

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC PREKINDERGARTEN ON SOCIAL COMPETENCE
AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS
IDENTIFIED AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Robin R. Pelton, MS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The University of Houston-Clear Lake

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

MAY, 2017

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC PREKINDERGARTEN ON SOCIAL COMPETENCE
AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS
IDENTIFIED AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Robin R. Pelton

APPROVED BY

Shanna Graves, PhD, Chair

Kent Divoll, EdD, Committee Member

Preeti Jain, EdD, Committee Member

Renée Lastrapes, PhD, Committee Member

RECEIVED BY THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION:

Joan Y. Pedro, PhD, Associate Dean

Mark D. Shermis, PhD, Dean

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No one succeeds alone. Certainly, reaching goals is dependent on hard work and perseverance; however, anyone who succeeds has not only caught a few breaks along the way, they also have countless people to thank. I am no different. It has been a humbling experience to recognize how many people have helped me along my journey, both in completing my dissertation, and in helping me reach the decision to begin and continue through a doctoral program. There are too many to thank them all, but some have been so important to me, I simply must call them out by name and express my gratitude.

First and foremost, I am indebted to my three children, who patiently tolerated my inattentiveness during the last three years as I pursued my doctoral degree. To Paula, my first child – thank you for teaching me the power of unconditional love. To Taylor, my first baby – you fill me with immeasurable joy! To Collin, my only son – through you, I learned that strength is born of hope. Each of you are uniquely special to me, and I can never express the gratitude I have to God for allowing me to be your mother! I also owe thanks to my husband, Mike, who serves as an anchor for our family, keeping us secure and steady throughout the years.

I want to thank my mom, Peggy Boone, who serves as my role model. I am so proud to be your daughter! To Jerry Boone, my stepfather – I dedicate this work to you. In 1988, you encouraged me to get my doctorate and never quit believing that I would someday do it. Thank you for believing in me! I also owe thanks to George Bowlin, my father. I learned to work hard by watching you work hard. Thanks also to Bonnie, my

dad's sweet wife who has brought contentment to his life. Thank you to my mother-in-law, Joyce Boyd, for serving as a role model of service to others. I want to also thank my brothers, Mike Bowlin and Mark Bowlin, and my sisters, Lynn Riddle and Tammy Moya. Thanks for loving me without fail.

I want to thank Dr. Shanna Graves for serving as my dissertation chair and providing the guidance to reach the finish line with this study. You have a unique way of instilling confidence in someone while also holding high standards, and I thank you for that. Thank you also, for letting me set an aggressive pace and never slowing me down – I know I couldn't have progressed as steadily as I did without your continued encouragement. I want to thank Dr. Renée Lastrapes for helping me discover the value and appreciation of methodology. I am indebted to you for taking an interest in me and for the hours you spent guiding me and making sure I produced quality work. Thanks also to committee members Dr. Kent Divoll and Dr. Preeti Jain, for your willingness to serve and your responsiveness when I had questions or needed information. I truly feel like I had the best committee a doctoral student could have! In addition, I am grateful for all the dedicated professors I have had at University of Houston – Clear Lake, and want to acknowledge them as well, for preparing me in each class to be ready for the next step in the program. I want to also thank all members of Cohort #9. I couldn't have been placed with a group of classmates I loved more! “Collaborate to graduate” became our motto, and I take pride in watching each of us as we reach this milestone.

I owe gratitude to an anonymous high school counselor from Oologah, Oklahoma who in the early 1980s took the time to recognize both my potential and my need, and enrolled me in Upward Bound. Without even knowing it, this small act set me on my higher

education journey. I want to also thank Danny Massey, a servant leader who inspired me to achieve more than I thought was possible. I want to acknowledge the responsiveness of data providers, campus principals, and teachers within the district of this study who each willingly played a role in helping me complete this study. I thank my loving friend, Genie Packard, whose bilingual skills and generous gift of time were invaluable in working with Hispanic students and parents during this study. I owe thanks to Sharon Barrow, who was so very willing to help me with technical writing. Finally, I want to thank Darla Fagan. Thank you for being a better friend than I deserve, for proofing all my papers over the last three years, for feeding my family and transporting my children when I was too busy, and for always listening, encouraging, and pushing me to reach for the stars!

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC PREKINDERGARTEN ON SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Robin R. Pelton
University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2017

Dissertation Chair: Shanna Graves, PhD

Participation in prekindergarten for English Language Learners may positively impact social competence and decrease school absences, which may promote increased levels of academic achievement throughout the years a student is enrolled in school. The purpose of this two-phase, explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was to assess the impact of participation in a half-day public prekindergarten program on social competence and on school attendance of kindergarten, first, and second grade Hispanic English Language Learners, and then follow up by utilizing teacher focus groups to explain the results in greater depth.

In the first phase of this study, quantitative survey data were collected from teachers, parents, and students themselves regarding their perceptions of social competence skills as measured by the *Social Competence Scale – Teacher Version*, the *Social Competence Scale – Parent Version*, and the *Child Development Project Student Questionnaire – Social Competence Scale*, respectively. Data were then analyzed using

independent-samples t tests to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between social competence of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade who attended half-day public prekindergarten and a matched sample of Hispanic English Language Learners who did not, and determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between school attendance rates of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade who attended half-day public prekindergarten and a matched sample of Hispanic English Language Learners who did not. For the second phase of this study, three qualitative focus groups were held with teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade, to better understand and explain the findings related to social competency.

Quantitative data revealed that kindergarten Hispanic English Language Learners displayed statistically significant mean differences in their self-assessment of social competence, and second grade students displayed statistically significant mean differences in school attendance. Overall, Hispanic English Language Learners in this study who participated in half-day public prekindergarten demonstrated slightly increased, but not statistically significant differences in social competence and school attendance when compared to a matched set of Hispanic English Language Learners who did not. Qualitative data provided depth of understanding to those findings. Further research on structural variables of public prekindergarten programs and instructional quality is warranted to evaluate what specific components may have a statistically significant impact on developing social competence skills and increasing school attendance for Hispanic English Language Learners, making public prekindergarten a more effective early intervention strategy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	vi
List of Tables	xi
Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Need for the Study	3
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Questions and Hypotheses	5
Definitions.....	6
Summary	6
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	8
Social Competence.....	10
Prekindergarten Impact on Social Competence	12
School Attendance	14
Challenges Faced by English Language Learners	16
Governmental Prekindergarten Initiatives	18
Theoretical Framework	20
Summary	21
III. METHODOLOGY	23
Overview of the Research Problem	24
Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs	24
Research Purpose and Questions	25
Research Design.....	26
Population and Sample	27
Instrumentation	33
Social Competence Scale – Teacher Version	33
Social Competence Scale – Parent Version	34
Child Development Project Student Questionnaire – Social Competence Scale	35
Data Collection Procedures.....	37

	Quantitative Data Collection.....	38
	Qualitative Data Collection.....	40
	Data Analysis Procedures	42
	Quantitative Data Analysis	42
	Qualitative Data Analysis	44
	Validity	45
	Privacy and Ethical Considerations	46
	Research Design Limitations	46
	Conclusion	47
IV.	RESULTS	49
	Quantitative Data Results	49
	Research Question One	49
	Teacher Assessment.....	50
	Parent Assessment	50
	Self-assessment.....	51
	Research Question Two	52
	Qualitative Data Results	53
	Research Question Three	53
	Themes.....	54
	Self-concept	56
	Confidence	56
	Initiative	58
	Self-regulation.....	60
	Understanding of Expectations	60
	Behavior	61
	Emotional Control.....	62
	Relationships with others	63
	Communication Skills.....	63
	Friendship Skills	65
	Parental influence.....	66
	Parental Involvement	66
	School Attendance	68
	Assimilation	69
	Quantitative and Qualitative Conclusions	71
V.	SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
	Summary of Findings.....	76
	Implications for Practice	82
	Full-day Prekindergarten	82
	Universal Prekindergarten	84
	Parent Outreach.....	85
	Recommendations for Future Research	86
	Conclusion	88

REFERENCES	90
APPENDIX A SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE – TEACHER VERSION	106
APPENDIX B SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE – PARENT VERSION	108
APPENDIX C CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE – SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE	111
APPENDIX D QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	114

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Student Participants	29
2 Student Participants' Gender	30
3 Student Participants' Economic Status	31
4 Non-prekindergarten Participants' Alternative to Public Prekindergarten Participation	31
5 Teacher Participants.....	32
6 Teacher Survey Mean Total Scores	50
7 Parent Survey Mean Total Scores	51
8 Student Survey Mean Total Scores	52
9 Attendance Mean Percentages	53
10 Focus Group Teacher Participants	54
11 Frequency of Comments for each Theme	55
12 Extensiveness of each Theme	56
13 Summary of Social Competence Significance Values.....	78

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When a child enters kindergarten, there is an expectation that basic social skills are already attained (Logue, 2007). Prior social-emotional competence is predictive of academic performance (Elias & Haynes, 2008). Actions taken to ensure all students have learned these foundational skills in advance of enrollment in kindergarten are, therefore, critically important. Nix, Bierman, Domitrovich, and Gill (2013) found that the development of academic skills during kindergarten is accelerated when social-emotional competency skills are already attained. Early literacy performance and academic achievement are the best predictors of success in future grades (Bingham & Patton-Terry, 2013; Muelle, 2010). Achievement is not only dependent on intellectual ability, but also on self-regulation, positive attitudes, and social skills; therefore, teaching social competency skills such as self-management, peer relationship skills, and respectfulness, in a prekindergarten program has the potential to impact academic achievement throughout a child's school career, and potentially affect other developmental factors that can change a child's trajectory in life (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015). Parents expect that along with academic instruction, quality prekindergarten programs will integrate instruction of social competence skills into their curriculum (Barbarin et al., 2006), and participation in prekindergarten is a critical early intervention that can help students overcome social and emotional skill deficits (Whitted, 2011). Young children

learn through interactions, and quality prekindergarten programs have a positive effect on social development by providing these kinds of learning opportunities (Mashburn et al., 2008). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) identifies expanding measures to provide preschool education as one of the smartest investments the country can make. Currently, forty states provide state-funded prekindergarten education (Barnett, Carolan, Squires, Clarke-Brown, & Horowitz, 2015).

Regular school attendance is also important in overcoming skill deficits. Academic achievement is negatively impacted when students are absent from school (Gottfried, 2011). Students who miss fewer days demonstrate higher gains in oral language development than students who miss more than 10 days of school (Hall-Kenyon, Bingham, & Korth, 2009). English Language Learners enter school with the greatest deficits in readiness skills (Mulligan, Hastedt, & McCarroll, 2012), and are, therefore, negatively impacted by deficits in social competence skills or by absences more than their English-speaking peers. Chronic absence has also been associated with certain social competence skills. Students who miss more school also demonstrate a decrease in their ability to work independently, display initiative, adapt to change, and show persistence when working on tasks (Gottfried, 2014).

While many studies demonstrate that students who attend prekindergarten are academically better prepared when they enter kindergarten (Belfield & Garcia, 2014; Goldstein, Warde, & Peluso, 2013; Lee, Brooks-Gunn, Zhai, Han, & Waldfogel, 2014), few studies have examined the impact public school prekindergarten may have on social competence or on school attendance, especially as it pertains to English Language Learners. Without a focus on interventions that meet the needs of English Language

Learners, inequitable educational experiences are perpetuated (Daniel, 2014). This mixed methods study assessed the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten has on social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners as they advance into kindergarten, first, and second grade. This chapter introduces the study by providing the need for the study, purpose of the study, research questions, and definitions of key terms.

Need for the Study

Closing educational gaps of students entering school with deficits is a difficult task. Kibbe Gaynor (2015) describes that when instruction is being provided for students starting out behind their peers, that instruction is simultaneously impacting all students in the class, so the gap remains ever-present as students advance through the grades. Prekindergarten is meant to address this very concern, by providing early instruction for children likely to perform behind their peers when entering kindergarten. By having early academic and social skills instruction, prior to their kindergarten year, students may not only be better prepared academically, but also may develop increased social competency and start school more prepared.

Research reveals phonological awareness, beginning reading skills, and math skills are higher for kindergarten students who have attended prekindergarten, in comparison to students who have not attended prekindergarten (Skibbe, Hindman, Connor, Housey, & Morrison, 2013). Bingham and Patton-Terry (2013) found that children who attended prekindergarten demonstrated significant vocabulary growth and that growth was maintained through the end of first grade. By studying a third grade cohort, Swere (2015) found enrollment in prekindergarten positively impacted academic

performance in math and reading, as well as determined that third grade promotion rates were higher for students who attended preschool. Johnson (2013), who also studied third grade students who had attended prekindergarten, concluded that reading and mathematics report card grades were higher for students who had been in prekindergarten than for those who had not. Curenton, Niambo, and Xiangjin (2015) found that fifth grade students had better reading and mathematics skills if they attended prekindergarten. These studies provide evidence that attending prekindergarten produces an academic impact on students' academic performance in their elementary years.

Not all researchers agree that prekindergarten has an impact on academic performance beyond the prekindergarten year (Whitehurst, 2014). However, Yoshikawa et al. (2013) concluded that even if enrollment in prekindergarten may not have lasting impacts on academics, it still may be worth investing in due to its positive effects on behavior. The ability to cooperate with others, resolve conflicts, and self-regulation are important social skills necessary for successful progression through school, as well as in life (Jones et al., 2015). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Program has followed 123 children since the mid-1960's, half of whom participated in an intense Michigan preschool program and half who did not, and found students in the program were more likely to achieve higher levels of educational attainment, secure jobs with higher wages, contribute financially more to society, and have fewer arrests and criminal charges against them (Belfield, Nores, Barnett, & Schweinhart, 2006). While these are promising findings, they are limited to an individual program with a small number of African American students. Studies of prekindergarten impact on Hispanic English Language Learners related to social competence is limited, and research studies related to its impact

on their school attendance is even more scarce. This provided support for the need of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of participation in half-day public prekindergarten on levels of social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The quantitative research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) Does participation in half-day public prekindergarten impact social competence of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged:
 - as measured by teacher assessment?
 - as measured by parent assessment?
 - as measured by self-assessment?
- 2) Does participation in half-day public prekindergarten impact school attendance of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged, as measured by percentage of school days present during the time of enrollment?

The qualitative research question that guided this study was:

- 3) What are teacher perceptions of the social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten

in comparison to Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten?

Definitions

Academic school readiness: Mastery of basic literacy, numeracy, and general knowledge skills that help ensure success in a formal school learning environment (Denham, Bassett, Zinsser, & Wyatt, 2014).

Economically disadvantaged: The socio-economic status assigned to students who, based on living in households with incomes that are at or below federal poverty thresholds, have been approved to receive free or reduced school meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program (Texas Education Agency, 2016a).

English Language Learner: A person who does not speak English as his or her primary language and has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

School attendance: For the purposes of this study, school attendance will refer specifically to a student's presence in school. School attendance will be measured by the percentage of days present at school during the time of enrollment from the first day of kindergarten through December 2016.

Social competence: Behavior, attitudes, and understanding that support the development of good relationships and enable children to be successful in tasks involving others. (Edmonds & Stewart-Brown, 2003).

Summary

Being able to engage effectively with fellow classmates, actively participate during instructional activities, and focus attention on learning are critical skills necessary

for learning (Bierman, Torres, Domitrovich, Welsh, & Gest, 2009). Intervening early through prekindergarten instruction can be the key to changing the trajectory of school success for students initially lacking those skills. Early intervention may increase the likelihood that Hispanic English Language Learners can receive a high-quality education. Increasing the number of days students are present at school provides students with more time to learn content and reach higher levels of student achievement. Researching the impact public school prekindergarten has on social competence provides evidence of the effectiveness of prekindergarten instruction and provides insight to its effect on establishing regular school attendance habits. This is valuable for decision-makers of the potential benefits, as well as informs them of the need for additional or continuous supports during the years following prekindergarten enrollment (U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2016).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The U.S. Department of Education (2012) provides non-regulatory guidance for how states shall serve preschool children through Title I as Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This guidance describes that a preschool program serves the purpose of improving cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children so they develop the prerequisite skills and attitudes necessary to be successful in later grades. There are various ways that states and the school districts within them can provide a preschool program under federal guidance, and if they choose to do so, federal funding is provided through Title I Part A. More than 116 million dollars is provided to states for prekindergarten programs each year (Barnett et al., 2015).

Who is considered eligible to participate in a Title I preschool program is dependent on the way states and school districts choose to provide it. If a program is offered, the U.S. Department of Education (2012) identifies some students as automatically eligible, which includes children who have participated in Head Start or another Title I preschool program, children who are considered migrant, homeless preschool-age children, and children who are under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services. States can determine other qualifiers. For instance, Texas includes children who are limited in their ability to speak English, are economically disadvantaged, or are the child of a member of the armed forces (Texas Education Code, 2015). There is not a federal requirement related to the length of day

that the program offers. Nationally, 30% of schools offer full-day prekindergarten, 57% offer part-day prekindergarten, and 13% offer both lengths of the program (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Districts may choose to offer prekindergarten to children not eligible, and tuition to cover costs may be set or local funds may be used. For instance, in Texas, a district may extend their program to students not eligible, but it must be submitted and approved by the commissioner (Texas Education Code, 2015). Poverty guidelines determine the type of program states or school districts may offer, as well as determine if students are eligible to attend prekindergarten based on socioeconomic status, as set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (United States Department of Agriculture, 2016).

States make decisions about instructional requirements of their prekindergarten programs. For instance, Texas requires that prekindergarten programs funded by Title I federal funds must include instruction in language, mathematics, and social skills (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Guidelines approved by the Texas Commissioner of Education in 2015 include skill domains of social-emotional development, language and communication, emergent literacy reading and writing, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical development, and technology. The social and emotional development domain includes outcome goals in behavior control, emotional control, control of attention, and forming positive relationships with others. The guidelines also provide guidance for classroom teachers in working with English Language Learners, which include an emphasis on the goal of bilingual education programs. Finally, the

guidelines support establishing a positive learning environment in ways such as physical arrangement of the room and promoting school readiness.

This mixed methods study assessed the impact participation in public school prekindergarten has on social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners as they advance into kindergarten, first, and second grades. This chapter reviews literature related to this study. Areas of review include social competence, the impact of prekindergarten on social competence, school attendance, challenges faced by English Language Learners, governmental prekindergarten initiatives, and the theoretical framework utilized for this study.

Social Competence

Social competence is essential for students to increase self-concept and be ready for school success (Joy, 2015). Sabol & Pianta (2012) found that high social skills seemed to compensate for weaknesses in other domains. The social skills children possess prior to elementary school are important elements of their school readiness, and are as important as academic school readiness skills; therefore, guidance and practice of social skills are essential for prekindergarten teachers to include in their preschool instruction (Robinson & Diamond, 2014). Goldstein, Warde, and Peluso (2013) found that participating in prekindergarten impacted a student's competency in social-emotional readiness skills. A study of 86 students proficient in speaking English demonstrated significant differences in social-emotional development after seven months of receiving prekindergarten instruction. Facets of the social-emotional skills assessed in the researchers' study included interpersonal skills, self-expression, self-regulation, and attention. Other social-emotional readiness skills are the ability to seek help, play

cooperatively, separate from a caregiver, transition to new activities, and follow rules (Quirk, Grimm, Furlong, Nylund-Gibson, & Swami, 2016). Children who exhibit the behaviors of organizing play, sharing, assisting others, and giving compliments, are observed as having more friends than students who do not display these behaviors (Joseph & Stain, 2010). These skills can be taught and practiced in prekindergarten classrooms, enabling those students who participated in prekindergarten to enter kindergarten more socially competent and better prepared to learn academic material. Rich social interactions with children in their early years have been shown to stimulate their brains so they are ready for school when they enter kindergarten (Meltzoff & Kuhl, 2016). Prekindergarten provides this stimulation in a way English Language Learners are not likely to receive without participation in this program (García & Jensen, 2007). Activities that happen regularly within prekindergarten classrooms allow for students to guess, think, and reason, as well as talk about their personal lives and participate in pretend play. These types of activities provide opportunities for students to consider what they know and describe that information in ways that reinforce and extend their current knowledge (Wang, 2015). Social competence skills are developed during these kinds of activities that prekindergarten classrooms provide.

Parents place importance on development of social competence skills, although the way they prioritize some of the skills differ from how teachers prioritize them. For instance, Warnes, Sheridan, and Geske (2005) found that parents want their children to learn to communicate problems verbally, be forgiving, and have a happy disposition, while teachers expressed greater importance on leadership skills and helping others. Teachers and parents alike want students to learn to transition easily to new

environments. Students whose parents place importance on school readiness skills and engage in transitioning activities before entering kindergarten have higher achievement when beginning kindergarten (Puccioni, 2015). By participating in prekindergarten, children can transition from the familiar environment of home to the new environment of school prior to the time they begin kindergarten. This opportunity is especially important for English Language Learners. As an example, Puccioni (2015) found parents of Hispanic students reported they provided less opportunities for their children to practice transitioning to new environments before entering kindergarten than parents of non-Hispanic students with similar economic backgrounds. Participation in prekindergarten gives teachers and schools an opportunity to identify students exhibiting emotional and behavioral problems early and begin implementing interventions (Searle, Sawyer, Miller-Lewis, & Baghurst, 2014), thus leveraging the time available to support self-regulation and social-emotional skills before students enter kindergarten (Raver, 2012).

Prekindergarten Impact on Social Competence

Approximately 3.4 million students enroll in kindergarten each year (Mulligan et al., 2012). Enrollment in prekindergarten is not available for all students in 29 states because of income requirements that limit who may participate (Barnett et al., 2015). Even so, prekindergarten enrollment has tripled in the past 30 years (Bainbridge, Meyers, Tanaka, & Waldfogel, 2005), with 29% of the national population of preschool-age children enrolled in prekindergarten (Barnett et al., 2015). Preschool teachers include social skills and self-help skills when describing expected areas of competency for entering kindergarten and believe participation in prekindergarten ensures these school readiness skills are mastered (ŞAHİN, Sak, & Tuncer, 2013). It is possible to provide this

instruction in a homeschool setting, as students whose parents choose to provide prekindergarten instruction at home are as academically prepared as students who attend prekindergarten (Woods, 2013). However, children in non-English speaking homes may not have an opportunity to receive prekindergarten learning experiences within their home environment (Chien et al., 2010). Parents may work fulltime or not have the educational skills, language skills, or resources necessary to provide such instruction.

Prekindergarten improves a student's ability to transition into the sometimes intimidating environment of kindergarten, since the structure of the prekindergarten classroom is often more aligned with practices appropriate for young learners, and provides a less abrupt entry into the school setting (Desimone, Payne, & Fedoravicius, 2004). When children are provided opportunities to practice transition activities, especially students identified as economically disadvantaged, kindergarten teachers found them to have more positive social competencies than students who had less opportunities to practice transition activities (LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008). Working memory and attention control are improved when students attend prekindergarten, and these abilities positively impact reading and math achievement in kindergarten, as measured by end-of-kindergarten assessment (Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bierman, & Nelson, 2010). Weiland and Yoshikawa (2013) found students who participated in prekindergarten were better able to identify emotions. Supporting students in developing social competence skills impacts more than the student alone, but can have an impact on the success of all other students within a classroom, as a single student exhibiting high levels of inappropriate behavior can negatively affect the learning of other students within the classroom (Carrell & Hockstra, 2009).

Self-esteem is believed to be causally related to better life outcomes, such as mental and physical health, graduation rates, and decreased criminal activity (Jones et al., 2015). This implies interventions that raise self-esteem are of value. Students who struggle in school sometimes devalue their school experience as a way of preserving self-esteem (Peixoto & Almeida, 2010). Prekindergarten is an early intervention that may reduce the likelihood of that occurring as they advance into later grades. Robins, Trzesniewski, and Donnellan (2012) suggest that by providing practice on academic and behavioral skills necessary for success in school, and coupling that practice with praise and feedback related to goal-setting and effort, self-esteem can be enhanced. Prekindergarten provides time for that practice and praise to occur, potentially leading to higher levels of self-esteem and increased social competency.

School Attendance

School attendance is a strong predictor of student achievement. Oral language development is negatively impacted when students miss more than 10 days of school (Hall-Kenyon, Bingham, & Korth, 2009). Nichols (2003) found that school absences became more frequent as students progressed through the grades among students who struggled academically, and by the time students were in high school, they were absent from school twice as much as they were in earlier grades. As students' absences increased, their academic achievement decreased and students who were failing classes in high school missed twice as much school as students who were not failing. Absenteeism is especially high among economically disadvantaged students. A study in Houston Independent School District, the seventh largest school district in America, found that there was an overrepresentation of economically disadvantaged students who were

chronically absent children in every grade from kindergarten through eleventh grade (Baker Finck, 2015).

Gottfried (2011) studied absence data for sets of siblings to account for family and neighborhood factors. His study spanned six years and found that with students living in the same household, there was a negative relationship between days absent and reading achievement, and an even greater negative relationship between days absent and mathematics achievement. Absences in early grades impact future school performance, and absences in any given school year are a significant predictor of grades for the following school year (Easton & Englehard, 1982), demonstrating the need for early identification and prevention (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Findings also indicate chronic absenteeism negatively impacts not only the chronically absent student, but the student's classmates as well (Gottfried, 2015b).

Little research exists related to the impact prekindergarten attendance may have on future school absences. Gottfried (2015a) examined this relationship and found that kindergarten students who attended a prekindergarten program were less likely to be chronically absent from school during their kindergarten year. In his study, Gottfried (2015a) analyzed data from over 14,000 students, and results indicated that children who attended prekindergarten had lower odds of having moderate or strong chronic absenteeism compared to children not in a prekindergarten program. This research demonstrates that participation in prekindergarten has the potential to increase student attendance in future grades through the early development of school attendance routines and the creation of positive attitudes towards school for students and their parents, further validating the benefit of prekindergarten enrollment.

Challenges Faced by English Language Learners

While all students benefit from participation in prekindergarten (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2005), the need for enrollment in prekindergarten is more prevalent among English Language Learners because of their language deficits. Many children living in Spanish-speaking homes reach school age with very little exposure to the English language (Winsler et al., 2012). For 15% of kindergarteners, the primary language spoken at home is not English (Mulligan et al., 2012). Related to the challenge these students face in learning two languages simultaneously, the attainment of vocabulary for English Language Learners is slower than native English speakers (Jackson, Schatschneider, & Leacox, 2014). However, fostering their children's bilingual abilities is valued by non-English speaking parents. For example, Hispanic parents express they want their children to learn English, but they also want the school to support their children in developing dual language abilities (Barbarin et al., 2006). Additional time spent on literacy skills must be spent by English Language Learners to be able to perform at the same levels as their English-speaking peers (DeVezin, 2010). Kindergarten teachers have the same academic expectations for all students in their classes, regardless of native language, and they expect readiness competencies to be mastered by all students prior to entering kindergarten (Sakuma, 2013); therefore, English Language Learners are at a disadvantage if they have not had prior English instruction before entering kindergarten. Prekindergarten improves school readiness for Hispanic students and decreases differences in academic achievement upon enrollment in kindergarten (García & Jensen, 2007).

Although there are clear advantages for English Language Learners who participate in prekindergarten, educating parents and actively encouraging enrollment is needed. Bainbridge et al. (2005) found that children with mothers who did not graduate from high school are half as likely to be enrolled in preschool programs as college-educated mothers, indicating children with the least-educated parents are also the least likely to receive preschool instruction. This is especially significant for English Language Learners. The U.S. Department of Education (2010) indicate that 39% of Hispanic children's mothers and 41% of Hispanic children's fathers have not completed high school, more than double any other ethnic group. Findings indicate Hispanic children's prekindergarten enrollment rates are about 20 percentage points lower than their non-Hispanic peers (Bainbridge et al., 2005). Because of this, many Hispanic students enter kindergarten with a deficit in school readiness skills. Quirk et al. (2016) found that only one in 10 Hispanic students entered kindergarten with readiness skills in place, and over half exhibited low or extremely low skill development. This deficit applies not only to academic readiness, but also in the development of social competence skills. Wanless, McClelland, Tominely, and Acock (2011) found that English Language Learners who are also economically disadvantaged are at the greatest risk for poor behavioral control, even more so than English-speaking, economically disadvantaged students. This emphasizes how important it is to provide prekindergarten opportunities to English Language Learners. This is especially evident in Texas, where the percentage of English Language Learners participating in prekindergarten is 36%, the highest in the nation, followed by Illinois, Florida, California, and Oregon, with the percentage of

prekindergarten students identified as English Language Learners as 19%, 18%, 15%, and 15%, respectively (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Government Prekindergarten Initiatives

Early interventions are successful at increasing school readiness and closing achievement gaps (García, & Jensen, 2007). More than \$1 billion federal dollars have been invested to support the *Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge* grant that was launched in 2011 for the purpose of expanding prekindergarten programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In Texas, prekindergarten was first implemented in 1985 (Brown & Gasko, 2012), and Chapter 29 of the Texas Education Code (2015) outlines Texas state requirements for prekindergarten. It also stipulates that districts must offer a minimum of half-day prekindergarten if 15 or more four-year-old children in the community are eligible. Eligibility identified by the Texas Education Code (2015) includes being unable to speak and comprehend the English language, along with qualifying as economically disadvantaged, homeless, being a child of an active member of the armed forces or a member who was injured or killed while serving on active duty, or having been under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

Barnett et al. (2015) identifies that, in Texas, 52% of the state population of four-year-old children are enrolled in prekindergarten, accounting for 226,226 children among 85% of the school districts within the state. Of those enrolled, 40% are limited English proficient (Texas Education Agency, 2016a). Texas meets just two of the 10 quality standards on the checklist that outlines nationally recommended benchmarks (Barnett et al., 2015). The benchmarks met are that of providing comprehensive learning standards

and requiring the recommended teacher in-service. Other benchmarks nationally recommended include requiring a Bachelors degree of its teachers and having them hold some level of specialized training in prekindergarten, requiring paraprofessionals to have an Associate's degree, limiting class size to 20 or less students, having a staff ratio of 1:10 or better, offering some support services, providing at least one meal to students each day, and including site visits at least once every five years.

Nueman (2003) asserts that educational leaders can best meet the needs of prekindergarten students by targeting at-risk students while providing sufficient time, ensuring focused instruction, and including accountability measures for prekindergarten programs. Children who attend prekindergarten are half as likely to be retained in kindergarten (Winsler et al., 2012). Past U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan issued a challenge in 2015 that our nation must ensure all children have opportunities to attend high-quality preschools (U.S. Department of Education, 2015), indicating it is vital to strengthening our nation's economy. Members of Congress have supported the Strong Start for America's Children Act to ensure children from low-income families can attend public prekindergarten.

Some states have begun to provide universal prekindergarten, meaning age is the only criteria for enrolling a child in prekindergarten. Georgia and Oklahoma were the first two states to offer prekindergarten to all, and Oklahoma now serves 71% of four year olds across the state (Doggett & Wat, 2010). There is evidence that economically-disadvantaged students show more growth when educated in preschool alongside their advantaged peers (Barnett, 2008). Ron Haskins, co-founder of the Brookings Center on Children and Families and Budgeting, on the other hand, argues that while data supports

prekindergarten impacts on student performance for economically-disadvantaged students, middle class families can afford to provide preschool education on their own, and it would be a waste of taxpayer dollars to fund prekindergarten for anything but low income families (Karni, 2014). Texas provided \$749,838,055 in funds to support prekindergarten in the 2012 school year, which is approximately \$3,295 per student enrolled (Texas Education Agency, 2016b). Texas Governor Abbot, in 2015, provided grant funds to support a prekindergarten initiative (Texas Education Agency, 2016d).

Theoretical Framework

The principals of social constructivism provided the theoretical framework for this research study. Social constructivism originated from the works of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who felt behaviorism was too narrow and isolated (Liu & Matthews, 2005). While Piaget's cognitive developmental theory indicated learning cannot happen until developmental milestones occurred, Vygotsky (1978) believed developmental growth lags behind the learning process. His theory supports that learning stimulates development and that social interactions with the teacher, as well as with peers, are an integral part of learning (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

A key concept of Vygotsky's (1978) theory is extending instruction beyond a child's actual developmental level to what he refers to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept is based on the need to instruct students at a level that is slightly beyond what they can do independently, but simple enough that they can perform the tasks with help from the teacher or more knowledgeable peers (Wass & Golding, 2014). Wass and Golding (2014) describe that by providing resources and background information before instruction and during guided practice activities, instruction can occur within the students' ZPD range, thereby expanding understanding

so students can then perform at higher levels than when working independently. This method enables teachers to create learning experiences that promote the developmental process.

Social constructivism was an appropriate theory for this research study for multiple reasons. Prekindergarten teaching methods incorporate learning activities that stretch student social competence learning just beyond what they could do independently, but not beyond what they can do with teacher and peer support. Social constructivism advocates high use of language within a collaborative learning environment (Powell & Kalina, 2009), which supports the instructional needs of English Language Learners. Teaching with the ZPD in mind is future-oriented, as it is focused on continual extension of current competencies, and is directed toward ensuring students reach their immediate potential for development (Levykh, 2008). The purpose of prekindergarten is to ensure students are developmentally prepared for their kindergarten year. Learning within a social constructivism framework involves providing students opportunities to construct, create, and discover (Liu & Chen, 2010). By using curriculum built on these concepts, prekindergarten provides these very opportunities. The Texas Prekindergarten guidelines (Texas Education Agency, 2016c), for instance, describes instruction should meet the students where they are and provide scaffolding experiences and activities necessary for building skills that will lead them toward school readiness. For all these reasons, social constructivism best provided the theoretical framework for this research study.

Summary

Research supports the notion that prekindergarten has a positive effect on school readiness (Goldstein et al., 2013; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). Studies demonstrate social competence has positive effects on school readiness (Welsh et al., 2010). Positive

relationships have been found between increased school attendance and success in student performance (Easton & Englehard, 1982). Data reveals that English Language Learners have the greatest need for early intervention (DeVezin, 2010; Jackson et al., 2014; Quirk et al, 2016; Wanless et al., 2011). Government initiatives are in place to provide support for states and school districts who implement public prekindergarten programs. There is minimal research that examines the impact of public prekindergarten on social competence or school attendance for Hispanic English Language Learners. This study adds to the body of existing research on the impact public prekindergarten may have on social competence and on school attendance for this population.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was to assess the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten has on social competence and on school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grades. In the first phase of this study, quantitative survey data were collected from two groups. One group was the teachers, parents, and students themselves who participated in half-day public prekindergarten. The other group was the teachers, parents, and students themselves who did not participate in public prekindergarten. The surveys were used to assess each student's social competence skills in the current grade level. Attendance data examined were from each student's first day of kindergarten through December 2016. For kindergarten students within the study, attendance data examined were from August 2016 through December 2016; for first grade students within the study, attendance data examined were from August 2015 through December 2016; and for second grade students within the study, attendance data examined were from August 2014 through December 2016. For the second phase of this study, qualitative data were collected through focus groups held with teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade to explain the findings from the quantitative data. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis

procedures, validity, privacy and ethical considerations, and research design limitations of this study.

Overview of the Research Problem

Learning self-management, peer relationship skills, respectfulness, and other social competency skills impacts students' ability to increase self-concept and experience school success (Joy, 2015). The U.S. Department of Education (2012) provides guidance that identifies the purpose of a prekindergarten program is to improve cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children so they develop the prerequisite skills necessary to be successful throughout their school career. Participating in prekindergarten provides students the opportunity to overcome social and emotional skill deficits prior to entering kindergarten (Whitted, 2011). Oral language development, which is critically important for English Language Learners, is negatively impacted when students miss more than 10 days of school (Hall-Kenyon, Bingham, & Korth, 2009). English Language Learners, especially if they are economically disadvantaged, are at the greatest risk for exhibiting misbehavior in school (Wanless et al., 2011). Without a focus on interventions that meet the needs of English Language Learners, inequity in educational opportunities will persist (Daniel, 2014).

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study consisted of three constructs: (a) half-day public prekindergarten, (b) social competence, and (c) school attendance. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2014) defines prekindergarten as a program for children younger than kindergarten age. For the purpose of this study, prekindergarten excluded federal Head Start programs, and instead referred to a four-year old public school program designed to

ensure kindergarten readiness. Edmonds and Stewart-Brown (2003) define social competence as having the behavior, attitudes, and understanding that support the development of good relationships to be successful in completing tasks involving others. The *Social Competence Scale – Teacher Version* and the *Social Competence Scale – Parent Version*, as well as the *Child Development Project Student Questionnaire – Social Competence Scale*, were used to measure perceptions of teachers, parents, and students themselves, respectively, related to social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners categorically divided into two groups: those who attended half-day public prekindergarten and those who did not attend public prekindergarten. For the purposes of this study, school attendance referred specifically to a student's presence in school while enrolled. School attendance was measured by the percentage of days present at school during the time of enrollment from August of the beginning of the student's kindergarten year through December 2016.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to assess the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten has on social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade.

The quantitative research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) Does participation in half-day public prekindergarten impact social competence of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged:
 - as measured by teacher assessment?

- as measured by parent assessment?
 - as measured by self-assessment?
- 2) Does participation in half-day public prekindergarten impact school attendance of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged, as measured by percentage of school days present during the time of enrollment?

The qualitative research question that guided this study was:

- 3) What are teacher perceptions of the social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten?

Research Design

This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. The design consisted of a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase that added meaning to the quantitative findings. This research design was effective for this study because it allowed for a more thorough understanding and exploration of the quantitative findings.

The quantitative phase of this study employed data collection related to social competency skills of kindergarten, first, and second grade Hispanic English Language Learners. Half of the students attended half-day public prekindergarten and half did not attend public prekindergarten. Data were collected through written surveys of the teachers and parents of the students participating in this study, related to their perceptions of the students' social competency skills. Students also self-assessed their skills through

orally-administered surveys. Today's classrooms promote student ownership of learning as a way of creating self-regulated learners (Chan, Graham-Day, Ressa, Peters, & Konrad, 2014; Nair, 2014). Therefore, students have become accustomed to self-assessment, which justifies including this research method in the study.

As a second component of the quantitative phase of this study, archived data of school attendance since entering kindergarten were collected for the sample of kindergarten, first, and second grade Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten and for the kindergarten, first, and second grade Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten. These data included collecting the number of days absent and the number of days present since enrollment, in order to calculate a percentage of days present since the time of enrollment.

The qualitative phase of this study included the use of teacher focus groups conducted as a follow up to help explain the quantitative results. Three separate focus groups were held, allowing for kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers to participate in grade level groups to explore their perceptions of the difference participation or non-participation in half-day public prekindergarten had on social competency at each of the grade levels for Hispanic English Language Learners.

Population and Sample

The population of this study included all kindergarten, first, and second grade students enrolled in a large suburban school district in south Texas during the 2016-2017 academic school year. The school district had a total student population of 12,382 students served by 19 campuses, including 11 elementary schools, two middle schools,

three intermediate schools, two high schools, and one alternative school. Student ethnicity demographics were 8.3% African-American, 52.1% Hispanic, 35.2% White, .05% American Indian, 1.4% Asian, .01% Pacific Islander, and 2.3% two or more races. Students who were identified as economically disadvantaged comprised 55.2% of the student population, and 9.1% of students are English Language Learners (Texas Education Agency; TEA, 2015).

The district employed 1,544 staff members, including 775 teachers. Teachers had 9.9 average years of experience and there was a 19.1% turnover rate. Teachers holding a Masters or higher degree equated to 19% of the total teaching staff, 79% were female, and 22% were an ethnicity other than White (TEA, 2015).

The elementary schools had a total kindergarten, first, and second grade population of 2,812 students, with 909 kindergarteners, 945 first graders, and 948 second graders. After removing those who entered the school district after the beginning of their kindergarten year, removing students who repeated kindergarten, first, or second grade, and removing students receiving special education services, 448 students remained. An additional 39 English Language Learners whose primary language was something other than Spanish were removed to create a more homogeneous group made up of Spanish-speaking English Language Learners. The participant pool that remained included 409 Hispanic English Language Learners: 349 who participated in half-day public prekindergarten and 66 who did not participate in public prekindergarten.

The 66 Hispanic English Language Learners who did not participate in public prekindergarten were selected for this research study, along with a matched sample of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten

within the school district, creating a total participant pool of 132 Hispanic English Language Learners. This sample was matched by grade level, gender, and economic status. The parents and teachers of each of these students were also asked to participate in this research study. This group of students, parents, and teachers served as the quantitative sample for this study. Table 1 displays the total number of students by campus who participated in the study and indicates the number by grade level of Hispanic English Language Learners who participated or did not participate in half-day public prekindergarten. This demonstrates the sample was matched by grade level. The number of students in each grade level who participated in half-day public prekindergarten equally matched the number of students in each grade level who didn't attend public prekindergarten.

Table 1

Student participants

Campus	Total students	Kindergarten		1 st grade		2 nd grade	
		PreK	No PreK	PreK	No PreK	PreK	No PreK
Campus A	5	1	1	0	0	1	2
Campus B	8	0	0	6	2	—	—
Campus C	11	—	—	—	—	6	5
Campus D	22	1	1	8	7	2	3
Campus E	12	1	2	3	3	1	2
Campus F	6	1	1	0	0	2	2
Campus G	8	0	2	1	2	1	2
Campus H	24	3	0	5	8	5	3
Campus I	36	0	0	10	11	8	7
Total	132	7	7	33	33	26	26

Note. Campus B does not serve students in second grade; Campus C does not serve students in kindergarten or first grade.

Among the 132 Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in this study, 53% of the students were female and 47% of the students were male. Table 2

displays the number of Hispanic English Language Learner participants of each gender by grade level and categorizes them by Hispanic English Language Learners who participated or did not participate in half-day public prekindergarten. This demonstrates that a matched sample was created based on gender. The number of males and the number of females who participated in half-day public prekindergarten equally matched the number of males and number of females who didn't participate in public prekindergarten.

Table 2

Student participants' gender

Grade	Total Students	Male		Female	
		PreK	No PreK	PreK	No PreK
Kindergarten	14	6	6	1	1
First Grade	66	12	12	21	21
Second Grade	52	13	13	13	13
Total	132	31	31	35	35

There were 71% of students in this study who were identified as economically disadvantaged and 29% of students who were not identified as economically disadvantaged. Table 3 displays the participants' economic status by grade level and categorizes them by Hispanic English Language Learners who participated or did not participate in half-day public prekindergarten. This demonstrates that the participants were matched by economic status. The number of students identified as economically disadvantaged who participated in half-day public prekindergarten equally matched the number of students identified as economically disadvantaged who didn't attend public prekindergarten, and the number of students not identified as economically disadvantaged who participated in half-day public prekindergarten equally matched the number of

students not identified as economically disadvantaged who did not participate in public prekindergarten.

Table 3

Student participants' economic status

Grade	Total Students	Not Economically Disadvantaged		Economically Disadvantaged	
		PreK	No PreK	PreK	No PreK
Kindergarten	14	4	4	3	3
First Grade	66	7	7	26	26
Second Grade	52	8	8	18	18
Total	132	19	19	47	47

Student participants who did not attend public prekindergarten were reported by their parents to have stayed home with a parent or caretaker, attended a daycare, were not living in the United States at that time, or information was not provided. Table 4 displays the data. A limitation of this study is the lack of information about the type of instruction students who did not attend public prekindergarten received prior to kindergarten.

Parents of students who reported their child was at home the year prior to kindergarten reported that the primary reason they made this choice was due to transportation issues.

Table 4

Non-prekindergarten participants' alternative to public prekindergarten participation

Alternative to public prekindergarten	Total Students
Home with parent or caregiver	24
Daycare / private preschool programs	12
Out of country*	9
Unreported*	21

Note. *Unknown if student attended non-public prekindergarten or prekindergarten outside of the United States.

The 132 Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in this study were served by 41 teachers at nine different elementary schools. Table 5 displays the distribution of teachers included in this study by the grade level they teach. The qualitative data for this study were obtained by creating three focus groups of teachers – one for each of the grade levels in this study. All teachers were invited to attend the focus group designated for their grade level. This resulted in ten kindergarten teachers, 17 first grade teachers, and 14 second grade teachers being invited to participate in focus groups.

Table 5

Teacher participants

Campus	Total teachers	Teachers by grade level		
		Kindergarten	First grade	Second grade
Campus A	3	2	0	1
Campus B	2	0	2	–
Campus C	2	–	–	2
Campus D	7	1	4	2
Campus E	6	3	2	1
Campus F	2	1	0	1
Campus G	7	2	3	2
Campus H	5	1	2	2
Campus I	7	0	4	3
Total	41	10	17	14

Note. Campus B does not serve students in second grade. Campus C does not serve students in kindergarten or first grade.

Prekindergarten classes within the school district were taught through a half-day program, with students either attending three hours in the morning or three hours in the afternoon. The students in this study who attended public prekindergarten all attended the program provided by this school district, utilizing the same district-developed curriculum aligned with state instructional guidelines, regardless of classroom or campus.

A common curriculum was also utilized by kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, who all utilized the district-specific TEKS Resource System supported by the Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative (TCMPC). This system provided state curriculum guidance, the district-created year-at-a-glance scope and sequence, vertical alignment documents, and instructional focus documents for each unit to ensure all students within the district received access to the same taught and tested curriculum. Teacher variation in delivery is always present; however, the content, scope, and sequence of the instruction delivered among the campuses and classrooms was uniform.

Instrumentation

This study used pre-existing survey instruments to assess social competence. The *Social Competence Scale – Teacher Version* was used to assess teacher perceptions of the social competence of selected students (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2011c). The *Social Competence – Parent Version* was used to assess parent perceptions of the social competence of their child (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2011b). The *Child Development Project Student Questionnaire – Social Competence Scale* (Developmental Studies Center, 1993) was used to allow students to self-assess their own social competence.

The Social Competence Scale – Teacher Version

The *Social Competence Scale – Teacher Version* (SCS-T) consists of 25 items designed to assess a student's prosocial behaviors, emotional self-regulation, and academic skills. The survey can be found in Appendix A. Each item states a behavior a child may display in a school setting. The teacher rates each item according to how well it describes the student on a five-point Likert scale. The rating options are 0=Not at all,

1=A little, 2=Moderately well, 3=Well, and 4=Very well. There are three subscales: prosocial/communication skills (items 9, 13, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 25), emotional regulation skills (items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 18), and academic skills (items 1, 4, 5, 10, 15, 17, and 21). A score for the combined prosocial/communication items and the emotional regulation items is calculated, as well as a total score.

This scale was originally created for the Fast Track Project by the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group in the 1990-91 school year and was utilized with three cohorts of kindergarten students from selected public school systems that collaboratively worked with four universities across the nation (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2011a). Based on a treatment sample and a matched control sample, the alpha coefficients ranged from .94 to .96 for the prosocial/communication skills scale, .94 to .96 for the emotional regulation skills scale, and .97 to .98 for the social competence scale total (Corrigan, 2003b, 2003c). Statistically significant higher prosocial/communication skills, emotional regulation, and total social competence scale independent-samples *t* test means were yielded for the treatment sample than the control sample, demonstrating the internal consistency measures, as evidenced by the Cronbach alpha values, were useful.

The Social Competence Scale – Parent Version

The *Social Competence Scale – Parent Version* (SCS-P) consists of 12 items designed to assess a child's prosocial behaviors, communication skills, and self-control. The survey can be found in Appendix B. The items on the parent version are a subset of the items on the teacher version. Each item states a behavior a child may display in a social setting. A parent rates each item according to how well it describes the student on

a five-point Likert scale. The rating options are 0=Not at all, 1=A little, 2=Moderately well, 3=Well, and 4=Very well. There are two subscales: prosocial/communication skills (items 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12) and emotional regulation skills (items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8). A Spanish translation of this form was created and provided for parents whose dominant language is Spanish. The translated version is included in Appendix B. To create a Spanish translation, the English form was submitted to a professional translator who was employed by the school district regularly for translations of legal district documents.

This scale was originally created for the Fast Track Project by the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group in the 1990-91 school year and was utilized with three cohorts of kindergarten students from selected public school systems that collaboratively worked with four universities across the nation (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2011a). Based on a treatment sample and a matched control sample, the alpha coefficients ranged from .74 to .84 for the prosocial/communication skills scale, .76 to .82 for the emotional regulation skills scale, and .84 to .89 for the social competence scale total (Corrigan, 2002, 2003a). Statistically significant higher prosocial/communication skills, emotional regulation, and total social competence scale independent-samples *t* test means were yielded for the treatment sample than the control sample, demonstrating the internal consistency measures, as evidenced by the Cronbach alpha values, were reliable.

Child Development Project Student Questionnaire – Social Competence Scale

The *Child Development Project Student Questionnaire – Social Competence Scale* consists of ten items designed to allow an elementary school child to self-assess their interpersonal social skills (Developmental Studies Center, 1993). The questionnaire

can be found in Appendix C. It is a self-report questionnaire designed for written completion by students in grades four and five. Each item on the assessment makes a statement that the child rates according to how well it describes them on a five-point Likert scale. The rating options for the first eight items and the tenth item are 5=Agree a lot, 4=Agree a little, 3=Neither agree or disagree, 2=Disagree a little, and 1=Disagree a lot. The rating scale for the ninth item is reverse-scored. Rating options for the reverse-scored item are 1=Agree a lot, 2=Agree a little, 3=Neither agree or disagree, 4=Disagree a little, and 5=Disagree a lot. The scores for each item on the questionnaire are added together, and higher scores indicates a higher perceived self-assessment on social skills. The internal consistency reliability coefficient is .80, indicating that it was an acceptable tool for self-assessment of social competence skills when administered in written form to fourth and fifth grade students (Developmental Studies Center, 1993).

Students in this study were in kindergarten, first, and second grade, so the readability of the instrument was measured and determined to be at a 4.6 grade level. This was determined by using Microsoft Word 2016's built-in program called the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Test that utilizes the average words in the sentence and number of syllables in the word for calculations (Microsoft, 2016). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was administered orally, since students taking the survey were in the spring semester of either kindergarten, first, or second grade. According to the Longman Vocabulary Checker, only two of the 105 words used in the survey ("cheer" and "bossy") were outside the most frequently used 3,000 words of the English language (Pearson, 2017). By five, children have acquired a 3,000-word expressive vocabulary, and receptive vocabulary is always significantly higher (Jarzynski, 2011).

Before administering the student survey, it was piloted with nine children who were in the age range of students who were a part of the study. A pictorial rating scale was developed to match the five choices using agreeable to disagreeable faces, allowing the student to point to his or her answer choice after each statement was read. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .643 was found from the pilot administrations. To increase reliability, a short mini lesson was developed and provided just prior to the individual administration of the questionnaire that reinforced the meaning of the words agree and disagree, since they were the two words used in association with the pictorial rating scale. Practice statements were provided until the student could demonstrate understanding of the answer choices and how to use the pictorial rating scale. A Spanish translation developed by submitting the English form to a professional translator was available during the oral administration and the assistant researcher administering the survey was bilingual. The translated version is included in Appendix C. This allowed administration of the survey in the language the student most comfortably understood and spoke, and translating occurred during the administration as necessary.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to beginning data collection, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) approval was obtained from the university and written approval was obtained by the school district. Once obtained, the researcher met with the campus leader from each of the nine schools included in the study to explain the purpose of the study and general information about the instrumentation being utilized, data collection procedures, and confidentiality measures taken, including where results of the research can be found at the conclusion of the study. The researcher arranged a time with each of

the campus principals to meet with individual teachers who instructed Hispanic English Language Learners who were a part of the research study. At that meeting, the researcher provided the same information to the teachers that was shared with the principals, as well as provided more specific information about the procedures and processes being utilized for this study.

Quantitative Data Collection

At a time and place approved by the campus principal, the researcher met teachers who instruct students who were part of the research study to explain the purpose of the study, instrumentation being utilized, and data collection procedures. The researcher indicated the estimated amount of time required for survey completion for each child, and communicated the confidentiality measures taken and where results of the study can be found at the conclusion of the study. Teachers were provided written information, indicating that participation was voluntary and consent was implied by taking the surveys. Each teacher was provided an envelope with a teacher survey instrument for each student they instructed who was a part of the research study, along with instructions for how to complete the surveys and a felt pen for them to keep. Once the teachers completed the surveys, they returned the envelope with the survey forms to the school secretary, who collected them and returned them to the researcher. Each teacher who returned completed student surveys was provided a “jeans pass” that the campus principal had approved. This pass gave the teachers permission to wear jeans on a day of their choice.

Teachers received individual envelopes addressed to each student they instructed who were a part of the study and were asked to give them to the specified students and

request the student take it home to his or her parent. Teachers also received a snack-sized bag of goldfish crackers to provide their students who returned the surveys. The individual envelopes included either a parental consent form for child under 7 years old for education research or a consent/assent form for parent and child aged 7-12 for education research, based on the age of the student. In addition, each envelope contained a parent survey instrument, along with instructions for how to complete and return the survey and a pen. The survey instrument was provided in both English and Spanish to allow the parent to complete the survey in the language of their choice. For each survey or consent form not returned within the requested time period, a bilingual educator called the primary contact of the student who was a part of the research study to verbally communicate and answer questions about purpose of the study, instrumentation utilized, data collection procedures, and confidentiality measures that were taken. Information about who to contact if they had additional questions was provided as well.

After receiving parent consent forms back, the researcher arranged an agreeable time with the teacher that permitted each student may be removed from class for a short period of time. A bilingual educator met with each student in a quiet location within the school as mutually agreed upon by the principal and explained the purpose of the study to the student, asking if he or she was agreeable to answering a few questions. Directions were explained and a mini-lesson was provided of key words used in the self-assessment. Once the student demonstrated an understanding of how to use the pictorial scale to answer questions, the student self-assessment questionnaire was orally administered in English or Spanish, based on the student's preference and need. Students received a

pencil in appreciation of their participation after the conclusion of the self-assessment and returned to their classroom.

Archival attendance data were collected from the school district information system utilized by the district for each student who was part of the research study. Data for number of days absent from school since entering kindergarten were retrieved. Data for total number of days absent included excused absences and unexcused absences. The number of days present was determined by subtracting the number of days absent from the total days of enrollment, and then a percentage of days present was calculated by dividing the number of days present by the number of days enrolled and multiplying by 100.

All quantitative survey and attendance data were entered into Microsoft Excel 2010 and then exported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Data were stored in two locations: on the researcher's computer hard drive and on a data stick. Both have password protections. Data will be stored for five years and then destroyed.

Qualitative Data Collection

Prior to beginning data collection, written approval was obtained by the school district and included with the submission of the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) application form. A copy of the proposed focus group questions that were to be asked of participants was submitted with the CPHS application form, as well. The questions were adjusted to better meet the needs of the study after quantitative data were reviewed, and the 10 questions utilized are included in Appendix D. Questions were designed by the researcher to be non-biased, allowing for participants to identify

what they perceived to be differences in the social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten to those who did not.

CPHS approval was obtained from the university before any qualitative data were collected. Once obtained, the researcher arranged with the campus leader from the campus selected to host the focus group meetings a time to meet with each grade level of teachers who instructed the students who were a part of this study. Three separate focus group meetings were scheduled: one for each grade level of teachers who instructed students who were a part of the study. Information about the focus groups was provided to teachers through a Google calendar invitation, and participants were encouraged to be familiar with the prekindergarten history of their Hispanic English Language Learners in preparation for the discussion.

All meetings were held during the early part of the spring semester, after school hours from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m., in the teacher dining room of the host campus. Finger foods and water was provided, as well as childcare for those who needed it. Participants received name tags upon arrival. When the meeting began, the teachers were reminded that the purpose of this phase of the study was to explore perceptions of social competence skills for Hispanic English Language Learners who attend their class after having attended half-day public prekindergarten compared to Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten, and to do so in greater depth than the prior survey had allowed. Data collection procedures were described, including the hour of time allotted for the focus group discussion. Confidentiality by participants was encouraged, but it was not guaranteed, since the researcher could not ensure participants would not share information outside of the focus group. To increase the likelihood of

group members treating disclosed information confidentially, the researcher communicated to participants that the researcher would keep all information confidential, and asked each participant to state their level of commitment to keeping the disclosed information confidential. Participants were reminded that their participation was appreciated but voluntary. Each teacher received an adult informed consent form, indicating their participation was voluntary and encouraging their confidentiality. Each teacher who signed consent to participate in the focus group joined the other teachers from their same grade level in responding to open-ended questions, as listed in Appendix D. After the focus group meeting, each participant received a five dollar Sonic gift card as appreciation of participation.

Each focus group meeting was audio-recorded on a digital recording device and recorded on the researcher's cell phone as a back-up. It was downloaded onto the researcher's computer, and once downloaded, the audio-recording was deleted from both recording devices. The audio-recording was emailed to a service provider called Rev (<https://www.rev.com/transcription>) for transcribing, and received back from them by email. The transcription was verified for accuracy by the researcher and provided to the participants for member-checking before data analysis. Transcriptions were stored in two locations: on the researcher's computer hard drive and on a data stick. Both have password protections. Data will be stored for five years and then destroyed.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Data Analysis

All quantitative data were entered into Microsoft Excel 2010 and then exported into the SPSS (Version 24) software for analysis. Independent-samples *t* tests were

appropriate for this study because this study compared one categorical independent variable, participation or non-participation in half-day public prekindergarten, on the dependent variables. Independent-samples *t* tests were used to evaluate whether the mean of the test variable for one group differed from the mean of the test variable for the other group (Green & Salkind, 2014).

The independent variable, participation or non-participation in half-day public prekindergarten, was categorically divided into two groups: Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten and Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten, and was analyzed separately by grade level and by total participants, as well as by those who were identified as economically disadvantaged. Two dependent variable factors were evaluated separately: social competence and school attendance. Social competence was investigated from three different vantage points: perceptions of teachers, parents, and of the students themselves.

To answer the first research question regarding social competence, independent-samples *t* tests were computed using the categorical independent variable (participation or non-participation in half-day public prekindergarten) and the dependent variables, the three scores of social competence as measured by teachers, parents, and students, respectively. To answer the second research question regarding school attendance, an independent-samples *t* test was computed using the categorical independent variable (participation or non-participation in half-day public prekindergarten) and the dependent variable, the percentage of days present of the total days enrolled. For the purposes of this study, a statistical significance value of .05 was used.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The third research question was designed to understand teacher perceptions of the social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not. By holding focus groups with teachers from different grade levels separately from one another, responses collected from kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers could be analyzed independently. The first step of analyzing the data from each group was for the researcher to take cognitive ownership of the transcribed conversations. To do so, the researcher read and reread the contents, making preliminary notes and notations on the documents. In vivo coding was then performed utilizing the transcribed data. In vivo coding involves identifying words or phrases that stand out, seem significant, or sum up what a participant was saying (Saldana, 2011). In vivo codes were recorded in list order for reflection and categorizing. The categories that emerged from the in vivo codes were then named as themes and subthemes. Within and across the themes, the researcher looked for frequency of comments and extensiveness. Similar to frequency, extensiveness considers not how many times something is said, but instead refers to how many different people spoke to the same theme (Krueger & Casey, 2009). This was useful in considering how important a particular code or category was to all members of the group. This same process was replicated following each focus group, allowing the researcher to distinguish what the participants found as important.

After data from each focus group had been analyzed separately, the researcher then analyzed the data side-by-side, reflecting and revising themes until common themes had been identified. The data were then merged and the researcher looked for frequency

of comments and extensiveness of the codes and categories among the groups. Group-to-group validation considers how many groups mentioned a topic, how many people within the group mentioned it, and how much focus the group gave to the topic (Morgan, 1997). This provided evidence that the topic was worthy of emphasizing and allowed for triangulation of data. This inductive data coding process built an in-depth understanding of perceptions of social competence skills for Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten compared to those who did not. The findings were translated into written summaries to reveal the insights of what was discovered through analysis, and peer reviews were utilized throughout the process to build credibility of the researcher's interpretations of participants' responses.

Validity

Multiple strategies were utilized by the researcher to increase the validity of findings from this study. Focus group questions were written in a neutral and objective manner, and were reviewed by committee members prior to use. Focus groups were held by grade levels of teachers to allow for triangulation of data. During the focus groups, the researcher recorded field notes to capture observations, participant emotions, and non-verbal expressions that related to verbal responses to researcher questions. The researcher restated and summarized information from participants after each question and at the conclusion of the focus group to ensure accurate understanding of contributions. An assistant was present during each focus group to take notes during the meeting, and then validate the field notes taken by the researcher to ensure accuracy and thoroughness. After transcriptions were complete, member-checking was used to assess the accuracy of

transcribed recordings. Peer reviews were utilized to ensure written summaries reflected objective analysis of data.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

CPHS and written school district permission was obtained before any data were collected. No data were collected from teachers without their consent, and no data were collected from parents or students without parental consent and student assent. Teacher and parent surveys had a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and that their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality of survey data was maintained, and confidentiality of focus group discussion was encouraged, but not guaranteed. When transcribing focus group dialogue, pseudonyms were utilized to protect anonymity. Multiple strategies were used by the researcher to remain neutral and objective throughout the data analysis process, including member-checking, triangulation of data, and peer reviews. Accuracy and precision of transcription recordings were ensured. All hardcopies of personally identifiable information are stored in a locked file in the researcher's office, and all electronic copies are stored on the researcher's hard drive and password protections are in place. Hard copies and electronic copies will be destroyed after five years.

Research Design Limitations

There were some limitations to this study. As this study was limited to Hispanic English Language Learners who had been in the school district since kindergarten, had not repeated a grade, and were not served by special education services, the number of students eligible for participation in this study was small. The students came from different schools and classes within the district, and were consequently evaluated by

different teachers, which implies a hierarchical structure to the data; yet because of the small sample size, a hierarchical linear model couldn't be used. The fact that the prekindergarten curriculum is standardized may have offset the limitation to some degree; regardless, this limits generalizability to other districts and student groups, lowering external validity. In addition, the prekindergarten program provided in the school district utilized for this study is a half-day program. This creates a limitation to this study because a half-day prekindergarten program may not provide sufficient time for Hispanic English Language Learners to gain the necessary social competence skills expected before entering kindergarten.

Internal validity was also affected by some extraneous and confounding variables. Although the students in this study who did not participate in prekindergarten were not in a public school program the year prior to their kindergarten year, they may have had some social competency instructional exposure through daycare or private preschool programs that was not verified. As mentioned, students were selected for this study across nine different elementary schools and three separate communities. While the district utilizes a common curriculum framework, there was likely variance between campuses, and even among the multiple classrooms. Data collected about social competence were based on perceptions, which could account for inconsistencies. The student participants were self-assessed, and because of their young age, internal validity could have been affected. Although the student survey instrument was administered orally and supports were put in place to assist students in self-assessing their social competence, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .663, indicating low reliability, and is therefore a limitation of this study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of participation in half-day public prekindergarten on social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade. This chapter provided a description of the research design, population and sample, instruments utilized, and data collection and analysis procedures. Ethical issues, limitations, and validity factors were also addressed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to assess the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten may have on social competence and on school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grades. This chapter describes the results of the data analysis for the quantitative and qualitative data collected, addressing each of the three research questions in this study. The chapter will conclude by connecting and summarizing the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Quantitative Data Results

Research Question One

Research question one assessed prekindergarten impact on the social competence of Hispanic English Language Learners in multiple ways. Teacher perceptions were obtained through completion of a teacher survey assessing the social competence of each of their students. Parent perceptions were obtained through completion of a parent survey assessing the social competence of their child. Student perceptions were obtained through student self-assessment of their own social competence. For each of these categories, the data were reported for all students in the study, as well as reported by grade level. In addition, data were isolated for all students identified as economically disadvantaged, and reported for all students in the study, as well as reported by grade level.

Teacher assessment. To answer the research question, *Does participation in prekindergarten impact social competence of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged, as measured by teacher assessment?*, independent-samples *t* tests were performed. Comparing the means of total scores from the teacher survey, by grade and by combined grades, there was no statistical significance between Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten, and those who did not ($p > .05$). Results are summarized in Table 6. Reliability of the results from the teacher survey was computed using SPSS (version 24), and the value of the Cronbach's Alpha was .967, indicating excellent reliability.

Table 6

Teacher survey mean total scores

Grade	<i>n</i>	<i>M^a</i>		<i>(t)</i>	<i>p</i> value ^{<i>b</i>}
		PreK	No PreK		
Kindergarten	14	78.57	64.71	1.156	.270
Eco. Disadvantaged	6	66.67	74.00	-.379	.724
First Grade	64	68.34	68.50	-.033	.974
Eco. Disadvantaged	50	68.24	68.84	-.109	.914
Second Grade	52	81.38	76.04	.990	.327
Eco. Disadvantaged	34	79.24	73.29	.834	.411
All Grades	130	74.66	71.11	1.010	.314
Eco. Disadvantaged	90	72.29	70.87	.335	.739

Note. Eco.= Economically. ^aTotal possible score = 100. ^bStatistical significance $p < .05$.

Parent assessment. To answer the research question, *Does participation in prekindergarten impact social competence of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged as measured by parent assessment?*, independent-samples *t* tests were performed. Comparing the means of total scores from

the parent survey, by grade and by combined grades, there was no statistical significance between Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten, and those who did not ($p > .05$). Results are summarized in Table 7. Reliability of the results from the parent survey was computed using SPSS (version 24), and the value of the Cronbach's Alpha was .833, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 7

Parent survey mean total scores

Grade	<i>n</i>	<i>M^a</i>		<i>(t)</i>	<i>p</i> value ^{<i>b</i>}
		PreK	No PreK		
Kindergarten	10	35.00	31.80	.747	.476
Eco. Disadvantaged	2	—	—	—	—
First Grade	56	33.93	34.18	-.137	.891
Eco. Disadvantaged	42	33.14	34.14	-.448	.657
Second Grade	44	37.05	34.41	1.433	.159
Eco. Disadvantaged	32	36.88	34.00	1.268	.215
All Grades	110	35.27	34.05	.980	.329
Eco. Disadvantaged	56	34.74	34.16	.369	.713

Note. Eco.=Economically. A sample size of 2 is too small to statistically analyze.

^aTotal possible score = 48. ^bStatistical significance $p < .05$.

Self-assessment. To answer the research question, *Does participation in prekindergarten impact social competence of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged as measured by self-assessment?*, independent-samples *t* tests were performed. Comparing the means of total scores from the student survey, by grade and by combined grades, there was no statistical significance in first or second grade between Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten, and those who did not ($p > .05$). However, there was a significant difference for kindergarten Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten (46.83) and those who did not (42.00) ($p=.037$). Results are

summarized in Table 8. Reliability of the results from the student survey was computed using SPSS (version 24), and the value of the Cronbach's Alpha was .663, indicating a relatively low reliability.

Table 8

Student survey mean total scores

Grade	<i>n</i>	<i>M^a</i>		<i>(t)</i>	<i>p</i> value*
		PreK	No PreK		
Kindergarten	12	46.83	42.00	2.408	.037*
Eco. Disadvantaged	4	—	—	—	—
First Grade	52	46.69	46.58	.115	.909
Eco. Disadvantaged	42	47.29	46.43	.875	.387
Second Grade	44	44.77	44.41	.304	.763
Eco. Disadvantaged	30	45.33	42.67	1.862	.073
All Grades	108	45.93	45.19	.988	.325
Eco. Disadvantaged	66	46.50	44.82	1.935	.057

Note: Eco.=Economically. A sample size of 4 is too small to statistically analyze. ^aTotal possible score = 50. *Statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Research Question Two

To answer research question two, *Does participation in prekindergarten impact school attendance of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged, as measured by percentage of school days present during the time of enrollment?*, independent-samples *t* tests were performed. Comparing the means of the attendance percentage of students from the time they entered kindergarten until December 2016, by grade and by combined grades, there was no statistical significance in kindergarten or in first grade between Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten, and those who didn't ($p > .05$). However, there was a significant difference for second grade Hispanic English Language

Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten (97.397%) and those who did not (95.510%) ($p=.005$). Results are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Attendance mean percentages

Grade	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>(t)</i>	<i>p</i> value ^a
		PreK	No PreK		
Kindergarten	14	94.173	95.865	-.607	.555
Eco. Disadvantaged	6	92.105	95.614	-.571	.598
First Grade	66	96.419	95.556	1.338	.186
Eco. Disadvantaged	52	96.351	95.348	1.304	.198
Second Grade	52	97.397	95.510	2.923	.005*
Eco. Disadvantaged	36	97.584	95.349	2.805	.008*
All Grades	132	96.566	95.571	1.969	.051
Eco. Disadvantaged	94	96.552	95.365	1.855	.067

Note. Eco.=Economically. ^aStatistical significance $p < .05$. *Statistical significance at $p < .01$.

Qualitative Data Results

Research Question Three

To address the qualitative research question that guided this study, *What are teacher perceptions of the social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended prekindergarten in comparison to Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend prekindergarten?*, a qualitative data analysis was conducted utilizing the data obtained from three separate focus groups held with kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. Each focus group consisted of teachers who all taught the same grade level. A total of 14 teachers participated in the focus groups. The number of participants from each grade level is displayed in Table 10. Each focus group conversation lasted between 35 and 40 minutes. Pseudonyms have been used in place of actual participants' names.

Table 10

Focus group teacher participants

Focus Group	Number of Teachers
Kindergarten Focus Group	2
First Grade Focus Group	7
Second Grade Focus Group	5
All Focus Groups	14

Themes

Each focus group was held independently from one another and data were first analyzed separately, before being combined to identify common themes that address the research question. Analysis from the qualitative data showed four main themes related to differences in teacher perceptions of social competence of Hispanic English Language Learners they taught who attended prekindergarten compared to those who did not. The themes that emerged were self-concept, self-regulation, relationships with others, and parental influence. Each theme consisted of subthemes. Subthemes related to self-concept were confidence and initiative. Subthemes related to self-regulation were understanding of expectations, behavior, and emotional control. Subthemes related to relationships with others included communication skills and friendship skills. Subthemes related to parental influence were parental involvement and school attendance. There were many comments related to academic readiness shared by participants; however, since this study focused on social competency, academic readiness was not identified as a theme, and instead, comments were included only as it related to their relationship with the identified themes. In addition, assimilation that occurs among students over time was described by participants and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Frequency and extensiveness of each theme and subtheme was recorded as a means of determining the importance placed on each theme by participants. Frequency counts, displayed in Table 11, demonstrate that comments related to self-regulation were made 44 separate times, followed by 38 comments related to self-concept, 35 comments related to relationships with others, and 28 comments related to parental influence. When looking at extensiveness counts, as displayed in Table 12, comments related to self-concept were made by 13 of the 14 participants, followed by 10 of the 14 participants who spoke of self-regulation, relationships with others, and parental influence.

Table 11

Frequency of comments for each theme

Themes and subthemes	Count
Self-concept	38
Confidence	17
Initiative	21
Self-regulation	44
Understanding of expectations	22
Behavior	10
Emotional control	12
Relationships with others	35
Communication skills	16
Friendship skills	19
Parental influence	28
Parental involvement	19
School attendance	9

Comments were recorded in each of the themes and subthemes by teachers in all grade levels with two exceptions. Although initiative was the subtheme with the highest counts, kindergarten teachers did not comment on initiative; and although emotional control was discussed extensively by kindergarten and first grade teachers, second grade

teachers did not comment on the subtheme of emotional control. Each of the themes and subthemes are discussed in the following sections.

Table 12

Extensiveness of each theme

Themes	Count ($n = 14$)
Self-concept	13
Confidence	7
Initiative	11
Self-regulation	10
Understanding of expectations	9
Behavior	5
Emotional control	6
Relationships with others	10
Communication skills	7
Friendship skills	8
Parental influence	10
Parental involvement	9
School attendance	5

Self-concept. Self-concept was conceptualized in this research as a student's level of awareness related to his or her own abilities. When measuring importance of themes by extensiveness, self-concept was the theme identified as most important, with only one participant not speaking to self-concept. There were 38 separate comments made that related to self-concept. The theme of self-concept is delineated into two categories: (a) confidence, and (b) initiative.

Confidence. Half of the participants noted positive differences in the level of confidence displayed by Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not, and teachers from all grade levels expressed this through 17 separate comments. When describing Hispanic English Language Learners who had not attended half-day public prekindergarten, eight separate

comments were made to emphasize observed shyness. Kindergarten and first grade teachers noted this as being especially prevalent at the beginning of the school year. However, even second grade teachers noted shyness as a common attribute of Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten. Second grade teacher, Julia, stated:

Some of them are very shy. When they need to talk, they put their hands in their mouth and can say nothing. I think when the student is without family...without mommy, without father and grandmother, they maybe feel lost. For this reason, they are very scared and very shy too.

This shyness wasn't found to be just a personality trait. It was described as related to their level of confidence. Nancy and Maricel, who also taught second grade, both indicated that the students didn't display shyness when they were in settings outside of the classroom or school building. Both teachers described that they have observed Hispanic English Language Learners interacting more confidently when on the playground. Nancy reflected on one of her students as an example and expressed:

Socially, the gap didn't seem to be that wide on the playground...it was the academic vocabulary that probably was more intimidated towards him. Because some of them that didn't go to Pre-K are very social on the playground. That's where they feel confident.

Maricel concurred, indicating both groups of students are equally open to socialize when they are on the playground. She noticed shyness only seems prevalent in the classroom. Nancy connected it to academics and the confidence required to risk being wrong in front of peers. She reported:

When everybody's looking at you: Did you get the right answer? They're very intimidated by it. Even if they might have it when you talk to them. Individually, they might have it, but they don't want to risk being wrong.

Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten were described differently. They exhibit confidence and are more willing to put themselves out there to take a risk. Second grade teacher, Lauri, gave an example from her classroom of a female student who she described this way:

One for sure stands out...she could run the classroom. She's very quiet confidence. She isn't a super social one, but she is definitely a self-starter. She'll keep the people in line. If I don't notice something, she'll let me know.

Maricel connected it to academics by stating that Hispanic English Language Learners who have been to half-day public prekindergarten are ready to learn and have better developed their vocabulary. Second grade teacher, Julia, speculated that when students are smart, but because of a language barrier are not able to do something, it affects their self-esteem and their level of confidence. "If they are smart but can't doing something, it affects their self-esteem. Their confidence."

Initiative. Nearly all of the participants noted positive differences in the level of initiative displayed by Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not, with 11 of the 14 participants speaking to this subtheme and making 21 separate comments about initiative. When comparing extensiveness among subthemes, initiative was considered of high importance; however, interestingly, kindergarten teacher participants did not speak to this subtheme. All seven of the first grade teachers, on the other hand, described a lack of

initiative displayed by Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten in comparison to those who attended. Students who had attended half-day public prekindergarten were described as, “eager to start,” and able to “hit the floor running.” Students who had not attended public prekindergarten were noted as not participating to the same level and having a “sense of helplessness.” First grade teacher, Gabriela, described:

They want everybody to do everything for them. From putting on their shoes to putting on their jacket, to getting things from them. They’re just used to mom doing it for them. They’re very helpless in a school situation because they don’t know they have to get up and do what the other kiddos are doing. They have to pretty much follow the lead of whatever the other children are doing.

Esther, who also taught first grade, concurred that for students who didn’t attend public prekindergarten, all of these things are done for them at home. When Felicia reemphasized that even simple things, like putting on a jacket required help, Esther concluded her sentence by role-playing, “Put your arm through the hole,” as if coaching the student how to put it on. Fellow first grade teacher, Delma, indicated she felt the Hispanic English Language Learners who didn’t attend public prekindergarten were always waiting for the teacher to guide them, and another first grade teacher, Isabel, added they are waiting for the teacher to “take their hand and do it for them.”

Second grade teachers described Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten as self-starters who volunteer more, while those who didn’t attend public prekindergarten need more prompting and guidance. Second grade teacher, Lauri, described a student in her room that needs constant assurance,

always asking for reinforcement before acting. “It's almost like he's my baby in the class. He always asks almost like I'm his mom, ‘What did you say? Can I do this?’” Rather than taking initiative, second grade teacher, Nancy, says these students sit back and observe. When comparing those who attended public prekindergarten and those who didn't, she contrasted them by saying, “They volunteer more. The other ones sit back and observe.”

Self-regulation. Self-regulation was conceptualized in this research as exhibiting personal responsibility for self-control. When measuring importance of themes by frequency, self-regulation was identified as most important, with 44 separate comments related to this theme; although extensiveness measures place it as lower importance than self-concept and of equal importance to the other three themes, with 10 teachers commenting on self-regulation. The theme of self-regulation is delineated into three categories: (a) understanding of expectations, (b) behavior, and (c) emotional control.

Understanding of expectations. A majority of teacher participants spoke to the benefits prekindergarten provided Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not. There were 22 separate comments made by nine different participants, including teachers from all grade levels. Everything was described as new for Hispanic English Language Learners who didn't attend public prekindergarten, while those who had attended half-day public prekindergarten began school knowing what was expected of them. They knew the rules and began to follow routines very quickly. As first grade teacher, Isabel, described, “They already know the rules, they already know the procedures, so they just take off.” Felicia, a fellow first grade teacher, indicated that, by knowing what to expect, it just

gives them a head start that the Hispanic English Language Learners who didn't attend public prekindergarten don't receive. "They know what to expect, they know what to do. It's just giving them a head-start in pre-k, the parents as well. They know what's expected."

Behavior. Appropriate school behavior was described as stronger for Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten compared to those who had not by teachers at all grade levels. This was identified by five of the 14 teachers through 10 separate comments from teachers at all grade levels. Being able to sit nicely and listen to the teacher was described by participants at all three grade levels as behaviors they observe from Hispanic English Language Learners who have attended half-day public prekindergarten. Kindergarten teacher, Amy, indicated the students who had been to half-day public prekindergarten seemed a little more mature, stating, "I think pre-kindergarten helped both of them mature a little bit." Fellow kindergarten teacher, Belinda, indicated she has observed those who haven't attended are usually well-behaved too, and added that it is perhaps because they are new. "They're usually well-behaved because they're new to it," she concluded. Amy concurred and indicated that from her experiences, English Language Learners are never behavior problems in the classroom. She said, "My ELLs were never really a behavior issue." Amy indicated she has found Hispanic English Language Learners who have attended half-day public prekindergarten are able to "think before acting." Lauri, a second grade teacher, expressed that she felt Hispanic English Language Learners who have been to half-day public prekindergarten are able to stay on task, ignoring distractions and continuing to do their work better than those who had not been to public prekindergarten. The ones who go to pre-kindergarten

just overall are more socially competent. She sums it up this way, “They're self-starters. They stay on task. When there's a distraction, they can keep on doing what they're doing for the most part. They just overall seem to be more prepared.”

Emotional control. Emotional control was identified as stronger for Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not attend public prekindergarten by five of the 14 teachers through 12 separate comments, although the comments were expressed by kindergarten and first grade teachers. Kindergarten teachers, especially at the beginning of the year, observed that Hispanic English Language Learners who had not been to public prekindergarten cried a lot. Those who had been to half-day public prekindergarten were not crying, and instead would bring tissue to those who were crying. Felicia, a first grade teacher, described that students who have attended half-day public prekindergarten seem to have more of a social understanding and are sensitive to the feelings of others. She indicated, “I think they also have more of a social understanding, like when it comes to feelings and stuff.” The crying from Hispanic English Language Learners is most often attributed to separation anxiety. Fellow first grade teacher, Gabriella, indicated, “Everything is mom. I would like to go with mom, and mom, and mom. When am I going to see my mom? Is it about time to go home and see my mom?” She went on to say that it isn’t all about separation, however, but also is related to the loss of constant mothering they have received at home. She shared:

The children that pretty much haven’t come to school are with mom and babies at home, so they are pretty babied too. Because they’re the ones, everything is done for them. They're the ones that mom runs around the house taking care of them,

so when they come to school they don't know how to deal with someone taking their pencil. They'll sit there and cry rather than trying to get up and get themselves another one. Emotionally, they're just not prepared for a full day away from mom, or grandma, or tía, whoever it is that they have at home.

Another first grade teacher, Esther, added that they can't problem-solve because so much has been done for them at home, linking this to why they are less able to control their emotions. "They can't problem-solve...at all because it is all done for them at home," she asserted. Amy shared that from her perspective as a kindergarten teacher, Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in half-day public prekindergarten seem to be better able to cope with failure. Even so, two teachers, one in kindergarten and one in second grade, made a point of commenting that they each had experienced having a student who had attended half-day public prekindergarten who cried a lot and seemed babyish. They felt like emotional control is often dependent on the child's own personal nature. "I guess it just depends on the child," Belinda resigned.

Relationships with others. Relationships with others was conceptualized in this research as exhibiting behaviors that support positive peer and teacher interactions. Relationships with others was mentioned by 10 of the 14 participants through 35 separate comments from teachers at all grade levels. The theme of relationship with others is delineated into two categories: (a) communication skills, and (b) friendship skills.

Communication skills. Communication skills were identified as stronger for Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not attend public prekindergarten by seven of the 14 teachers through 16 separate comments made by teachers at all grade levels. There were

four teachers, from first and second grades, who used the word “sociable” to describe Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten. They were also described as more willing to talk with not only other Hispanic English Language Learners, but also communicate with other students in the school, as well as teachers and adults. Students who had attended half-day public prekindergarten were also described as being more willing to work with each other in a group. Connecting communication with academic readiness, first grade teacher, Gabriella, noted that Hispanic English Language Learners who didn’t attend public prekindergarten don’t know a lot of school words, and because they lack school vocabulary, their communication skills are hindered. When contrasting students who attended public prekindergarten to those who didn’t, she states, “Basic vocabulary, the school vocabulary, they now have it in their repertoire, and the kiddos that didn’t go to school don’t have it. I see them pretty much starting behind their peers.” It is harder for them to express themselves and are therefore often quiet. Belinda, who taught kindergarten, stated, “You have to get very close to them at the beginning,” because they are so quiet. Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten, however, are not afraid to talk and eagerly interact with their peers. Belinda added that even with this observation in mind, it is important to also recognize that because they are young, they quickly socialize with others and their reluctance to communicate does not hinder their ability to be included by other students. “They become friends with the first person that they see. They’re just kids. They’re just going to get there; they’re going to make friends easily.”

Friendship skills. Friendship skills were identified as more prevalent among Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not attend public prekindergarten by eight of the 14 teachers through 19 separate comments made by participants at all grade levels. There were no comments directly describing the lack of friendship skills among English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten. Instead, there was a great deal of description of the friendship skills that are evidenced among Hispanic English Language Learners who did attend half-day public prekindergarten. Half of the participants specifically named sharing as a friendship skill they see displayed more often by the students who attended half-day public prekindergarten. Felicia, a first grade teacher, shared, “They know how to share because they know it’s right. They know it makes the other person feel included. I think I see that in my kids that have come.”

Friendliness and helpfulness were two additional attributes observed in students who attended half-day public prekindergarten. It was specifically noted that Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten take on the nurturing role that those who didn’t attend public prekindergarten are missing. Felicia stated, “One thing I observe is that the students that have been to Pre-K have a tendency of helping those that did not have Pre-K. They tie their shoes; they tell them not to cry.”

Delma and Gabriela, both first grade teachers, agreed and named it as “mothering.” Delma added, “I can see that in really one of my students. She’s very motherly, like she’s always the one to help someone. She sometimes gets distracted from her own work, because she wants to go help someone else.”

Parental influence. Parental influence was conceptualized in this research as familial factors that affect a student's school experiences. Parental influence was described by 10 of the 14 participants through 28 separate comments from teachers at all grade levels. The theme of parental influence is delineated into two categories: (a) parental involvement, and (b) school attendance.

Parental involvement. Parental involvement was identified as stronger for Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not attend public prekindergarten by nine of the 14 teachers through 19 separate comments made by participants at all grade levels. Kindergarten teachers focused on the value of having parents learn routines in prekindergarten, so it isn't so overwhelming when their child begins kindergarten. Amy indicated, "It's just really fresh for parents who are coming into kindergarten. If they didn't have that Pre-K foundation, it's harder for them." Learning the folder system or homework expectations is not only new for the student, it is also new for the parent. Kindergarten teachers felt like they had to answer more questions from parents who were trying to learn the routines when the student had not been to public prekindergarten. Belinda added, "It takes them longer to understand folder and homework. They have lots more questions." That sentiment was reiterated by first grade teachers. Isabel, who taught first grade, asserted:

I surely want them to come to Pre-K. I feel that they're ready to go if they've been through two full years of school. The parents have been contacted; they know about attendance, the parents, even if they don't speak the language, have at least gone through the procedures. It helps me as a first grade teacher in my job if they've come. If they've gone to Pre-K.

Isabel added that parents of Hispanic English Language Learners who didn't attend public prekindergarten require support to learn the routines, but also don't always understand the value of education and how important it is for their child. When asked what was most important about the discussion, she referenced parents and said, "Make sure they understand how important education is, and where it can get them." Helena, who also taught first grade, spoke to this benefit for parents who enroll their child in public prekindergarten. She stated:

I think it's a benefit for students and parents to come to pre-k, because sometimes the parents are not exposed to an education or to the system, and they start learning with their child. Sometimes they don't think it's important to come to school. They start growing with their kids in this system. We educate the kids and we educate the parents too. We help them to understand the new system. I think it's very important for them to be involved and learning too together.

Second grade teachers also spoke to the differences in how parents of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten value education in comparison to those who don't enroll their child in public prekindergarten. Those whose children attended half-day public prekindergarten are more involved and more willing to ask questions. Second grade teacher, Maricel, expressed that parents who enroll their children in half-day public prekindergarten are more involved, not only because they value education more, but also because their children are so young that they want to be at school to stay closer to them. She stated:

I think there's more of a value in education, because they're starting so young.

Being so young and going to a classroom ... Because it's very hard for a mom to

let go, when they just probably turned four. They were three yesterday, now they're four. Now they're going to pre-K. I think there's ... I've seen more of a wanting to be involved in their students.

Fellow second grade teacher, Karissa, agreed and reflected on her own sister's struggle with considering half-day public prekindergarten enrollment. Her sister felt so attached to her child that she didn't want to separate from her. She shared:

My sister, she sent her little girl to pre-K. She was like, "I don't know if I want to send her to pre-K. I just want to wait until she's in kindergarten." I don't know if it's like she says, they are too attached to the little ones that they don't want to send them to school. They value learning but not as much as the ones that go to pre-K.

Teachers from all grade levels indicated that parents of Hispanic English Language Learners often don't work with them on academics at home, regardless if their child attends half-day public prekindergarten or not. This is why they felt prekindergarten participation was so important for this population of students. Karissa indicated that by enrolling their child in half-day public prekindergarten, even when they are so attached to them and want them to stay home another year, it is like the parent is saying, "I value learning."

School attendance. School attendance was identified as less regular for Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did attend public prekindergarten by five of the 14 teachers through 9 separate comments made by teachers at all grade levels. Kindergarten teacher, Belinda, indicated these students miss a lot of school or they are often late. "Students

that didn't go to Pre-K miss a lot. I have about three students that didn't and have missed like six days already. They're late a lot of the times.” First grade teachers stated that parents of Hispanic English Language Learners who didn’t attend public prekindergarten will let their child stay home if the child says that they don’t want to go to school today, complain that it’s too cold or raining, or want to stay in bed on a Friday or a Monday. They indicate parents often will pick them up early as well. Maricel shared her own personal experience as an English Language Learner herself. She shared:

Attendance-wise, I know from my experience, if my mom would say, "You're not feeling good, you don't get to go to school." That's how we were babied a little too much. If the baby’s not feeling good, they're not going to go to school.

The teachers perceive that Hispanic English Language Learners who didn’t attend public prekindergarten miss a lot of school because of the low value their parents place on education and believe half-day public prekindergarten helps parents learn that school is important and brings them in early as partners in supporting their child’s success in school.

Assimilation

Teachers at all grade levels identified many differences in social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to those who did not. They described differences in self-concept between the two groups through the level of confidence and initiative the students displayed. They identified differences in self-regulation abilities as evidenced by their level of understanding of school expectations, behavior, and emotional control. They observed differences in their relationships with others through observation of their communication

and friendship skills. They noted parental influence differences through parent involvement and school attendance. Even so, teachers at all three grade levels indicated differences are minimal and may diminish over time. Kindergarten teacher, Amy, stated, “If they didn’t come to Pre-K, they’re going to come out of their bubble at some point.” Fellow kindergarten teacher, Belinda, agreed, stating that differences were quite evident at the beginning of the year, but by spring semester, they are much less noticeable. She described the reason for this is teacher intervention. Belinda stated:

We have to work so much harder with those kids that didn't go to Pre-K to get them to be there. We have to play catch-up. We have to catch up until they're all basically ready to move on together.

Julia, who taught second grade, attributed the assimilation of Hispanic English Language Learners who didn’t attend public prekindergarten as the support they receive through peers. She shared, “During the year, they develop with their partners. Something they don’t understand well, their partners tell them what to do.”

Second grade teacher, Karissa, described that by first grade, Hispanic English Language Learners who didn’t attend half-day public prekindergarten have had enough experience in school that they even out with the students who did attend public prekindergarten. The teachers collectively perceive that because the students are young, they are good at adapting to new situations and, as first grade teacher, Carla, stated, “They learn to go with the flow.” While Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten have a stronger foundation and transition to other grades more quickly, Hispanic English Language Learners overall are viewed as

good kids who try hard. Second grade teacher, Nancy, indicates, “Their personality’s going to shine no matter what.”

Quantitative and Qualitative Conclusions

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to assess the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten may have on social competence and on school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grades. Results from quantitative and qualitative data analysis were presented in this chapter separately. By looking at this data holistically, and connecting the qualitative and quantitative findings, conclusions were drawn as described in this section.

When assessing the impact of half-day public prekindergarten on the social competence of Hispanic English Language Learners, teacher surveys identified no significant difference between those students who attended half-day public prekindergarten and those who didn’t; however, focus groups revealed that four prevalent themes related to differences in social competence were identified by a subgroup of the same teachers who had completed the surveys. Through focus group discussions, teachers identified differences in students’ level of confidence, initiative and understanding of school expectations, behavior and emotional control, communication and friendship skills, amount of parent involvement, and regular school attendance exhibited by the student. These quantitative findings and qualitative findings are not congruent with one another and merit consideration of explanations for this discrepancy.

It is noteworthy that while significance was not identified in the quantitative data analysis, the mean differences on the teacher surveys were slightly increased for Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten and second grade who attended half-day

public prekindergarten. It is reasonable that teachers in these grade levels were able to identify subtle differences between the two groups, even when there wasn't significance identified in the findings. Lauri commented during the second grade focus group interview, "I could see how they're somewhat comparable, because I almost feel like we are being nit-picky about their differences." Nancy, who teaches second grade, commented:

I can't help but think that it puts them beyond the kids that don't go. It just seems like anything, any kind of vocabulary development, social situations, sharing or letting someone else go first...or this is a chair and sit in this and I watch the teacher; any of those things...it just seems like a good thing to me.

The quantitative findings are further supported by focus group comments made about the assimilation that takes place among Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten. Belinda, who teaches kindergarten, described the amount of effort teachers exert to help students who didn't go to half-day public prekindergarten catch up with the group. Julia, second grade teacher, indicated the level of support Hispanic English Language Learners who didn't attend half-day public prekindergarten receive from their peers. The teacher interventions and peer supports help assimilate the students who did not attend half-day public prekindergarten into the school culture and minimize differences between the two groups of students.

When assessing the impact of half-day public prekindergarten on the social competence of Hispanic English Language Learners, parent surveys identified no significant difference between those students who attended half-day public prekindergarten and those who didn't. This aligns with the quantitative findings from the

teacher survey. In addition, mean differences of parent surveys were slightly increased for Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten and second grade students who attended half-day public prekindergarten, similar to the teacher surveys, indicating subtle but not significant differences. Parent surveys of Hispanic English Language Learners in first grade were actually higher for students who did not attend half-day public prekindergarten, which also aligns with the first grade teacher survey results.

Significance was identified through student self-assessment in kindergarten between those students who attended half-day public prekindergarten and those who didn't, although no significance was found in first or second grade. Mean differences slightly increased for Hispanic English Language Learners for students in all grades who attended half-day public prekindergarten. The significance identified through kindergarten self-assessment is supported by teacher surveys, where the biggest mean difference was noted. It also is supported by teacher focus group findings, indicating that differences are most notable early on and diminish over time.

When assessing the impact of half-day public prekindergarten on school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners, significance was identified in second grade, although no significance was found in kindergarten or first grade. It is interesting to note that for students who did not attend half-day public prekindergarten, school attendance remains constant from kindergarten to first grade to second grade, all in the 95.5-95.8% range; however, for students who attended half-day public prekindergarten, school attendance increases from 94.1% to 96.4% to 97.4% as they advance from kindergarten to first grade to second grade. There may be a stronger connection than the data in this small sample and in these early grades demonstrates. This is supported by

teacher focus group comments related to school attendance being negatively associated with Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten, in comparison to those who did attend.

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to assess the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten may have on social competence and on school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grades. This chapter described the results of the data analysis for the quantitative and qualitative data collected, addressing each of the three research questions in this study. The chapter concluded by connecting and summarizing the qualitative and quantitative findings.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to assess the impact participation in half-day public prekindergarten may have on social competence and on school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grades. The research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) Does participation in half-day public prekindergarten impact social competence of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged:
 - as measured by teacher assessment?
 - as measured by parent assessment?
 - as measured by self-assessment?
- 2) Does participation in half-day public prekindergarten impact school attendance of students identified as Hispanic English Language Learners, including when isolated by grade level and when students were identified as economically disadvantaged, as measured by percentage of school days present during the time of enrollment?
- 3) What are teacher perceptions of the social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison

to Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten?

This chapter presents a summary of key research findings from this study, describes implications for practice, and provides recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Children with social, emotional, and relational skill deficits have difficulty being successful in a school environment (Whitted, 2011). When examining the relationship between aspects of social competency and school readiness in preschool-aged children, Bierman et al. (2009) found significant correlations, demonstrating the importance of developing social competency in preschool-aged children. Goldstein, Warde, and Peluso (2013) studied readiness gains in public prekindergarten programs for English-speaking students and found students made gains in aspects of social competency. Gottfried (2015a) determined that children who attended prekindergarten had less chronic absenteeism compared to children not in a prekindergarten program, demonstrating that participation in prekindergarten has the potential to increase student attendance in future grades. This two-phase study aimed to contribute to this literature by focusing on the social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten in comparison to a matched sample of those who did not attend.

In the first phase of this study, data were collected from teachers, parents, and students themselves regarding their perceptions of the students' social competence skills through the use of survey instruments. Data collected for 132 Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade were analyzed using

independent-samples t tests to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between social competence of those who attended half-day public prekindergarten and a matched sample of those who did not attend public prekindergarten. Data were also analyzed to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between school attendance rates of those who attended half-day public prekindergarten and a matched sample of those who did not attend public prekindergarten.

The quantitative data revealed that through self-assessment, kindergarten Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in half-day public prekindergarten demonstrated a statistically significant mean difference in their level of social competence when compared to a matched sample of kindergarten Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten. Likewise, while not statistically significant, survey results of the teachers and parents of kindergarten Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in half-day public prekindergarten demonstrated increased differences in social competence when compared to a matched sample of Hispanic English Language Learners who did not attend public prekindergarten. This aligns with the findings of Goldstein et al., (2013) that a student's competency in social-emotional skills is impacted by participating in prekindergarten. Overall, Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in half-day public prekindergarten demonstrated slightly increased, but not statistically significant levels of social competence when compared to a matched set of Hispanic English Language Learners who did not participate in public prekindergarten when assessed by their teachers and parents, as well as when self-assessed. Table 13 summarizes the findings

related to significance of differences from the teacher, parent, and student surveys. The highest mean differences were in kindergarten, when comparing students who attended half-day public prekindergarten and those who didn't. This reinforces that the half-day public prekindergarten impact on social competency of Hispanic English Language Learners is strongest during the year immediately following their participation in public prekindergarten, and the effects appear to diminish over time.

Table 13

Summary of social competence significance values

Grade	Teacher		Parent		Student	
	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i> value*	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i> value*	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i> value*
Kindergarten	14	.270	10	.476	12	.037*
Eco. Disadvantaged	6	.724	2	—	4	—
First Grade	64	.974	56	.891	52	.909
Eco. Disadvantaged	50	.914	42	.657	42	.387
Second Grade	52	.327	44	.159	44	.763
Eco. Disadvantaged	34	.411	32	.215	30	.073
All Grades	130	.314	110	.329	108	.325
Eco. Disadvantaged	90	.739	56	.713	66	.057

Note. Sample sizes of 2 and 4 were too small to statistically analyze. *Statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Quantitative data indicated that statistically significant differences were found in attendance rates of second grade Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten compared to those who didn't. This was true for all students in the grade level, as well as those identified as economically disadvantaged. This is relevant, since Baker Finck (2015) found that students identified as economically disadvantaged have disproportionately higher rates of absenteeism. Overall, Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in half-day public prekindergarten demonstrated slightly increased, but not statistically significant school attendance when compared to a matched set of students who did not participate in public prekindergarten.

While significance was not found in kindergarten or first grade, it is important to notice there were gains from each grade to the next in mean attendance rates among students who attended half-day public prekindergarten, while mean attendance rates remained flat from each grade level to the next among students who did not attend public prekindergarten. This indicates that the impact of half-day public prekindergarten appears to strengthen as students move into future grades, and the early intervention they received provided a foundation that supported school attendance in later years. Gottfried (2015a) found that students who attended prekindergarten have lower chronic absenteeism in kindergarten; therefore, the notion that participation in public prekindergarten may strengthen attendance rates in future grades, beyond kindergarten, is a finding that warrants further study.

For the second phase of this study, focus groups were held with a total of 14 teachers from kindergarten, first, and second grade, as a way to better understand and explain the quantitative findings. When comparing social competence of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten to those who did not attend, teachers identified several differences between Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten and those who did not. Related to self-concept, Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten exhibited higher levels of confidence and were more likely to take initiative. Jones et al. (2015) identifies self-esteem as causally related to better life outcomes, indicating there is value to interventions that increase self-concept. Related to self-regulation, Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten had a stronger understanding of school expectations and exhibited

increased levels of behavioral and emotional control. Robins et al., (2012) suggest that by practicing behavioral readiness skills, self-esteem can be enhanced, connecting the positive findings related to self-concept and self-regulation skills that teachers identified as stronger in Hispanic English Language Learners who had attended half-day public prekindergarten. Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten displayed more effective communication skills and demonstrated increased levels of friendship skills such as helpfulness and sharing. Teachers have been found to place importance on friendship skills such as being helpful to others (Warnes et al., 2005). Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten had parents who were more involved in their education, and had better school attendance than those who did not attend public prekindergarten. This aligns with research from Puccioni (2015), who found that students whose parents place importance on school readiness skills have higher achievement when beginning kindergarten.

When combining the quantitative and qualitative findings, there are indications that half-day public prekindergarten does minimally impact social competence and school attendance. Impact on social competence was greatest in kindergarten, before teachers and peers have provided interventions to help students “catch up” with the students without deficits; and impact on school attendance was greatest in second grade, after students and their parents have established a value for their strong educational foundation. It is possible teachers expressed perceived social competence differences between the two groups based on logical assumptions rather than actual differences. It seems reasonable that students who attended half-day public prekindergarten would have more social competence than those who hadn’t attended, which could have led to

expressed differences beyond what was observed. Teachers in the focus groups identified the differences described, but also acknowledged that the differences in social competence were minimal, were observed mostly at the beginning of the school year, and diminished over time. Even so, teachers expressed support for public prekindergarten and advocated their students who were identified as Hispanic English Language Learners that attended half-day public prekindergarten were advanced, when comparing their social competence and school attendance to Hispanic English Language Learners who had not attended public prekindergarten.

There are several possible explanations for null findings within the quantitative portion of this study. The school district used in this study offers only a half-day prekindergarten program. A half-day prekindergarten program may not provide sufficient time for Hispanic English Language Learners to gain the necessary social competence skills expected before entering kindergarten. English Language Learners, especially those who are identified as economically disadvantaged, develop behavior regulation at a significantly slower rate than their English-speaking peers (Wanless et al., 2011). The school district in this study also did not offer universal prekindergarten, a term used to describe a prekindergarten program that offers open enrollment for all students who choose to attend. Barnett (2008) found that economically-disadvantaged students show more growth when educated in a preschool alongside their advantaged peers, yet in this study, 89% of the students enrolled in the school district's prekindergarten classes were identified as economically disadvantaged. Finally, the instructional quality of the prekindergarten classrooms of the students within this study was not assessed. Mashburn et al. (2008) found teachers who interact with students in

stimulating and supportive ways produce students who learn more. It is possible that if the prekindergarten had been a full-day program, had offered open enrollment, or had increased levels of teacher interaction, the differences would have been greater and significance may have been found.

Implications for Practice

Based on this study, there are three implications for practice proposed by the researcher. School districts should provide full-day prekindergarten programs.

Prekindergarten should be made available to all students whose parents wish to enroll them. Parents of Hispanic English Language Learners who arrive to kindergarten from home settings should be nurtured and educated on the value of education for their child. Each of these implications for practice are described in this section.

Full-day prekindergarten

The mean differences of social competence and school attendance for Hispanic English Language Learners were slightly higher for those in this study who attended prekindergarten compared to those who did not. English Language Learners need more intervention provided for them to learn social competence skills than their English-speaking peers (Wanless et al., 2011). Interventions that are applied after students begin kindergarten lack effectiveness at reducing achievement gaps, because while they may work to improve instructional achievement of students entering with low school readiness, they also simultaneously improve the achievement of already-higher performing students (Kibbe Gaynor, 2015). Hence, the achievement gap remains ever-present. This applies to instruction in all domains, including social competence. The best method to close the achievement gap is to address the deficits of skills by providing

intervention before kindergarten begins. Half-day programs do not take full advantage of the opportunity to close the gaps before they even present themselves. Full-day programs are more effective than half-day programs for Hispanic English Language Learners (Gormley & Gayer, 2005). To delay intervention until the kindergarten year, and allow Hispanic English Language Learners to enter kindergarten with deficits, creates a classroom with large differences in academic and social competence. Teachers in this study stated they spend a great deal of time helping Hispanic English Language Learners who didn't attend prekindergarten "catch up" with their peers. They also indicate peer support is utilized to help assimilate the students to the routines and culture of the classroom. Both of these practices negatively impact the progress of higher performing students. Certainly, it is appropriate to support assimilation and not simply leave students with deficits behind; however, helping students with deficits catch up with their peers should not be at the expense of other students who entered kindergarten with the expected readiness skills from having the opportunity to experience a year's academic growth. For this reason, providing full-day prekindergarten as an early intervention for Hispanic English Language Learners is an implication from the findings of this study.

Half-day prekindergarten programs present a transportation problem for many families. Children of working mothers are often not able to enroll their child in a half-day prekindergarten program due to not being able to provide transportation in the middle of the day. Nearly all the parents of the children in this study who indicated their children were in homecare the year before beginning kindergarten, expressed transportation was their barrier to prekindergarten enrollment. These parents would likely enroll their child in a full-day prekindergarten program if the opportunity were

available. Gottfried (2015a) found that children of working mothers were less chronically absent in kindergarten, so providing a prekindergarten program that met the scheduling needs of working mothers would be valued by them. A whole subset of Hispanic English Language Learners not being instructed during their four-year old year could begin receiving early intervention.

Universal Prekindergarten

Barnett (2008) found that economically-disadvantaged students show more growth when educated in universal preschool programs. García and Jensen (2007) indicate Hispanic children have decreased achievement differences when prekindergarten is open to all children of that age. Students in this study were in classes where over 89% of the students were identified as economically disadvantaged. Texas school districts have the authority to use local funding or offer tuition-based entry in order to extend prekindergarten to all children, not just ones who meet eligibility criteria (Texas Education Code, 2015). Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, and West Virginia are states that open the prekindergarten classrooms to all children of the appropriate age, without regard to income or other needs-based criteria (Geraghty, Holian, & Gyekye, 2012). A study of Oklahoma's universal prekindergarten program, where just 46% of students were economically disadvantaged, found Hispanic students showed significant gains in readiness skills (Gormley et al., 2005). Universal programs, where there is greater economic diversity among students, can offer richer vocabulary development for Hispanic English Language Learners and develop increased levels of proficiency that leads to higher confidence in students. Significant findings may have been found in this study if universal prekindergarten was provided and Hispanic English Language Learners

were in prekindergarten classrooms that provided greater economic diversity among the student population. The slight increase in social competence skills and school attendance rates of students in this study may have been stronger within a universal prekindergarten program, and programs that provide access to all students should be considered.

Parent Outreach

Teachers in every grade level focus group discussed concerns about the amount of parental involvement from the parents of students who did not attend prekindergarten. They communicated these parents did not display the same level of value toward education that the parents of students who attended prekindergarten displayed. In addition, the students of these parents missed school more often. A study by Connolly and Olson (2012) of attendance in Baltimore City Schools among prekindergarten and kindergarten students recommend schools pay careful attention to students entering kindergarten without prior prekindergarten participation and offer orientation programs that reach out to these families. They recommended actions that would help provide a smooth transition for students into school, as well as increased parent support and communication until the parents and their child are fully immersed into the school experience. Connolly and Olson (2012) also found that average daily attendance was lowest and chronic absenteeism was highest for students who had been in homecare the year before kindergarten rather than a prekindergarten program. Recognizing homecare was the primary alternative to prekindergarten participation in this study, providing a strong parent outreach program is recommended to increase parental involvement and instill in them the value of education. With a strong program, it is possible there would be increased enrollment in prekindergarten, and by taking steps to help parents recognize

the value of education for their child, schools may find that by implementing a parent outreach program, they reduce the amount of future attendance problems for Hispanic English Language Learners.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study contributed to the current body of research related to prekindergarten by examining differences in social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten compared to those who didn't. There are multiple recommendations that are prompted from the findings of this study. These recommendations include suggestions for repeating this study in a modified manner, implementing a longitudinal study that follows a cohort of students over time, and assessing the quality of teacher interactions within prekindergarten classrooms.

The sample size of Hispanic English Language learners in the study was small. A future study could expand the quantitative research design by studying Hispanic English Language Learners from a larger district or across a county or region to investigate if the results differ with a larger sample. The study could also be repeated in a district that provided full-day prekindergarten to determine if the minimal impact found in this study would increase to show significance if students were instructed all day and, therefore, extended time was invested in the delivery of this intervention. Another recommendation is to repeat this study in a district that provides universal prekindergarten to determine if the minimal impact found in this study would increase if the prekindergarten population did not consist of as large of a percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged.

The qualitative portion of this study included holding focus groups with teachers to more deeply understand their perceptions of social competence for their Hispanic English Language Learners. Further research could be performed in the same manner, but instead hold focus group interviews with parents or students. This research could prove especially valuable in understanding parents' values related to education, as this was questioned by the members of the teacher focus groups. Asking questions related to what parents would find motivating for decreasing the number of absences or inquiring about barriers that prevent better attendance could enlighten educators on motivational strategies to consider or spark ideas for how to remove school attendance barriers for Hispanic families.

This study looked at three different grade level cohorts of students. Following these students over the course of future years would provide a better picture of whether prekindergarten impact on social competence does diminish over time. It could also provide a better picture of whether prekindergarten participation increases school attendance rates over time. Implementing a longitudinal study that followed a cohort, rather than comparing different groups of students, would add strength to findings.

This study did not assess instructional quality of prekindergarten classrooms. The dimensions of teacher-student interactions that children directly experience is a critically important aspect related to the quality of prekindergarten instruction. By assessing the teacher-student interactions that occur for Hispanic English Language Learners through observations of prekindergarten classrooms, and correlating those findings with social competence and school attendance in later grades, the impact of

public prekindergarten participation on social competence and school attendance could be better established.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of participation in half-day public school prekindergarten on levels of social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners in kindergarten, first, and second grade. Early interventions that develop the social competence needed for school success is critically important for students initially lacking those skills, and participation in prekindergarten increases the likelihood that Hispanic English Language Learners are able to receive a high quality education (DeVezin, 2010; Joy, 2015; Robinson & Diamond, 2014).

Increasing the number of days students are in attendance at school allows for more time for students to learn content and reach higher levels of student achievement (Gottfried, 2011; Nichols, 2003).

This mixed-methods study found minimal impact from participation in a half-day prekindergarten program on social competence and on school attendance among Hispanic English Language Learners. Quantitative findings identified kindergarten Hispanic English Language Learners who participated in half-day public prekindergarten self-assess their social competence significantly higher than those who did not attend public prekindergarten, and overall teachers, parents, and students rate social competence higher if the student participated in half-day public prekindergarten. Second grade Hispanic English Language Learners demonstrated significantly better school attendance if they participated in half-day public prekindergarten, and overall school attendance was higher for Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten.

Qualitative findings indicated teachers in kindergarten, first, and second grade identified higher levels of social competence and school attendance in Hispanic English Language Learners who attended half-day public prekindergarten compared to those who did not attend public prekindergarten. Teachers did, however, indicate the differences are minimal and diminish over time, due to teacher interventions provided during the school year to narrow the differences between the two groups.

Implications were presented for structural changes in the way prekindergarten is provided, by recommending full-day, universal programs. Adding parent outreach programs was recommended for parents who do not enroll their children in prekindergarten, to help them learn the value education can provide. Further study by modifying the implementation of this research design, implementing a longitudinal study that follows a cohort of students over time, and assessing the quality of teacher interactions within prekindergarten classrooms, is needed to continue the advancement of research on prekindergarten as an early intervention that increases social competence and school attendance of Hispanic English Language Learners.

REFERENCES

- Bainbridge, J., Meyers, M. K., Tanaka, S., & Waldfogel, J. (2005). Who gets an early education? Family income and the enrollment of three- to five-year-olds from 1968 to 2000. *Social Science Quarterly (Wiley-Blackwell)*, 86(3), 724-745.
doi:10.1111/j.0038-4941.2005.00326.x
- Baker Finck, J. (2015). *When students miss school: The high cost to Houston*. Report from the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation. Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5731ee0840261d67c7155483/t/57645a759de4bb528a12cf78/1466194571775/Finck_When+Students+Miss+School+Final%2C+The+High+Cost+to+Houston_2015.pdf
- Barbarin, O. A., McCandies, T., Early, D., Clifford, R. M., Bryant, D., Burchinal, M., Howes, C., & Pianta, R. (2006). Quality of prekindergarten: What families are looking for in public sponsored programs. *Early Education & Development*, 17(4), 619-642. doi:10.1207/s15566935eed1704_6
- Barnett, W. S. (2008). *Preschool education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications*. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/preschool-education>
- Barnett, W. S., Carolan, M. E., Squires, J. H., Clarke-Brown, K., & Horowitz, M. (2015). *The state of preschool 2014*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: National Institute for Early Education Research.

- Belfield, C. & Garcia, E. (2014). Parental notions of school readiness: How have they changed and has preschool made a difference? *Journal of Educational Research*, 107(2), 138-151. doi:10.1080/00220671.2012.753863
- Belfield, C. R., Nores, M., Barnett, S., & Schweinhart, L. (2006). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Program: Cost-benefit analysis using data from the age-40 followup. *Journal of Human Resources*, 41(1), 162-190.
- Bierman, K. L., Torres, M. M., Domitrovich, C. E., Welsh, J. A., & Gest, S. D. (2009). Behavioral and cognitive readiness for school: Cross-domain associations for children attending head start. *Social Development*, 18(2), 305-323. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00490.x
- Bingham, G. E., & Patton-Terry, N. (2013). Early language and literacy achievement of early reading first students in kindergarten and 1st grade in the United States. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 27(4), 440-453. doi:10.1080/02568543.2013.822952
- Brown, C. P., & Gasko, J. W. (2012). Why should pre-k be more like elementary school? A case study of pre-k reform. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 26, 264-290. doi:10.1080/02568543.2012.686471
- Carrell, S. E., & Hoekstra, M. L. (2009). Domino effect. *Education Next*, 9(3), 58-63.
- Chan, P. E., Graham-Day, K. J., Ressa, V. A., Peters, M. T., & Konrad, M. (2014). Beyond involvement: Promoting student ownership of learning in classrooms. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 50(2), 105-113.
- Chien, N. C., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Pianta, R. C., Ritchie, S., Bryant, D. M., Clifford, R. M., Early, D. M., & Barbarin, O. A. (2010). Children's classroom

engagement and school readiness gains in prekindergarten. *Child Development*, 81(5), 1534-1549.

Conduct Problem Prevention Research Group (2011a). *Fast Track Overview*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University. Retrieved from <http://fasttrackproject.org/overview.php#design>

Conduct Problem Prevention Research Group (2011b). *Social competence scale—parent version*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University. Retrieved from <http://fasttrackproject.org/techrept/s/scp/>

Conduct Problem Prevention Research Group (2011c). *Social competence scale—teacher version*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University. Retrieved from <http://fasttrackproject.org/techrept/s/sct/>

Connolly, F. & Olson, L. S. (2012). *Early elementary performance and attendance in Baltimore City Schools' pre-kindergarten and kindergarten*. Baltimore Education Research Consortium. Retrieved from <http://www.baltimore-berc.org/pdfs/PreKKAAttendanceFullReport.pdf>

Corrigan, A. (2002). *Social competence scale—parent version, grade 1/year 2*. Fast Track Project Technical Report. Retrieved from <http://www.fasttrackproject.org/techrept/s/scp/scp3tech.pdf>

Corrigan, A. (2003a). *Social competence scale—parent version, grade 2/year 3*. Fast Track Project Technical Report. Retrieved from <http://fasttrackproject.org/techrept/s/scp/scp3tech.pdf>

- Corrigan, A. (2003b). *Social competence scale—teacher version, grade 2/year 3*. Fast Track Project Technical Report. Retrieved from <http://fasttrackproject.org/techrept/s/sct/sct3tech.pdf>
- Corrigan, A. (2003c). *Social competence scale—teacher version, grade 3/year 4*. Fast Track Project Technical Report. Retrieved from <http://fasttrackproject.org/techrept/s/sct/sct4tech.pdf>
- Curenton, S. M., Nianbo, D., & Xiangjin, S. (2015). Does aggregate school-wide achievement mediate fifth grade outcomes for former early childhood education participants? *Developmental Psychology*, 51(7), 921-934. doi:10.1037/a0039295
- Daniel, S. M. (2014). Learning to educate English language learners in pre-service elementary practicums. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 41(2), 5-28.
- Denham, S. A., Bassett, H. H., Zinsser, K., & Wyatt, T. M. (2014). How preschoolers' social-emotional learning predicts their early school success: Developing theory-promoting, competency-based assessments. *Infant and Child Development*, 23(4), 426-454.
- Desimone, L., Payne, B., & Fedoravicius, N. (2004). Comprehensive school reform: An implementation study of preschool programs in elementary schools. *Elementary School Journal*, 104(5), 369-389. doi:10.1086/499758
- Developmental Studies Center. (1993). *Social competence*. Scales from Student Questionnaire, Child Development Project for Elementary School Students. Retrieved from https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/cdp/DSC_ElementSch_scales.pdf

- DeVezin, J. (2010). *The effect of extending the pre-kindergarten school day on literacy and language development of English language learners* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3411425)
- Doggett, L., & Wat, A. (2010). Why prek for all? *Part of a special issue: Early learning*, 92(3), 8-11.
- Easton, J. Q., & Engelhard, G. (1982). Longitudinal record of elementary school absence and its relationship to reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 75, 269-274.
- Edmonds, L., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2003). *Assessing emotional and social competence in primary school and early years settings: A review of approaches, issues, and instruments*. (EOR/SBU/2002/042). University of Oxford. Retrieved from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/eor/sbu/2002/042>
- Elias, M. J., & Haynes, N. M. (2008). Social competence, social support, and academic achievement in minority, low-income, urban elementary school children. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(4), 474-495.
- García, E. E., & Jensen, B. (2007). Advancing school readiness for young Hispanic children through universal prekindergarten. *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*, 19, 25-37.
- Geraghty, T., Lolian, L., & Gyekye, A. (2012). *Prekindergarten participation rates in West Virginia* (REL Technical Brief, REL 2012-021). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and

- Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>
- Goldstein, P., Warde, B., & Peluso, P. (2013). Children's readiness gains in publically funded, community-based pre-kindergarten programs for 4 year olds and preschool for 3 year olds. *Child Youth Care Forum*, 42, 507-523.
doi:10.1007/s10566-013-9215-0
- Gormley, W. T., Jr., & Gayer, T. (2005). Promoting school readiness in Oklahoma. *Journal of Human Resources*, 40(3), 533-558.
- Gormley, W. T., Jr., Gayer, T., Phillips, D., & Dawson, B. (2005). The effects of universal pre-k on cognitive development. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(6), 872-884. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.41.6.872
- Gottfried, Michael A. (2011). The detrimental effects of missing school: Evidence from urban siblings. *American Journal of Education*, 117(2), 147-182.
- Gottfried, Michael A. (2014). Chronic absenteeism and its effects on students' academic and socioemotional outcomes. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 19(2), 53-75.
- Gottfried, Michael, A. (2015a). Can center-based childcare reduce the odds of early chronic absenteeism? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 32(3), 160-173. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.04.002>
- Gottfried, Michael, A. (2015b). Chronic absenteeism in the classroom context: Effects on achievement. *Urban Education*, 1-32. Doi: 10.1177/0042085915618709

- Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2014). One-way multivariate analysis of variance. In S. Frail (Eds.), *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (pp. 200-208). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Hall-Kenyon, K. M., Bingham, G. E., & Korth, B. B. (2009). How do linguistically diverse students fare in full- and half-day kindergarten? Examining academic achievement, instructional quality, and attendance. *Early Education and Development*, 20(1), 25-52. doi:10.1080/10409280802206593
- Jackson, C. W., Schatschneider, C., & Leacox, L. (2014). Longitudinal analysis of receptive vocabulary growth in young Spanish English-speaking children from migrant families. *Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools*, 45(1), 40-51. doi:10.1044/2013_LSHSS-12-0104
- Jarzynski, B. (2011, July 21). How many words should my child be saying: A quick guide to vocabulary development [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.talkingkids.org/2011/07/how-many-words-should-my-child-be.html>
- Johnson, S. N. (2013). *The effects of public school prekindergarten attendance on academic achievement in language arts and mathematics* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3590209)
- Jones, E. J., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(11), 2283-2290.
- Joseph, G. E. & Strain, P. S. (2010). *You've got to have friends*. (Module 2, Handout 2.3: Social Emotional Teaching Strategies. Retrieved from Vanderbilt University, The

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.

<http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/FriendshipSkills-Resource5.pdf>

Joy, J. M. (2015). Social competence as a precursor to increased self-concept and school readiness. *International Journal on New Trends in Education & Their Implications*, 6(4), 50-57.

Karni, A. (2014, February 24). Experts, studies clash on benefits of pre-k. *NY Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/experts-studies-clash-benefit-de-blasio-pre-k-plan-article-1.1699600>.

Kearney, C., & Graczyk, P. (2014). A response to intervention model to promote school attendance and decrease school absenteeism. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 43(1), 1-25. doi:10.1007/s10566-013-9222-1

Kibbe Gaynor, A. (2015). Development toward school readiness: A holistic model. *Journal of Education*, 195(3), 27-40.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Lee, R., Brooks-Gunn, J., Zhai, F., Han, W., & Waldfogel, J. (2014). Head Start participation and school readiness: Evidence from the early childhood longitudinal study-birth cohort. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(1), 202-215. doi:10.1037/a0032280

Levykh, M. G. (2008). The affective establishment and maintenance of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. *Educational Theory*, 58(1), 83-101.

Liu, C. C., & Chen, I. J. (2010). Evolution of constructivism. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 3(4), 63-66.

- Liu, C. H., & Matthews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's philosophy: Constructivism and its criticisms examined. *International Education Journal*, 6(3), 386-399.
- LoCasale-Crouch, J., Mashburn, A. J., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2008). Pre-kindergarten teachers' use of transition practices and children's adjustment to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Quarterly*, 23(1), 124-139.
doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.06.001
- Logue, M. E. (2007). Early childhood learning standards: Tools for promoting social and academic success in kindergarten. *Children & Schools*, 29(1), 35-43.
- Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarin, O. A., Bryant, D., Burchinal, M., Early, D. M., Howes, C. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in prekindergarten and children's development of academic, language, and social skills. *Child Development*, 79(3), 732-749.
- Meltzoff, A. N., & Kuhl, P. K. (2016). Exploring the infant social brain: What's going on in there? *Zero to Three*, 36(3), 2-9.
- Microsoft Office (2016). Microsoft. Redmond WA. Retrieved from
https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Test-your-document-s-readability-85b4969e-e80a-4777-8dd3-f7fc3c8b3fd2?CorrelationId=70283a5c-5c94-4fc9-901b-37f4728c0fa5&ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US&ocmsassetID=HP010148506#__toc342546558
- Morgan, D. L. (1997). Focus groups as qualitative research (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Muelle, C. M. (2010). *The relationship between prekindergarten social and emotional development and academic success among Hispanic children from low-income*

- families* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3431303)
- Mulligan, G., Hastedt, S., & McCarroll, J. (2012). *First-time kindergarteners in 2010-11: First findings from the kindergarten rounds of early childhood longitudinal study, kindergarten class of 2010-11*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012049.pdf>
- Nair N. S. (2014). Impact of metacognitive practices and assorted assessment modalities towards creating self-regulated learners. *Journal on School Educational Technology, 10*(2), 46-51.
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2016). *The condition of education 2016*. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/commissioner.asp>
- Neuman, S. B. (2003). From rhetoric to reality: The case for high-quality compensatory prekindergarten programs. *Phi Delta Kappan, 85*(4), 286-291.
- Nichols, J. D. (2003). Prediction indicators for students failing the state of Indiana high school graduation exam. *Preventing School Failure, 47*(3), 112-120.
- Nix, R. L., Bierman, K. L., Domitrovich, C. E., & Gill, S. (2013). Promoting children's social-emotional skills in preschool can enhance academic and behavioral functioning in kindergarten: Findings from Head Start REDI. *Early Education & Development, 24*(7), 1000-1019. doi:10.1080/10409289.2013.825565
- Pearson. (2017). Longman Vocabulary Checker. *Longman Dictionaries Online U.S.A.* Retrieved from http://www.longmandictionariesusa.com/vocabulary_checker

- Peixoto, F., & Almeida, L. S. (2010). Self-concept, self-esteem and academic achievement: Strategies for maintaining self-esteem in students experiencing academic failure. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 25*(2), 157-175.
- Powell, K. C., & Kalina, C. J. (2009). Cognitive and social constructivism: Developing tools for an effective classroom. *Education, 130*(2), 241-250.
- Puccioni, J. (2015). Parents' conceptions of school readiness, transition practices, and children's academic achievement trajectories. *Journal of Educational Research, 108*(2), 130-147. doi:10.1080/00220671.2013.850399
- Quirk, M., Grimm, R., Furlong, M. J., Nylund-Gibson, K., & Swami, S. (2016). The association of Latino children's kindergarten school readiness profiles with grade 2-5 literacy achievement trajectories. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 108*(6), 814-829. doi:10.1037/edu0000087
- Raver, C. C. (2012). Low-income children's self-regulation in the classroom: Scientific inquiry for social change. *American Psychologist, 67*(8), 681-689. doi:10.1037/a0030085
- Robins, R. W., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Donnellan, M. B. (2012). A brief primer on self-esteem. *Prevention Researcher, 19*(2), 3-7.
- Robinson, C., & Diamond, K. (2014). A quantitative study of Head Start children's strengths, families' perspectives, and teachers' ratings in the transition to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 42*(2), 77-84. doi:10.1007/s10643-013-0587-4

- Sabol, T. J., & Pianta, R. C. (2012). Patterns of school readiness forecast achievement and socioemotional development at the end of elementary school. *Child Development, 83*(1), 282-299.
- ŞAHİN, İ. T., Sak, R., & Tuncer, N. (2013). A comparison of preschool and first grade teachers' views about school readiness. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 13*(3), 1708-1713. doi:10.12738/estp.2013.3.1665
- Sakuma, R. (2013). *Teacher expectations for entering kindergarteners: A qualitative study with prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 1524156).
- Saldana, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Searle, A. K., Sawyer, M. G., Miller-Lewis, L. R., & Baghurst, P. A. (2014). Prospective associations between children's preschool emotional and behavioral problems and kindergarten classroom engagement, and the role of gender. *Elementary School Journal, 114*(3), 380-405.
- Skibbe, L. E., Hindman, A. H., Connor, C. M., Housey, M., & Morrison, F. J. (2013). Relative contributions of prekindergarten and kindergarten to children's literacy and mathematics skills. *Early Education & Development, 24*(5), 687-703. doi:10.1080/10409289.2012.712888
- Swere, J. L. (2015). *A causal comparative study of the academic effects of voluntary prekindergarten participation* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3745487)

Texas Education Agency. (2015). *2014-15 Texas Academic Performance Report*.

Retrieved from

https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/cgi/sas/broker?_service=marykay&year4=2015&year2=15&_debug=0&single=N&title=2015+Texas+Academic+Performance+Reports&_program=perf rept.perfmast.sas&prgopt=2015%2Ftapr%2Ftapr.sas&ptype=P&level=district&search=district&namenum=Brazosport&district=020905

Texas Education Agency. (2016a). *2015-16 PEIMS data standards*. (Section 4).

Retrieved from

http://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Data_Submission/PEIMS/PEIMS_Data_Standards/2015-2016_Data_Standards/

Texas Education Agency. (2016b). *Texas Prekindergarten Data*. Retrieved from

http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Student_Populations/Early_Childhood_Education/Texas_Prekindergarten_Data/

Texas Education Agency (2016c). *Texas prekindergarten guidelines*. Retrieved from

<http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147495508>

Texas Education Agency. (2016d). *TEA awards more than \$116 million as part of Gov.*

Abbott's high quality pre-k initiative. Retrieved from

[http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Press_Releases/2016/TEA_awards_more_than_\\$116_million_as_part_of_Gov__Abbott_s_high_quality_pre-K_initiative/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Press_Releases/2016/TEA_awards_more_than_$116_million_as_part_of_Gov__Abbott_s_high_quality_pre-K_initiative/)

Texas Education Code. (2015). *Kindergarten and prekindergarten programs*. (Chapter

29, Subchapter E, §29.153). Retrieved from

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm>

- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2016). *Child nutrition income eligibility guidelines*. Food & Nutrition Services. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fr-032316>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups*. National Center for Educational Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010015.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2012). *Serving preschool children through Title I*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/preschoolguidance2012.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *A matter of equity: Preschool in America*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/early-learning/matter-equity-preschool-america.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Fact sheet: Expanding access to high-quality early learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-expanding-access-high-quality-early-learning>
- U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights. (2014). *Civil rights data collection: Data snapshot (Early childhood education)*. Issue Brief No. 2. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-early-learning-snapshot.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2016). *Preschool through third grade alignment and differentiated instruction: A literature review*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oepdp/ppss/reports.html>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), *Mind in society: The*

development of higher psychological processes (pp. 79-91). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wang, Z. (2015). Theory of mind and children's understanding of teaching and learning during early childhood. *Cogent Education*, 2(1), 1-1.

doi:10.1080/2331186X.2015.1011973

Wanless, S. B., McClelland, M. M., Tominey, S. L., & Acock, A. C. (2011). The influence of demographic risk factors on children's behavioral regulation in prekindergarten and kindergarten. *Part of a special issue: Self-Regulation in Early Childhood*, 22(3), 461-488. doi:10.1080/10409289.2011.536132

Warnes, E. D., Sheridan, S. M., & Geske, J. (2005). A contextual approach to the assessment of social skills: Identifying meaningful behaviors for social competence. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42(2), 173-187. doi:10.1002/pits.20052

Wass, R., & Golding, C. (2014). Sharpening a tool for teaching: The zone of proximal development. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(6), 671-684.

Weiland, C., & Yoshikawa, H. (2013). Impacts of a prekindergarten program on children's mathematics, language, literacy, executive function, and emotional skills. *Child Development*, 84(6), 2112-2130. doi:10.1111/cdev.12099

Welsh, J. A., Nix, R. L., Blair, C., Bierman, K. L., & Nelson, K. E. (2010). The development of cognitive skills and gains in academic school readiness for children from low-income families. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(1), 43-53. doi:10.1037/a0016738

Whitehurst, G. (2014). *Does pre-k work? It depends on how picky you are.* (Research Report No. 56 of 115). Brookings: The Brown Center Chalkboard Series Archive.

Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/02/26-does-prek-work-whithurst>

Whitted, K. S. (2011). Understanding how social and emotional skill deficits contribute to school failure. *Preventing School Failure*, 55(1), 10-16.

Winsler, A., Hutchison, L. A., De Feyter, J. J., Manfra, L., Bleiker, C., Hartman, S. C., & Levitt, J. (2012). Child, family, and childcare predictors of delayed school entry and kindergarten retention among linguistically and ethnically diverse children. *Developmental Psychology*, 48(5), 1299-1314.

Woods, T. D. (2013). *Relationship between prekindergarten experiences and kindergarten readiness* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3558359)

Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunne, J., Burchinal, M. R., Espinosa, L. M., Gormley, W. T., Ludwig, J., Magunson, K. A., Phillips, D., & Zaslow, M. J. (2013, October). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Society for Research in Child Development. Retrieved from <http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20on%20Preschool%20Education%20FINAL.pdf>

APPENDIX A

SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE – TEACHER VERSION

APPENDIX A

SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE – TEACHER VERSION

Child's Name: _____

Instructions: Please rate each of the listed behaviors to how well it describes this child.

		Not at all	A little	Moderately well	Well	Very well
1.	Functions well even with distractions	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Can accept things not going his/her way	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Copes well with failure	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Is a self-starter	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Works/plays well without adult support	0	1	2	3	4
6.	Accepts legitimate imposed limits	0	1	2	3	4
7.	Expresses needs and feelings appropriately	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Thinks before acting	0	1	2	3	4
9.	Resolves peer problems on his/her own	0	1	2	3	4
10.	Stays on task	0	1	2	3	4
11.	Can calm down when excited or all wound up	0	1	2	3	4
12.	Can wait in line patiently when necessary	0	1	2	3	4
13.	Very good at understanding other people's feelings	0	1	2	3	4
14.	Is aware of the effect of his/her behavior on others	0	1	2	3	4
15.	Works well in a group	0	1	2	3	4
16.	Plays by the rules of the game	0	1	2	3	4
17.	Pays attention	0	1	2	3	4
18.	Controls temper when there is a disagreement	0	1	2	3	4
19.	Shares materials with others	0	1	2	3	4
20.	Cooperates with peers without prompting	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Follows teacher's verbal directions	0	1	2	3	4
22.	Is helpful to others	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Listens to others' points of view	0	1	2	3	4
24.	Can give suggestions and opinions without being bossy	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Acts friendly toward others	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE – PARENT VERSION

ENGLISH AND SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE – PARENT VERSION

Name: _____ Child's Name: _____

I will read to you some statements that could describe your child. Please tell me how well each of the statements actually does describe your child.

		Not at all	A little	Moderately well	Well	Very well
1.	Your child can accept things not going his/her way.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Your child copes well with failure.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Your child thinks before acting.	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Your child resolves problems with friends or brothers and sisters on his/her own.	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Your child can calm down when excited or all wound up.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	Your child does what he or she is told to do.	0	1	2	3	4
7.	Your child is very good at understanding other people's feelings.	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Your child controls his/her temper when there is a disagreement.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	Your child shares things with others.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	Your child is helpful to others.	0	1	2	3	4
11.	Your child listens to others' points of view.	0	1	2	3	4
12.	Your child gives suggestions and opinions without being bossy.	0	1	2	3	4

ESCALA DE APTITUD SOCIAL – VERSIÓN PARA EL PADRE

Nombre: _____ Nombre del Niño: _____

Le leeré algunas oraciones que podrían describir a su hijo/a. Por favor, dígame qué tan bien describe a su hijo cada oración.

		Para nada	Un poco	Moderadamente Bien	Bien	Muy Bien
1.	Su hijo/a puede aceptar cosas que no van a su manera.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Su hijo/a hace frente al fracaso de buena manera.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Su hijo/a piensa antes de actuar.	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Su hijo/a resuelve problemas con amigos o hermanos por sí mismo/a.	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Su hijo/a puede calmarse cuando está alborotado o furioso/a.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	Su hijo/a hace lo que se le dice que haga.	0	1	2	3	4
7.	Su hijo/a es muy bueno para comprender los sentimientos de otras personas.	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Su hijo/a controla su temperamento cuando hay un desacuerdo.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	Su hijo/a comparte cosas con otros.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	Su hijo/a ayuda a otros.	0	1	2	3	4
11.	Su hijo/a escucha el punto de vista de otros.	0	1	2	3	4
12.	Su hijo/a hace sugerencias y da opiniones sin ser mandón.	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX C

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE – SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE

ENGLISH AND SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

APPENDIX C

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE – SOCIAL COMPETENCE SCALE

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mark the box that shows how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

		Disagree A Lot	Disagree A Little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree A Little	Agree A Lot
1.	I can always cheer up someone who is feeling sad.					
2.	I can always find a way to help people end arguments.					
3.	I listen carefully to what other people say to me.					
4.	I'm good at taking turns, and sharing things with others.					
5.	It's easy for me to make suggestions without being bossy.					
6.	I'm very good at working with other children.					
7.	I always know when people need help, and what kind of help to give.					
8.	I know how to disagree without starting a fight or argument.					
9.	I'm not very good at helping people. (R)					
10.	I'm good at finding fair ways to solve problems.					

PROYECTO DE DESARROLLO INFANTIL
CUESTIONARIO PARA EL ESTUDIANTE – ESCALA DE APTITUD SOCIAL

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____

Marca el cuadro que muestra cuánto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con la oración.

		Muy en Desacuerdo	Un Poco en Desacuerdo	Ni de Acuerdo Ni en Desacuerdo	Un Poco de Acuerdo	Muy de Acuerdo
1.	Siempre puedo levantarle el ánimo a alguien que esté triste.					
2.	Siempre puedo encontrar una forma de ayudar a las personas a terminar discusiones.					
3.	Escucho atentamente lo que me dicen otras personas.					
4.	Soy bueno/a turnándome y compartiendo cosas con otros.					
5.	Me resulta fácil hacer sugerencias sin ser mandón/a.					
6.	Soy muy bueno/a trabajado con otros niños.					
7.	Siempre sé si las personas necesitan ayuda y el tipo de ayuda que tengo que dar.					
8.	Sé cómo no estar de acuerdo con algo sin comenzar una pelea o discusión.					
9.	No soy muy bueno/a ayudando a las personas. (R)					
10.	Soy bueno/a para encontrar formas justas de resolver problemas.					

APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Based on your experiences, how would you describe the social competency of Hispanic ELLs who attended PreK?
 - Can you give an example of what that "looks like?"
2. Based on your experiences, how would you describe the social competency of Hispanic ELLs who *did not* attend PreK?
 - Can you give an example of what that "looks like?"
3. So when you consider how you described those who attended PreK and how you described those who didn't, what are differences that stand out to you?
4. The findings from the teacher surveys indicate that students who attended PreK have only *slightly* higher social competence than those who didn't, but it's very minimal. This is the case, even when controlling for income or gender. What is your reaction to these results?
5. While the differences weren't significant for any grade level, the findings showed kindergarten had the biggest difference, ratings in first grade were exactly even, and ratings in second grade had a slight difference. How would you explain these findings?
6. When looking at individual responses, the *only* one that showed a statistically significant difference was, "Is a self-starter." So what does that difference look like in the classroom?
7. Of all we've talked about, related to differences between Hispanic ELLs who attended PreK and those who didn't, what do you believe is most important?
8. Do you have any closing comments that would help me fully understand your perceptions about the impact prekindergarten *may or may not* have on the social competency of Hispanic ELLs who attended prekindergarten in comparison to those who didn't?