Portfolio Assessment in the Preschool Classroom

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Abstract

Parents of five preschoolers enrolled in a small public school in Northwest Ohio participated in the study. The purpose of this study was to determine if the use of portfolio assessment with preschool students increased parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. The research questions were: What was portfolio assessment and how did it pertain to the preschool child? What were the components of traditional parent-teacher conferences? What were parental expectations for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences? Did the implementation of portfolio assessment in the preschool classroom increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences? The researcher first surveyed parents to determine what they expected from parent-teacher conferences and their level of satisfaction. The researcher then implemented portfolio assessment during parent-teacher conferences. After conferences, the researcher interviewed parents to determine if parental satisfaction had increased through the use of portfolio assessment. Parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences increased from forty percent to eighty percent.
This work is dedicated to all preschool teachers who strive to improve their teaching practice in order to better accommodate the needs of all the children, parents, families, and communities involved.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This project involved the use of portfolio assessment in conjunction with preschool parent-teacher conferences. The researcher was interested in improving the level of parental satisfaction with conferences. Portfolio assessment was the tool selected to increase parental satisfaction with preschool parent-teacher conferences.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project was to determine if the use of portfolio assessment with preschool students changed parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. The research questions were: What was portfolio assessment and how did it pertain to the preschool child? What were the components of traditional parent-teacher conferences? What were parental expectations for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences? Did the implementation of portfolio assessment in the preschool classroom increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences?

Justification

With hopes of increasing parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences, the researcher incorporated portfolio assessment during parent-teacher conferences of preschool children. The teacher researcher believed that parents would be more satisfied with parent-teacher conferences if they were given more information on the child’s growth and development. Through the use of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences, the parent receives a wide variety of useful information charting their
child’s educational progress. In addition, the researcher demonstrated an opportunity for teachers to increase the parent’s awareness of their child’s overall classroom experience.

Definition of Terms

Portfolio Assessment- A method for collecting a wide variety of a student’s work in order to document a student’s progress and growth.

Traditional Parent-Teacher Conferences- A conversation or meeting involving a teacher and a parent/parents/caregiver of a student for the purpose of sharing information on the student.

Preschool Student- A three- five year-old child enrolled in a public preschool program.

Preschool Classroom- A public school classroom arranged into learning centers geared to the developmental level of young children.

Parental Satisfaction- A sense of contentment or fulfillment felt by parents of preschoolers in regards to parent-teacher conferences.

Limitations

The teacher researcher conducted the action research project using a small group of preschool parents. Only five sets of parents met the requirements to be involved in the project. Due to the limited sample size, the results of the project may not be generalized to other preschool populations.
Chapter II: Review of the Literature

It was the intent of the literature review to determine if the implementation of portfolio assessment with preschool students would change parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. In order to answer the question, the researcher conducted a thorough review of the literature. First, the researcher wanted to define portfolio assessment and how it pertained to preschool children. Second, the researcher reviewed the literature to find out the components of traditional parent-teacher conferences. The review of the literature concluded with the researcher gathering information on what questions parents wanted answered at parent-teacher conferences.

Research Question #1: What was Portfolio Assessment?

Gelfer and Perkins (as cited in Grace & Shores, 1992; NAEYC/NAECS/SDE; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1991) defined assessment as the process of observing, recording, and documenting a child’s work. They provided guidelines of implementing portfolio assessment to make educational decisions that effected the child. Hannon (2000) indicated that portfolio assessment provided a deeper understanding of each individual child by documenting growth and development over an extended period of time.

The review of the literature identified the student portfolio as one form of assessment. “A student portfolio is a meaningful collection of student work that exemplifies the student’s interests, attitudes, ranges of skills, and development over a period of time. Portfolios may reveal a great deal about their creators because they require them to collect and reflect on examples of their work” (Gelfer & Perkins, 1998, p.
Puckett and Black (as cited in Valencia, 1990, p. 340) defined student portfolios as a philosophy that emphasized both the process and the products of learning as well as the active participation of both the teacher and the student in their own evaluation and growth. MacDonald (1996) indicated that when using a student portfolio for assessment purposes, it should contain observational and recording techniques to document the actions of students in order to acquire a more meaningful portrait of each individual student.

Puckett and Black (2000) identified four essential components of the student portfolio collection:

1. The student participates in the process of selecting portfolio contents.
2. The criteria for selection.
3. The criteria for evaluating merit.

Teacher role in portfolio assessment.

The review of literature indicated that the first step in the implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom was to select an audience. By keeping the targeted audience in mind, the teacher would be more capable to make decisions as to what to put in a portfolio and why (Hebert, 2001).

It was also stated that the teacher needed to identify the goals of the portfolio by looking at the individual needs of the students and the curriculum. The teacher would then determine the most appropriate type of portfolio to use, based on the identified goals (Salend, 1998).
Another responsibility of the teacher was to assist the student when defining ownership of the portfolio. Ownership was defined as teacher ownership, shared ownership or a combination of the two (Hebert, 2001). Gelfer and Perkins (1998) stated that teachers had differing views on ownership. They suggested that teachers should encourage students to eventually take responsibility or ownership of their portfolios and seek guidance from teachers and parents.

Several studies (Hebert, 2001; Puckett & Black, 2000; Salend, 1998) stressed the importance of the teacher establishing procedures for organizing the portfolio items prior to the collection of work samples. The actions consisted of developing an organized method of collecting portfolio work samples and collecting all of the necessary materials needed to begin portfolio assessment. Important material consisted of working folders, boxes, index cards, clipboards, etc.

Many studies (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997; Hebert, 2001; MacDonald, 1996) supported the view that the portfolio should be made visible and easily accessible to the students. An appropriate location would reflect the student’s needs and also signify respect for that student as an individual.

Another step in implementing portfolio assessment was the collection of baseline information on each student. Baseline information would include health history, preschool experiences, and any other background information that teachers were interested in. The information would then be used to help teachers get acquainted with students and their families in order to plan more appropriately for the experiences they would have at school (Puckett & Black, 2000).
Gelfer & Perkins (1998), MacDonald (1996), Puckett & Black (2000), and Salend (1998) stated that teachers needed to decide what items to collect and include in a portfolio collection. It was also mentioned that students should be involved in the selection process. According to Puckett and Black (2000), the selection process for gathering materials for the portfolio should have met the following criteria:

- The student work samples were selected by the students and were personally meaningful to them.
- The work samples and assessment tools reflected development and/or learning in all domains, in differing contexts, and on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.
- The contents of the portfolio were linked to the instructional objectives.
- The contents offered a medium for shared meaning between the student and their teachers, parents, and perhaps their peers.

Gelfer & Perkins (1998), Hebert (2001), & Salend (1998) indicated that after teachers and students had chosen the items they wanted to include in the portfolio, they recorded their significance to the student. This was accomplished by creating a descriptive statement that identified and communicated the significance of the piece with respect to what it revealed about student learning and instruction. Salend 1998 believed that descriptive statements were to be brief, written, comments that teachers and students used to document what they developed and the reasons why the samples were selected. In addition to labeling, the work samples required a date of completion.

Hebert (2001) defined teacher assessment and evaluation of student learning as an ongoing process and an integral component of an instructional program. Portfolios were
evaluated by the story they told of a student's learning. However, the specific contents of the portfolio collection were not deemed as important as the thoughtful process that children engaged in as they constructed an ongoing assessment of their work samples. In essence, portfolios could be evaluated or assessed as demonstrated by each student's growth (Gelfer & Perkins, 1998). Through the evaluation of the portfolio process, the teacher acquired useful information, which in turn guided the curriculum. How students responded to activities determined what activities and materials were offered next (MacDonald, 1996).

Gelfer and Perkins (1998) and Hebert (2001) stated that by encouraging parent participation in the process of their child's learning, a greater understanding between school and family would develop. Portfolios could be used during parent-teacher conferences to show the parents the process and products of the student's educational growth and accomplishments (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997).

**Student role in portfolio assessment.**

The review of the literature indicated that the student's role in the portfolio process was twofold. The student was to assist in the selection of portfolio contents and to develop a description or reflection of each item chosen (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997; Hebert, 2001).

Hebert (2001) stated that students found it natural to be in charge of collecting evidence of their learning. It fulfilled the student's need for responsibility, and for engaging in meaningful work.
When students were given the opportunity to review, compare, and attribute value to selections of their own work, they were absorbed in metacognitive decisions. When questioned as to how did they know they were learning, students had to examine the conditions and requirements for learning and the learner’s awareness of those conditions and requirements. It required the students to figure out which strategies they used to obtain and retain information and how to obtain them for future use.

In essence, portfolios allowed students to gain deeper insight about themselves as learners (Hebert, 2001).

Teacher benefits of portfolio assessment.

Several studies identified the teacher benefits of implementing portfolio assessment through the use of student portfolios:

- They allowed teachers to view student’s learning, development, and achievement over an extended period of time (Collinson, 1995 & Salend, 1998).

- They allowed teachers to assess both the learning process and final product (Collinson, 1995).

- They fostered an atmosphere of collaboration among the students rather than one of competition for test scores (Collinson, 1995).

- By using ongoing assessment of the portfolio contents, the teachers were able to adequately plan further instruction (MacDonald, 1996 & Salend, 1998).

- They allowed teachers to see the student as a whole person, and not merely as a learner of basic skills (Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999).
• They enabled the teachers to document developmental progress in a variety of ways, which supported meeting the individual needs of each learner (Culbertson and Jalongo, 1999).

• They helped facilitate parent-teacher conferences by providing parents with visible evidence of their child’s development over time. The portfolio experience provided a great opportunity to actually experience a child’s growth (Collinson, 1995; Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999; MacDonald, 1996).

**Student benefits of portfolio assessment.**

Several studies identified how portfolio assessment contributed to student learning and success:

• It made sense to the students and provided them with a clearer understanding of what was expected of them (Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999).

• It encouraged students to become motivated, independent learners by giving them a choice in their own education. By allowing the students to be part of the assessment process, they could see how their work changed over time (Collinson, 1995; Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999; Gelfer & Perkins, 1998).

• It fostered a sense of responsibility and independence in students (Culbertson & Jalongo, 1999).

• It would ease anxiety in students in relation to their grades and report cards. Since the students were involved in the assessment process, they understand how their grades were determined (Collinson, 1995).
• It would be less stressful for students because it was a daily, ongoing process that occurred in a safe, comfortable environment with familiar surroundings (MacDonald, 1996).

• It would focus on evaluating students in a more positive way. Students would be assessed by what they knew and could do, not by what they couldn’t do (MacDonald, 1996).

*How portfolio assessment pertains to preschool.*

Hannon (as cited in Bredekamp & Rosegrant 1992; Jones & Reynolds 1992; NAEYC 1997) identified one of the purposes of assessment in preschool programs was to help in the discussion with families of a student’s growth and development. It provided teachers with a way to show families, teachers, administrators, and the community that students in preschool programs were learning, growing, and acquiring the necessary skills for advancement. According to MacDonald (1996), portfolio assessment was the most effective and realistic instrument for the assessment of preschool students.

Puckett & Black (2000) described portfolio assessment in the context of preschool to be more of a communication system than an assessment instrument. The contents of the portfolio were used as an ongoing basis for collaborative purposes and to guide instruction.

The review of the literature indicated that the contents of a preschool portfolio should be representative of emerging development, in relation to a developmental continuum associated with content areas. Since development and learning were viewed as emergent and ongoing, preschool portfolios were not evaluated with a final letter.
grade. Instead, preschool portfolios were evaluated on the basis of whether the contents satisfied the following conditions:

- Illustrated progress toward target behaviors or achievements, or toward individual learning goals or outcomes.
-Reflected all contexts in which learning occurs: developmental, cultural, home, school, group, individual.
-Reflected individual intelligences and learning styles.
-Reflected individual capabilities and interests.
-Requested student dialogue and self-reflection.
-Provided a foundation for meaningful communication between the teacher and student.
-Provided a basis for meaningful collaboration between the teacher and the student’s parents.
-Could be used to guide instruction and curricular decisions (Puckett & Black 2000).

According to MacDonald (1996), there were only two components to the preschool portfolio assessment process. The first was to collect work samples from each student. The second was taking anecdotal records about each student. By using both methods to gather information, it portrayed a picture of the student at his/her stage of development.

Anecdotal records were described as brief, accurate descriptions of what students did or said, free of opinions and non-judgmental (MacDonald, 1996). Anecdotal records
gave the portfolio its authenticity. They increased reliability and accountability because they were detailed recordings of actual observations (Gronlund and Engel 2001).

MacDonald (1996) identified nine guidelines for teachers to follow when observing students and recording the information accurately:

1. List the date, time, location, activity, and name of the student on each recording.
2. Record only what is seen.
3. Include the student’s own words.
4. Be positive.
5. Be specific; record the events in the order that they happen, and list details.
6. Know what is important in what is recorded.
7. Know how to use the information to look at one student’s growth and change.
8. Know how to use the information obtained from the student to guide curriculum planning.
9. Know how to use the information to evaluate the program.

The review of the literature defined portfolio assessment as the process of observing, recording, and documenting a child’s growth and development over a period of time. The teacher’s main role in the portfolio assessment process was to identify the goals of the portfolio, taking into consideration the individual needs of the students and the curriculum. Other teacher responsibilities included organizing the portfolio, making it accessible to students, collecting baseline information on students, and sharing the portfolios with parents to develop a greater understanding between school and family. The student’s role in the portfolio process was to assist in the selection of portfolio
contents and to develop a description of each item chosen. This allowed students to gain deeper insight about themselves as learners. The teacher’s benefits included being able to assess both the learning process and final product and by being able to provide parents with visible evidence of their child’s development over time. Students benefited by having a clearer understanding of what to expect. In addition, they were given responsibility, independence, and ownership. In the context of preschool, portfolio assessment was defined as more of a communication system to help in the discussion with families of a student’s growth and development. In addition, the contents of the portfolio were used to guide instruction.

Research Question # 2: What Were the Components of Traditional Parent-Teacher Conferences?

The review of the literature described parent-teacher conferences as a two-way exchange of information as a result of careful planning and organization. It was a time when parents and teachers shared information about a student from their own unique perspectives (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997). In addition, it was an opportunity for the teacher and parents to work together in order to benefit the student (Manning, 1985).

Research has also indicated that parent-teacher conferences were a time when parents were given a chance to learn how their child acted in a school environment. It was stated that teachers should provide the parent with school information beyond letter grades. It was important for parents to understand their child’s motivation, attitudes towards success and failure, fears, and special interests. Furthermore, it was an effort to

Jonson (1999) identified four purposes of typical parent-teacher conferences:

1. Information gathering-The process in which teachers gained insight about a student by reviewing files and gathering information about a student's home situation.

2. Information sharing-The part of the conference in which the teacher asked parents for their perceptions of their child's strengths and weaknesses before offering his/hers.

3. Joint problem solving-The part of the conference when the two parties explored options together and discussed strategies that could help the student.

4. Development of mutual trust-The bi-product of effective and open communication between the teacher and parents.

_The components of traditional parent-teacher conferences._

Research indicated that productive conferences needed to be well planned and organized. Those initial steps ensured a worthwhile and successful conference for all members involved (Bailard & Strang, 1964).

According to Bjorklund & Burger (1987), the first step of the parent-teacher conference was to prepare the parents. They suggested an invitation to the parents along with some general information about the conference. They wanted to provide the parents with concrete information about the goals of the conference and an overview of things for
them to think about before the conference. In addition, the invitation sent home should be friendly and informal, with the purpose of informing the parents of the upcoming conference dates and times available (Bailard & Strang, 1964). Shalaway (1993) recommended having evening slots available to accommodate working parents and to have parents call or send in a return note to reserve a time. Finally, a reminder was suggested to confirm with the parents the actual date, time, and location of the conference (Fetrow, 1998).

Research indicated that in order for teachers to be fully prepared for the conference, they needed to engage in some pre-conference homework. This included finding out the student’s history from his/her school file. Social background information and changes in family structure were also important in preparing for the conference (Meyers & Pawlas, 1989).

After scheduling the conference and doing the pre-conference homework, the next step was to create the proper conference setting (Meyers & Pawlas, 1989). Bjorklund & Burger (1987) suggested an arrangement of adult-size furniture around a low table so the student’s work and any other items could be displayed and discussed. To ensure privacy and prevent disruptions, a sign labeled “Conference in Progress” could be hung on the door. Another feature included setting up a table in the hall for waiting parents with material they could take home such as curriculum plans, homework and grading policies, newsletters, and invitations to parent group meetings and school activities (Shalaway, 1993).

According to Fetrow (1998), when the conference time arrived it would be helpful for the teacher to follow a timeline in order to stay focused and avoid becoming
distracted. The initial step of the conference was the introduction. When the parents arrived, the teacher would greet them in a friendly manner, putting them at ease with some informal conversation (Bailard & Strang, 1964; Meyers and Pawlas, 1989; Robinson, 1997).

Fetrow (1998) believed that to begin the actual conference, the teacher should provide the parents with an overview of the events that led to the conference. It would also be helpful for the teacher to give parents an agenda for discussion in order for them to follow along.

Bailard & Strang (1964) and Bjorklund & Burger (1987) stated that when beginning the conference, the teacher was to make a positive statement about the child. This helped in establishing a good rapport with the parents, by helping the parents feel more at ease.

In addition to making the positive opening remarks, it was considered equally important to begin with the child’s strengths in academics verses the areas that needed improvement. Jonson (1999) stated that teachers should ask parents for their perceptions of the child’s strengths and weaknesses before offering theirs. When reporting academic performance and behavior to parents, it was beneficial to have specific examples and anecdotal records to back them up (Bailard & Strang, 1964; Robinson, 1997).

According to Fetrow (1998), the next step was to set goals with the parents, not for the parents. It was important to encourage the parents to participate and share information when setting the goals for the child’s future progress (Meyers & Pawlas, 1989). It was essential to solicit the parents’ views and suggestions for helping the child improve (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997). The role of the teacher was to guide the
discussion towards a series of solutions that could be taken to assist the student (Fetrow, 1998).

In concluding the meeting, the teacher would briefly summarize the conference and make sure the parents understood the course of action agreed upon by the teacher and parents and were comfortable with it (Fetrow, 1998; Meyers & Pawlas, 1989; Robinson, 1997). The conference should end on a positive note. The teacher would thank the parents for coming and invite parents to call, send a note, or stop after school for further discussion (Bailard & Strang, 1964; Fetrow 1998; Shalaway, 1993).

According to Bjorklund and Burger (as cited in Morrison, 1978, p. 163), “The parent-teacher conference is only as good as the follow-up and follow-through that occur after the conference.” Immediately after the conference, the teacher would write a careful record of the conference, including suggestions that were made and questions that were raised. If an action was expected from the teacher, it would be taken care of immediately (Bjorklund & Burger, 1987; Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997; Shalaway, 1993). This was also the time when teachers evaluated their own performance by writing down things they could improve upon (Shalaway, 1993). Meyers and Pawlas (1989) recommended sending a note home with the child the day after the conference thanking them again for their time.

Careful planning, support, and prompt, respectful follow-through could make conferences a positive experience and a special sharing time for all participants involved (Kneas, 1999).
The teacher role in parent-teacher conferences.

Communication was considered at the core of parent-teacher conferences. It was essential that teachers presented effective ways to communicate with parents in order to develop a mutual understanding of respect and appreciation (Bailard & Strang, 1964). Fetrow (as cited in Perl, 1995) identified six necessary communication skills that teachers needed to develop:

1. Genuine caring-A sincere sense of warmth and caring displayed when interacting with parents.
2. Building rapport-An attempt to putting parents at ease or relax them.
3. Listening-Being an active listener by really attending to what the parents were saying.
4. Empathy-Developed by putting oneself in the parent’s situation and trying to understand what the parent was experiencing.
5. Reflecting affect-Being able to understand the parents’ feelings and then trying to help them understand them.
6. Clarifying statements-Asking parents to help explain or clarify a comment they made.

The review of the literature identified a wide variety of suggestions for teachers to keep in mind when communicating with parents at parent-teacher conferences:

- Being sensitive to the demands on parents’ time and resources (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997).
- Focusing the parent-teacher conference on what was important to parents (Bailard & Strang, 1964; “Nine Tips,” 2000).
• Having sufficient, student information to share with the parents by keeping a folder for each child that contained dated work samples, anecdotal records, and grade reports (Bailard & Strang, 1964; Bjorklund & Burger, 1987).

• Using language that was simple and concrete. Staying away from educational jargon (Bailard & Strang, 1964; “Nine Tips,” 2000).

• Having the classroom in an organized, aesthetically appealing condition with materials available (Bailard & Strang, 1964; Gelfer & Perkins, 1987)).

• Being honest about student’s academic performance and behavior (Potter & Bulach, 2001)

• Allowing enough time for a meaningful conference—at least thirty minutes (Bjorklund & Burger, 1987).

• Being gracious to all parents, including those with different backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs, and socioeconomic statuses (Jonson, 1999).

• Bjorklund & Burger (as cited in Berger, 1981) speaking no more than fifty percent of the time in order to get to know the parent and child better from the parents’ perspectives.

As research indicated, both the parent and teacher should leave the parent-teacher conference with more insight into the child’s development and behavior. In addition, they should be taking the necessary steps to further that growth and development (Bailard & Strang, 1964).
The parent role in parent-teacher conferences.

According to Bailard & Strang (1964), the parents should be included in the planning of parent-teacher conferences. They needed to appreciate what conferences were all about. In addition, they needed to feel that the cooperative effort among teachers and parents would be beneficial to their child and to their understanding of the program.

According to Turner (2000) the involvement of parents in schools was a critical ingredient for children's educational growth and success. Parental participation had a great impact on student success. Research supported the fact that student achievement went up when parents were involved in their child's education (Jonson, 1999).

According to Turner (as cited in Epstein, 1991), there were benefits to parents when they were involved in schools. Parents that were involved in their child's education expressed a feeling of being more connected to the school. The children benefited too, by displaying a more positive attitude toward learning and school.

Jonson (1999) stated that because of the importance of parent involvement in schools, it was essential that parents participated in parent-teacher conferences. Research had identified some responsibilities that parents accepted when participating in parent-teacher conferences:

- Parents were to bring questions, thoughts, concerns, and information that they would like to share about their child's education to the conference (Jonson, 1999 & "Parent Conferences," 1997-1998).

- Parents were to come prepared to listen (Jonson, 1999).

- Parents provided insight into their child's needs, behaviors, interests, and abilities in the home setting (Bjorklund & Burger, 1987).
• Parents provided the school with their child’s background information, including health records and family structure (Meyers & Pawlas, 1989).

• Parents were involved in the follow-up step of the conference, by being responsible for keeping their end of the contracted agreement (Potter & Bulach, 2001).

Fetrow (as cited in Gelfer & Perkins, 1987) recognized a variety of ways in which parents benefited from participating in parent-teacher conferences:

• They gained a better understanding of their child’s school program, including teaching and learning styles.

• They could visualize their child’s personal growth.

• They were given the opportunity to communicate concerns, questions, and suggestions that could lead to a better school experience for their child.

• They could learn about activities that enhanced their child’s growth and development.

The review of the literature defined parent-teacher conferences as a two-way exchange of information and an opportunity for the teacher and parents to work together in order to benefit the student. Components of traditional parent-teacher conferences included scheduling the conference, finding out the student’s history from his/her school file, creating the proper conference setting, beginning the conference with a positive statement about the student, setting goals with parents, ending the conference on a positive note, and taking care of any follow-up plans. The teacher’s main role in the parent-teacher conference was maintaining good communication with parents. This consisted of focusing the parent-teacher conference on what was important to parents and
using language that was simple and concrete. The parent’s role in the parent-teacher conference was to provide the school with their child’s background information, and insight into their child’s needs, behaviors, and interests in the home setting. By participating in parent-teacher conferences, parents could visualize their child’s personal growth and gain a better understanding of their child’s school program.

Research Question # 3: What Were Parental Expectations for Information Regarding Satisfactory Parent-Teacher Conferences?

The research identified many different parental concerns and expectations in regards to parent-teacher conferences. According to Duffy (1997), parents attended conferences with three basic questions:

1. Do you know and like my child? The teacher could answer this concern by sharing with parents a positive anecdotal record about their child. This information translated to the parents that the teacher noticed their child and liked their child.

2. Can I trust you? By sharing tiny bits and pieces of experience with parents on a regular basis, the teacher could develop a sense of trust with them.

3. Is my child normal? The parents wanted to know their child’s performance at school. They wanted to know if their child was developing normally in the developmental areas of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. The teacher could satisfy parents by providing
them with observation notes, concrete examples, and other forms of
documentation in those four areas.

The research also indicated that parents went to parent-teacher conferences to
hear about their own child. It was a very personal experience for them. As much as they
liked to hear about their child, parents also liked to talk about their child. Therefore, it
was an opportunity for the teacher to find out about the child’s interests and needs. The
two-way exchange of information was beneficial in helping the parents and teacher better
understand and develop the whole child (Rich, 1995).

Bjorklund & Burger (1987) felt that parents had their own perspective on how
their child was doing in school. What parents really wanted to know was how their child
was doing from the school’s perspective. Most parents came to conferences with wanting
to find out what their child actually learned. They wanted some concrete materials to
demonstrate that learning had occurred (Miller, 1995). Hannon (as cited in Bredekamp &
Rosegrant, 1992) stated that parents were most interested in and gained the most from
specific information about their child. To add to parents’ understanding of their child’s
learning, research suggested that teachers selected materials such as children’s writings,
drawings, photograph of their activities, observational notes, and anecdotal records to
show parents at conferences (Hannon, 2000; Miller, 1995).

Research suggested that when teachers prepared for the parent-teacher
conference, it would be helpful for them to anticipate parents’ questions (Gelfer &
Perkins, 1987). Most parents would like to know:

- How their child got along with other children (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich,
• How their child behaved (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich 1997; Gelfer & Perkins, 1987).

• If their child was working up to his/her full potential (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987).

• What interests and special abilities their child demonstrated in class (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987).

• What they could do to help their child achieve (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987).

• How their child was doing academically (Bailards & Strang, 1964; Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997; Rich, 1995).

Rich (2000) stated that the key to a successful parent-teacher conference was making everyone feel comfortable enough to work together towards their common goal—the success of the child.

The review of the literature indicated that parents wanted to find out as much information as they could about how their child was doing at school from a teacher’s perspective. They wanted to learn about their child’s behavior and how he/she got along with others at school. They also wanted to know how and see how their child was doing academically. In addition, they were concerned if their child was reaching his/her full potential and what they could do to further their child’s learning. Finally, parents wanted to develop a sense of mutual trust with the teacher.

Summary

The research defined portfolio assessment as gaining a deeper understanding of each individual child by documenting growth and development over an extended period
of time. In relation to preschool, the portfolio served as more of a communication system rather than an assessment instrument.

Traditional parent-teacher conferences were described as an opportunity for parents and the teacher to communicate and work together to benefit the student. A positive parent-teacher conference required careful planning, support, and prompt follow-through.

The research indicated that parents went to parent-teacher conferences to hear about their own child and find out as much information as they could about their child. Parents were most interested in and gained the most from specific information about their child. The research suggested that the teacher accomplish this by sharing children’s writings and drawings, observational notes, and anecdotal records with parents.
Chapter III: Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this project was to determine if the use of portfolio assessment with preschool students changed parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. The research questions were: What was portfolio assessment and how did it pertain to the preschool child? What were the components of traditional parent-teacher conferences? What were parental expectations for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences? These three questions were answered through the review of the literature. The fourth question framed the action research project and is stated below. Did the implementation of portfolio assessment in the preschool classroom increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences?

Participants

Five sets of parents participated in the study. All parents were married and living in the same household with their biological children. The parents and children were all Caucasian and lived in small rural community. Each set of parents had a preschooler enrolled in a small, tuition-based public preschool located in Midwest Ohio for the school year of 2002-2003. The preschool enrolled all typical children. None of the families in the study qualified for reduced fees. All five sets of parents participated in parent-teacher conferences the previous school year of 2001-2002.

Instruments/Protocols

Research question # 3: What were parental expectations regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences?
In order to answer research question three, data was collected by administering a survey to the parents. The survey was in the form of a checklist. The checklist contained three questions to which the responses were to be checked by the parents (see Appendix A for a copy of the pre-conference survey form).

The first question stated, “At parent teacher conferences in November, I would like the following additional information provided to me about my child. Please check all that apply.” The items listed consisted of various areas of children’s growth and development. The choices included art & creative development, block play development, math skills, writing development, reading development, language and communication, fine motor skills, social skills, behavior, personal care, gross motor development, and other. Another choice stated, “Satisfied with current level of information. No other information needed.”

The second question stated, “I would like the following supplemental information pertaining to preschool children in general. Please check all that apply.” The items/choices listed consisted of topics that the teacher/researcher thought parents might be interested in. The choices included, kindergarten readiness, stages of child development, child behavior/discipline, health issues (bedwetting), separation from parents, transitioning into kindergarten, improving self-esteem, nutrition, first aid/CPR training, and other. The final choice stated, “No additional information needed at this time.” This information would be shared with the parents via handouts and pamphlets.

The final question on the survey stated, “The best time for both parents to attend a parent-teacher conference would be:” Choices listed were morning, afternoon, and evening.
Research question #4: Did the implementation of portfolio assessment in the preschool classroom increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences?

The researcher developed interview questions (see Appendix B) and conducted an informal interview with each set of parents to determine if parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences had increased through the use of portfolio assessment. The researcher met with each set of parents after the conference and asked them the same set of five questions. The teacher researcher used a tape recorder to document the parents’ responses. The five questions were as follows:

1. How do you feel this year’s parent-teacher conference went? Were you satisfied with the information you received?

2. Do you feel you received more information about your child by viewing your child’s portfolio at parent-teacher conferences as opposed to last year’s conference using the traditional progress report method?

3. Did you find the information in your child’s portfolio to be more useful to you in helping you better understand your child?

4. Which of the following components of portfolio assessment did you find the most helpful to you as a parent?

   - General information on the stages of your child’s development.
   - Actual writing/drawing/painting samples of your child.
   - Pictures of your child involved in various learning activities.
   - Supplemental information such as kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten.
5. Would you rather follow this new format of portfolio assessment for parent-teacher conferences or use the traditional format for parent-teacher conferences?

After the interview, the teacher/researcher listened to the tape and recorded the parent’s responses on paper (see Appendix B for a copy of the interview questions).

*Procedures*

This project formally began at “Preschool Orientation,” the week before school began. The teacher/researcher met with the prospective parents that night to make them aware of the project that she was working on and how they might be involved. She provided a brief overview of her project and explained to them that she would like their help. The parents were informed that they would be receiving a letter explaining the project in detail, along with a survey (see Appendix A) to be filled out and returned to school in the provided envelope. The teacher/researcher also met with her school principal to inform her of the purpose of the project and the intent to implement portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences (see Appendix C for a copy of the letter to the principal).

During the first full week of school, a letter, a pre-conference survey form (see Appendix A), and an envelope was sent home to five parents via their children. The envelope had the teacher/researcher’s name on it and a number from 1-5. The researcher assigned each parent a number from 1-5, and recorded this information in a file folder labeled portfolio project. The letter reminded the parents of the project and asked them to fill out the survey. The surveys were numbered from 1-5 in order to keep the data well
organized. Envelopes were provided for the parents to put the completed pre-conference surveys in and return them to school with their children by September 20 (see Appendix D for a copy of this parent letter).

When the completed surveys (see Appendix A) were returned, they were put in a file folder labeled portfolio project. The results from survey questions were used to determine how to implement the portfolio assessment project. The information from the surveys helped determine what items to gather and collect in the portfolios to share with parents at the upcoming parent-teacher conferences in November.

The survey (see Appendix A) also indicated the best time for parents to meet for conferences. This gave the teacher/researcher an opportunity to plan the conferences at times most convenient to the parents.

Prior to conferences in November, many items were collected to put in each child’s portfolio. Each portfolio was unique in that it contained the specific information that the parents had requested. For example, for the parent who wanted information on writing development, the writing samples, anecdotal records, drawings, and name samples were gathered for that child. Additional information about preschool children that parents requested was also collected to share with parents at conferences. Examples included, brochures on Kindergarten Readiness, first aid training times, handouts containing information on stages of child development, and information about a kindergarten transitioning night to be held at the school in April.

A file folder system was used to keep all of the information and documentation organized and accessible. There was a file folder for each of the five students whose parents were participating in the project. The student’s name and corresponding number
was written on the outside of each folder. The front cover of the folder also contained a list of the information that the parents had requested on the pre-conference survey (see Appendix A). As the information was collected, it was put in the appropriate file folder and checked off on the front of the folder. This system helped to determine what items were still needed for each portfolio. Many items put in the portfolio were dated children’s writings, drawings, and paintings. Other items in the portfolio included copies of math graphs the students completed, pictures of block structures students built, anecdotal notes on conversations students had, etc.

The teacher/researcher used other resources to help gather more information about preschool children in general. Information from books was copied to share with parents. In addition, the Putnam County Office of Education was contacted and brochures from the National Association for the Education of Young Children on discipline and kindergarten readiness were received. A pamphlet on an Effective Parenting Program held in the parent’s county of residence was included. Furthermore, the teacher/researcher talked with her school principal to get information pertaining to kindergarten readiness (see Appendix E for a copy of the handouts, brochures, etc.).

Once all of the requested information was collected, it was transferred from file folders to legal-sized pocket folders, or “portfolios”. This was done because all of the portfolios contained many writing, painting, drawing, and cutting samples, and required bigger folders to store them. Each portfolio was also labeled with the student’s name and corresponding number. In the front of each portfolio, the teacher/researcher put a copy of the pre-conference survey (see Appendix A) that the child’s parents had completed in September.
Conferences were scheduled in November according to parent’s scheduling needs. The teacher/researcher began the conference by greeting the parents and showing them a copy of the pre-conference survey form that they completed in September (see Appendix A). The items in the portfolio were shared with the parents. The parents were encouraged to ask questions or add comments at any time during the conference. The conference began with the information related to the individual growth and development of the child. Some items included children’s writing samples, pictures of block structures, paintings, samples of cutting skills, and anecdotal records of language skills. The teacher/researcher then shared with the parents more general information about preschool-age children. This was also information that parents had previously requested. Some items included brochures on kindergarten readiness, pamphlets on discipline, handouts on stages of child development, and information on transitioning from preschool to kindergarten. Next, the parents were asked to share any comments or concerns. The conferences concluded with the researcher thanking the parents for coming. At the conclusion of the conference, the parents were asked if they would be willing to meet to discuss how the conference compared to the conference they had had the previous year. The parents were shown a letter with a list of dates and times that were available for this meeting, and asked if they would sign up for a time convenient for them (see Appendix F for a copy of this letter). The meeting times were scheduled between the weeks of December 3-December 13. Parents were informed that the meeting would last between fifteen to thirty minutes. The researcher explained to the parents that she would be asking them five questions pertaining to the outcome of the parent-teacher conference using portfolio assessment. She further informed them that the meeting
would be more effective if she could tape their responses to the questions and later write them down on paper. All of the parents agreed to the meeting and signed up for times convenient for them. The time and date for each conference was recorded on the master copy and parents were given a sticky note containing the same information.

In December, the teacher/researcher met with each of the five parents in the preschool classroom at a time of their choosing. The meeting/interview was informal and open-ended. The teacher-researcher began the meeting by greeting the parent and thanking the parent for meeting with her. The researcher explained to the parent again that she would be taping the interview in order to document the information accurately. The parent was then shown the list of five questions related to the parent-teacher conference that were to be answered. Before starting the tape, the parent was asked if he/she had any questions. When the parent was ready, the researcher turned on the tape recorder and proceeded in asking all five questions. After the interview, the parents were once again thanked for their time and assistance. The tape recordings were used to document the parent’s responses to the interview questions.

**Timeline**

Preparation for the parent-teacher conference using portfolio assessment began the last week in August when the school year began. The school principal was informed of intent to implement portfolio assessment during fall parent-teacher conferences. Parents received the information letter and pre-conference survey form during the first week of September (see Appendix A). They were asked to complete the survey and return it to school by September 20, 2002. The information for the portfolios was
collected throughout the entire school year. However, the only items shared with parents at conferences were those items collected from August through November of 2002. The parents attended parent-teacher conferences between November 25-26, 2002. The parents were interviewed after parent-teacher conferences between December 3-13, 2002. The teacher/researcher then used the data she collected to determine if parents were more satisfied with parent-teacher conferences with portfolios.

Data Analysis

In review, the researcher wanted to find out what parental expectations for information regarding parent-teacher conferences were and if parental satisfaction increased through the use of portfolio assessment.

Research question #3: What were parental expectations for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences?

In order to see what parents expected from parent-teacher conferences, five sets of parents were asked to respond to a pre-conference survey (see Appendix A). The surveys were numbered 1-5 and were to be returned in envelopes with the same number on them. A master copy of the parent’s names and assigned number was kept in a file folder labeled portfolio project. When the parents returned the surveys, the teacher/researcher placed them in the “portfolio project” file folder. When all five surveys were received, the researcher started a file folder for each student, labeling the folder with the student’s name and corresponding number. She then copied each pre-conference survey form and placed them in the appropriate file folders. For example, the survey labeled #1 was
copied and placed in the front of the file folder labeled with # 1. The original copy of the pre-conference surveys was kept in the appropriate envelopes and kept in the "portfolio project" folder.

The first survey question (see Appendix A) asked parents what information they wanted from parent-teacher conferences and if they were satisfied with current level of information given at conferences. The teacher/researcher transferred the information from question one on the survey onto the front of the file folder. For example, if parent # 1 checked math skills, gross motor development, writing development, and social skills, the researcher listed those items on the front of the file folder labeled # 1. The items were listed in a column on the left side of the file folder. Below the column, a check was placed if the parent was already satisfied with the current level of information given at conferences. This format was continued for all five folders.

The second question on the pre-conference survey (see Appendix A) pertained to what type of information each individual parent wanted in relation to preschool children in general. The teacher/researcher looked over the parent’s responses and then transferred the information onto the front of the appropriate file folder. For example, if parent # 2 requested information on kindergarten readiness, transitioning into kindergarten, and stages of child development, the researcher listed those same items on the front of file folder # 2. The items were listed in rows on the right hand side of the folder. This format was continued with all five folders. When all folders were completed, the researcher tallied up the parents’ responses. This information was documented on the front of the researcher’s "portfolio project" folder. For example, if all five parents wanted information on kindergarten readiness, the researcher wrote down kindergarten readiness
on her folder with five tally marks behind it. This method was used to help gather brochures and pamphlets and copying from books and flyers.

The last question on the survey (see Appendix A) pertained to conference time. The teacher/researcher recorded the preferred time chosen by the parents on the student's file folder, under the child's name and number. This information was used when planning a time for the parent-teacher conference.

The teacher/researcher then used the student's file folders to help collect the necessary work samples and developmental information needed for conferences. As the teacher/researcher collected the information, it was placed in the appropriate file folder and a check mark was put by that item on the front of the folder. In other words, as the items went in the folder, the item was checked off on the front of the folder. This procedure was continued until all of the items on all five folders were checked.

Research question #4: Did the implementation of portfolio assessment in the preschool classroom increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences?

To answer this research question, the teacher researcher interviewed the five sets of parents after parent-teacher conferences. A set of five open-ended questions pertaining to the implementation of portfolio assessment was developed for use at parent-teacher conferences (see Appendix B). The questions were designed to help determine if the parents were more satisfied with the parent-teacher conference using portfolio assessment. The parent interviews were recorded on a tape recorder. After the interviews, the researcher played back the tape and transcribed the parents' responses. Each interview was labeled by the number that the parents had been given at the
beginning of the project. The researcher then reviewed all of the parent responses and color-coded them. All positive responses, related to the portfolio assessment process, from parents were highlighted in yellow. All negative responses were highlighted in green. Any suggestions for improving portfolio assessment with parent-teacher conferences with were highlighted in orange. Each interview question response was classified as either positive or negative, based on the color it was coded. The positive responses for each parent were compared to the number of positive responses and a percentage computed. A score of seventy five percent or higher on positive responses was the cut score needed to classify the parent as satisfied with the parent-teacher conferences.

Summary

In review, the researcher wanted to determine if parents were satisfied with conferences and what their expectations were for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences. For the purpose of this study, five sets of parents who had participated in parent-teacher conferences the previous school year were chosen. In September, these parents responded to a survey that was designed to find out what types of information parents wanted from parent-teacher conferences. The completed surveys were used to help determine what student samples and what types of developmental information to collect and save for use at parent conferences. All of this information went into the students’ portfolios that were then shared with parents at parent-teacher conferences in November.
The study was designed to determine if implementing portfolio assessment during parent-teacher conferences would increase parent’s satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. To answer this question, the researcher decided to interview the parents after parent-teacher conferences to ask them how they felt about the conference. Five questions were developed for parents to respond to in order to determine if they were more satisfied with the parent-teacher conferences where portfolio assessment was implemented (see Appendix B). The teacher/researcher asked parents these questions during an interview in the weeks following conferences. The parent responses were taped and later recorded for review and coding. The researcher carefully verified all of the data for accuracy by re-checking each recorded response. All of the data from the surveys (see Appendix A) and interviews (see Appendix B) were translated into written and table form. That data provided the results for the project and answered the following research questions: “What were parental expectations for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences?” and “Did the implementation of portfolio assessment in the preschool classroom increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences?”
Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of portfolio assessment with preschool students would change parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. Prior to parent-teacher conferences, the researcher implemented a survey (see Appendix A) with parents to discover if they were satisfied with conferences and what types of information they wanted to receive at conferences. The information from the surveys was used to implement portfolio assessment at conferences in November. Following conferences, the researcher interviewed the parents to determine if they were more satisfied with the portfolio parent-teacher conference as compared to the previous, traditional parent-teacher conference.

Research Question #3: What Were Parental Expectations for Information Regarding Satisfactory Parent-Teacher Conferences?

In order to answer research question three, the researcher first needed to determine if parents were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences. The researcher designed a survey for parents in the form of a checklist. It consisted of three questions pertaining to parent-teacher conferences and the types of information parents wanted to receive at these conferences. The survey questions also allowed the parents to check if they were already satisfied with parent-teacher conferences. The pre-conference survey was administered (see Appendix A) to five sets of parents in order to determine the percentage of parents already satisfied with parent-teacher conferences. On the survey, parents were asked to check items that applied to them. An item on the survey stated, “Satisfied with current level of information. No other information needed.” The
responses to this item from each parent were recorded on the front of their child’s file folder. Responses were then tallied up and converted to a percentage. Forty percent of parents checked that they were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences. The data indicated that less than half of the parents were satisfied with the current level of information given at parent-teacher conferences. The researcher documented the information in her “portfolio project” folder. It was recorded and used later to compare with the results of satisfaction after parent-teacher conferences.

The researcher also used the survey (see Appendix A) to determine parental expectations of parent-teacher conferences. The first survey question asked parents to check the areas in which they wanted information pertaining to their child. The question read, “At parent-teacher conferences in November, I would like the following additional information provided to me about my child. Please check all that apply.” The items listed consisted of various areas of children’s growth and development. The responses from each parent were then recorded on the front of their child’s file folder.

The parent responses for each item on the survey (see Appendix A) were also tallied up and converted to a percentage. The results were as follows:

- 60% of parents requested information on art & creative development.
- 60% of parents requested information on math skills.
- 60% of parents requested information on reading development.
- 80% of parents requested information on fine motor development.
- 80% of parents requested information on behavior.
- 60% of parents requested information on gross motor development.
- 40% of parents requested information on block play development.
- 80% of parents requested information on writing development.
- 80% of parents requested information on language and communication.
- 80% of parents requested information on social skills.
- 20% of parents requested information on personal care.

The graph that follows summarizes the responses of parents to the first survey question on what types of information was requested.

![Graph summarizing parent responses](image)

**Figure 1.** Percentage of parents and their responses for the information they requested on their children.
The data demonstrated that most parents were interested in fine motor development, behavior, writing development, language and communication, and social skills.

The second question asked the parents to check the areas in which they wanted information regarding preschool children in general. The question read, “I would like the following supplemental information pertaining to preschool children in general. Please check all that apply.” The items/choices listed consisted of topics that the teacher/researcher thought might be of interest to parents. The responses from each parent were then recorded on the front of their child’s file folder.

The parent responses for each item on the survey (see Appendix A) were tallied and converted to a percentage. The results were as follows:

- 100% of parents requested information about kindergarten readiness.
- 40% of parents requested information about child behavior/discipline.
- 100% of parents requested information about transitioning to kindergarten.
- 40% of parents requested information about improving self-esteem.
- 20% of parents requested information about first aid/CPR training.
- 20% of parents requested information on stages of child development.
• 0% of parents requested information about health issues (bedwetting).
• 0% of parents requested information about separation from parents.
• 0% of parents requested information about nutrition.
• 0% of parents checked no additional information needed at this time.

The graph that follows summarizes the responses of parents to the second survey question on what types of supplemental information they requested.

Figure 2. Percentage of parents and their responses for the supplemental information they requested.
The data demonstrated that most parents requested information on kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten.

The final question on the survey (see Appendix A) asked parents to check their preferred time of conference. The question read, “The best time for both parents to attend a parent-teacher conference would be.” The choices listed were morning, afternoon, and evening. The response from each parent was also recorded on the front of the child’s file folder. The responses were also tallied up and converted to a percentage. The results follow:

- 20% of parents requested a morning conference.
- 0% of parents requested an afternoon conference.
- 80% of parents requested an evening conference.

The graph that follows summarizes the responses of parents to the third survey question on what time parents preferred for conferences.
Figure 3. Percentage of parents and their responses for preferred time chosen for parent-teacher conferences.

The data confirmed that most parents were interested in evening parent-teacher conferences.

Summary

A parent survey was used (see Appendix A) to determine if parents were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences and to determine what types of information they wanted to receive at parent-teacher conferences. The data from the surveys revealed that less than half of the parents were satisfied with the current level of information given at parent-teacher conferences. The data also demonstrated that the majority of parents were interested in receiving information on fine motor development, behavior, writing development, language and communication, social skills, kindergarten readiness, and
transitioning into kindergarten. In addition, the survey indicated that most parents were interested in attending parent-teacher conferences in the evening.

Research Question #4: Did the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment in the Preschool Classroom Increase Parental Satisfaction with Parent-Teacher Conferences?

In order to answer research question four, the teacher researcher conducted a parent interview (see Appendix B) with five sets of parents after parent-teacher conferences to help determine if portfolio assessment increased parents’ satisfaction with conferences. The interview consisted of five questions pertaining to the implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences. The questions were chosen to help determine if parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences increased. (Refer to Appendix B for a list of the questions asked at the interview). All responses were coded as positive or negative and converted to a percentage. It was determined that seventy five percent or higher indicated parent satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences.

The first question asked, “How do you feel this year’s parent-teacher conference went? Were you satisfied with the information you received?” Responses to this question were all positive. One hundred percent of the parents responded that the conference went fine, well, very well, or very, very well. This data revealed that all parents were satisfied with the information they received at parent-teacher conferences as compared to the forty percent satisfaction of parents on the pre-conference survey (see Appendix A). The data also confirmed that all of the respondents were satisfied with the information they received and were more satisfied than before the portfolio parent-teacher conference.
The second interview question asked, “Do you feel you received more information about your child by viewing your child’s portfolio at parent-teacher conferences as opposed to last year’s conference using the traditional progress report method?” (See Appendix B) One hundred percent of the parents responded to this question positively. They stated that they received more information about their child. Eighty percent of the parents commented that it was helpful to actually see how their child had progressed throughout the year. The graph that follows demonstrates the responses to the second interview question.

Figure 4. Responses to the interview question, “Do you feel you received more information about your child by viewing your child’s portfolio at parent-teacher conferences as opposed to last year’s conference using the traditional progress report method?”
The data confirmed that all of the respondents were satisfied with the amount of information they received by viewing their child’s portfolio.

The third question asked, “Did you find the information in your child’s portfolio to be more useful to you in helping you better understand your child?” Eighty percent of the parents responded yes, stating that it was helpful to compare the developmental guidelines with their child’s developmental level. Twenty percent of the parents responded negatively, stating that the information given was the same as other years. The graph that follows summarizes the responses to the third interview question (see Appendix B).

![Graph showing responses to the interview question](image)

**Figure 5.** Responses to the interview question, “Did you find the information in your child’s portfolio to be more useful to you in helping you better understand your child?”

The data confirmed that most parents found the information in the portfolio to be useful.
The fourth interview question asked, "Which of the following components of portfolio assessment did you find the most helpful to you as a parent? General information on the stages of your child's development, actual writing/drawing/painting samples of your child, pictures of your child involved in various learning activities, or supplemental information such as kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten." (See Appendix B) One hundred percent of the parents responded positively in that some of the previous components of portfolio assessment were beneficial to them. Sixty percent of the parents commented that all of the components were helpful to them in some way or another. The graph that follows summarizes the responses to the fourth interview question.

![Graph](image)

**Figure 6.** Responses to the interview question, "Which of the components of portfolio assessment did you find the most helpful to you as a parent? General information on the stages of your child's development, actual writing/drawing/painting samples of your child, pictures of your child involved in various learning activities, or supplemental information such as kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten."
The data confirmed that all of the respondents found some of the components of portfolio assessment helpful.

The fifth question asked, “Would you rather follow this new format of portfolio assessment for parent-teacher conferences or use the traditional format for parent-teacher conferences?” Eighty percent of the parents responded that they preferred the new format for parent-teacher conferences. They commented that they received more information with new portfolio format for parent-teacher conferences. Twenty percent of the parents responded that the traditional progress report format was preferred because it was more compact, stating that the portfolio contained too much information. The graph that follows summarizes the responses to the fifth interview question (see Appendix B).

![Bar graph showing responses to the interview question]

**Figure 7.** Responses to the interview question, “Would you rather follow this new format of portfolio assessment for parent-teacher conferences or use the traditional format for parent-teacher conferences?”
The data confirmed that most parents preferred the new, portfolio method for parent-teacher conferences. (Refer to Appendix G for a copy of the parent’s responses to the interview questions).

In order to determine if parental satisfaction had increased through the implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences, a combination of the parent survey (see Appendix A) and the parent interview was used (see Appendix B). The parent survey that was administered to parents before conferences asked them what types of information they wanted at conferences. The first part of the survey (see Appendix A) asked them to check the areas where they wanted specific information pertaining to their child. Choices included many areas of development. The last choice stated, “Satisfied with current level of information. No other information needed.” Forty percent of the parents surveyed responded by checking satisfied with current level of information. Therefore, forty percent of the parents were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences before the implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences.

The researcher interviewed the same parents after implementing portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences and asked them questions pertaining to satisfaction with conferences. The researcher recorded and coded all parent responses to help determine satisfaction. The teacher/researcher concluded that a respondent score of seventy five percent or higher would indicate parent satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. Eighty percent of the parents interviewed were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences that implemented portfolio assessment. Therefore, eighty percent of the
parents were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences in which portfolio assessment was implemented. The graph that follows summarizes the responses of both the parent survey (see Appendix A) and parent interview (see Appendix B) in terms of parental satisfaction.

Figure 8. Results of the parent survey and parent interview pertaining to satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences.

The data indicated that parental satisfaction increased through the implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences.

Summary

The data from the pre-conference survey (see Appendix A) indicated that less than fifty percent of parents were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences before the
implementation of portfolio assessment. Most parents surveyed were interested in receiving more information at parent-teacher conferences. The most requested information pertained to fine motor development, behavior, writing development, language and communication, and social skills. All parents were also interested in receiving supplemental information on kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten. Survey (see Appendix A) responses further indicated that most parents requested evening conferences.

The interview questions (see Appendix B) were answered by the same set of parents. The data revealed that all parents were satisfied with the information they received at parent-teacher conferences. All were satisfied with viewing their child’s portfolio at conferences, commenting that it was helpful to “see” their child’s growth and development. Most of the parents found the information in the portfolio to be useful in helping them better understand their child. All parents found the components of portfolio assessment to be beneficial to them. And, the majority of the parents preferred the portfolio method for parent-teacher conferences as opposed to the traditional format.

When comparing the parent survey (see Appendix A) data to the parent interview (see Appendix B) data, the researcher found an increase in parental satisfaction. On the parent survey, only forty percent of parents were satisfied with the current level of information received at conferences. However, when interviewed after the implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences, eighty percent of the parents responded as being satisfied with parent-teacher conferences.
Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this project was to determine if the use of portfolio assessment with preschool students changed parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. The researcher first defined portfolio assessment and how it pertained to the preschool child, as well as identifying the major components of traditional parent-teacher conferences. Next, the researcher reviewed the literature to discover what parents expected from parent-teacher conferences. The researcher also surveyed parents to determine if they were satisfied with conferences and their expectations for the information conveyed at conferences. Finally, the researcher interviewed parents to determine if the implementation of portfolio assessment increased parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences.

Discussion

*Research Question #3: What Were Parental Expectations for Information Regarding Satisfactory Parent-Teacher Conferences?*

The researcher collected data by administering a pre-conference survey with parents prior to parent-teacher conferences. The researcher was interested in determining the percentage of parents already satisfied with parent-teacher conferences. On the first question of the survey, forty percent of the parents checked that they were satisfied with the current level of information given at parent-teacher conferences. The results indicated that less than half of the parents surveyed were satisfied with the information they received at parent-teacher conferences. This seemed to suggest that the parents felt that they were not given enough information at parent-teacher conferences. This data
may further indicate that the majority of the parents were not satisfied with the format in which the information was given at parent-teacher conferences. These results prompted the researcher to implement and experiment with portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences in order to offer those parents more and different types of information than what was presented at a typical parent-teacher conference and attempt to increase parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences.

The survey was also used to determine what types of information parents wanted pertaining to their child's own growth and development. Parents responded to the first question on the survey by checking the items that were of interest to them. Of the eleven items listed on the survey, all were checked by a minimum of one parent. In other words, each item was requested by a percentage of twenty percent or more. This data seemed to suggest that parents were interested in receiving a wide variety of information pertaining to their child's growth and development. It may further indicate that parents wanted to receive a large amount of information on their child's growth and development.

Many parents checked numerous items on the first question of the survey. In fact, eighty percent of the parents requested information on fine motor development, behavior, writing development, language and communication, and social skills. This data may suggest that many parents valued information pertaining to fine motor skills. It may further indicate that parents considered fine motor development an area of development in which their preschool children needed to excel. The researcher interpreted this to mean that parents wanted to see actual samples of their child's fine motor development and how he/she was progressing through drawings, paintings, cutting with scissors, and lacing objects. The researcher shared this information with parents through the
implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences. Educational resources that described each of the six stages of art and fine motor development were also shared with parents.

The majority of the parents also requested information on behavior. This data seemed to indicate that most parents were interested in how their children were behaving and getting along at school. It may further suggest that those parents valued behavior as being important in a preschool classroom. At conferences, the researcher shared with those parents how their child was doing with the classroom rules and routine.

Writing development was another developmental area that many parents requested information on. This may suggest that most parents felt writing was important in the growth and development of their child. It may further indicate that parents were seeking information on how their child's written language was developing. The researcher determined it was valuable to share with parents both the educational resource of stages of written language development and the children's dated, writing samples. It was felt that both would help parents see and understand how their child was developing in the area of written communication.

Most parents were also interested in information on language and communication. This data may suggest that those parents considered language and communication important elements in preschool growth and development. It may also suggest that parents were interested in whether or not their child communicated well in the classroom environment. The researcher interpreted this to mean that parents were interested in learning about the different stages of oral development and how their child was doing in relation to his/her developmental stage. At conferences, the teacher/researcher shared
this information with parents, along with anecdotal records of their child’s language used when conversing in the classroom.

Information on social skills was yet another developmental area that was requested by the majority of parents. This data may indicate that most parents were concerned with how their children were interacting with and getting along with others in the preschool classroom. It may further suggest that parents felt their children needed to get along with others and form positive friendships with their peers. The teacher/researcher hoped to satisfy these parents by providing them with positive comments pertaining to their child’s social development, along with photos of their child engaged in cooperative play situations.

The second question on the parent survey asked parents to check the areas in which they wanted information regarding preschool children in general. There were ten items listed for the parents to check if they were interested in additional information. Out of the ten areas, four areas were not checked by any of the parents. None of the parents checked information on health issues, separation from parents, nutrition, or additional information. This data may indicate that at the time of the survey, no parents felt the need for any information on the related health issues listed on the survey.

Of the ten items on the second question of the survey, one hundred percent of the parents requested information on kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten. This data seemed to suggest that parents were mostly interested in information pertaining to kindergarten. It may further indicate that parents were concerned with whether or not their child was going to be ready for kindergarten the following year. The teacher/researcher gathered information on kindergarten readiness
skills from a wide variety of resources to share with parents at conferences. She also collaborated with her school principal in order to provide a more detailed list of skills that children were expected to have mastered before entering kindergarten. The researcher felt that this type of information was what parents would be interested in.

On the survey, all parents checked that they were interested in receiving additional information on transitioning into kindergarten. This data may have suggested that parents wanted information on how they could better prepare their children for the transition from preschool to kindergarten. Information was gathered from a variety of educational resources on how to help prepare children for kindergarten. This information was shared with parents at conferences. The data may also suggest that parents were interested in helping ease their child’s transition from preschool to kindergarten. This data prompted the researcher to offer a “transitioning night” for parents and their children. The purpose was to respond to a parent need by providing a night when they, along with their children, could meet the kindergarten teacher, see the kindergarten classroom, and receive answers to any questions they might have.

The final question on the parent pre-conference survey asked parents to check their preferred time for conference. Eighty percent of the parents responded by checking evening conference as their preferred time. This data may suggest that most parents work during the day, leaving evenings as the most favored choice. It may further indicate that evenings would be a more suitable time for both parents to attend conferences. The teacher/researcher used this data when scheduling conferences. In other words, when signing up for conferences, she provided parents with many evening time choices. She also offered a few morning and afternoon times.
Research Question # 4: Did the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment in the Preschool Classroom Increase Parental Satisfaction with Parent-Teacher Conferences?

Data was collected by interviewing the parents after parent-teacher conferences to determine whether or not parents were more satisfied with parent-teacher conferences in which portfolio assessment was implemented. The first interview question asked parents how they felt the conference went and if they were satisfied with the information they received. One hundred percent of the parents stated that the conference went fine, and they were satisfied with the information they received. One parent commented that she was presented with a lot more information that would help her prepare her daughter for kindergarten. The data seemed to suggest that the parents were satisfied with the amount of information given to them at parent-teacher conferences.

The second interview question asked parents if they felt they received more information about their child by viewing their child’s portfolio at parent-teacher conferences as opposed to last year’s traditional format for conferences. One hundred percent of the parents responded yes to this question. Many parents commented further as to why they liked viewing their child’s portfolio. One parent commented that she liked to see her son’s fine motor skills of coloring and cutting progressing. This seemed to suggest that the children’s actual work samples were considered valuable by some parents. Another parent stated that the developmental guidelines she received were very beneficial in helping her determine what areas of development she needed to work on with her son. This may indicate that some parents found the developmental guidelines useful in helping them better understand where their child was in relation to the stages of development.
The third interview question asked parents if the information in their child's portfolio was useful in helping them better understand their child. Eighty percent of the parents responded yes to this question. This data may indicate that most parents were satisfied with the types of information contained in their child's portfolio. Parent's additional comments were that it was beneficial to have the teacher reinforce what the parents may have felt or thought. Most parents added that the information in the portfolio was straightforward in that it compared developmental guidelines with the developmental stages of their children. This data may further indicate that most parents felt the portfolio information helped them visualize the overall development of their child.

Twenty percent of the parents responded to the third interview question with some hesitation. One parent commented that the information given at conferences was probably that same as other years. She also stated that she felt the teacher/researcher always gave parents plenty of information. This data may suggest that the parent was already satisfied with conferences and felt somewhat overwhelmed with all the additional information. It may also indicate that this particular parent may be interested in more of a clear, concise format of presenting information on her child's growth and development.

The fourth interview question asked parents, "Which of the following components of portfolio assessment did you find the most helpful to you as a parent? General information on the stages of your child's development, actual writing/drawing/painting samples of your child, pictures of your child involved in various learning activities, or supplemental information such as kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten." One hundred percent of the parents responded to this question stating that at least some of the components were beneficial to them. This data may suggest that
parents liked the different types of information presented and how the information was all contained in their child’s own portfolio. In fact, sixty percent of the parents commented that all of the components were significant to them in some form or another. This may also indicate that parents felt they received a more diverse collection of information by viewing all of the different components of portfolio assessment. In addition, it may suggest that most parents were satisfied with the implementation of portfolio assessment during parent-teacher conferences.

The final interview question asked parents if they would rather follow the new format of portfolio assessment for parent-teacher conferences as opposed to the traditional format. Eighty percent of the parents stated they preferred the new format for parent-teacher conferences. These parents also commented that the reason they liked the new format was because they received a lot more information with the use of the portfolio. This data seemed to suggest that most parents were satisfied with the implementation of portfolio assessment. It may further indicate that the parents preferred the portfolio method because they valued receiving more information on their child.

Twenty percent of the parents responded that the traditional format was preferred because it was more compact, stating that the portfolio contained too much information. This data seemed to indicate that the portfolio was considered overwhelming by containing more information than needed. It may also suggest that some parents may be more interested in a conference format that contains useful developmental information on their child in a more clear and concise manner.

Twenty percent of the parents also responded to the last interview question with a suggestion for future conferences. It was commented that the time allowed for parent-
teacher conferences was not long enough. This data seemed to indicate that parents were interested in extending the length of conference time. It may also suggest that parents felt overwhelmed by all of the information they were given in such a brief period of time. It may also help explain why a parent would prefer a more compact format for conferences. In a fifteen-minute parent-teacher conference, parents can only absorb so much information about their children. This may also explain why a parent would choose the traditional format of using a progress report for conferences.

The data collected from both the survey and the interview was used to help determine if the parents were more satisfied with the implementation of portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences. Forty percent of the parents were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences before the implementation of portfolio assessment, and eighty percent of the parents were satisfied with conferences after the implementation of portfolio assessment. This data seemed to indicate that parental satisfaction increased through the implementation of portfolio assessment. It may further suggest that the parents were more satisfied because they gained more insight into their child’s own growth and development by viewing their child’s portfolio.

Research Results and Practice

The teacher/researcher attained beneficial information and developed into a better teacher throughout the duration of this project. By reviewing the literature on parent-teacher conferences, the researcher discovered that parent’s main purpose for attending
parent-teacher conferences was to receive a lot of information about their child. With that in mind, the teacher/researcher tried to improve parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences by experimenting with portfolio assessment. She was hoping to work closely with parents and implement portfolio assessment as the means to provide them with the information they were interested in.

The teacher was highly motivated to provide parents with the information they requested. By parent-teacher conferences, the children’s portfolios contained several samples of artwork, anecdotal records, writing samples, photos, and supplemental information on kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten. Parents were quite satisfied with the amount of useful information contained in the portfolios. It allowed them to “see” the actual growth of their child.

The teacher/researcher discovered that portfolio assessment was useful for all preschool parent-teacher conferences. It helped demonstrate the growth and development of children in a positive way. In other words, all children grow and develop throughout the course of the school year. Portfolio assessment provides parents with all of these accomplishments in a visual format.

The teacher/researcher was very pleased with the comments made by the parents during the post-conference interview. They were very appreciative of all the time and effort that was put in to each child’s portfolio. As a result of the positive comments made by parents, the teacher plans to continue using some form of portfolio assessment for future parent-teacher conferences. The time required to implement portfolio assessment was considered very well worth the rewards.
Summary

The purpose of this project was to determine if the use of portfolio assessment with preschool students increased parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. Parents of five preschoolers enrolled in a small public school in Northwest Ohio participated in the project. The researcher began the project by conducting a thorough review of the literature to define portfolio assessment, components of traditional parent-teacher conferences, and parental expectations for information regarding satisfactory parent-teacher conferences. The researcher then surveyed the parents to determine if they were satisfied with parent-teacher conferences and what they expected from conferences. Results of the survey revealed that most parents were interested in receiving more information about child development and kindergarten readiness. Portfolio assessment was implemented during parent-teacher conferences in November. In December, the researcher interviewed parents to determine if parental satisfaction had increased through the use of portfolio assessment. Data from the parent interview indicated that the majority of the parents were satisfied with the information they received from the parent-teacher conference in which portfolio assessment was implemented. The percentage of parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences increased from forty percent to eighty percent.

Recommendations

If the project was replicated, it is recommended there be a larger sampling of parents. For the purposes of this study, the researcher only used parents that participated in preschool parent-teacher conferences the previous school year. A larger sampling of
parents may yield additional information about parental attitudes towards and opinions of parent-teacher conferences.

Another recommendation would be to allow more time for individual parent-teacher conferences. For the purposes of this study, the researcher scheduled conferences in fifteen-minute intervals. Each portfolio conference was scheduled for fifteen minutes, which was the same time schedule used the previous school year when traditional parent-teacher conferences were implemented. During the first portfolio parent-teacher conference, the teacher/researcher realized that fifteen minutes was not nearly enough time to present all of the information contained in the child’s portfolio. Furthermore, the teacher/researcher felt very rushed when trying to share all of the valuable information in the portfolio with parents. It was nearly impossible to stay on schedule when conferences were scheduled back to back, every fifteen minutes. In addition, there was very little time available for parents to ask questions or comment on the information presented to them. The teacher/researcher concluded that when scheduling portfolio conferences on another year, the minimum conference time would be thirty minutes.

The teacher/researcher would also recommend a couple of changes with the instruments she developed. The pre-conference survey was developed by the researcher to help her determine what kinds of information parents wanted to receive at parent-teacher conferences. The parents were asked to check the areas in which they wanted information on regarding preschool children in general. The researcher found this survey helpful when determining what types of information to put in the child’s portfolio. However, the survey could have served a more useful purpose by asking the parents how they wanted to receive the information they requested. For example, parents checked that
they were interested in information on kindergarten readiness, child behavior/discipline, transitioning into kindergarten, improving self-esteem, first-aid/CPR training, and stages of child development. The researcher gathered up information on all of the previous requests by using a variety of resources that she thought parents might find useful. It would have been more beneficial to the researcher if the parents were asked to check on the survey how they wanted to receive the information. For instance, the researcher could have had the choices of handouts, videos, brochures, seminars, etc. listed for the parents to choose from. This small adjustment to the survey could have helped the researcher better fulfill the parent’s request.

Another modification could be made with the parent interview. The teacher/researcher developed a set of questions to ask parents concerning the portfolio parent-teacher conference. The five interview questions were asked in order to help the researcher determine if parental satisfaction with conferences had increased through the implementation of portfolio assessment. All five questions asked pertained to what parents liked about portfolio assessment. In retrospect, the researcher thought the instrument could have included a question pertaining to what parents didn’t like about the portfolio parent-teacher conference. This type of question could help the researcher in determining how to modify portfolio assessment to better serve parent’s needs. Furthermore, it would assist the researcher when determining if parental satisfaction had increased through the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The inclusion of preschoolers in portfolio parent-teacher conferences could also be investigated. This project focused only on implementing portfolio assessment at
parent-teacher conferences. The researcher thought it would also be interesting to investigate this area further and research how parents would feel about including their child in the portfolio parent-teacher conference. After implementing portfolio assessment at parent-teacher conferences, the teacher/researcher concluded it might be rewarding for a preschoole to share his/her accomplishments with parents at the portfolio conference.

It would also be interesting to research the effectiveness of portfolio assessment as a tool for determining kindergarten readiness. After the researcher presented parents with their child's portfolio, containing a large amount of detailed information on growth and development, the researcher wondered if this could be used in place of, or in addition to "kindergarten screening." The researcher felt that by keeping a portfolio of information on each preschooler throughout the school year, she would obtain a fair amount of documentation to show school personnel that could be used to indicate the child's readiness for kindergarten. In other words, it could be a determining factor in whether or not a child was ready for kindergarten the following year. If this area were to be investigated further, it may prove to be beneficial to teachers, school personnel, parents, and children.
References


Appendix A- Pre-Conference Survey
Pre-Conference Survey

At parent-teacher conferences in November, I would like the following additional information provided to me about my child. Please check all that apply.

- Art & Creative Development
- Block Play Development
- Math Skills
- Writing Development
- Reading Development
- Language & Communication
- Fine Motor Development (Scissor Skills)
- Social Skills
- Behavior
- Personal Care
- Gross Motor Development (Hop, Skip, etc.)

- Satisfied with the current level of information. No other information needed.

I would like the following supplemental information pertaining to preschool children in general. Please check all that apply.

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Stages of Child Development
- Child Behavior/Discipline
- Health Issues (Bedwetting)
- Transitioning to Kindergarten
- Separation from Parents
- Improving Self-Esteem
- Nutrition
- First Aid/CPR Training
- Other

- No additional information needed at this time.

The best time for both parents to attend a parent-teacher conference would be:

(Please check one of the following)

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
Appendix B - Parent Interview Questions

1. What are your expectations of your child’s academic performance?

2. How do you think your child's current progress compares to other students in the class?

3. How involved are you in your child's education, and what activities or practices do you find most helpful?

4. If you had to choose between additional homework and additional socialization opportunities for your child, which would you prioritize and why?

5. How do you think your child's learning style might affect your approach to educational interventions or accommodations?

6. In what ways do you think your child's interests and passions can be integrated into their learning process?

7. If you were to encounter a situation where your child's teacher was recommending a significant change in your child's educational plan, how would you go about understanding this recommendation and making an informed decision about whether to support it?

8. How do you think your child's emotional well-being might be impacted by changes in their school environment, and what strategies might you use to support them?

9. What roles would you expect to play as your child's primary caregiver and educational advocate?

10. How do you think your child's strengths and weaknesses in school might manifest in their behavior or activities outside of school?
Interview Questions

1. How do you feel this year’s parent-teacher conference went? Were you satisfied with the information you received?

2. Do you feel you received more information about your child by viewing your child’s portfolio at parent-teacher conferences as opposed to last year’s conference using the traditional progress report method?

3. Did you find the information in your child’s portfolio to be more useful to you in helping you better understand your child?

4. Which of the following components of portfolio assessment did you find the most helpful to you as a parent?
   - General information on the stages of your child’s development.
   - Actual writing/drawing/painting samples of your child.
   - Pictures of your child involved in various learning activities.
   - Supplemental information such as kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten.

5. Would you rather follow this new format of portfolio assessment for parent-teacher conferences or use the traditional format for parent-teacher conferences?
Appendix C - Letter to Principal

I have attached the copy of my pre-conference survey for parents and a list of interview questions. If you have any changes or suggestions, I would appreciate them. I want to thank you in advance for being supportive of my goal to earn a Master's Degree in Education.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
August 26, 2002

Dear Mrs. Burgei,

I am presently enrolled in the Masters of Education Program at Defiance College. I am currently working on my final project titled, “Portfolio Assessment in the Preschool Classroom.” My goal is to improve parental satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences by implementing portfolio assessment.

I began the project this past summer by defining my purpose statement and reviewing the literature on the topics of portfolio assessment and parent-teacher conferences. I also researched what parental expectations of parent-teacher conferences were. This fall I will be surveying the parents in order to determine their expectations of conferences. I will then use the information that I received from the surveys to help me determine what items I will be collecting in the student portfolios. At parent-teacher conferences in November, I will be sharing the student portfolios with the parents.

After parent-teacher conferences I will be meeting with the parents and interviewing them to find out how the parents felt about the new parent-teacher conference format. I am hoping the portfolios will give the parents more useful information about their child. I am also hoping the parents will become more satisfied with parent-teacher conferences.

I have attached the copy of my pre-conference survey for parents and a list of interview questions. If you have any changes or suggestions, I would appreciate them. I want to thank you in advance for being supportive of my goal to earn a Master’s Degree in Education.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Inkrott
Appendix D- Letter to Parents

The following letter is a short one about the research project I will be providing. I would appreciate you taking your time to read this letter and trying to complete the survey. You do not need to sign your name unless you have a middle name, in which case it must be included.

If you are not moving forward with this project, please do so.

Thank you for being there and taking the time to assist me.
Dear Parents,

I am presently enrolled in the Masters of Education Program at Defiance College. This semester I am working on my final project titled, “Portfolio Assessment in the Preschool Classroom.” In completing this project, I hope to improve my teaching practice by providing parents with a more satisfying parent-teacher conference.

In order to fulfill my requirements, I will need to have parents involved in the project. I would appreciate your help. If you agree to participate in the project, your task will consist of two parts. First, I will have you fill out a short survey pertaining to parent-teacher conferences. Second, I will interview you in December to ask you a few questions about parent-teacher conferences. The reason I have chosen you for the project is because you are familiar with the parent-teacher conference format that was used last year.

The following sheet is a short survey for you to fill out and return to school in the envelope provided. I would appreciate having the survey returned by Friday, September 20. You do not need to sign your name because I will be assigning you to a number for the purposes of this project.

If you feel that you do not want to participate in this project, just return the blank form in the envelope provided and I will choose another parent.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking time to assist me in completing my project requirements.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Inkrott
Appendix E- Copies of Parent Handouts/Pamphlets
Pamphlets


Pathways Counseling Center, Inc.- Mental Health Services. Effective Parenting Program.
Dear Parents,

I will be having a night in April for you parents and your children to come in and meet with the kindergarten teacher and I. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 23, 2003, which is after Kindergarten Screening.

I will be going over the pre-kindergarten Standards for math and language arts. I will also be answering any questions that you might have about your child’s development.

The kindergarten teacher will also be answering any questions you may have about what is expected of your child in kindergarten. She will also be showing the children around the kindergarten room and school.

The kindergarten teacher and I hope that this night will help ease your child’s transition from preschool to kindergarten. In addition, we hope to satisfy the needs of you parents. Please feel free to use this night to ask any questions or concerns that you might have.

As the time draws nearer, I will be sending out a reminder in the parent newsletter concerning the transitioning meeting night.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Inkrott
Stages of Art Development

Stage 1. Scribbling: Children use crayons, markers and paint in zigzag fashion and circular motions. Later, the scribbles become more controlled. Their work is exploratory. Color is unrealistic. The child begins to draw symbols like circles, crosses and lines (3 and 4 year olds).

Stage 2. Preschematic Stage: At four, a child begins to show definite forms in representing a person, making a circle for the head and two vertical lines for legs. Sometimes there is a mouth, arms, hands, feet or shoes. Objects are drawn at random and they are not in sequence or proportion. At this stage, form is more important than color. As children progress through this stage size becomes more proportional, and they gain more brush control as their paintings begin to look more like illustrations. By age seven a child has established a mental picture of an object that is repeated with each painted repetition of the object. For example, each time the child paints a house it will look very much like all the other houses he/she painted (4 to 7 years old).

Stage 3: Schematic: At this stage, sky lines (usually blue) and base lines (usually green) appear on the top and bottom of drawings. Items drawn between these lines usually are proportional, and they are on the base line as appropriate (6 to 9 years old).

Stages of Block Play

Stage 1. Tote and Carry: Blocks are carried around to feel their smoothness, their weight and to hear what kind of sounds they make when they fall. Children like to fill containers, dump them out, and refill them. (2 to 3)

Stage 2. Building Begins: Children lay the blocks on the floor in rows, either horizontally or vertically with much repetition. Children may play alone or near other children, but rarely in a cooperative way. (3)

Stage 3. Trial and Error Bridging: Two blocks with a space between them, connected by a third block. Children learn to bridge by trial and error. (3 to 4)

Stage 4. Enclosures: Blocks are placed in such a way that they enclose a space. Bridging and enclosing are among the earliest “technical” building problems that children learn to solve. As children work at building enclosures, they learn the spatial concept of inside and outside. (4)

Stage 5. Representational Building: At this stage, 4 and 5 year olds add dramatic play to their block building. They name their structures which relate to a function. Before this, children may also have named their structures but the names were not necessarily related to the function of the building.

Stage 6. Building Sociodramas: By age 5, group cooperative play is common. Children decide beforehand what they want to build, and they may reproduce structures that are familiar to them. Children may ask to leave their structure standing and may play with it again.

Stages of Math Development

Stage 1. Two and three year olds: begin to understand the use of numbers as they hear others using them; understand the use of numbers through exploring objects; work large-piece puzzles; understand direction and relational words; recognize geometric shapes, like a circle; and, sequence up to three items.

Stage 2. Three and four year olds: recognize and express quantities like some, more, a lot, and another; begin to have a sense of time; recognize familiar geometric shapes in the environment; sort objects by one characteristic; rote count to 5; notice and compare similarities and differences; and use words to describe quantity, length, and size.

Stage 3. Four and five year olds: play number games with understanding; count objects to 10 and sometimes to 20; identify the larger of two numbers; answer simple questions that require logic; recognize more complex patterns; position words; sort forms by shape; compare sizes of familiar objects not in sight; and work multi-piece puzzles.

Stage 4. Five and six year olds: begin to understand concepts represented in symbolic form; can combine simple sets; begin to add small numbers in their heads; rote count to 100 with little confusion; count objects to 20 and more; understand that the number is a symbol that stands for a certain number of objects; classify objects by multiple attributes; and can decide which number comes before, or after, another number.
Stages of Motor Development

Three Year Olds: At this stage a child has difficulty with independent limb movement, shows wide flexibility in range of joints, walks with automatic gait, runs with increased smoothness, walks on a balance board, balances on one foot for an instant, alternates feet going upstairs, jumps off a low box with both feet together, throws an object with total body involvement, catches an object thrown directly into stiff outstretched arms, and shows readiness for riding a tricycle.

Four Year Olds: At this stage a child controls independent movement of body parts, shows increased spatial orientation, has a near adult style walking gait, shows increased smoothness when running, turns corners quickly, accelerates, decelerates and stops running motion, begins alternating feet while walking on a balance board, begins mastery of galloping skills, throws with arm only, relaxes arms as they move to catch an approaching object, and begins to control a bouncing ball.

Five Year Olds: At this stage a child shows increased control of fine movements, has increased endurance, uses running skills in play activities, has improved motion balance, has refined climbing skills, skips, gallops and jumps with smoothness, attempts to master hopping with increased sense of balance, shows rapid improvement in throwing skills, begins to move body to catch an object, begins to control a bouncing ball with one hand, shows increased leg backswing, follow-through and appropriate trunk rotation when kicking.
Stages of Oral Language Development

Stage 1. Infant: A child at this stage smiles socially, imitates facial expressions, coos, cries, babbles, plays with sounds, develops intonation, and repeats syllables.

Stage 2. 18 months to two years: A child at this stage responds to specific songs, uses two-word sentences, depends on intonation and gesture, understands simple questions, and points and/or names objects in pictures.

Stage 3. Two to three years: A child at this stage begins to use pronouns and prepositions, uses “no”, remembers names of objects, and generalizes. There is a high interest in language and an increase in communication. There is a large jump in vocabulary growth and articulation.

Stage 4. Three to four years: A child at this stage communicates needs, asks questions, begins to enjoy humor, has much better articulation, begins true conversation, responds to directional commands, knows parts of songs, can retell a story, speaks in three and four word sentences, is acquiring the rules of grammar and learns sophisticated words heard in adult conversation.

Stage 5. Four and five years: A child at this stage has a tremendous vocabulary, uses irregular noun and verb forms, talks with adults on adult level in four to eight word sentences, giggles over nonsense words, engages in imaginative play using complex oral scripts, tells longer stories, recounts in sequence the day’s events and uses silly and profane language to experiment and shock the listener.
Stages of Reading Development

Stage 1. At this stage children: display an interest in handling books; see the construction of meaning from books as magical; listen to words read to them; play orally with letters or words; begin to notice print in an environmental context; incorporates letters in their drawings; and mishandle books, like “reading” them upside down (3 to 4 years old).

Stage 2. At this stage children: engage in reading-like behaviors; try to magically impose meaning on new print; “read” contents of familiar story books; recognize their names; recognize words in environmental contexts; construct word meaning from pictorial clues; pick known words from print inconsistently; rhyme words; speak words that begin similarly; display an increasing knowledge of book handling; recall key words from poems and stories; and, they begin to internalize story grammar (4 and 5 years old).

Stage 3. At this stage children can: write and read-back their own words; pick out individual words and letters; read familiar books or poems (that could not be repeated without the print); use picture clues to supplement print; read words in one context that may not be read in another; show increasing control over visual cueing system; enjoy chants and poems chorally read; detect the beginning/ending sounds in spoken words; blend phonemes; delete initial phonemes; recognize the letters of the alphabet; observe the differences between upper and lower case letters; and, match words in poems and chants that have been internalized (4, 5, and 6 year olds).
Stages of Written Language Development

Stage 1. Random Scribbling: Children make marks on paper randomly with little muscular control (2 and 3 year olds).

Stage 2. Controlled Scribbling: Children “write” across the paper in linear fashion, repeating patterns over again, showing increased muscular control (3 year olds).

Stage 3. Letter-Like Forms: Children make mock letters. These are written lines of letters that have letter characteristics but they are misshapen and written randomly, even covering the page. They like to pretend they are writing; and, in their work they separate writing from drawing. They have purpose to their letter-like forms (3 and 4 year olds).

Stage 4. Letter and Symbol Relationship: Children write letters to represent words and syllables. They can write their name. They know the word that represents their name. They can copy words. Reversals are frequent (4 year olds).

Stage 5. Invented Spelling: Children make the transition from letter forms to invented spelling. This requires organization of letters and words on the page. They use a group of letters to form a word. Many of the letters will be consonants. They understand that letters relate to sounds. Some punctuation appears. They can copy words from their environment (4 and 5 year olds).

Stage 6. Standard Spelling: Most of the words the children use are written correctly, some add punctuation. They organize their words in lines with spaces between the words; and, they move from left to right, and from the top of the page to the bottom (5, 6 and 7 year olds).
Stages of Social Development

Stage 1. At this stage children wander around and watch others play. They do not participate or talk to the others playing.

Stage 2. At this stage children watch others play, ask questions and make suggestions but do not participate. They are likely to leave if asked to interact.

Stage 3. At this stage children play alone. They might act out a role alone with no apparent awareness of others. They select a toy with which to play but show no interest in other children's activities.

Stage 4. At this stage children play near other children and may play with the same objects but they do not interact with the other children. The children play side by side and at times they might make conversation with themselves but not with the other children in the same area.

Stage 5. At this stage children play with each other, are engaged in activities; and they may exclude some children. They rarely negotiate about the direction of their play. They interact with others at various times to share props, or, to have a partner in play.

Stage 6. At this stage children organize their play, assigning roles, and negotiating turns. There is constant chatter about the roles the children are playing. They recognize the benefits of working together. They are able to share the materials and take turns using them.
Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Kindergarten is an exciting milestone for you and your child. It can be an anxious time, especially if this is your first child. Undoubtedly, you will have many questions, but the three most common concerns are whether your child is "ready" for kindergarten, what is the best way to prepare your child for the kindergarten experience, and what can you expect from the kindergarten program.

Will my child be ready?

Children arrive at school with a wide range of abilities and experiences. Some children have been in preschool for several years, some have never been in a preschool or a daycare situation. Some children have read or heard hundreds of stories, some have not been read to or heard any stories. Some children have grown up in households where everyone had jobs to do, and some children have never had that kind of responsibility.

Parents should learn about the school and the school's expectations. Since children arrive from varied backgrounds, schools will try to meet the needs of each child who walks through the door. The parents' responsibility is to love, nurture and provide experiences and opportunities through everyday situations.

Preparing your child

- **Enhance love of learning** by talking to your child, asking questions, and listening closely to the response. Respect your child's opinion even if it is different than your own.

- **Encourage your child's curiosity** by taking advantage of natural learning activities. At the grocery store, point out items that fit into one group (frozen foods, cereals, pet supplies) and concept words (big, little, top, bottom, high, low). "Hand me the big red box on the bottom shelf."

- **Foster a love of books** by reading to your child everyday. This will expose your child to many words, story language, cause and effect and story sequence.

- **Provide a variety of activities:**

  Talk (in the car, while giving a bath, at dinner time) about activities, interests and problems. A child's conversation should be considered as important as adults' conversation.

  Listen to your child's questions and ideas. Encourage her curiosity. Show respect for her thoughts and feelings.

  Establish clear rules and expectations for your child's behavior at home and school.

  Visit zoos, museums, historic sites, concerts and other events.

  Set an example by reading at home. Your child should see you reading books, magazines, newspapers, cookbooks, instructions, etc.
Organize household schedules and responsibilities. Everyone should have chores.

Get your child a library card and use it regularly.

Read aloud to your young child often.

Play games with your child (ring toss, Concentration, tic-tac-toe, Hi Ho Cherry-O).

Leave notes, messages and lists for your child.

Use everyday activities at home to emphasize important math concepts for your children. Count knives and forks when setting the table, keep a growth chart for each child, compare sizes and shapes of different articles.

Involve your child in simple cooking activities and meal preparation (with supervision).

Encourage your child to write. Help him write thank-you notes to relatives, shopping lists, schedules or activities and stories.

Word of caution: Avoid flash cards and drilling your child on colors, shapes, ABCs or numbers. Memorizing turns a child off to learning. Parents should not focus on specific, isolated skills because they don't make sense to children. Valuable informal learning experiences resulting from a child's interest and curiosity will give your child a better foundation and a love of learning.

The program
The typical kindergarten program is changing because we know better than ever how young children learn and what they should be learning. Research tells us that children learn through play, through being actively involved with materials and toys and through interaction with other children. We know children will make noise when they are learning, their mistakes are learning opportunities, and children need opportunities to make choices (such as to play with blocks or to look at a book). Children need time to learn how to work and play with other children and how to solve their own problems.

When you visit a kindergarten class you should see:

- Teachers moving about the room, stopping to talk to individual or small group of children
- Children working on projects, active experiments and play
- Classroom areas set aside for blocks, art, reading, listening, housekeeping, science, etc.
- Children looking at books and dictating or writing stories
- Happy, busy children!

Kindergarten is an exciting adventure. It is a time when your child should have the opportunity to develop a lifelong love of learning and to recognize herself as a unique and valuable person. Enjoy the year! Work in partnership with the school, and remember, you are still your child's most influential teacher.

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READYNESS SKILLS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Social Behaviors and Classroom Conduct:
- Understands role as part of group.
- Respects others and their property.
- Interacts and defends self without aggression.
- Plays cooperatively, shares toys and materials.
- Expresses emotions and affectsions appropriately.
- Takes turns, participates appropriately in games.
- Is willing to try something new.
- Follows class rules and routines.
- Lines up and waits appropriately.
- Sits appropriately.
- Plays independently.

Communication Behaviors:
- Follows two to three part directions.
- Initiates and maintains peer interactions.
- Modifies behavior when given verbal feedback.
- Asks peers or teachers for information or assistance.
- Recalls and follows directions for tasks previously described.
- Follows group instructions.
- Relates ideas and experiences.
- Answers questions.
- Communicates own needs and wants.

Task-related Behaviors:
- Finds materials needed for tasks.
- Does not disrupt peers during activities.
- Complies quickly with teacher instructions.
- Generalizes skills across tasks and situations.
- Follows task directions in small or large group.
- Replaces materials and cleans up work space.
- Monitors own behavior, knows when a task is done.
- Begins and completes work at appropriate time without extra teacher attention.
- Makes choices.
- Stays in own space.
- Follows routine in transition.
- Uses a variety of materials.
- Seeks attention appropriately.
- Attends to teacher in a large group.

Self Help Behaviors:
- Recognizes when a problem exists.
- Locates and cares for personal belongings.
- Avoids dangers and responds to warning words.
- Takes outer clothing off and puts it on in a reasonable amount of time.
- Tries strategies to solve problems.
- Feeds self independently.
- Cares for own toileting needs.

Turn To: CHARLOTTE’S WEB
First Aide

November 19, 2002
6 - 10 p.m.

being held at
Putnam Co. Job & Family Services
1225 E. Third St.

Just RSVP to Kelly Schroeder @ 419-523-4580, Ext. 148
by November 13, 2002

Cost $15

You will be responsible for the fee if you do not show!
Building Self-Esteem in Preschoolers

What is self-esteem?
In her book Your Child's Self-Esteem, Dorothy Briggs describes high self-esteem as "your child's quiet comfort about being who he is." She further describes high self-esteem as based on your child's belief that he is lovable and worthwhile. Children learn to see themselves as the important people around them do. They build their self-pictures from the words, body language, attitudes, and judgments of others. But educator William Damon points out in his book Greater Expectations, "The pursuit of self-esteem in and of itself is a misdirected quest." Lillian Katz adds that self-esteem should not be confused with preoccupation with self.

How can I raise my child's self-esteem?

- Give him age-appropriate opportunities to be self-reliant and take initiative.
- Encourage her to take new risks and make decisions while she is learning something new.
- Treat mistakes and frustrations as positive, motivating forces, not as negatives. Be a cheerleader!
- When you are working and playing together, do things at your child's own speed.
- Give quiet encouragement and time to figure things out by herself before you offer help.
- Teach him to appreciate his own effort. Tell him you're glad he tried hard.
- Do what you can to design the environment so that she succeeds most of the time. Provide some activities that use his strengths and others that comfortably challenge him.

Can I praise my child too much?
Praising your child is a way of making sure he knows when he has succeeded. Avoid excessive praise, which can turn into a form of pressure. Rather than a heavy dose of general praise, experts recommend giving kids timely, specific, and accurate feedback. For example, you could say, "I see you can button your sweater now. You worked hard until you learned how. Congratulations!"

How can I help my child handle failure?
When things don't go well you can say to your child in your own words, "It's okay to make mistakes. That's how we all learn." When your child is upset, his secret wish is for understanding. He needs it before explanations, reasons, or reassurance. Not experiencing immediate success doesn't always mean we have failed. It might mean we need more time to learn. Encourage him to keep trying.
Discipline: A Positive Approach

Most parents of young children say that their main parenting concern is discipline. What is appropriate discipline? How much is too much or too little? It is important for parents to think, read, and talk about the goals and the many techniques of discipline.

Discipline = teaching children self control and responsibility to others
Punishment = controlling children through fear

Tips for Parents

**Do...**
- Set limits
- Be consistent
- Be firm
- Be realistic
- Listen carefully
- State expectations clearly
- Give encouragement and acknowledge efforts
- Stop dangerous, destructive behavior
- Redirect misbehaviors
- Ignore minor misbehaviors

**Avoid...**
- Accusing
- Controlling
- Blaming
- Criticizing
- Humiliating
- Ridiculing
- Using sarcasm or cruel humor
- Nagging and fussing
- Being overpermissive

Books for parents about Discipline

*How to Discipline with Love* by Fitzhugh Dodson
*Liberated Parents, Liberated Children* by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
### Kindergarten Data Sheet for the BRIGANCE® K & 1 Screen

#### A. Student's Information
- Student's Name: ___________________________
- Parents/Guardian: ________________________
- Address: ________________________________
- Date of Screening: ___________ ___________ ___________
- School/Program: _________________________
- Birth date: ___________ ___________ ___________
- Age: ________________________________
- Teacher: ________________________________
- Examiner: ______________________________

#### B. Basic Screening Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Assessment Number</th>
<th>Skill (Circle the skill for each correct response. Make notes as appropriate.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Personal Data Response: verbally gives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. first name 2. full name 3. age 4. address 5. birth date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Color Recognition: Identifies and names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. red 2. blue 3. green 4. yellow 5. orange 6. purple 7. brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Picture Vocabulary: Recognizes and names pictures of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. dog 2. cat 3. key 4. girl 5. boy 6. airplane 7. apple 8. leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>Visual Discrimination-Forms and Uppercase Letters:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visually discriminates which one of four symbols is different:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Visual-Motor Skills: Copies 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>6A</td>
<td>Gross-Motor Skills:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Hops two 3. Stands on one foot momentarily. 5. Stands on one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>foot for five seconds. 7. Walks forward heel-to-toe four steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Stands on one foot momentarily with eyes closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Hops two 4. Stands on the other foot momentarily. 6. Stands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>on the other foot for five seconds. 8. Walks backward toe-to-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>heel four steps. 10. Stands on the other foot momentarily with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eyes closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>Rote Counting: Counts by rote to: (Circle all numbers prior to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the first error.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8A</td>
<td>Identifies Body Parts: Identifies by pointing to or touching:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. chin 3. heels 5. jaw 7. elbows 9. wrists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. fingernails 4. ankles 6. shoulders 8. hips 10. waist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>9A</td>
<td>Follows Verbal Directions: Listens to, remembers, and follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. one-step direction 2. two-step direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10A</td>
<td>Numerical Comprehension: Matches quantity with numerals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 1 4 3 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>11A</td>
<td>Prints Personal Data: Prints first name Reversals: Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12A</td>
<td>Syntax and Fluency: 1. Speech is understandable. 2. Speaks in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>complete sentences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### C. Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Correct Responses</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Student's Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 points each / 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 point each / 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 point each / 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 point each / 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.5 point each / 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0.5 point each / 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5 points each / 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 points each / 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 points ea. / 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 points ea. / 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### D. Observations

1. Handedness: Right ______ Left ______ Uncertain ______
2. Grasps pencil with: Fist ______ Fingers ______
3. Hearing appeared to be normal: (See Functional Hearing and Vision)
   Yes ______ No ______ Uncertain ______
4. Vision appeared to be normal: (See Functional Hearing and Vision)
   Yes ______ No ______ Uncertain ______
5. Record other observations on another sheet.

#### E. Recommendations

Total Score = 100
Your Young Child:  
Age 5

Learning About  
Self & Others

Look for your child to:

Need a few rules to feel safe.

Be able to remember rules.

Ask questions and want real answers.

Have a good friend or two.

Want things to be fair.

Want to win games.

Be proud of what he has done.

Ways you can help:

Have a few simple rules.

Have him help make some rules.

Talk with your child, not just to him. Visit the library together.

Have other children play in your home or yard.

Follow the rules. Help children share.

Play simple board games and cards with your child. Show him you have fun even when you lose.

Show you are happy when he learns new things.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Look for your child to:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ways you can help:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect pets or younger brother or sister.</td>
<td>Ask him to help feed the animals. Ask him to play with the baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how other people feel some of the time.</td>
<td>Talk about feeling sad, happy, angry, disappointed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to help.</td>
<td>Let him help around your home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to say please and thank you.</td>
<td>Say please and thank you to him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Young Child: Age 5
Learning to Think & Learn

Look for your child to:

See how things are alike and different.

Sort and match objects.

Be able to count a few things.

Remember what happened.

Use today, last night and next time, without really knowing what it means.

Know that he can make things happen.

Ways you can help:

Ask him to tell you how things are alike and different. Talk about what is big or little, hot or cold, fast or slow.

Help him find and save groups of things: rocks, leaves, toy cars.

Read counting books. Have fun together counting things around you.

Have a regular time to eat and to go to bed. Then he will know what to expect.

Use these kinds of words often when you talk with him.

Use cardboard, blocks and books to make ramps for cars. Use cups and funnels for water and sand play.
Your Young Child: 
Age 5 
Learning to Use Her Body

**Look for your child to:**

Use only her hands to catch a ball.

Stand on one foot. Put one foot on a step, then the other foot on the next step.

Walk on a curb.

Write letters and numbers.

Use small scissors to cut on a line.

Like to take care of herself.

**Ways you can help:**

Play ball with your child.

Play outside with your child.

Find places for her to run, jump and climb.

Put a long piece of yarn on the ground for your child to walk on.

Tell her you like the pictures and letters she makes.

Give your child crayons, pens, pencils and scissors to use.

Give your child time to wash and dress herself. Give her time to pick up her own toys.
Look for your child to:

- Understand over 3,000 words.
- Speak clearly. The sounds r, v, l, th, j, and z still may be hard for her.
- Try using new big words.
- Try to be funny.
- Be able to tell about a picture.
- Tell a story. Tell about something that happened.

Ways you can help:

- Read and talk with her every day.
- Listen. Speak clearly to her. Don't correct her speech. Just repeat what she said more clearly.
- Praise her when you hear new words.
- Tell riddles. "What animal is furry, has four legs, and says meow?"
- Show her a picture. Ask her to tell you what is going on.
- Talk about your day. What do you do first in the morning? What's next?
Your Young Child: Age 5
Learning to Talk & Listen, Read & Write

Look for your child to:

Tell how to solve a simple problem.

Play pretend games with other people.

Be interested in letters, numbers and words.

Know her first name in print.

Get better at writing her name.

Ways you can help:

Ask questions to help her think. "Where do you look when you can't find your shoes?" Help her think of many answers.

Give her chances to play with other children.

When you read books together, take time to talk and answer questions.

Write her name for her.

Help her write if she wants to try. Always have pencils, paper, crayons, and markers for her.
Look for your child to:

- Want things to be fair.
- Want to win games.
- Have a good friend or two.
- Use small scissors to cut on a line.
- Like to take care of herself.
- Write some letters and numbers.
- Be able to count up to seven things.
- See how things are alike and different.
- Like to collect things.
- Tell a story. Tell about something that happened.
Look for your child to:

- Try to be funny.
- Be interested in letters, numbers, and words.

Around 5 1/2 years of age your young child:

- May be slow to do what you ask him to do or say "I don't want to."
- May cry often or not be able to make up his mind about things.
- May see letters backwards.
- May lose some baby teeth.
- May chew on his collar or put his fingers in his mouth.
- May say his body hurts or his head hurts.
- May act very shy one minute, and very loud the next minute.
Appendix F - Parent Note for Interview Sign-Up Time

[Schedule details not visible in the image]
Dear Parents,

Thank you for taking time to meet with me to discuss your child’s progress in the Miller City Preschool Program. I would like to meet with you in the next few weeks to discuss your satisfaction with parent-teacher conferences. I will be using your feedback to complete my final project titled, “Portfolio Assessment in the Preschool Classroom.”

The following times I have made available to meet with you to discuss your parent-teacher conference. Please sign up for a time most convenient for you.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to assist me in completing my project requirements.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Inkrott

Tuesday, December 3 at 7:30 AM
Tuesday, December 3 at 11:00 AM
Tuesday, December 3 at 11:30 AM
Tuesday, December 3 at 2:55 PM
Tuesday, December 3 at 7:00 PM
Wednesday, December 4 at 7:30 AM
Wednesday, December 4 at 11:00 AM
Thursday, December 5 at 7:30 AM
Thursday, December 5 at 11:00 AM
Thursday, December 5 at 11:30 AM
Thursday, December 5 at 2:55 PM
Thursday, December 5 at 7:00 PM
Friday, December 6 at 7:30 AM
Friday, December 6 at 11:00 AM
Monday, December 9 at 7:30 AM
Monday, December 9 at 11:00 AM
Monday, December 9 at 7:00 PM
Tuesday, December 10 at 7:30 AM
Tuesday, December 10 at 11:00 AM
Tuesday, December 10 at 11:30 AM
Tuesday, December 10 at 2:55 PM
Wednesday, December 11 at 7:30 AM
Wednesday, December 11 at 11:00 AM
Wednesday, December 11 at 7:00 PM
Thursday, December 12 at 11:00 AM
Thursday, December 12 at 11:30 AM
Thursday, December 12 at 2:55 PM
Friday, December 13 at 7:30 AM
Friday, December 13 at 11:00 AM
Appendix G - Parent Responses for Interview Questions

Responses to the Interview Questions # 3

1. I learned a lot about what Krista is doing in school.
2. I got more information this way.
3. Krista wants to feel that you always care.
4. It's the actual drawings and work.
5. The pictures helped.
6. The book was helpful. They were interested in it. They could not put it down.
7. Krista was her favorite.
Responses to the Interview Questions #1:

1. It went very well. Yes I was.
2. Yes, I liked the portfolio conference better because you got to see how they progressed with the coloring and with cutting. Jackson’s cutting was always choppy and you showed me how it got much better.
3. Yes. It did. The guidelines you gave me showed me exactly where he should be for his age and how he’s progressing and getting better.
4. I actually liked them all. I like to know where he is as far as development. I like to see how his drawing and painting skills develop and get better. I like to the pictures because it shows what he’s doing in class. With me working, I don’t get to come in to class. And the kindergarten readiness- you answered questions about that.
5. I liked the new format of the portfolio assessment because I got to see more of what he actually does in class.

Responses to the Interview Questions #2:

1. I thought it went very well. Yes, you answered a lot of questions.
2. Yes, I was able to see what he was doing and how far he had come.
3. Yes, you had more information in there on where he was at as far as what stage level he was at for his age and where he should be.
4. Probably the writing and drawing since that’s a hard one for him. It’s nice to see how he is doing at school with other kids around him. And the information on the stages of his development. It shows us what we need to work on.
5. I liked the way you did it this year. I think I got more information out of parent-teacher conferences this year.

Responses to the Interview Questions #3:

1. I thought it went fine. I learned a lot about what Kristin is doing in school as far as development and stuff.
2. Definitely, I received a lot more information this year.
3. Probably the same as other years. I feel that you always give parents plenty of information.
4. I think the most helpful is the actual drawings and paintings. You can see how much she developed and learned. The pictures are more for enjoyment purposes. I don’t know that it’s that helpful. The general information on the stages of development is fine. But like me, I’m an older parent. I pretty much know where they should be, but for a younger parent, I think that information would be a great help. As far as the supplemental information, I don’t know that that’s necessary. I guess if a parent wants it, it’s nice that you have it.
5. Probably the traditional, the one you used last year because it was more compact. There was just a lot of information in the portfolio.

Responses to the Interview Questions #4:

1. I thought it went very, very well. I thought it was very informative. I wish that they were a little bit longer. I don’t think that they are as long as they need to be. But as far as the information that was provided to me, I felt was very, very good. Yes, I was satisfied with the information I received.

2. I feel that the information that you have given to me this year was actually very helpful. I have been going over that ever since I received it, going over some of the papers that you have given to me. As far as like where he should be and where he is and that type of stuff.

3. Yes, and I think that both of us are on the same page as to where he was as far as his development and his progress. But, I think it brings it more home if you have a teacher telling you this and actually seeing it on paper as opposed to seeing it in your own home every day.

4. I liked the drawing and the writing and the painting samples that my child had done. I pretty much had known where my child was at because I see that at home. The general information on the stages of development; that has changed so much is that last few years that I felt that that information was very, very helpful. And kindergarten readiness has changed so much in the last three, four, or five years that I feel that that information is also very helpful. Pictures of my child involved in the various learning activities; I can’t say that I felt that that was as helpful as say looking at his actual things, but I enjoy the pictures. The supplemental information such as kindergarten readiness and transitioning into kindergarten, I think is a huge help, and I think that that’s something that’s very important for all parents that are getting children ready for kindergarten. Like I said, things are changing so quickly in that field.

5. I like this format better. I think there is actually more information for us parents to have as far as seeing where our child is and I just feel that it’s actually more informative than the traditional style. I just feel that the parent-teacher conference needs to be longer.

Responses to the Interview Questions #5:

1. I think it went very well. Yes, we were satisfied, and I felt that we got more information especially with her going to kindergarten. We got a lot more of the outlines and the paperwork to help us get her ready for next year.

2. Yes, definitely. As I said before, because we got more information about where she stands. Like even as far as how she talks and how she moves. The different types of things you have to know for kindergarten.

3. Definitely.

4. I think I would rank first the general information on the stages of child development, because I find it useful to know how she stands in each of the stages. Then after that it’s kind of nice to see the actual writing, drawing, and
painting of how she progresses through the year. I feel that when you see it all put together, you can see all of the changes. And the next one I liked was the kindergarten readiness and transitioning. I liked the pictures, but I think the other three really helped us evaluate how our child is doing.

5. Definitely the new format. I feel that we received a lot more information this year, which was especially helpful with our daughter going to kindergarten next year.