will be referred to in the discussion that follows as child care providers.

First, child care providers must give careful consideration to adopting prevention and intervention programs that will promote the social and emotional development of all children. Although numerous curricular approaches have been suggested to address children's challenging behaviors, this study does not recommend a particular prevention and intervention model. However, Dunlap et al. (2006) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature as to the impact, prevention, and intervention of challenging behaviors in young children. A consensus building process involving the review and synthesis was used to produce summary statements containing the core conclusions and the supporting evidence of various interventions. Table 15 is the summary statements for the intervention section of their research (Dunlap et al. 2006, p. 33).

Table 15 *Interventions with Challenging Behaviors*

Summary Statement	Type of Empirical Support
1. Interventions based on a functional assessment of the relation between the challenging behaviors and the child' environment are effective for reducing challenging behaviors in young children.	Aggregation of descriptive, quasi-experimental, and experimental peer-reviewed studies using single-subject designs.
2. Teaching procedures have been demonstrated to be effective in developing children's skills and reducing challenging behaviors.	Aggregation of descriptive, quasi-experimental, and experimental peer-reviewed studies using single-subject designs.
3. Interventions involving alterations to features of the child's activities and the child's social and physical environment have been demonstrated to reduce challenging behaviors.	Aggregation of descriptive, quasi-experimental, and experimental peer-reviewed studies using single-subject designs.
4. Multicomponent interventions implemented over time and across multiple relevant environments can produce durable, generalized increases in prosocial behavior and reductions in challenging behaviors.	Aggregation of descriptive, quasi-experimental, and experimental peer-reviewed studies using single-subject designs.
5. Family involvement in the planning and implementation of interventions facilitates durable reductions in challenging behaviors of young children.	Quasi-experimental and experimental analyses, including single-subject and randomized control group designs. Numerous qualitative studies have supported this statement as well.

Second, even though childcare providers may not elect to implement a curriculum approach or prevention and intervention model to address children's challenging behaviors, they will need to adjust their instructional strategies. Because many early childhood programs are serving diverse groups of children with academic, social, and behavioral needs, teachers must accommodate all students so they can experience success (Grishman-Brown et al. 2005; Jacobs, 2008; Lamm et al. 2006). This will require a variety of instructional strategies including more differentiated instruction, small group and one-on-one instruction, and cooperative learning activities (Jacob, 2008; Lamm et al., 2006).

Third, child care providers should provide early childhood teachers with in-service training in the areas of reflective practice and behavior management. Research indicates that childcare provider training is an essential component of a quality childcare environment (NAEYC, 2009; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). These classes could be held on-site with professionals who are skilled in behavior management and reflective practice or by developing partnerships with school districts, county intermediate units, community colleges, or local universities.

Fourth, three of the participants in this study stated that an on-staff behavioral consultant was available for support with children's challenging behaviors. Research indicates that when preschool teachers have access to a mental health consultant, children's expulsion rates decrease (Benedict, 2007; Gilliam, 2005; Perry et al. 2008). In their report on the outcomes of a four-year project designed to reduce the number of children expelled for challenging behavior, Perry et al. emphasized that behavioral interventions not only reduced rates of problem behaviors but also increased young

children's social skills. Considering the importance of early prevention and intervention of young children's challenging behaviors, childcare providers may want to think about hiring a behavior specialist or school counselors to support teachers to manage inappropriate behaviors.

Finally, if young children are to make a successful transition from the preschool setting to kindergarten, early childcare providers should collaborate with school administrators to create a transition plan. Pianta and LaParo (2003) and Stormont et al. (2005) assert that young children who lack social and emotional skills often receive limited academic and behavioral support and are less likely to make a successful transition to kindergarten. Stormont et al. proposes an ecological approach or team approach to transition, which includes the involvement and participation of administrators and teachers of preschool programs, schools, community organizations, and families. Because children who exhibit inappropriate behaviors often face multiple risk factors, the researchers stress a systematic approach to support the transition needs of children with challenging behavior. However, if resources are limited, early childhood teachers should consider collaborating with kindergarten teachers to visit the kindergarten classroom in advance, in order to prepare young children for a smooth transition to their new environment.

Recommendations for Future Research

Numerous commissions and boards have emphasized the importance of reflective practice and have identified it as a standard towards which teachers and students should strive (Nolan, 2008; Rodgers, 2002). There has also been much research in regards to

the prevention and intervention of young children's challenging behaviors (Dunlap et al. 2006). However, there are other related issues which require further study.

First, the present study examined teachers' reflections of recommended strategies to correct challenging behaviors in a public preschool, a private preschool, and four child care centers, but did not make comparisons between the entities. More research could be conducted as to whether strategy recommendation would vary, according to setting. For instance, would early childhood teachers' strategy recommendations vary between private and public schools? It might also be interesting to see if teachers' age and experience varied as to strategy recommendation.

Second, the focus of the current study was designed specifically for children 3 and 4 years of age in the early childhood setting. Future research could examine the strategies recommended by teachers working with older children in the elementary school setting. This would involve revising the scenarios for that age group. However, it would be interesting to compare the findings between the early childhood setting and elementary school.

Third, research could be conducted to determine if in-service staff development, which focuses on the topic of reflective practice, would influence experienced teachers' perspectives on young children's challenging behaviors. Also, veteran teachers may have experienced a traditional authoritarian style of discipline in their university coursework or past in-service seminars, and are not aware of the proactive approaches of behavior management. Interviews or focus groups could be conducted with the teachers to determine if reflective practice has influenced them to revisit their child guidance practices, as well as their instructional strategies. Even though the research of LaParo et

al. (2009) indicated that the student teaching experience does not appear to significantly alter preservice teachers' beliefs about children and discipline practices, it would be interesting to see what the results would be with experienced teachers.

Finally, additional research could also be conducted as to why some children, even though they have encountered many difficult life circumstance and setbacks, have good behavioral outcomes in spite of the absence of intervention. In other words, these children have developed resiliency or coping strategies that have supported them to overcome school failure, drug abuse, and juvenile delinquency problems (Linquanti, 1992). According to Dyszlewski and Boekamp (2005), schools are critical in supporting young children to become resilient because "learning environments that emphasize resiliency not only reduce school failure, but also can counter the risk factors that underlie many unhealthy behaviors including school violence, teen pregnancy, alienation, and substance abuse" (p. 1). Therefore, research that examines successful curriculums, which focus on promoting resiliency, could significantly improve the outcomes for all children.

Conclusion

Teachers and children in the 21st century are faced with challenges and pressures that were unknown to their predecessors. The growing number of young children entering preschool programs in need of significant support to develop their social and emotional skills, many of whom are confronted with challenges such as hunger, violence, and poverty has caused concerns for teachers and caregivers. At the same time, it also presents all of those who work with young children opportunities to make a tremendous difference in their lives.

This study explored the innermost thoughts and perspectives of early childhood teachers in relation to their child guidance philosophies, the social and emotional behaviors that they identified as critical to young children's transition to kindergarten, and the strategies they use to address children's challenging behaviors and promote young children's ability to self-regulate. One effective strategy that can support teachers in their efforts to help young children express their needs and control their emotions is that of reflective practice. Reflective practice can help teachers understand how their beliefs influence their discipline styles and teaching strategies, serve as a valuable tool to articulate a positive approach as to how they describe young children's behaviors and their families (Fennimore, 2000), and support teachers to make decisions to adjust their teaching and adapt the curriculum to fit the needs of all children (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2008). Although reflective practice is not a panacea for solving all of today's educational challenges, it is clear that if young children are to grow up to be healthy and productive citizens, teachers must consider not only children's academic needs, but also their social and emotional development.

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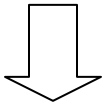
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Methods and Procedures Flowchart

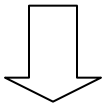
Participants

- Identify through purposeful sampling and obtain consent from approximately 20 early childhood teachers to participate in the study.
- Arrange and conduct semi-structured interviews with the teachers at Martin Elementary School, Montessori Centre Academy, and Seton Hill Child Services.



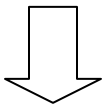
Semi-structured Interviews

The principal investigator will conduct 25-30 minute semi-structured interview with the participants which will be audio-taped. The interview questions were adapted from Jacob's (2008) study of equitable education of students with disabilities and Jalongo and Isenberg's (2007) *Exploring your role: A practitioner's introduction to early childhood education.*



Survey

At the end of the interviews, Anderson's (2007) Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional's Survey (BCECE: PS, Appendix G) will be distributed. Participants will respond to a Likert scale (e.g., 1 = never, 6 = always) as to how often they would recommend the particular strategy to manage the behavior described in three scenarios (e.g., physical aggression, verbal aggression, and noncompliance). Participants will also complete an open-ended question as to any other strategies they would recommend and to describe the influences of their response. Surveys will be collected and SPSS will be used to analyze the quantitative data.



Data Analysis for Semi-structured Interviews

1. Data set will be divided into categories based on predetermined topologies.
2. Typologies will be divided into data sets--data sets will be separated into smaller sets.
3. Read entries by typology and record main ideas on a summary sheet.
4. Typologies will be examined for patterns, relationships, and themes.
5. Patterns will be written as generalizations and data excerpts will support those generalizations. (Hatch, 2002, p. 153).

Appendix B

Site Approval Letter from Martin Elementary School

New Kensington-Arnold School District
Martin Elementary School
1800 Seventh Street Road
New Kensington, Pa. 15068

Mrs. Donna J. Holtzman
Principal
724-335-4641

March 13, 2009

To: Indiana University of Pennsylvania

As Principal of Martin Elementary School, New Kensington-Arnold School District, I am willing to permit Mary Lou Bitar to conduct her study about early childhood teachers and the self-regulation of young children. Additionally, I will invite my teachers to participate in the study when IRB approval is granted.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Donna Holtzman
Principal

Appendix C
Site Approval Letter from Montessori Centre Academy

MONTESSORI CENTRE ACADEMY, INC.
1014 William Flynn Highway
Glenshaw, PA 15116 • (412) 486-6239 • Fax: (412) 486-2930

December 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

As Director of the Montessori Centre Academy, Inc. I will permit Mary Lou Bitar, a doctoral student at Indiana University of PA, to conduct her study of early childhood teachers and the self-regulation of young children. I understand that when IRB approval is granted interviews will be conducted at a later date.

Sincerely,

Yolanda N. Sweenie, Director

Appendix D
Site Approval Letter from Seton Hill Child Services

Seton Hill Child Services, Inc.

Human Services Center
Suite 109 1011 Old Salem Road
Greensburg, PA 15601-1034
(724) 836-0099 Fax (724) 836-1346
www.shchildservices.org.

March 16, 2009

Dr. Mary Renck Jalongo
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Department of Professional Studies
122 Davis Hall
Indiana, PA 15705

Dear Dr. Jalongo,

Seton Hill Child Services grants site approval for Mary Lou Bitar to conduct her study of early childhood teachers and the emotional and social development of young children. I understand that pending IRB approval, teachers from our seven early care and education centers will be invited to participate in interviews at a later date.

Sincerely,

Sarah G. Dye
Executive Director

cc: file

Appendix E

Early Childhood Teacher Informed Consent Form

Challenging Behaviors: Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives on Young Children's Self-Regulation

Dear Early Childhood Teacher:

You are invited to participate in a study that examines the strategies that early childhood teachers use to support young children to find healthy ways to express their needs and emotions, or in other words, to learn self-control.

The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are an early childhood teacher teaching in a site-approved early child center, public or private preschool. The Indiana University of Pennsylvania supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. There are no known risks associated with this research. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time by simply calling me or sending me an e-mail at the phone number or e-mail address which I have provided for your convenience on the next page. Participation or non-participation in this study will not adversely affect you in any way. Participants who participate in the interview and complete the survey will receive a $25.00 gift card to a national book store.

Initial participation in this study will require approximately one hour of your time. I will agree to meet with you at your respective site where I will conduct an interview which will be audio-taped. After the interview, you will be asked to complete a survey as to how often you would recommend a particular strategy to manage the behavior described in three scenarios, to list any additional strategies you would recommend, and what may have influenced your recommendations. All of the answers to your questions will be kept confidential. No one, except me and my faculty sponsor, Dr. Jalongo, will have access to the data. All anecdotal records will be secured in a locked file cabinet in my home office for at least three years in compliance with federal regulations. Your name will not be used to identify your response in the dissertation or other written documents. In addition, any publication or presentation of the findings from this research will use pseudonyms for all of the participants.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement on the next page and return it to me. Take the extra unsigned copy with you. Your return of this letter and your signature on the permission form implies consent. A summary of the findings from this study will be made available to you upon request. Thank you for your time and consideration to participate in my study.

Appendix E

Mary Lou Bitar, Principal Investigator
106 Mohawk Drive
Arnold, PA 15068
Home: (724) 335-5637
Cell (412) 378-0800
E-mail: M.Bitar@iup.edu
IUP doctoral candidate

Dr. Mary Renck Jalongo, Faculty Sponsor
Indiana University of PA
Department of Professional Studies
122 Davis Hall, 570 S. Eleventh St.
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705
Office phone (724) 357-2417
Email Address: mjalongo@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone (724)-357-7730).

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:
I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed consent form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT):_____

Signature: _____

Phone number or location where you can be reached: _____

Best days and times to reach you:_____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____ _____
Date Investigator's Signature

Appendix F

Interview Guide

1. How many years have you been teaching at the preschool/early childhood level?

2. What is your level of educational attainment?

3. What motivated you to choose early childhood education rather than teaching children of other ages?

4. Have you ever received specific training in working with children with challenging behaviors?

5. Think about your early years in school. Did you attend nursery/preschool? Did you attend kindergarten? If so, what do you remember about your first teachers?

6. Did any of your first teachers affect the way you pattern your approaches to challenging behaviors in the classroom? Give examples.

7. Reflect for a moment on your family's beliefs about children's behavior. Have any of your ideas about child guidance been affected by your experiences as a child? As a parent? If so, how? Please provide examples

8. How would you compare the behavior of children today and the expectations of today's families with that of children from previous time periods? In your opinion, what direction does it appear to be taking?

9. Now let's talk about your class. Based on your experiences in the early childhood classroom, what social and emotional behaviors need to be in place in order for preschoolers to make a smooth transition into kindergarten? Give examples.

10. What words or phrases come to mind when you think about children's behavior problems?

11. Describe a particularly successful experience you've had when dealing with young children's challenging behavior.

12. Describe a particularly frustrating experience you've had when dealing with young children's challenging behavior.

The above interview questions were adapted from the following sources:

Jacobs, P. A. (2008). Equitable education for students with disabilities: Teachers' attitudes and perspectives Doctoral Dissertation, Walden University, 2008). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 51*, 69, 02.

Jalongo, M. R., & Isenberg, J. P. (2007). *Exploring your role: A practitioner's introduction to early childhood education* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall.

Appendix G

Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional's Survey

Now you will be considering three different cases in which a preschool child presents some challenging behaviors in the classroom setting. After reading each brief case, you will be asked to reflect on the strategies you might use to respond to the situation.

Case One

Janie is a typically developing three-and-a-half year old girl currently enrolled in a preschool program. She has been observed to hit other children and bite them when she is unable to get her way. After being scolded for biting a playmate, she was seen pulling the same child's hair. Jamie also has been seen taking toys that other children are playing with, and then purposefully throwing the toys at her classmates. According to Jamie's teacher, she rarely uses her words to problem solve, and engages in aggressive behavior at least four times a day, usually during free play.

Circle the number that indicates how often you would recommend this strategy to manage this particular behavior.

	Never	Hardly ever	Occasionally	Often	Almost always	Always
1. Ignore this behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Redirection (help them find words; give alternatives to inappropriate language	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Verbal Instructions (explain why the behavior is not appropriate)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Time-out/Removal from activities (take child away from the class)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Making the child "fix" the problem (child puts ice on the wound; have the child apologize)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Giving the child responsibilities or alternative activities (being the line leader, let them participate in other activities)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.Modeling appropriate behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.Talking with parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior (praise, stickers)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Suspension or expulsion	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Preventative efforts to decrease the probability of problem behaviors (more than one teacher in the room; have enough toys)	1	2	3	4	5	6

If there are other strategies you would recommend, please describe here:_____

_____

Please think about your responses to the scenarios in general. Below, please describe what factors influenced your response?

- Child factors (gender, classroom/academic performance)?
- Teacher factors (beliefs, expectations)?
- Environmental factors (classroom support, resources)?

Appendix G (continued)

Case Two

Michael just turned three and is attending preschool for the first time; he has no cognitive or developmental delays. However, in class Michael frequently is confrontational with his teachers. He has yelled at his teachers and other adults in the classroom when he is asked to do various tasks (e.g., help pick up his crayons) or follow simple requests (e.g., wait his turn in line). These behaviors occur even when Michael is given ample warning that such requests are going to occur. In class, Michael also responds by swearing and using derogatory phrases (e.g., "I hate you", "You're stupid") towards his teachers in response to their questions and prompts. Michael yells out several times an hour, which at best last several seconds and at worst lasts for several minutes.

Circle the number that indicates how often you would recommend this strategy to manage this particular behavior.

	Never	Hardly ever	Occasionally	Often	Almost always	Always
1. Ignore this behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Redirection (help them find words; give alternatives to inappropriate language	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Verbal Instructions (explain why the behavior is not appropriate)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.Time-out/Removal from activities (take child away from the class)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Making the child "fix" the problem (child puts ice on the wound; have the child apologize)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Giving the child responsibilities or alternative activities (being the line leader, let them participate in other activities)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Modeling appropriate behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Talking with parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior (praise, stickers)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Suspension or expulsion	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Preventative efforts to decrease the probability of problem behaviors (more than one teacher in the room; have enough toys)	1	2	3	4	5	6

If there are other strategies you would recommend, please describe here:_____

_____

Please think about your responses to the scenarios in general. Below, please describe what factors influenced your response?

- Child factors (gender, classroom/academic performance)?
- Teacher factors (beliefs, expectations)?
- Environmental factors (classroom support, resources)?

Appendix G (continued)

Case Three

Jimmy is a three-and-a-half year old preschooler with no developmental delays or disabilities. Jimmy often refuses to follow teachers' requests. Even with forewarning about upcoming changes in activities, he has a particularly difficult time transitioning from his preferred activity of playing with blocks. When asked to join circle time, if it is not his preferred activity of the moment, he often refuses the request. Additionally, when adults attempt to guide Jimmy to an activity, he pulls away. He also has been running away from requested activities, pouting in corners and sitting with his arms crossed when he does not get his way. Jimmy's teachers state that he engages in such behaviors two or three times a day.

Circle the number that indicates how often you would recommend this strategy to manage this particular behavior.

	Never	Hardly ever	Occasionally	Often	Almost always	Always
1. Ignore this behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Redirection (help them find words; give alternatives to inappropriate language	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Verbal Instructions (explain why the behavior is not appropriate)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Time-out/Removal from activities (take child away from the class)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Making the child "fix" the problem (child puts ice on the wound; have the child apologize)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Giving the child responsibilities or alternative activities (being the line leader, let them participate in other activities)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.Modeling appropriate behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Talking with parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior (praise, stickers)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Suspension or expulsion	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Preventative efforts to decrease the probability of problem behaviors (more than one teacher in the room; have enough toys)	1	2	3	4	5	6

If there are other strategies you would recommend, please describe here:_____

_____

Please think about your responses to the scenarios in general. Below, please describe what factors influenced your response?

- Child factors (gender, classroom/academic performance)?
- Teacher factors (beliefs, expectations)?
- Environmental factors (classroom support, resources)?

Source: Anderson, E. R. (2007). Managing challenging behaviors in early childhood: Effect of Theoretical orientation on strategy recommendation (Doctoral Dissertation: University of Florida, 2007). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 51*, 69, 02.

Appendix H

Permission from Jacob's 2008 Study

From: nj797@bellsouth.net
To: Mary Lou Bitar
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2008 7:47 PM
Subject: Re: dissertation

Hi Mary Lou,

I give you permission to modify my interview guide as long as you state that it was designed by me. I hope you have a successful experience as you complete your dissertation.

Dr. Prudencia Jacobs
---------- Original message from "Mary Lou Bitar" <mlbitar@earthlink.net>: ----------

Hi Prudencia,
My name is Mary Lou Bitar and I am a doctoral student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I'm doing a study for my disseration on the challenging behaviors of young children and would like permission to modify the interview guide that you designed for your dissertation, Equitable education for students with disabilities: Teachers' attitudes and perspectives. If you decide to grant permission, please be assured that I will credit you for your contribution.

Thank you so much for your consideration of my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Mary Lou Bitar

Appendix I

Permission via phone call from Dr. Anderson

Permission was received from Dr. Anderson via telephone call on January 15, 2009. At that time I also asked Dr. Anderson to send me an e-mail verifying permission to use her 2007 Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Education: Professional Survey (BCECE: PS) so that I could attach it to my IRB. I also sent her the following e-mail that evening as a reminder:

----- Original Message -----
From: Mary Lou Bitar
To: Dr. Anderson
Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2009 7:50 PM
Subject: Permission

Hi Dr. Anderson,
Thank you for your verbal permission, via your phone call on 1-15-09, to permit me to use your dissertation, Managing Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood: Effect of Theoretical Orientation on Strategy Recommendation (2007) for my study, which also concerns young children's challenging behavior. If you would e-mail permission so that I can include your letter in my IRB, I would be most appreciative. Please be assured that I will credit you for your contribution.
Mary Lou Bitar
IUP Doctoral Candidate

Appendix J

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

School of Graduate Studies and Research
Office of the Assistant Dean for Research
Stright Hall, Room 113
210 South Tenth Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1048

724-357-7730 - Assistant Dean for Research
724-357-2224 - Thesis and Dissertation
724-357-2439 - Centers and Institutes
724-357-2715 - FAX
Internet: *http://www.iup.edu/graduate/research*

March 16, 2009

Mary Lou Bitar
106 Mohawk Drive
Arnold, PA 15068

Dear Ms. Bitar:

Your proposed research project, "Challenging Behaviors: Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives on Young Children's Self-Regulation," (Log No. 09-060) has been reviewed by the IRB and is approved as an expedited review for the period of March 16, 2009 to March 16, 2010. I will report this to the Board. Should you need to continue your research beyond March 16, 2010, you will need to file for continuing IRB review. Please contact my office at (724) 357-7730 or come to Room 113, Stright Hall for further information.

Please note that Federal Policy requires that you notify the IRB promptly regarding: (1) any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented), (2) any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects, and (3) any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).

Although your human subjects review process is complete, you must file a Research Topic Approval Form before proceeding with your research. Enclosed is a copy of the form.

I wish you success as you pursue this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Michele S. Schwietz

Michele S. Schwietz, PhD
Chairperson
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

MSS:jeb

Enclosure: Research Topic Approval Form

cc: Dr. Mary Jalongo, Dissertation Advisor
Ms. Beverly Obitz, Thesis and Dissertation Secretary