The Long-Term Effects of a Preschool Program

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THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

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Table of Contents

Abstract

Introduction 3

Literature Review 5

Method 24

Results 28

Conclusion 30

Bibliography 34

Appendix A – Human Subject Review Board Application and Approval 39

Appendix B – Letters to Logan County Schools Superintendent and Logan County High School Principal 48

Appendix C – Consent Form 51
This study considered high-quality preschool programs, what has happened in Kentucky preschool programs and the long-term effects children receive from attending a preschool program. Research indicated that there are significant long-term attendant benefits: better school achievement, better school attainment, and better adult success. This research used the 2004 senior class of Logan County Schools in Russellville, Kentucky and examined the rate of special education placement, retention, suspension and dropout for students who attended a preschool program versus students who did not attend a preschool program. Results of this research showed, there is no difference in special education percentages between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool; and there is no difference in retention rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool; there is a difference in suspension rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool; there is no difference in dropout rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.
Chapter One

Introduction

The U. S. Congress originally passed The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) in 1975. Its purpose was to ensure all children and youth with disabilities (ages six-18) access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Part of this act included the Preschool Incentive Grant, which provided some incentive monies to states to provide services to children under age six. These services, however, were not mandated.

Legislation amended The Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1986 and changed the name to The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments (PL 99-457). The most dramatic provisions of this new law related to handicapped and at risk children between the ages of birth and six and their families. The law stated:

The Congress finds that there is an urgent and substantial need:

1. to enhance the development of handicapped infants and toddlers and to minimize their potential for developmental delay;

2. to reduce the educational costs to our society, including our nation’s schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after (they) reach school age;

3. to minimize the likelihood of institutionalization of handicapped individuals and maximize the potential for their independent living in society; and

4. to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special need of their infants and toddlers with handicaps. (Smith, n.d., Overview).

Regarding young children and their families, PL 99-457 established two new federal programs. One program addressed three- to five-year-old handicapped children
(Preschool Grant Program) and the other addressed handicapped and at risk infants and toddlers from birth to age three. The new Preschool Grant Program mandated states to serve all three-, four- and five-year-old handicapped children by 1990-1991. By 1992, all states were progressing under Part B and all states made FAPE available to all children with disabilities aged three through five (Walsh, Smith & Taylor, 2000).

In 1990, Kentucky made the most comprehensive restructuring efforts ever undertaken by a state legislature. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) was a bold educational reform measure initiated jointly by all three branches of the Kentucky state government. In essence, KERA was designed to provide Kentucky’s children with equal educational opportunity and to improve students’ scholastic performance. As a part of KERA, Kentucky required an expansion of preschool programs for children in need of additional academic support. The law required that school districts provide preschool education programs for four-year-olds at risk of educational failure as well as those who were interested in receiving services. It also required local school districts to provide preschool education services to three- and four-year-old children with disabilities as required by IDEA. The goal of the KERA preschool program was to create a comprehensive early childhood education system to provide developmentally appropriate instruction to children (Chi, 1995).

This study discusses the research of high-quality preschool programs, the long-term effects of a preschool program, the Kentucky Preschool Program and the on-going Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project. It will also discuss the study conducted in the Logan County School District.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Childcare vs. Preschool

Childcare and preschool serve young children and can provide supervision while parents work. The terms “childcare” and “preschool” are often used interchangeably, but childcare and preschool are not the same thing.

For this study, “childcare” is defined as any arrangement in which children are cared for by someone other than their parents. The typical environments are center-based childcare or daycare, care by a relative or other person in the home or elsewhere (Mead, 2004). “Preschool” is defined as an educational setting designed specifically to foster young children’s (three- and four-year-olds) development and prepare them to succeed in school. The typical environments are Head Start programs, center-based childcare centers, private preschool programs or public schools (Mead, 2004).

Several studies (AFT, 2002; Gomby, Larner, Stevenson, Lewit & Behrman, 1995; KERA Initiative Summary, 2004; The Trust for Early Education, 2004) define high-quality preschool programs as having five key elements:

1. Staff that have postsecondary training and ongoing professional development tend to get better salaries and have lower turnover rates.

2. Small class size and low teacher-to-child ratios allow more individual attention, more classroom interaction and more opportunities for teachers to work on developmental areas.

3. Children are better prepared for the demands of formal schooling when exposed to age appropriate activities applied in the context of play and structured time.
4. Documented progress of children and feedback to staff and parents about each child’s progress in addition to time for staff and parents to evaluate and provide input about the program.

5. Interactions between children and adults, children and their peers and children and their environment in a language rich environment increase the exposure to early communication, literacy and social skills.

Significance of the Problem

Kindergarten is a German word, which means children's garden; it was created over a century ago for the first stages of a child's classroom education. In some places kindergarten is part of the formal school system; in others it may refer to pre-school or daycare. The beneficiaries of kindergarten at that time included immigrant families, families struggling with poverty, urban residents and orphans residing in orphanages (The Trust for Early Education, 2004). Today's kindergarten is more like the past's first or second grade. Eventually, research proved that the benefits of kindergarten impact all children and push for universal kindergarten began.

Instead of the half-day kindergarten class that included a snack and nap time, during the past fifteen years, most states have switched to full-day class that no longer includes snack or nap time, but now includes reading books, spelling tests and two-digit math. Walking through today's kindergarten classroom, one would soon discover why preschool is essential for children. Today's kindergarten is more like the middle to late 20th century’s first or second grade. Today we are asking our kindergarten children to do more academic work at higher levels than in previous generations (The Trust for Early Education, 2004).

Kindergarten teachers report that many children come to school unprepared. According to the National Poll of Kindergarten Teachers, 86% of the teachers said poorly prepared students in the classroom negatively affect the progress of all children, even the
best prepared. In addition, more than 50% of U.S. children have one or more risk factors for school failure, including too little exposure to stimulating language, reading and storytelling (AFT, 2002b). Children with these risk factors often have trouble following directions, working independently or in groups, communicating and establishing secure relationships with adults.

The early primary grades in school constitute a critical period for children’s adjustment as students (Entwisle, 1995). Entering school alters children’s social environments at a time when their capabilities are also changing. High-quality preschool programs offer children the opportunities to learn new skills, internalize classroom routines and expectations and broaden their horizons through a wide variety of learning experiences (The Trust for Early Education, 2004).

Most states now have preschool programs targeted to children thought to need extra support succeeding in school. Entrance requirements are based on family income, exposure to violence, substance abuse, low parental education levels, limited English proficiency, developmental delay or other risk factors. Only two states have universal preschool, which provides preschool regardless of family income. In 1995, Georgia introduced the first statewide universal pre-K program that offered free preschool services to all four-year-old children. In 1998, Oklahoma established a universal pre-K program for four-year-old children after having administered a program for economically disadvantaged children for eight years. New York and West Virginia soon followed with their own universal pre-K programs, although New York did not fully fund its program and West Virginia plans for it to be phased in by 2012 (NIEER, 2004). In 2002, Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment stipulating that all four-year-olds in the state be offered a free pre-K education by 2005 (Barnett & Hustedt, 2003). Massachusetts
began the move toward universal preschool in 2004 by passing legislation but at this time it has not taken effect. Most recently, Tennessee has started the initiative of voluntary preschool for all four-year-old children. Twelve states, Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming, have no state-funded preschool programs (NIEER, 2004).

The Council of Chief State School Officers, representing the top state officials responsible for K-12 achievement in the United States, changed a decade old policy statement. It changed from preschool for at-risk three- and four-year-olds to a new policy calling for universal early learning programs. According to the Council, investments in K-12 education will not yield the results Americans want if children enter school without a strong foundation for learning (Barnett, Brown & Shore, 2004).

States were recently given an additional reason for developing high quality preschool programs with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL 107-110), commonly known as NCLB, is a United States federal law that reauthorizes a number of federal programs that aim to improve the performance of America's primary and secondary schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts and schools, as well as providing parents more flexibility in choosing which schools their children will attend. Additionally, it promotes an increased focus on reading and re-authorizes The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10). This is seen by many as an extrapolation of Goals 2000: Educate America Act (PL 103-227). Goals 2000 established a framework in which to identify world-class academic standards, to measure student progress, and to provide the support that students may need to meet the standards. Many of these goals were based on the principles of Outcomes-based education, and not all of the goals were
attained by the year 2000 as was intended. Comparing the positive effects of a preschool program to what states are being held accountable for, then states should have a more prominent role in coordinating and providing a high quality preschool experience before children enter kindergarten (ED.gov, 2003). States are required to close the gap between low-income and minority students from their wealthier, non-minority counterparts, raise overall student achievement and improve high school graduation rates (The Trust for Early Education, 2004).

How does the United States compare to other nations? While the United States continues to debate over increasing its investment in young children, other industrialized countries have already recognized the benefits of such investments (Committee for Economic Development, n. d.). Belgium, France and Italy offer free programs for preschool children aged three to six and enroll 95-99% of this population. Denmark, Sweden and Finland enroll 73-83% of their three- to six-year-olds and guarantee placement in subsidized-care to any child aged one and older. Austria, the Netherlands and Spain enroll over 70% of their preschoolers. The United Kingdom enrolls over 90% of their four-year-olds (Committee for Economic Development, n. d.).

Three-fourths of young children in the United States participate in a preschool program (Barnett & Hustedt, 2003). Yet, preschool participation is highly unequal. The children least likely to attend are those whose parents have the least education and income, whose mothers do not work outside the home and who live in the western region of the United States (Barnett & Yarosz, 2004). Programs operate under a wide range of auspices from private organizations to public schools to Head Start. Until recently, most statewide early education programs followed Head Start's method of providing services to children of low socioeconomic status or who were at-risk.
Numerous studies (Bracey & Stellar, 2003; The Carolina Abecedarian Project, 2003; Garces, Thomas & Currie, 2000; Reynolds, 1997; Schweinhart, 2003) have shown that preschool programs prepare children for school. Short-term studies show that children who enter kindergarten after participating in a quality preschool have better reading, math, motor, language and social skills than those who do not attend a preschool. Participation in preschool can result in IQ gains of approximately eight points immediately after completion of the program (Gomby, Larner, Stevenson, Lewit & Behrman, 1995). Children who attend preschool may have better physical health because they are required to be properly immunized, are linked to health services, have vision, hearing and developmental screenings and are provided nutritious meals.

Questions about the long-term benefits of early childhood programs first surfaced in a 1969 study of children who attended Head Start and how they benefited in a lasting way. Research has established that preschool education can produce substantial gains in children’s learning and development (Gomby, Larner, Stevenson, Lewit & Behrman, 1995). Since most preschool research projects end by the third grade, research tends to show short-term effects but few long-term effects. It takes at least fifteen years for a group of three-year-olds to complete high school, so evidence of long-term effects that last into adolescence and beyond is available only from programs that operated more than twenty years ago (Gomby, Larner, Stevenson, Lewit & Behrman, 1995). There are only a handful of long-term studies; these tend to be the strongest methodologically and have provided many results.

Four well-conceived preschool programs are presented in this section. Long-term follow up studies have been completed which analyze the outcomes for the children
involved. Economic issues of these specific programs and preschool in general are also discussed. This section concludes with details of the Kentucky Preschool Program.

**Head Start**

The most widely known and longest lasting preschool program is Head Start. It began in 1965 as part of the “War on Poverty,” with widespread bi-partisan support. Head Start was designed to close the gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers. It was based on the idea that poverty severely restricted the capacity of many families and communities to support the development of young children adequately. Eligibility is limited to young children in families with incomes below the federal poverty line or who potentially qualify for public assistance. Ten percent of this enrollment qualifies by disability (Garces, Thomas & Currie, 2000). In addition to providing a nurturing learning environment, Head Start is required to facilitate and monitor utilization of preventive medical care and to provide nutritious meals and snacks. Head Start has an annual budget of more than six billion dollars and employs one in five preschool teachers (Garces, Thomas & Currie, 2000).

Head Start began as a summer program with 561,000 predominantly African American children (Garces, Thomas & Currie, 2000). It expanded to serve almost three quarters of a million African American and white children in the summer of 1966. By the early 1970’s, Head Start had become an all-year program.

Garces, Thomas, and Currie (2000) studied the longer-term effects of Head Start using non-experimental data drawn from the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID). Their study began in 1968 with a survey of 4,802 households composed of 18,000 individuals. In 1995, adults at age 30 and below who were eligible to participate in Head Start during the late sixties and seventies were asked a variety of questions. Findings of
the PSID show participation in Head Start had positive effects on the probability of attending college, mostly among whites. As young adults, whites saw large increases in the probability of graduating from high school and in earnings. The probability of graduating from high school increased for African-American males. African-Americans who participated in Head Start were significantly less likely to have been charged or convicted of a crime than siblings who did not. Some evidence suggested there were positive spillovers from older children attending Head Start to their younger siblings (Garces, Thomas & Currie, 2000).

*The Chicago Child-Parent Centers*

Created in 1967, The Chicago Child-Parent Centers provide comprehensive educational and family support services to ages three through nine for up to six years of continuous intervention. It is the second oldest state and federally funded early childhood educational intervention program. This program was created for children in the Chicago Public Schools considered at risk of academic underachievement due to poverty and associated factors. The major rationale of this program is to provide a school-stable learning environment during the preschool and primary grade years. Parents can have an active part in their children’s education to foster scholastic development (Reynolds, 1997).

The University of Wisconsin-Madison began the Chicago Longitudinal Study of the Child-Parent Centers in 1986. Tracking began with the 1989 graduates of the program (third grade for most) until the age of 14. Yearly data have been collected from school system records, including standardized test scores, to determine the children’s progress. The Chicago Longitudinal Study findings show any participation in the program was associated with better school performance up to eighth grade. Duration of
participation was associated with better school performance, especially for children who participated for five or six years. Participation in extended childhood intervention to second and third grade yielded significantly better school performance than participation ending in kindergarten (Reynolds, 1997).

*The High/Scope Perry Preschool*

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study has followed the lives of 123 African Americans who originally lived in the attendance area of the Ypsilanti (Michigan) school district’s Perry Elementary School (Schweinhart, 2003). Children entered the study from 1962-1965. The study’s strength is that participants were randomly assigned to groups: enrolled in the preschool program or not enrolled in any preschool program. Diagnosticians, interviewers and teachers did not know to which group the children had been assigned (Bracey & Stellar, 2003). The children attended the program for a half-day for eight months. The first group of children received one year of preschool and later groups received two years. This preschool program included weekly, 90-minute home visits by members of the project staff (Bracey & Stellar, 2003). Data were obtained at ages 19, 27 and 40 on both groups of students.

Each year the results were very positive. For example, by age 40, 16% of the preschool group had been arrested (versus 55% of the non-preschool group), 14% of the preschool group had been arrested for drug crimes (versus 34%) and 60% of the preschool group earned $20K+ (versus 40%) (Schweinhart, 2003).

*The Abecedarian Project*

Created in 1972, the Abecedarian Project of North Carolina differed from most other early childhood programs. This program identified children at birth and provided them full-day care, fifty weeks a year, from birth until they entered school (Bracey &
Stellar, 2003). The Abecedarian Project was a carefully controlled study in which 57 infants from low-income families were randomly assigned to receive early intervention in a high quality childcare setting and 54 were in a non-treated control group. Each treated child had an individualized prescription of educational activities consisting of “games” that were incorporated into the day. These activities addressed social, emotional and cognitive development but gave particular emphasis to language (The Carolina Abecedarian Project, 2003).

At age 21, cognitive functioning, academic skills, educational attainment, employment, parenthood, and social adjustment were measured. Fifty-three from the treated group and 51 from the untreated group were assessed (The Carolina Abecedarian Project, 2003). Children in the treated group had significantly higher mental test scores from the toddler period through age 21 with reading and math scores significantly higher from the primary grades to young adulthood (The Carolina Abecedarian Project, 2003). Those in the treated group were more likely to be in school at age 21 (40% versus 20%). and 35% had either graduated from or were attending a four-year college or university (The Carolina Abecedarian Project, 2003). Young adults in the treated group were two years older (19-year-olds versus 17-year-olds) when their first child was born. There was no statistical significance in the employment rates between the two groups.

Economic Outcomes

The Chicago Child-Parent Centers, High/Scope Perry Preschool Study and Abecedarian Project of North Carolina all cost substantially more money than Head Start. The question arises if the benefits from the programs are worth the costs. A recent analysis of the Abecedarian Project (Masse & Barnett, 2002) concluded that the benefit/cost ratio for the program was four to one. Society received four dollars in return
for every dollar invested (Bracey & Stellar, 2003). The Perry and Chicago projects yielded benefit/cost ratios of seven to one. Masse and Barnett (2002) estimated that children who took part in one of these programs would earn $143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who did not and their mothers would earn $133,000 more. They also inferred the residual effects the children of the children who participated in a high-quality preschool program would earn more. Mothers are able to establish better, longer-term and more productive relationships with employers, children reap the positive short and long-term effects, and their children experience better outcomes associated with higher incomes and better educational attainment.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis had a group of leading economists, brain scientists and child development experts review recent research on early education programs (Cobb, 2003). The group decided that early childhood education is probably one of the best public investments a state can make. It was estimated that approximately $1.50 per household per week could improve the performance of Minnesota public schools and increase the number of students who earn diplomas (Cobb, 2003).

According to the report, “Exceptional Returns,” (Lynch, 2004), children who attend preschool, in the long run, have higher verbal, math, and intellectual achievement, higher graduation rates, less involvement in criminal activity, and a better chance of securing good jobs with higher earnings than children who did not attend preschool. This study demonstrates that providing all 20% of the nation’s three- and four-year-old children who live in poverty with a high quality early childhood development program would have a substantial payoff for governments and taxpayers in the future (Lynch, 2004).
A high quality, nationwide commitment to preschool would cost a significant amount of money up front, an estimated $19 billion a year, but it would have a substantial payoff in the future. Within 17 years the net effect on the budget would increase and within 30 years the offsetting budget would more than double the costs of preschool (Lynch, 2004). But even with this long-term projection, only 15 states increased spending on preschool, 17 states did not increase spending and seven states actually decreased their budgets (NIEER, 2004).

Kentucky Preschool Program

Kentucky’s state-funded preschool programs were established in 1990 under KERA to ensure all children have the opportunity to succeed in school when they enter the primary program. This program was created to reduce barriers to learning for four-year-old children at risk of educational failure (defined by law as eligible for free lunch) and three- and four-year-old children with disabilities (Kentucky Preschool Program, 2004). Districts are directed through statute to serve other four-year-olds as placements are available and by using local funds or other resources (KERA Initiative Summary, 2004).

The vision for Kentucky’s young children and their families is that “all young children are healthy and safe, possess the foundation that will enable school and personal success, and live in strong families that are supported and strengthened within their communities” (Governor’s Early Childhood Task Force, 1999). As a part of this vision, specific learning standards for children birth through four years of age have been developed. Kentucky’s Early Childhood Standards were designed to reflect the range of developmental abilities typical of young children at different ages and to represent the expectations for the skills and levels of knowledge that children are able to achieve.
(Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, 2003). These standards are aligned with Head Start Outcomes and the Kentucky Program of Studies.

Educational components of the Kentucky Preschool Program consist of developmentally appropriate experiences: cognition, communication, social, physical, and emotional development (Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, 2003). Other areas of creative expression, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health education, physical education, arts and humanities are also included.

The Early Childhood Standards are not intended to serve as a curriculum guide or as an assessment tool. In Kentucky, the curriculum is based on a philosophy of how children learn, including content (what the children should learn) and method (how to teach the content). The Standards are not a detailed listing of all skills and knowledge children exhibit in their developmental progress nor do they propose a method of teaching particular knowledge or skills (Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, 2003). Selection of procedures, assessments, content, method and experiences are left to the discretion of parents and school staff.

In exposing a preschooler to these developmental areas, the classroom arrangement plays a large part. School-based classrooms are arranged so children may work individually, in small groups or in large groups. Centers such as art, block building, housekeeping, dramatic play, library, math and science are utilized throughout the day. The students also engage in gross motor, fine motor, outdoor activities, cooking, experiments, early literacy, songs and games. Materials are developmentally appropriate and reflect the culture and ethnicity of the children (Kentucky Preschool Program Outline, 2003). Tests, workbooks and ditto sheets are not used.
The maximum number of children allowed during a session is 20 with at least two adults, one lead teacher and one assistant. Smaller group sizes and additional adults are encouraged (Kentucky Preschool Program Outline, 2003). Increasing or decreasing staff depends on the needs of the children. An adult cannot be left alone with more than 10 preschool children (704 KAR 3:410(6)). As of the 2004-2005 school year, any new lead teacher will be required to hold the Kentucky Early Childhood teaching certificate (NIEER, 2004).

According to 704 KAR 3:410(6), the local school district shall select one of the following program options: standard half-day, five day a week program (single session); half-day four day a week program in single or double sessions; or a locally-designed program approved by the chief state school officer. Most preschool programs are three or three and one-half hours each day, few are four to six hours per day and the standard school-based preschool program operates a four or five day schedule. Typically, there are four days of the preschool program with the fifth day reserved for services: home-visits, meetings, social experiences for children, parent trainings and coordination of medical or social services (704 KAR 3:410(6)). Preschool programs operate the length of a typical school year.

Disabled four-year-old children are expected to be in the same program as other four-year-old children. There are a variety of setting options for the preschooler with disabilities: mainstreamed preschool, a special education preschool, a home setting, or another preschool program acceptable in Kentucky. All programs must provide adaptations for children with special needs. Speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, special transportation and other related services might be provided for preschoolers with disabilities.
Active parent involvement is achieved by participation as observers or volunteers, parent education activities, two-way communication systems, and at least two home visits by the teacher (Kentucky Preschool Program Outline, 2003). Each local preschool program involves parents, staff and other professionals in an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program (Kentucky Preschool Program Outline, 2003). Participation of children, parental satisfaction, success of children and adherence to program requirements are all reviewed. A Kentucky Preschool Self-Study instrument is available to assist programs in setting local goals.

Ninety-five out of 176 districts experienced preschool enrollment growth of more than five percent during the 2003-2004 school year (KERA Initiative Summary, 2004). In Kentucky, all school districts serve eligible three- and four-year-old children through the district preschool program or through contractual agreements with Head Start or private agencies. During the 2003-2004 school year, 81 districts operated the program in conjunction with another program or agency, 49 districts blended with Head Start funded programs, 19 districts contracted the entire program to an outside private agency or Head Start and 42 districts served non-eligible children through tuition (Kentucky Preschool Program, 2004). Current figures for the 2003-2004 school year from Head Start and the Kentucky Preschool Program reveal that together these programs served 37,417 three- and four-year olds (Kentucky Preschool Program, 2004).

State funding for the program has decreased by $2.2 million since 2001, while the number of eligible preschool children has increased annually by 1,000. In some districts, this has led to cuts in the quality and duration of services offered (NIEER, 2004). The state estimate of cost per child is $3,916, including state, IDEA, Title 1 and district funds. State funding provides the majority of funds but is often insufficient to support the
program fully. Most districts contribute funds ranging from $10,000 to $1,000,000 depending on the size of the district and at the district’s discretion.

Experts at the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER, 2004) use a 10-item Quality Standards Checklist to compare standards of quality across different states. These items are based on research findings that create benchmarks for a minimum standard to compare educational programs. The Quality Standards Checklist is composed of curriculum standards, teacher degree requirement, teacher specialized training requirement, assistant teacher degree requirement, teacher in-service requirement, maximum class size, staff-child ratio, screening/referral requirements, required support services and meal requirements. In the 2004 State Preschool Yearbook, compiled by NIEER, Kentucky rates seven out of 10 on the Quality Standards Checklist. Kentucky lacked in curriculum standards, teacher degree requirements and assistant teacher degree requirements.

**Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project**

Since 1991, the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project has tracked the academic and social progress of 3,528 students. This project follows students who qualified for preschool and their non-qualifying peers. Over 2,250 elementary and middle school teachers from 496 schools in 142 districts completed social skills rating scales, transition (preschool to Kindergarten) questionnaires and academic surveys to track children’s progress as they moved through the primary program (Hemmeter, Townley, Wilson, Epstein & Hines, n.d.).

An ongoing goal of the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project is to measure the long-term effects of participation in the Kentucky Preschool Program. Three studies have been implemented: (1) survey data on students in the second and fourth years of
primary and students in the fifth grade; (2) survey and interview data on two groups of
students in the fourth year of primary; and (3) middle school students' surveys.

The survey data on group one found that when there are differences between
groups, the differences favor the preschool participants over their peers. Data on
preschool participant's expectancy about high school completion, entrance into college,
post secondary training and transfer to a job were higher than non-preschoolers.
Preschool participants had higher grades in language arts, mathematics, social studies and
science and were referred to the Family Resource/Youth Service Centers less often than
non-preschoolers. No significant differences were found in the areas of social skills,
academic motivation, KERA learning goals progress, communication skills, or
attendance (Hemmeter et al., n. d.).

Survey and interview data on group two revealed two important findings. First,
the children who are further behind at the beginning of preschool make more progress
during preschool and, second, preschool participants continue to do as well as their peers
who were not eligible for the preschool program. The progress they made in preschool
adequately supports their success through the fourth year of primary.

The middle school students' surveys indicate that the children who attended
preschool continue to do as well as and in some cases better than a random group of their
peers (Hemmeter et al, n. d.). Middle school students were surveyed on their self-
perception, education, future jobs, attitude toward school, extracurricular involvement
and parent involvement. The findings show the two groups were similar in most cases,
but the preschool participants had higher percentages in the areas of education and
positive attitudes toward school.
According to the Early Care and Education Collaborative (n.d.), long-term research shows nine findings about preschool:

1. helps children have greater school readiness,
2. improves scores on primary grade testing,
3. reduces grade retention and special education,
4. increases high school graduation rates,
5. increases the likelihood of a college education,
6. has very positive employment impacts,
7. reduces crime,
8. is cost-effective and
9. enhances the quality of life.

Program quality, type, duration, funding and other factors affect these long-term outcomes. As seen in the review of Head Start, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers and the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, different programs do yield different, yet positive, long-term results. Kentucky has been gathering data since 1991 but only documents short-term, through fifth grade, results.

Purpose of Present Investigation

It has been sixteen years since KERA and the preschool program were established in Kentucky. The students who started preschool in the 1990-1991 school year have now graduated from high school. What kind of long-term effects have Kentucky preschoolers received?

This research used the 2004 senior class of Logan County Schools in Russellville, Kentucky and examined the rate of special education placement, retention, suspension
and dropout for students who attended a preschool program versus students who did not attend a preschool program to explore the following research questions.

1. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of special education placement?

2. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of retention?

3. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of suspension?

4. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of dropout?

Hypotheses

1. There is no difference in special education percentages between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

2. There is no difference in retention rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

3. There is no difference in suspension rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

4. There is no difference in dropout rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.
Chapter Three

Method

This section includes a description of the definitions, participants, procedures followed and data preparation of this study.

Definitions

For this study, “senior” is defined as a student born in 1985 or 1986 and eligible to graduate in 2004. “Special education” is defined as qualifying through specific criteria to receive instructional services, speech therapy or any other related service. “Retention” is defined as repeating a grade level. It is important to note that a part of KERA created the ungraded primary. Students are allowed to remain an extra year in the primary program without being considered retained. In this study, students were marked as retained if they repeated any grade level. “Suspension” is considered any time a student was not allowed to attend school due to a behavior infraction. Students who “dropped out” any time before their senior year or during their senior year and met the criteria of the 1985 or 1986 birthday were allowed to participate in the study. Excluded from the study were students born in 1984 and students who had relocated during their senior year.

Participants

The first qualifying preschool participants graduated from high school in 2004. The researcher tracked the education of these students and compared them to students
who did not attend a preschool program. Students who attended other preschool programs (private agencies, Head Start or other districts) were also included in the study. Students were divided into two groups: attended preschool or did not attend preschool. School records from kindergarten to senior year were reviewed and information regarding special education placement, retention, suspension and dropout was obtained.

The 2004 Logan County High School senior class consisted of 230 students. Of this group, 208 participated in this study. Of the participating seniors, 44% (n=91) attended a preschool program and 56% (n=117) did not attend a preschool program.

Males represented 46% (n=95) of the study. Forty-five percent (n=43) of them attended preschool and 55% (n=52) of them did not attend preschool. Females represented 54% (n=113) of the study. Forty-two percent (n=48) of them attended preschool and 58% (n=65) of them did not attend preschool.

African-Americans represented <1% (n=9) of the study. Fifty-six percent (n=5) of them attended preschool and 44% (n=4) of them did not attend preschool. Whites represented 96% (n=199) of the study. Forty-three percent (n=86) of them attended preschool and 57% (n=113) of them did not attend preschool.

**Procedures**

The researcher submitted an application for approval of investigations involving the use of human subjects to The Human Subjects of Research Review Board (HSRB) at Western Kentucky University. Upon review, the HSRB determined that the risks to subjects were: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is
equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects’ welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent and that participation is clearly voluntary. The application and approval forms appear in Appendix A.

A letter was sent to both the current Logan County Schools Superintendent and the current Logan County High School Principal. The researcher asked permission to contact parents of Logan County High School seniors. Both agreed for this study to take place. The letters with signed permission appear in Appendix B.

Past and current Russellville Head Start staff and the Logan County Schools Preschool Family Facilitator were interviewed to obtain an overview of the first preschool program that was conducted in Logan County. The current Logan County Schools Director of Pupil Personnel provided names and birthdays of the 2004 senior class in addition to the names of any students born in 1985 or 1986 who had dropped out of school.

A consent form was mailed to all seniors who met the above criteria. In the form, the researcher introduced the study, explained its purpose and encouraged parents to complete the bottom portion of the form. Parents were asked to sign and date with a witness, allowing the researcher to review the student’s records. A stamped pre-addressed envelope was included with each. The letter appears in Appendix C.

Data Preparation

Once the researcher obtained permission from the parent to review the records, the student’s name was added to an Excel spreadsheet. Information was then gathered from each participating student’s records in the study areas. Each area (special education placement, retention, suspension and dropout) was marked yes or no according to the
student’s involvement. SPSS was the statistical software used to analyze the data for this research. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and percentage were first obtained. The chi square statistic was used to determine how closely observed frequencies or probabilities match expected frequencies or probabilities. Chi square is a nonparametric statistic. The significance level for this research was set at the less than the 5% confidence level.
Chapter Four

Results

Data was obtained in four different areas: special education placement, retention, suspension and dropout. This section discusses the hypothesis of each area, the data comparison and the chi square analysis on each. The values of chi square ($\chi^2$) and degrees of freedom (df) were calculated to obtain the probability that the null hypothesis was correct. If the probability (p) was .05 or less, the null hypothesis was rejected.

1. There is no difference in special education percentages between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

Twenty-four percent (n=22) attended preschool and had some type of special education placement versus 76% (n=69) attended preschool and did not receive some type of special education placement. Fifteen percent (n=17) that did not attend preschool and received some type of special education placement versus 86% (n=100) did not attend preschool or have any type of special education placement.

The percentage of special education students who attended preschool was 24% and the percentage of special education students who did not attend preschool was 15%. Chi square analysis revealed no significant percentage difference: $\chi^2 = 3.126$, df = 1, p = .106.

2. There is no difference in retention rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

Fourteen percent (n=13) attended preschool and were retained versus 86% (n=78)
attended preschool and were not retained. Thirteen percent (n=15) did not attend preschool and were retained versus 87% (n=102) that did not attend preschool and were not retained.

The percentage of retained students who attended preschool was 14% and the percentage of retained students who did not attend preschool was 13%. Chi square analysis revealed no significant percentage difference: \( \chi^2 = 0.094, \text{df} = 1, p = .839 \).

3. There is no difference in suspension rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

Seven percent (n=6) attended preschool and were suspended versus 93% (n=85) attended preschool and were not suspended. Eighteen percent (n=21) did not attend preschool and were suspended versus 82% (n=96) that did not attend preschool and were not suspended.

The percentage of suspended students who attended preschool was 7% and the percentage of suspended students who did not attend preschool was 18%. Chi square analysis revealed a significant percentage difference: \( \chi^2 = 5.843, \text{df} = 1, p = .021 \).

4. There is no difference in dropout rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool.

Nine percent (n=8) attended preschool and dropped out versus 91% (n=83) attended preschool and did not dropout. Nine percent (n=11) did not attend preschool and dropped out versus 91% (n=106) did not attend preschool and did not dropout.

The percentage of dropout students who attended preschool was 9% and the percentage of dropout students who did not attend preschool was 9%. Chi square analysis revealed no significant percentage difference: \( \chi^2 = 0.023, \text{df} = 1, p = 1 \).
Chapter Five

Conclusion

In 1990, the Logan County School District implemented its first preschool program. Through discussions with the past and current Russellville Head Start staff and the Logan County Schools Preschool Family Facilitator, the researcher was able to obtain an overview of the first preschool program that was conducted in Logan County. The program was combined with the local Head Start program that also included students from Russellville City Schools. It is important to note that there was not an overwhelming participation from Logan County Schools that first year. Enrollment began to increase dramatically once the preschool program was placed in each of the five elementary schools in Logan County.

The first qualifying preschool participants graduated from high school in 2004. The researcher tracked the education of these students and compared them to students who did not attend a preschool program. Students who attended other preschool programs (private agencies, Head Start or other districts) were also included in the study. Students were divided into two groups: attended preschool or did not attend preschool. School records from kindergarten to senior year were reviewed and information regarding special education placement, retention, suspension and dropout was obtained.

The purpose of this study was to determine the long-term effects for Kentucky preschoolers, specifically in the Logan County School District.

The following research questions were addressed during this study:
1. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of special education placement?

2. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of retention?

3. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of suspension?

4. How do students who attended preschool compare to students who did not attend preschool in the area of dropout?

In reviewing the evidence gathered from this study, the following was found about each of the hypothesis.

1. There is no difference in special education percentages between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool. This hypothesis was accepted.

2. There is no difference in retention rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool. This hypothesis was accepted.

3. There is no difference in suspension rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool. This hypothesis was rejected. A small p-value of .021 suggests that this hypothesis is unlikely to be true. The smaller the p-value, the more convincing is the rejection of the hypothesis. It indicates the strength of the evidence that students who attended preschool were suspended less than students that did not attend preschool.

4. There is no difference in dropout rates between students who attended preschool and students who did not attend preschool. This hypothesis was accepted.

*Limitations of the Study*
There are many important limitations to be noted in this study. First, the participants in this study were all students from the same rural school district, which may not be representative of all students. Most of these students attended preschool through twelfth grade in this same district.

Second, there is a small proportion of minorities represented in this study. Only 4% (n=9) of the participants were African-American and no other minorities were represented.

Third is human error. The researcher obtained all information from each participating student’s records. Over thirteen years of school records, health records and other forms were all in this one set of records. It is assumed by the researcher that all information in the records was accurate. Also, although the researcher made every attempt to transfer each student’s data correctly, human error could have occurred.

Program quality, type, duration, funding and other factors affect the long-term outcomes of a preschool program. As seen in the review of Head Start, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers and the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, different programs do yield different long-term results. Although not specific in area to any one of the four programs reviewed, this study did not corroborate the literature’s assessment that children who attended preschool did better in the long-term. This researcher found no difference in students who attended preschool than students who did not attend preschool in the areas of special education, retention and dropout. These results are very encouraging if we consider that the Kentucky Preschool Program was established to give extra assistance to three- and four-year old children who were at risk of educational failure or who were disabled.
Literature shows a strong bias towards the positive outcomes of preschool program; both short-term and long-term effects have been documented. Quality preschool improves a child’s life opportunities and benefits society. With the federal government mandating preschool for certain children and some states offering preschool for all children, preschool is an area to watch.

A leading influence in preschool programming, Steve Barnett of Rutgers University, reviewed thirty-six studies and expressed:

(The) effects are large enough and persistent enough to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children...for many children, preschool programs can mean the difference between failing and passing, regular or special education, staying out of trouble or becoming involved in crime and delinquency, dropping out or graduating from high school (Barnett, 1995, p. 43).

Mounting evidence testifies to the powerful effects early schooling can have on children’s life chances and ultimate well-being, in part because educational stratification begins in earnest during these years. The researcher suggests Kentucky schools should provide universal preschool to all three- and four-year old children. Making sure children enter Kindergarten with the preparation and skills to learn needs to be one of Kentucky’s most important priorities.
Bibliography


http://minneapolisfed.org/pubs/region/03-12/ecd.cfm

http://www.ced.org/does/newsletter_prek_2004_08.pdf


Kentucky Preschool Program Outline. (2003). Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of
Education, Early Childhood Branch.


Appendix A

Human Subject Review Board Application and Approval
Submit to the Office of Sponsored Programs, 106 Foundation Building, by the first working Monday of the month for screening prior to the HSRB meeting. Please add additional space between items as needed to describe your project.

The human subjects application must stand alone. Your informed consent document(s), survey instrument, and site approval letter(s) should be attached to the application and referred to in your write up of the appropriate sections so that reviewers may read them as they read your application. Thesis proposals or other documents that are meant to substitute for completing the sections of the application will not be read and should not be attached.

1. Principal Investigator's Name: Kerry Holloman  
   Email Address: kholloman@logan.k12.ky.us  
   Mailing Address: 4292 Chandler Rd Auburn, KY 42206  
   Phone: 270-542-8295

2. If you are a student, provide the following information
   Faculty Sponsor: Lois Jiricano  
   Department: EDAD  
   Phone: 270-745-4980  
   Faculty Mailing Address: 424-C Tate Page Hall  
   Student Permanent Address (where you can be reached 12 months from now):  
   Same location

   Is this your thesis or dissertation research?  Yes  No  X

3. Title of project  Long-Term Effects of a Preschool Program

4. Project Period  Start:  upon HSRB approval  
   End: 5-1-04  
   month, day, year  
   Note: Your project period may not start until after the HSRB has given final approval.

5. Has this project previously been considered by the HSRB?  Yes  No  X

   If yes, give approximate date of review

---

[Footer: Please use a WORD PROCESSOR]
6. Do you or any other person responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of this research have an economic interest in, or act as an officer or a director of, any outside entity whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by the research? (Yes ________  No ________ X______

If "yes," please include a statement below that may be considered by the Institutional Conflict of Interest Committee:

7. Is a proposal for external support being submitted? (Yes ________  No ________ X______

If yes, you must submit one complete copy of that proposal as soon as it is available and complete the following:

   a. Is notification of Human Subject approval required? (Yes ________  No ________

   b. Is this a renewal application? (Yes ________  No ________

   c. Sponsor's Name

   d. Project Period: From ________ To ________

8. You must include copies of all pertinent information such as, a copy of the questionnaire you will be using or other survey instruments, informed consent documents, letters of approval from cooperating institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals or other medical facilities and/or clinics, human services agencies, individuals such as physicians or other specialists in different fields, etc.), copy of external support proposals, etc.

9. Does this project SOLELY involve analysis of an existing database? (Yes ________  No ________ X______

If yes, please provide the complete URLs for all databases that are relevant to this application, then complete the signature portion of the application and forward the application to Sponsored Programs.

If the database is not available in an electronic format readily available on the internet, please provide evidence that the data were collected using procedures that were reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board, then complete the signature portion of the application and forward the application to Sponsored Programs.
In the space below, please provide complete answers to the following questions. Add additional space between items as needed.

I. PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT

A. Provide a brief summary of the proposed research. Include major hypotheses and research design.

In 1990 Kentucky schools were mandated to begin a public preschool program for qualifying 3 and 4 year old children. The Kentucky Preschool Program serves 4 year old children who qualify for the free lunch program and 3 and 4 year old children with disabilities. In Logan County Schools, these first qualifying preschool attendees are now seniors in high school. My research project is to track the education of these seniors and compare them to seniors who did not attend preschool. I hypothesize that the seniors who attended preschool will have lower occurrences of retention, suspension, dropout and special education than seniors who did not attend preschool.

B. Describe the source(s) of subjects and the selection criteria. Specifically, how will you obtain potential subjects, and how will you contact them?

In this project, I will examine the school records of each senior in Logan County Schools to find the information on the four areas addressed in this project. No seniors will be directly contacted for any information.

C. Informed consent. Describe the consent process and attach all consent documents.

A consent form will be mailed to the parent of each senior with a stamped envelope enclosed for the return of the form. Only forms that are returned with given consent will be used in this project.
D. Procedures: Provide a step-by-step description of each procedure, including the
frequency, duration, and location of each procedure.

Participating seniors will be divided into two groups: attended preschool and did not
attend preschool. School records of the participating seniors will be reviewed and
information regarding retention, suspension, dropout and special education will be obtained.
This overall data will be looked at and compared between the two groups. For this project,
school records will not be removed from the vault area in which they are kept.

E. How will confidentiality of the data be maintained? (Note: Data must be securely kept
for a minimum of three years on campus.)

Students will be divided into two groups: attended preschool and did not attend
preschool. After the data is compiled all individual names, individual data and other
identifying data will be destroyed. In the final project, no names will be used, only the group
name and the overall data gathered.
F. **Describe all known and anticipated risks to the subject including side effects, risks of placebo, risks of normal treatment delay, etc:**

   None

G. **Describe the anticipated benefits to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.**

   I hope to show that seniors have benefited from attending a preschool program. If there is data to support this, I will use the data in future preschool activities to increase the knowledge base of parents, staff, and administrators. I hope that this will cause an increase in preschool enrollment, stronger administrative support and information to create a better preschool program.

   **Additions to or changes in procedures involving human subjects, as well as any problems connected with the use of human subjects once the project has begun, must be brought to the attention of the HSRB as they occur.**
II. SIGNATURES

A. I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information presented herein is an accurate reflection of the proposed research project.

[Signature]

Date

Co-Investigator

Date

B. Approval by faculty sponsor (required for all students).

I affirm the accuracy of this application, and I accept the responsibility for the conduct of this research, the supervision of human subjects, and maintenance of informed consent documentation as required by the HSRB.

[Signature]

Date

Faculty Sponsor

Date

C. Approval by Department Head (required for all applications). If PI is a director or department head, then the PI's immediate superior should sign.

I confirm the accuracy of the information stated in this application. I am familiar with, and approve of the procedures that involve human subjects.

[Signature]

Date

Department Head (or immediate superior)

Date

D. Advising Physician*:

I certify that I am a duly licensed physician in the State of Kentucky and that, acting as advising physician, I accept the procedures prescribed herein.

[Signature]

Date

Physician's Name and Signature

*Physician signature is needed only if the project involves medical procedures and the investigator is not a licensed physician.
Project Title: The Long-Term Effects of a Preschool Program

Investigator: Kerry Holloman, 270-542-8295
(include name, department and phone of contact person)

(This portion is for HSRB use only.)

HSRB Determination:

Exempt from Full Review ( ) Expedited Review ( ) Full HSRB Review ( )

( ) Disapproval

Approval

( ) Above minimal risk ( ) Below minimal risk

a. approval, subject to minor changes

b. approval in general but requiring major alterations, clarifications or assurances

c. restricted approval

Comments:

Human Subjects Review Board Chair

[Signature]

Date: 04-04-04

Human Protections Administrator

Date

If you have questions regarding review procedures or completion of this HSRB application, contact the Office of Sponsored Programs:
Director -- Dr. Phillip E. Myers, Human Protections Administrator, (270) 745-4652
E-mail: philip.myers@wku.edu

Compliance Specialist -- Steva Kaufkins, HSRB Recorder (270) 745-4652
E-mail: steva.kaufkins@wku.edu
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Human Subjects Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs
106 Foundation Building
270-745-4488; Fax 270-745-4211
E-mail: Steva.Kaufkins@wku.edu

In future correspondence please refer to HSO4-095, April 19, 2004

Kerry Holloman
4292 Chanders Road
Auburn, KY 42206

Dear Kerry:

Your research project, "Long-Term Effects of a Preschool Program," was reviewed by the HSRB and it has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects' welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

1. In addition, the IRB found that: (1) signed informed consent will be obtained from all subjects. (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data. (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

   a. Your research therefore meets the criteria of Exempt Review and is Approved.

2. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. If you expect this protocol to be used, please submit a revised protocol. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and your approval, are maintained in the Office of Sponsored Programs at the above address. Please report any changes to this approved protocol to this office. A Continuing Review protocol will be sent to you in the future to determine the status of the project.

Sincerely,

S Eva Kaufkins
Ms. Steva Kaufkins
Compliance Specialist
HSRB Recorder

cc: Human Subjects File HSO4-095
cc: Dr. Luis Juristano
Appendix B

Letters to Logan County Schools Superintendent and Logan County High School Principal
Mr. Kemp,

I am participating in a research methods class at Western Kentucky University and will be engaging in a model study to learn qualitative research. I have chosen to study the long-term effects of a preschool program.

In Logan County Schools, our first preschool attendees are now seniors in high school. I wish to “track” the education of these seniors and compare them to seniors who did not attend a preschool. I will to compare the rates of retention, suspension, dropout and special education between the two groups.

The study will explore if a preschool program lowers the occurrences of the four factors. Consent forms will be sent to parents of seniors. Only cumulative folders of consenting seniors will be examined. Confidentiality of the seniors participating will be strictly maintained.

If you have any questions regarding my request, please contact me for further information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kerry-Louise Holloman

[Signature]

[Approval of Superintendent]

[Date]
Mr. Nylin,

I am participating in a research methods class at Western Kentucky University and will be engaging in a model study to learn qualitative research. I have chosen to study the long-term effects of a preschool program.

In Logan County Schools, our first preschool attendees are now seniors in high school. I wish to “track” the education of these seniors and compare them to seniors who did not attend a preschool. I will compare the rates of retention, suspension, dropout and special education between the two groups.

The study will explore if a preschool program lowers the occurrences of the four factors. Consent forms will be sent to parents of seniors. Only cumulative folders of consenting seniors will be examined. Confidentiality of the seniors participating will be strictly maintained.

If you have any questions regarding my request, please contact me for further information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kerry-Louise Holloman

[Signature]

Approval of LCPS Principal

Date

3/10/2021
Consent Form

Project Title: The Long-Term Effects of a Preschool Program

Investigator: Kerry-Louise Holloman
Special Education Consultant, Logan County Schools
Work Phone: 270-726-2436  Home Phone: 270-542-8295

In 1990 Kentucky schools were mandated to begin a public preschool program for qualifying 3 and 4 year old children. In Logan County Schools, these first qualifying preschool attendees are now seniors in high school. A research study under the direction of Western Kentucky University and Logan County Schools is being conducted to track the education of these seniors and compare them to seniors who did not attend preschool.

Participating senior school records will be divided into two groups: attended preschool and did not attend preschool. Data will be looked at and compared between the two groups. No names will be used in the study, only the group name and the overall data gathered. Confidentiality safeguards will be used to ensure the safety of the individual.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. Neither your senior nor you will be directly contacted about any information.

I expect to show that seniors have benefited from attending a preschool program. If there is data to support this, I will use the data in future preschool activities to increase the knowledge base of parents, staff and administrators. I anticipate that this will cause an increase in preschool enrollment, stronger administrative support, and information to create a better preschool program.

I hope that you will choose to participate in this study. If you choose not to, there will be no penalty or adverse consequences from Western Kentucky University or Logan County Schools.

If you wish to participate, please complete the bottom portion of this form and return it in the enclosed envelope.

My senior attended a preschool program*. Yes  No

Printed Senior's name

____________________________  ____________________
Signature of Parent  Date

____________________________  ____________________
Witness  Date

* Any preschool program-Logan County Schools, Russellville City School, Russellville Christian School (Crittenden Drive), or another district or private preschool.

The dated approval on this consent form indicates that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Western Kentucky University Human Subjects Review Board (270-745-4632).