

Parent Involvement:
The Contributions of Parent
Self-Reported
Beliefs and Parent Practices to
Early Years Achievement

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June, 2009



Final Report to Barrie Region MISA Professional Network Centre

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Introduction and Background

The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of parents self-reported practices on the entry level achievement of Junior Kindergarten students at the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.

The Preparation for School Experiences (PSE) survey was a central component of the data collection for this project. The PSE survey was designed to assess the contribution of these factors to the school readiness of young students. Family demographic variables and the level of a child's participation in preschool activities were also measured.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. To what extent do parent beliefs and self-reported practices contribute to a child's early achievement?
2. What dimensions of parent beliefs and self-reported practices have the greatest impact on a child's early achievement?

This report describes the results of the study in the context of junior kindergarten students, their families and their achievement in Northumberland County, Ontario.

Data Collection Method and Analysis

A literature review set the broad context for effects of parent's practices and other mitigating factors on early achievement. A few examples of key descriptors that evolved from the literature review include early years, child, teacher, parent, self-reported practices, home learning environment, school readiness, and student achievement.

History of the Preparation for School Experiences (PSE) survey

The PSE survey was developed in 2006 with the support of three stakeholders, the Kawartha pine Ridge District School Board, the Northumberland Child Development Centre and OISE/UT.

Findings from an exploratory factor analysis provided evidence for a 5-factor solution. Specifically, the influence of parent practices in the home learning environment (HLE) and

parent beliefs about learning, schooling and school readiness (PSR) were organized under the following five factors:

1. HLE - Parent encouragement of literacy / numeracy development;
2. HLE - Parent promotion of pro-social behaviour;
3. HLE - Parent encouragement of physical development;
4. PSR - Parent encouragement of child independence / self confidence; and
5. PSR - Parent trust for school.

The theoretical model for the Preparation for School Experiences survey is detailed in Figure 1. Central to the theory is the influence of the five factors capturing the ideas of the home learning environment and parent school readiness, the influence of children's preschool experiences and the direct assessment measure of school readiness, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, version III (Dunn and Dunn, 1997).

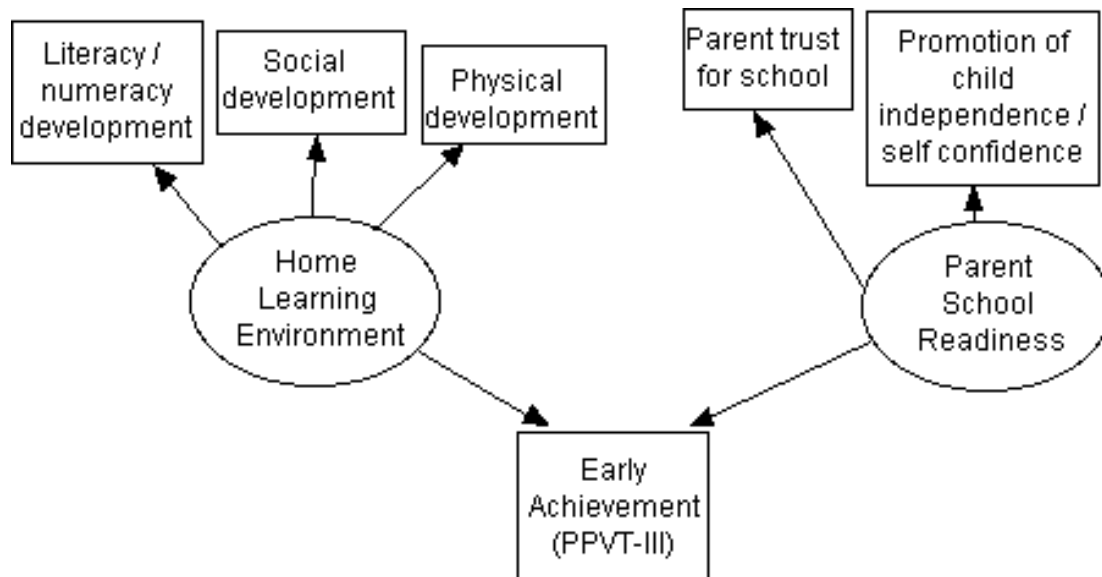


Figure 1: Theoretical Model of the Preparation for School Experiences survey

Preparation for School Experiences (PSE) survey data collection

The Preparation for School Experiences survey included 34 items. The survey was distributed to the 700 junior kindergarten students registered in Northumberland County. Three hundred and eighty-three parents returned the survey, yielding a return rate of 55%.

Direct Assessment of Receptive Vocabulary (PPVT-III)

Consent forms were sent home to the 383 parents that returned the survey asking for their permission to assess their child using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Version III. Two

hundred and eleven (211) parents granted consent and their children were tested by assessors from the Northumberland Child Development Centre.

Analysis

The analysis plan for the date included an initial examination of the PSE data set and the PPVT-III to investigate missing data and the properties of responses, including the distribution of the dataset. The two files were then merged to match student achievement data with parent responses. Descriptive statistics were compiled and a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the factors on early achievement.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the six PSE survey items measuring parent promotion of physical development are reported in Table 1. The response options for the six physical development items were outline on a 5 point Likert type scale anchored in 1 = Almost Never and 5 = Daily.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for Physical Development items

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
I encourage my child to dress him / herself.	4.74	4	.59
I encourage my child to use outdoor play equipment.	4.42	4	.72
I encourage my child to get in and out of a car without assistance.	4.53	4	.95
I encourage my child to wash his / her hands without assistance.	4.84	4	.49
I encourage my child to practice holding pencils / pens / crayons.	4.33	4	.81
I encourage my child to go to bed on time.	4.72	4	.57

The descriptive statistics for the six items measuring parent promotion of literacy / numeracy are reported in Table 2. Response options were anchored in 1 = Almost Never and 5 = Daily.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for Literacy / Numeracy Development items

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
How often do you encourage your child to write or scribble?	4.08	4	.77
How often do you practice learning colours with your child?	4.25	4	.86
How often do you describe or discuss patterns with your child?	3.48	4	1.17
How often do you practice counting with your child?	4.41	4	.74
How often do you talk about shapes with your child?	3.91	4	.91
How often do you ask your child to identify signs or symbols?	3.53	4	1.18

The descriptive statistics for the six items measuring parent promotion of social development are reported in Table 3. Response options were anchored in 1 = Almost Never and 5 = Daily.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for Social Development items

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
I encourage my child to understand the feelings of others.	4.53	4	.70
I encourage my child to try to help when someone asks for help.	4.44	3	.75
I encourage my child to listen when someone else is speaking.	4.79	4	.52
I encourage my child to use words to resolve disagreements.	4.60	4	.73
I encourage my child to care about other people.	4.81	2	.48
I encourage my child to have a positive manner.	4.80	4	.52

The descriptive statistics for the eight items measuring parent promotion of independence are reported in Table 4. Response options were anchored in 1 = Almost Never and 5 = Daily.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for Child Independence and Self Confidence

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
I teach my child to enjoy learning from others.	4.16	4	.87
I teach my child to ask for help when he/she needs it.	4.76	4	.54
I teach my child to share his/her feelings without being prompted.	4.38	4	.83
I teach my child to persist with a challenge, even when things go wrong.	4.39	4	.77
I teach my child to make his/her own choices.	4.64	4	.62
I teach my child show curiosity about the world around him/her.	4.53	4	.72
I teach my child to enjoy developing new skills.	4.36	4	.77
I teach my child to adjust well to changes in routine with minimal fuss.	4.17	4	.94

The descriptive statistics for the eight items measuring parent trust for school are reported in Table 5. The response options were reported on a 5 point Likert type scale anchored in different wording than the items from the four previous factors. The parent trust for school scale was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree; 5 = Don't Know.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for Parent Trust for School items

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
I believe my child will benefit from attending school.	3.84	4	.48
I believe I should attend school events to support my child at school (i.e. orientation, parent night).	3.75	4	.55
I believe it is important to speak positively about school in front of my child.	3.88	4	.44
I believe my child should look forward to attending school.	3.80	4	.49
I believe school routine will be good for my child.	3.80	4	.50
I believe my child will finish high school.	3.91	4	.43
I believe my child will be comfortable in a school classroom.	3.73	4	.58
I believe my local school is a safe place for my child.	3.59	4	.65

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

The mean, median, range and standard deviation of PPVT-III scores are displayed in Table 6 below. The PPVT-III is normed to a mean score of 100 and the results from the KPR sample (mean = 111.97) indicate higher than expected score for the assessment.

Table 6
Mean, range and standard deviation of PPVT-III scores (N = 211)

	Mean	Minimum score	Maximum score	Range	Standard Deviation
PPVT-III standard scores	111.97	80	149	69	11.00

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that parent practices supporting literacy / numeracy development in the home are a significant predictor of early achievement ($p < .05$).