INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS:
IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
TRAINING FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

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in
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by
Zina L. Bonham
Spring 2014
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to several influential individuals in my life. My husband of 34 years, Steven Bonham has been my anchor throughout my educational journey. His belief in my abilities to begin college and to achieve my dreams of attending a University was instrumental in my success. I thank God for my husband’s constant encouragement and support and for his patience. This journey included many hours of writing and attending classes infringing upon our family and personal time. It has been a blessing to have you in my corner!

In addition I dedicate this work to Dr. Cindy Ratekin. My views of working with children with Special Needs and the Inclusive Classroom were dramatically changed and transformed as a result of things I learned in my undergraduate Child Development classes. Through her classes I was introduced to the idea of including children with special needs. I was new to this practice and despite my numerous years of experience in the field of Early Childhood Education I felt I did not have the necessary skills to be an effective Inclusion teacher. I found my perspectives and bias on inclusion practice were challenged and analyzed through meaningful reflective assignments. I learned the importance of acceptance rather than fearing children with special needs. This was the beginning of my research into effectively preparing teachers to embrace inclusion by advocating for increased professional development in this vital area of early intervention.
and education. Thank you Dr. Ratekin for introducing me to this important field and for your encouragement and direction.

Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to all past, present and future educators who have or will impact this world with loving kindness and guidance to all young children who may be marginalized and their families until inclusion is a reality in our communities.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Michael Kotar for assisting me in developing my original research question and literature review for this thesis. His encouragement, patience and expertise in editing and designing the study were invaluable to me. Thank you for your willingness to chair my committee and providing your extensive time and guidance.

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Dr. Zartman I thank you for teaching me to divide the chapters of this thesis into manageable sections. You introduced me to important research in the area of Adult Developmental and Career Levels and you challenged me to dig deeper in my research to learn about the history of Early Childhood Education. A field I have been very passionate about for three decades. You challenged me to develop and express my own expertise into this project.

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I would like to thank Josie Smith for her expertise in formatting and editing. This allows me to present a final professional presentation for the CSU, Chico digital archive for future researchers in this crucial area of education. I thank you for working with me!
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ABSTRACT

INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS:
IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

by

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Master of Arts in Education
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The study examined how the field of Early Childhood Education has developed over time. How the history, philosophies and theories of the past have driven current best practices. This study identified the progression of special education and how it currently impacts teachers, students and families. Previous research indicates a critical need to increase early childhood inclusive classrooms to meet the current laws and education requirements of providing a free and appropriate public education for children with special needs. A total of 14 participants agreed to participate in the study. Six teachers began the study with five completing the study. Results revealed that early childhood education teachers believe inclusion can have a positive outcome for all children, however, they perceive this work to be moderately high in difficulty. Teacher responses indicate a need for additional coursework and professional development in the
area of inclusion and teaching children with special needs. The study included determining characteristics of a high quality inclusive preschool program and how early childhood teachers view working in inclusive environments, measuring teacher confidence and efficacy. Adult career and professional development models were researched and teachers were surveyed to determine if early childhood educators are likely to pursue training opportunities to enhance their skills or if they considered leaving the field. Lastly, this study identified key components of long term, sustained Adult Professional Development models.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

I currently work as a Head Teacher in a Full Day Head Start Classroom in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood in Northern California. This is my seventh year working in a bilingual, inclusive preschool setting. When I began my teaching career in Early Childhood Education at a Community College near Denver, Colorado in the early 1970s the nation was just beginning to examine the inequality of privileges and rights of disabled children and adults. Inclusion or mainstreaming was not practiced in most schools. Students with disabilities were segregated into their own classrooms. Advocacy groups and parents were beginning to challenge the laws of institutionalization and disenfranchisement of the handicapped population in America. The following summarizes how the laws evolved to inclusion practices for federally funded agencies.

“The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112) included the first piece of civil rights legislation providing the guarantees of rights to persons with disabilities” (Murdick, Garten & Crabtree, 2007, p. 14). Section 504 specifically included a provision that prohibited excluding individuals from participating in any activity or program receiving Federal funding based solely on their disability; “thus extending the rights granted previously to persons of different races and ethnicities to persons with disabilities” (Murdick et al., 2007, p. 14).
The 94th Congress passed Public Law 94-142 titled “Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.” According to the U.S. Commissioner of Education “Congress further spelled out and expanded section 504’s education guarantees for handicapped school age children. In addition it also called all states to start educating handicapped preschool children by September 1, 1978” (Boyer, 1979, p. 299).

My teaching career advanced over the next several decades, as I became a Preschool Director at a private Christian Preschool. When my husband and I moved to northern California I began teaching for a private K-8th school until 2006. I encountered a few children with special needs. Private schools are not mandated to provide special education services, as they are not federally funded. Overall, in my 13 years of teaching at this school I only encountered four students with identified disabilities. The parents provided support and transportation for therapy in each of these cases. Mehfoud (1994) reports that many school districts choose to offer special education services to private school students; however, these services are usually offered in the public school setting (as cited by Yell, 2012, p. 377).

IDEA 2004 includes new provisions to ensure that students in private elementary and secondary schools have access to special education services (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014, pp. 1-3). There are strict requirements that IEP services follow students when moved from a public to private school setting. This current guide for parents states that when parents, private school teachers or administrators requests an evaluation, the local public school district in the area is responsible for testing and evaluating the referred students to determine if they are eligible for special education services. In addition, some services may be provided on the private school site under
FAPE. However, any services, including material and equipment, must be controlled by the public agency (Yell, 2012, p. 377).

In 2006, I returned to Early Childhood Education and accepted a Head Teacher Position at Head Start. I found I was not equipped to teach in an inclusive classroom. The work of teaching in a classroom with the majority having special needs was overwhelming. In addition, over 50 percent were English language learners and several typically developing students had behavioral challenges. I sought out assistance from the School District Inclusion Specialist, my agency’s Education Specialists as well as peers and colleagues. I began to set professional goals for myself to obtain the skills and support I would need to stay in my chosen field. I transferred to California State University to earn my BA in Child Development. I signed up for professional conferences for Dual Language Learners and took several classes to learn more about Special Education.

I noted a specific time in my studies when I began to recognize my own personal bias toward working with children with special needs. Once realized, it was a turning point in my career as I began to change the way I thought about working in an inclusive classroom. I found my teaching philosophies and practices were not congruent with teaching children with special needs in an inclusive environment. Through further research and study I found that by embracing all the students and challenges I have improved the climate for everyone in our inclusive classroom and created an environment where all children had the right to learn and be accepted.
Statement of Problem

This led me to examine several concerns regarding the lack of professional development for Early Childhood Education teachers. Many budding early childhood educators may leave the field when they are faced with multiple challenges and issues they are not prepared to handle. Noble and MacFalane (2005) assert that many Early Childhood teacher-education programs perpetuate highly romanticized images of Early Childhood teaching. This can lead to unrealistic expectations while learning to work in diverse and inclusive communities. Noble et al. further predicted this could lead to negative perceptions of self-efficacy and cause teacher burn out (as cited by Garvis, Fluckiger, & Twigg, 2007).

In addition, many families with children that have special needs find there are many barriers and lack of acceptance for their child to be fully included in preschool environments. As the United States becomes increasingly diverse there is a “growing need for educators to become responsive to individual needs and cultures of the students and families they serve” (Vakil, Welton, O’Connor & Kline, 2009, p. 323). This begins by teachers reflecting on their own set of beliefs, culture and biases. Teachers then begin to learn about perspectives of families and students within their classrooms. Once individual differences and similarities are examined a teacher can establish a democratic classroom within the school and the community.

The traditional education system separated children with special needs from typically developing students until the rights of the disabled were addressed in the late 1970s. Teacher education for K-12 grade classrooms began to require coursework in the area of working with children with special needs in their multiple and single subject
credential programs in response to IDEA and IDEIA laws. However, early childhood educators lacking appropriate education and training are at a distinct disadvantage. The cultural shift in the minds of teachers and parents who were educated in the traditional educational systems will need to take place in order for inclusion practices in the preschool years to be fully accepted. “The number of preschool-aged children with disabilities who spend part of their day in an inclusive school or child care has grown tremendously in the past ten years” (Lytle & Bordin, 2005, p. 79). Yet the training and coursework has not been commensurate with the demand.

In 2013, we have seen a marked increase in children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder attending day care and preschool. Data collection funded by the Center for Disease Control estimated a 78% increase in the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders in the United States between 2002-2008 (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2012). Research continues to examine the causes for this increase. Environmental, biological and increase in diagnostic improvements are all being considered. The Center for Disease Control revealed a 30 percent increase or 1 in 68 children are currently being diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (CDC, 2013). Early intervention is key to provide better outcomes for these children.

Child Development and Early Childhood programs in community colleges and Universities are beginning to expand the requirements and coursework in Special Education in order to effectively equip teachers in this area. These courses should include strategies and research based interventions that are known as best practices. My research revealed the Early Childhood Education field is establishing best practice standards for
inclusive early childhood environments. These best practices have changed in order to be more accommodating to diverse learners.

Professional organizations in the field are beginning the dialogue and process of advocating for quality professional training and practice. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized and passed in 1997 and revised again in 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act, 2004). Finally three decades from the 1978 mandate, the Division for Early Childhood of the Council of Exceptional Children drafted a Joint Position Statement titled “Early Childhood Inclusion” for Exceptional Children (DEC) with the National Association for the Education of Young Children to adopt developmentally appropriate and best practice standards for inclusion in early childhood education settings (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] and Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children [DEC], 2009).

In 2011, the California Department of Education (CDE) and First 5 of California collaboratively developed an extensive California Early Childhood Educator Competencies Standard and Guide (California Department of Education and First 5 California, 2011). This comprehensive approach for professional development will bring the areas of dual language learners and children with special needs to the forefront. The California Department of Education (2011) and First 5 have created an interactive on-line training module designed to “provide education and professional development for individuals who are interested in early care and education or who already work in the profession” for each of the twelve Early Childhood Educator Competencies. This will be a great resource for ongoing professional development as early childhood educators seek
ways to improve their knowledge, skills and dispositions. This extensive document can be accessed with the following link: [http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp)

**Purpose of the Study**

1) The purpose of this study was to critically investigate how the field of Early Childhood Education has developed over time. How the history, philosophies and theories of the past drive current best practices.

2) Determine characteristics of a high quality inclusive preschool program.

3) Examine how current early childhood teachers view working in inclusive environments, measuring teacher confidence and efficacy.

4) Determine if Early Childhood Educators are likely to pursue training opportunities to enhance their skills or will they decide to leave the field.

5) Identify the key components of long term, sustained Adult Professional Development models.

The overall purpose was to measure if attitudes and teacher efficacy in the area of inclusive classroom practice changed in preschool teachers who participated in the self selected online training modules and were presented with the history and current best practice strategies. To conduct the project I recruited participants currently working or volunteering in inclusive classrooms in California. Participants completed a prestudy survey responding to questions about how they currently feel about working in inclusive classrooms, their efficacy and confidence and information about their current professional development and training levels.
For the intervention participants were be asked to obtain online training from two different sources: The Iris Center by Vanderbilt Peabody College at http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator/ and the Online Autism Modules a project of Education Service Center of Central Ohio and Ashland University at http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/. The time commitment for the online portion was four hours. Participants also viewed two slide presentations created by the researcher that summarized the literature review and outline specific researched based strategies to improve classroom practice, climate and management. The researcher provided samples of materials currently utilized in her classroom that are easy to make. Participants completed a post intervention survey that included a personal reflection.

Significance

This study was designed due to accomplish three important things:

1) Provide self-selected resources for sustained on the job training and professional development for teachers based on their stages of development and perceived needs.

2) Advocate for increased college and university coursework and internships

3) Advocacy for increasing high quality Inclusive classrooms by providing resources and education for ECE Teachers, Parents, Administrators and Policy Makers

The potential findings of this study may indicate a need for accessible self-selected professional development for preschool teachers learning to serve students with special needs in their programs that are at various adult developmental levels in their careers. Self-reflection activities incorporated within these training opportunities may
begin to challenge their current misconceptions about inclusion and perhaps begin the internal dialogue that will help educators identify their own bias towards inclusion.

The findings in this study may impact future Child Development teacher preparation programs in the areas of special education and inclusive practice at universities and community colleges to include additional coursework and requirements for the benefit of new teachers and the children they will serve.

Lastly the need for increasing high quality inclusive early childhood classrooms in the state of California and nationwide are well noted in the research in order to comply with the intended educational laws of FAPE and IDEA. Providing accessible resources and education to achieve this goal is vitally important.

Limitations

This study was limited in its time requirements for participants. There was not an expectation that participants would implement the information teachers gleaned in the training modules into their practice this school year. (The research-based modules verified that the strategies have worked in other inclusive classrooms.) Participating teachers were asked to implement strategies in the coming months and report their status a year from now so results could be added for publication at a later date.

Definitions of Terms

- **CDC** – Center for Disease Control
- **CDE** – California Department of Education
- **Children with Special Needs** or **Children with Exceptionalities** will be used in place of Children with Disabilities, Disabled Children or Handicapped Children
- **DAP** – Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Education or Best Practices
- **DEC** – Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
- **DRDP** - Desired Results Developmental Profile
- **FAPE** – Children ages 3-21 are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education

**IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997)
- **IDEIA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (2004)
- **IEP** – Individual Education Plan
- **Inclusion** refers to including children with disabilities in a classroom with typically developing peers.

- **LRI** – Least Restrictive Environment
- **NAEYC** – National Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Research Based Interventions** – Interventions from Peer Reviewed Studies
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This Literature review attempts to examine five areas that impact the Early Childhood Education field. Those areas are:

1. Early Education, the history, theories and philosophies that have established the foundations of current practice.
2. The inclusive classroom movement and identified best practice standards of the inclusive classroom.
3. Teacher preparation and teacher efficacy in the area of inclusion.
4. The benefits and characteristics of high quality inclusive classrooms.
5. Key components in the design of high quality professional training by utilizing adult development models including technology to meet the needs of educators in the field.

Early Childhood Education: History, Theories and Practice

Early childhood education has a global history; rich with the wisdom of noted philosophers, educators, doctors and theorist who strongly influenced the foundation of teaching young children. Authors Gordon and Brown (2011) reveal three prominent figures in the field of Early Education theory and practice from the 17th through the 19th century.
Beginning in the 17th century, Czech educator and author, John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), believed children should learn “at their own pace” (Gordon, 2011). Comenius proposed that a teacher’s role should be to follow the child’s inner inclinations and interest. Gordon et al. reveal that Comenius asserted another basic tenet of early childhood: “Children learn by doing” (Gordon & Brown, 2011, p. 10).

An English Philosopher, John Locke (1632-1714) is included in the foundation of modern educational philosophy. According to Gordon et al. Locke developed the concept of children being a “clean slate” at birth. Their experiences with parents, society, education and the world are written on this slate. This challenged the religious premise of the time that children were born with an original sin nature. He viewed children as neutral rather than evil. He advocated for teaching children the basic education for this time in history: to develop children into reasoning creatures. Locke espoused these views on instruction: “Instruction should be playful, pleasant and include drills. He believed children should have a working knowledge of the Bible and a counting ability to sufficiently conduct business” (Gordon & Brown, 2011, p. 11). Some of Locke’s educational philosophies are also deeply embedded in the writings of 18th century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

Gordon and Brown (2011) concurs that Rousseau began to assert similar revolutionary ideas into education. He believed that children were naturally good and not inherently evil. Five important ideas emerged from Rousseau’s concerns for children and his beliefs about educating the young learner: (1) children view the external world differently than adults, (2) there are distinct phases of development of a child’s mind, (3) children must learn from firsthand experience, and (4) children should use concrete
materials. Lastly, (5) Rousseau asserted that teachers must provide a less restrained atmosphere and be flexible enough to meet the needs of the child (Gordon and Brown 2011, p. 11). This premise is similar to Jean Piaget’s theories introduced centuries later. Rousseau believed children should learn abstract and symbolic learning in the later years. Rousseau was an influential forerunner for notable educators such as Friedrich Froebel (German kindergarten pioneer) and Italy’s renowned doctor and educator, Maria Montessori.

In 19th century history, the founder of the first German Kindergarten Friedrich Froebel created a “Child Garden” which was his translation for a new type of educational institution. Friedrich Froebel described his utopian vision for his new school at a public address to parents and teachers in 1840: “As a garden, under God’s favor, and by the care of a skilled and intelligent gardener” (Beatty, 1995, p. 41). Froebel’s Kindergarten class combined play and handwork activities. This approach promoted a means to foster social harmony and had ideals to prevent class conflicts. Froebel asserted that children would learn concepts of unity through play. He believed mothers should be “taught to cultivate, foster, protect and guard children’s play as it was the budding leaves that would influence all later life” (Beatty, 1995, p. 41). This is foundational for social emotional learning theories introduced by Bandura and Vygotsky in the next century.

According to author E. M. Standing (1998) Froebel writes a poignant memory in his book titled The Education of Man, “a three-year-old child standing in a garden of lilies inspired him. The lad was smiling at Froebel as he was returning home after serving on the front lines in the Napoleonic war. His desire was born at that very moment to teach young children unity and social harmony” (Standing, 1998, p. 322). This is a very
inspiring story from one of the key founders of the modern day field of Early Childhood Education.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) overcame many obstacles in the pursuit of her chosen profession as a medical doctor in 19th century Italy. A woman physician was not widely accepted in her culture. According to Standing (1998), “Dr. Montessori was appointed Assistant Doctor at the Psychiatric Clinic in the University of Rome” (p. 28). She was introduced to the children with special needs, (who were) called “idiots’ housed together in asylums for the insane and there she began her extensive research in this field. Montessori learned about two French Doctors (pioneers in the field of Special Education) Jean Itard and Edourd Sequin. She found they devoted their life to the education of “defective” children (Standing, 1998).

Maria Montessori rose to fame within two years of establishing new schools for these children with special needs. Montessori began developing her own teaching pedagogy based on the foundational work of Jean Itard and Edourd Sequin. Many of the deficient children in her charge learned to read and write and were able eventually, after learning under her methods, to test successfully alongside typically developing children. Maria Montessori would go on to open schools for typically developing children with astounding results. She would become an international speaker while setting up training courses around the world to teach these groundbreaking methods for early education. Montessori schools and methods are worldwide.

Many theorists and educators enriched our understanding of how to best meet the needs of children as they develop and grow in the 20th century. One of the most influential theorists in the area of cognitive development was Swiss psychologist Jean
Piaget (1896-1980). His studies in child development spanned seven decades (Cook & Cook, 2005). Piaget’s original work was published in French and English in the 1920s. He theorized that children learned through specific stages of development. These theories were widely accepted for decades. Many challenge his theories today. However, in an article by Stephen and Brown (2004) “Piaget’s cognitive theories continue to strongly influence practitioners as they view their role as providers and facilitators” (as cited by Stephen, 2012, p. 230).

His strong biology background influenced Jean Piaget’s ideas as he developed his new constructivism theory on child development. Piaget asserted that people interpret their experiences and environments by developing a scheme in order to organize their thoughts and make adaptation to their thought processes. In the field of biology adaptation refers to the ability to make modifications in order to survive. Piaget applied this to cognitive development. “When this cognitive organizational process causes disequilibrium, the next step is assimilation. The process of modifying old schemes is accommodation. Cognitive equilibrium results as cognitive areas of the brain align new information to already existing schemes” (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 174).

Several decades later, the works of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky were published. He proposed a socio-cultural theory of cognitive development (Cook & Cook, 2005) that is very prominent in the postmodern philosophy of early childhood education. Vygotsky theorized that learning is a social process, with adults assisting children to acquire the cultural and linguistic tools of their society. This changes the role of teacher to supporting in joint endeavors with the child and scaffolding children’s activities until they can proceed alone (Stephen, 2012 p. 231). This is known as the Zone of Proximal
Development. Vygotsky defined ZPD as “the distance between a child’s actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the child’s level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 195).

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was born in Russia to Jewish parents. He received his early education from a private tutor who provided opportunities to learn in the Socratic Dialogue method. In this method, tutors asked questions and helped students reason plausible answers rather than giving facts and information to memorize. Although he was a contemporary of Piaget, Vygotsky’s theories and writings were not published until several decades after his death due to Soviet political restrictions on his literary works that cited foreign scientists and scholars and on cold war restrictions. After the death of Joseph Stalin his research and writings emerged (Cook & Cook, 2005 p. 193).

Russian American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005) also embraced the cultural and social components into human development in his Ecosystems Theory of Human Development. Bronfenbrenner was a co-founder of the Head Start program a response to the “war on poverty” initiated by President Lyndon Johnson. In 1964 Bronfenbrenner testified at a congressional hearing urging that the target be broadened the target to poverty’s most vulnerable victims, children.” He would be one of three American Developmental Psychologists credited with the beginning of Head Start in 1965 (Woo, 2005).

Piaget’s theories on cognitive development primarily focused on how children think “whereas Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory focused on how children interact with other people and their environments” (Cook & Cook, 2005). The Ecological
Systems theory expanded and evolved over the span of Bronfenbrenner’s career as new research theories and discoveries emerged in the field of Human Development. “An emeritus professor of psychology and human development at Cornell University, Bronfenbrenner argued that individuals develop not in isolation but within a system of relationships to family, school, community and society” (Woo, 2005).

The Ecological Systems theory is an interacting group of social layers that impact child and human development. The “Microsystem” includes relationships of family, teachers and friends. The second layer is the “Mesosystem” is the interactions between home and community such as schools, day cares, and neighborhoods. The third layer is “Exosystem” which comprises extended family, friendship networks, social service programs and work place policies that impact families. The fourth layer in this theory is the widest as it encompasses the values, culture and laws of a particular place.

One example of the “Macrosystem” is that some cultures value certain perspectives and such as westerner’s value individualism versus eastern encourage collective cultures. This strongly influences individuals. In addition, children may have opportunities for resources in some nations more so than others. Later in Bronfenbrenner’s career he added a final layer titled the “Chronosystem” to represent the multiple positive and negative forces that can impact children’s development over time. Many of these systems interrelate and change throughout child development.

Bronfenbrenner theorized that each of these systems is bidirectional because every child possesses their own unique reactions, characteristics and temperaments (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 17).
Woo, a writer for the Los Angeles Times writing about Urie Bronfenbrenner after his death, related a story that strongly influenced the development of this noted theorist and his life work. Bronfenbrenner’s father worked at the New York State Mental Institution. Dozens of typical children were admitted to this institution by mistake. However, despite the efforts of his father, a neuropathologist at the Institution, the children’s test scores plummeted after just two weeks in the Institution. They would be classified as mentally deficient and this tragically “meant remaining in the institution for the rest of their lives” (Woo, 2005).

This author noticed a prevalent theme in the literature concerning the foundations of Early Childhood Education. Many educators, psychologist, theorist and doctors began by examining the most vulnerable and marginalized citizens as a starting place, children. Many began their work with children that were not typically developing or were at risk.

Doctor Maria Montessori, when charged with helping children labeled as idiots, researched the work of French Psychiatrist Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard. In 1801, he reported his efforts to educate Victor, a “wild boy” who was severely retarded and abandoned in the forest by his family in France. He employed vigorous habit training and a system of activities consistently for five years, which provided intensive sensory input for this untrained youth. “This mentally retarded wild boy responded very favorably. Victor learned to walk upright rather than on all fours. He learned to feed, dress and toilet himself independently and acquired the use of language” (Mason, Menolascino, Gavin & Rev, 1976, p. 128).
In the mid 19th century, Dr. Samuel Howe of Massachusetts established the first school to educate persons with Mental Retardation. It began as humanitarian family plans to care for a small number of individuals (Murdick et al., 2007). Yet by “the turn of the 20th century these institutions changed from educating people so they could return to the community to institutions that controlled people and protected the communities from individuals with deficiencies from being in the general populations” (Murdick et al., 2007, p. 3). Individuals with disabilities were excluded from public education and public life and the role of State institutions drastically changed from education to long-term custodial care. Disabled citizens were disenfranchised from society.

In 1950, a citizen advocacy group created the National Association for Retarded Citizens (NARC). This association was comprised of “parents of the retarded, professionals in mental retardation and concerned citizens” (Mason et al., 1976, p. 126). NARC would begin actively bringing litigation to safeguard the rights of mentally retarded children and adults. These efforts began to shed light on the need for changes nationwide for the next several decades. And, it would take decades to de-institutionalize the care of the disabled.

This movement began and continued into the 1960s. Parents of the Mentally Retarded and professionals in the field exposed the abuses in the state institutions. Overcrowding, inadequate funding, and quality of care were substandard. In 1962 President John F. Kennedy established a Panel on Mental Retardation (Murdick et al., 2007, p. 4). This panel was charged with investigating the conditions of state institutions. The alarming results spearheaded the movement to change practices. President Kennedy addressed Congress with these words after reviewing the results:
We as a nation have long neglected the mentally ill and the mentally retarded. This neglect must end, if our nation is to live up to its own standards of compassion and dignity and achieve the maximum manpower. The tradition of neglect must be replaced by forceful and far reaching programs carried out at all levels of government, by private individuals and by state and local agencies in every part of the Union. (as cited by Murdick et al., 2007, p. 10)

The Presidential Panel on the mentally retarded would outline three important changes nationwide in the care of the mentally retarded, “Alternate methods of care, research guidelines, and new training programs for the enlarging the professional workers on behalf of the mentally retarded” (Mason et al., 1976, p. 126).

A parent advocacy group would emerge in Nebraska in 1969. It would establish a Governor Citizen’s Committee on Mental Retardation. “The parent inspired report resulted in a statewide system of community based services” (Mason et al., 1976, p. 146). This movement resulted in the creation of the Eastern Nebraska Office of Mental Retardation (ENCOR). This community-based program is known for being “highly effective in providing mentally retarded citizens with necessary services within the mainstream of society where they live” (Mason et al., 1976, p. 146). In 1973, the National Association for Retarded Citizens reported that the new shift in the care for the mentally retarded:

Mental retardation professions soon realized the application of normalization principles demanded less restrictive integrated settings which could never be achieved within the confines of massive residential institutions. (Mason et al., 1976 p. 146)

This new ideology for the field actually revisited the work of early researchers. Combining normalization and a developmental model this creates the foundation for the innovative changes for the disabled population by proposing inclusion and mainstreaming practices.
In 1973, the group known as People First International was founded (Murdick et al., 2007) to promote true inclusion practices rather than normalization of individuals with disabilities. This group advocated for persons with disabilities to be welcomed into the fabric of society, as a minority community not just to improve residential standards. This “sense of belonging to a community” is an essential component to meeting the needs of members of a society (Murdick et al., 2007). The President’s panel results combined with parent advocacy and professional groups would become the foundation for the first two legal cases called the “Right to Treatment” cases that would establish standards and legal principles of providing the “least restrictive environment” for the disabled (Murdick et al., 2007, p. 6). Early intervention strategies and Public Laws to protect the rights of people with disabilities soon followed. Yet it would take several decades to see the social acceptance of these groundbreaking laws.

Innovative Educational Change: Inclusion in Early Education Classrooms

According to Recchia and Puig (2011), Public Law 94-142 in 1975 entitled children with disabilities a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (p. 85). Advocates and stakeholders such as parents and educators in the 1990’s were instrumental in advocating for innovative changes by further amending and introducing inclusion known as mainstreaming into education practice known as mainstreaming. As cited by to Purcell, Horn and Palmer (2007) a notable researcher, Fallon asserted that innovative changes in education require three distinct phases of change: initiation, implementation and finally institutionalization.
Purcell et al. (2007) asserted that inclusion involves giving young children opportunities to explore social skills and experience a sense of belonging, of being valued and having choices. In addition, they outline the three key points for success. First, it must begin with a shared vision. This requires changing the way parents, teachers, normally developing students and students with exceptional needs view the classroom environment. Secondly, key personnel must be utilized to ensure that strong collaborative relationships are sustained with school districts, education coordinators and parents. Thirdly, schools must recognize the need to provide strong training programs for staff. This includes teachers and staff developing appropriate structure within a program so inclusion can work and be beneficial (Purcell et al. 2007, p. 94).

A participant in a study conducted by Recchia and Puig (2011) reported that children benefit is when classrooms follow a predictable “rigid schedule.” In many preschools, the schedule is extremely flexible and often responds to the needs and mood of the students. However, this design simply doesn’t work in the special needs setting. Children with disabilities rely heavily on consistency and routines. Therefore transitions can be difficult and can create extreme resistance in children who require more structure.

Teacher Student Ratios

A qualitative study conducted by Jane Leatherman, investigated early childhood education inclusion teachers, their perceptions about their classrooms and factors that influenced success. Teachers were chosen based on their own self-proclaimed positive view regarding inclusive classroom environments (Leatherman, 2007, p. 595).
Most respondents in the study followed the researcher’s social constructivist framework based on Vygotsky that states individuals construct their world as a result of social experience. This shapes their evolving reality and mindset. Therefore teachers that were experienced in inclusive classrooms expressed the positive benefits of all students and teachers working and learning in a diverse classroom. However, they expressed in their observations an ongoing lack of adequate training for early childhood education teachers working with children who have special needs (Leatherman, 2007).

In this study, Leatherman noted that teachers in early childhood inclusive programs strongly indicated that an adequate number of staff was essential to a successful inclusive classroom. The complexities and support systems needed to meet the needs with children that have individualized education plans include therapy sessions, behavior charting, positive behavior support plans, and creating or purchasing adapted materials. Inclusion teachers participate in student study team and IEP meetings along with parents and the local school district IEP team. Adequate staff must be in place for teachers to have the additional time available to participate in crucial aspects of working with a child with IEP.

Teachers in previous research by Leatherman revealed a concern that too many children with special needs were in each teacher’s classroom (Wolery et al., 1994). This not only puts a tremendous workload on the teacher with additional IEP responsibilities, but also negatively impacts the positive benefits of typically developing peers could have on a child with special needs. Social theorist Albert Bandura theorized that children learn through social referencing and observational learning.
“Children will mimic behaviors and language they see and hear through modeling and operant conditioning” (Cook & Cook, 2005 p. 410).

Inclusion Modalities Support Other Learners

Hollingswork, Boone and Crais (2009) cited previous research that supported the idea that methods used for children with special needs benefit other learners. The use of social scripts is based on evidence that such scripts have been found to increase the social participation of preschool-age children with disabilities with their typically developing peers (Goldstein & Cisar, 1992; Goldstein, Wickstrom, Hoyson, Jameison, & Odom, 1988; McConnell, 2002, as cited by Hollingswork et al.). Most children with speech and language delays, children diagnosed with Autism and English Language learners all need support in the area of communication and social competencies. Providing picture schedules, social stories and modeling social language for one group is easily used with the others.

Researchers conducted two studies to compare the quality of care between non-inclusive and inclusive preschool classrooms. A surprising result emerged. The first study data was collected from 1,313 classrooms in North Carolina. It noted significantly “higher overall global quality in the inclusive classrooms” (Hestenes, Cassidy, Shim, & Hedge, 2008, p. 524).

In the second study, data were collected from a smaller sample. This group scored higher in levels of child and teacher interactions. Other differences noted were student teacher ratios and teacher’s level of education. The findings suggest that when children with mild to moderate disabilities are included into a general classroom; the
global quality improves and so do the adult child interactions. High quality programs also had more experienced teachers with higher education levels. Hestenes et al. (2008) asserted that these findings indicate policy initiatives are need to increase special education coursework and advocate for appropriate ratio levels of teacher/students ratios when children with special needs are being served in order to develop quality programs and maintaining positive child and teacher interactions (Hestenes et al., 2008).

A Professional Joint Position Statement

In 2009, the recommendations by the National Association of the Education of Young Children and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children addressed the need for consistent national standards in the fields of Early Intervention and Preschool Inclusion. These professional recommendations provide six key recommendations in order to create a national standard for early childhood inclusion practices. Reaching a consensus on the meaning of a high quality early childhood inclusion model is a starting place.

1) Creating high expectations for all students in the inclusive environment. This includes utilizing the skill sets of typically developing peers for modeling and interacting with children that have special needs.

2) Developing a program and school culture that values inclusion. Schools need to have it in their handbooks and mission statements.

3) Establish a system of services and support. The ideal inclusive classroom is to use the natural proportion of these students as are present in the population as a standard for Special Needs /Typically Developing children in the classroom. Incentives should be
in place for inclusive classrooms such as additional support adjustments to teacher-child ratios along with childcare subsidies that provide collaboration with school districts.¹

4) Revising national professional standards in early childhood education.

Existing programs are primarily aimed at the general population. This is not sufficient to address the complexities and individual needs of diverse groups found in the inclusive classroom.

5) Integrating a professional development system that brings in the multifaceted stakeholders: parents, teachers, higher education, Head Start, early intervention programs, health care, preschools and public pre-kindergarten programs.

6) Advocating for high quality inclusion through data that not only includes the number of children enrolled in inclusive programs but also the data that reports the standards and quality in those environments and child outcomes.

Lack of Adequate Inclusion Teacher Preparation

Chang, Early, and Winton (2005) researched the Special Education coursework requirement in 2 and 4-year higher education institutions. A random survey of Early Childhood Educators working in accredited preschools found 60% had at least one child with a disability in their classroom. This was a 32% increase from the previous decade. The findings revealed that colleges and universities that had a stated mission to prepare teachers with training in special education were more likely to require at least one course in Special Education (Chang et al., 2005).

¹ In my research I found some possible causes for higher ratios of children with special needs in inclusive preschool classrooms. According to the CDC (2013), one in six children in the population is diagnosed with one or more special needs, which would make best practice standards at 16%. However, the national average for children with IEP’s is 11-12%. This is due in part to the legal phrase “adversely affect educational performance” written in the IDEIA law. Many children with special needs are not diagnosed in the preschool years that have learning disabilities, which emerge in the lower elementary grades.
Students who graduated with an AA or BA from institutions that did not include a mission statement on meeting the needs of children with disabilities in their missions were not required to take coursework or field experience classes in order to qualify for a Center Director or Teacher position (Chang et al., 2005). On the job training was not sufficient to prepare these new teachers for an inclusive classroom.

Problems with teacher education programs have also been noted in previous research. The study conducted by Silverman, Hong, and Trepanier-Street (2010) indicated that early childhood education teachers in general support the idea of inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom. But many teachers reported they lack skills in adapting curriculum and the ability to scaffold the social skills of children with disabilities while providing a quality education program for their normally developing peers. Silverman et al. cited multiple studies regarding the perceptions and attitudes of early childhood educators in inclusive classrooms. As cited by Silverman et al. (2010), Hadadian and Hargrove (2001) reported results from a study that included 202 early education teachers. Once again, teachers responded positively regarding the benefits of inclusion; yet they also noted they lacked support and training in order to provide appropriate curriculum and strategies to support children with special needs.

According to Judge, Floyd and Jeffs, (2008) assistive technology is expanding. Most teachers are not sufficiently trained in the use of these devices and methods to support children with special needs. Assistive Technology increased the overall effectiveness of intrapersonal and interpersonal relations with peers and teachers. In addition, many of these technologies are beneficial for dual language learners.
Inclusive Teacher Training Programs

The purpose of the 2011 study conducted by Recchia et al. was to analyze the journals of student teachers who acquired training in a self-contained exclusive special needs classroom as part of their educational training to prepare them for inclusive environments. The benefits of this preparation model for early education teachers included four critical components.

The self-contained classes consisted of children with moderate to severe disabilities which allowed the student teachers to observe and learn methods to address various learning needs. Secondly, student teachers were given clear access to the multidisciplinary team and support staff to learn the art of collaboration. Thirdly, student teachers learned about differentiated learning and the inner workings of utilizing an IEP (Independent Learning Plan) as well as assessment tools and terminology in the field of special education. Lastly, students had the opportunity to observe behavioral strategies and curricular adaptations used by special education teachers working directly with the children in the self-contained special needs environment.

The results of this study indicated the self-contained classroom provided teachers with opportunities to broaden their knowledge base, which will allow them to meet the needs of diverse students in inclusive environments (Recchia et al, 2011). One of the difficulties student teachers noted: the use of more direct instruction and behavioral control used by special education teachers. This is vastly different than the child centered philosophies used in most early childhood education classrooms. Providing university mentor teachers who understand the complexities and challenges of special education classrooms was found to be crucial for assisting student teachers in reflecting on their
own development as teachers. Reflection led them to believe they are capable and skilled in working in an inclusive environment.

Another study examined a trans-disciplinary teacher education model, which partnered early childhood education teacher students from the University of Michigan-Dearborn and Oakwood Healthcare, a child disability health care program center for families with children diagnosed with special needs. This model required university coursework, and a student created inclusion experience coupled with a reflection piece written over the course of the semester (Silverman et al., 2010).

In this collaborative effort between an Early Childhood Program and a Child Disability Health Care Program, three important themes were designed to prepare students with a broader range of experiences and skills to effectively navigate future responsibilities in the inclusive classroom. The first theme was titled: “Promotion of Positive Image of Inclusion Practice” (Silverman et al., 2010, p. 465). By providing student teachers an opportunity to observe an inclusive classroom they see firsthand the benefits to all students. They begin to learn the modifications and methods teachers employ to individualize and support children with special needs. They observed the teachers’ being flexible while utilizing multiple strategies to scaffold children’s learning.

The second theme was: “A Family Centered Approach” (Silverman et al., 2010, pp. 465-466). Students attended a family event and had the opportunity to observe the “give and take” support provided by parents during the event. This established the essential collaboration with a child’s first teacher, the parent. The third theme centered on “Collaboration and Relationship Building” (Silverman et al., 2010, p. 466). Students were co-mentored throughout the course in the areas of collaboration, communication.
cooperation and coordination among team members: Special Education Teachers, Therapist, Nurses and Coordinators.

This coursework resulted in student teachers reporting positive attitudes and the overall acceptance of an inclusive environment. By incorporating the collaboration with families and special needs educators; teachers were learning extensive relevant skills to prepare them for a transdisciplinary approach. Findings by Campbell (2003), Shippen (2005) and Pretti-Frontczak (2002) (as cited in Silverman et al., 2010) confirmed that combining course work with field experience positively impacted teacher attitudes regarding acceptance and improved their dispositions towards inclusion practice.

Swim and Isik-Ercan (2013) asserted that dispositions develop over time as teachers analyze their knowledge and experiences. Placing the dispositional development as a central focus encouraged “ongoing inquiry into the beliefs, assumptions, knowledge and daily practices of the early childhood practitioners” (Swim & Isik-Ercan, 2013). A culture of inquiry and peer and collaborative discourse supports an environment of change and growth as new knowledge is applied in intentional ways within the school culture.

Adult Developmental Theories

In planning and designing high quality ongoing professional training, leaders in the field must look into the emerging research on adult learning theories and teaching career stages. Burgess, (1995) described teaching as “a complex activity, inextricably interrelated with students, the school culture and societal demands” (p. 19).
Understanding the adult learner and the adult stages of development is essential in order to meet the learning needs of teachers. Dr. Lilian Katz and Dr. Karen Vander Ven, Early Childhood Education Professors proposed two different teacher developmental stages (Rodd, 1998, p. 22).

In Katz’s 1995, theory the first stage is Survival. The new teacher learns to juggle all the responsibilities and just getting through the end of the day. The second stage is the Consolidation period where the teacher builds on the experience gained in the first stage. The third stage is Renewal. In this stage, the practitioner is very familiar and competent with direct work with children. This is the beginning of the practitioner looking for new challenges and ways to expand their expertise. The fourth stage is Maturity. This stage is attained when the activities and interests of the practitioner are directed toward meaningful search for professional insight, perspective and realism (as cited by Rodd, 1998, p. 22).

Dr. Karen Vander Ven (1988) proposed five stages of personal and professional development in early childhood careers. The first stage is Novice and it identifies early childhood practitioners who primarily function in direct care of children. The second stage is Initial and is comprised of practitioners in direct care and education roles under close supervision of a senior staff member. The third stage is titled Informed Practitioners. These are practitioners who have completed formal training and have made a strong commitment to the Early Childhood Education field. The fourth stage is Complex and this stage the Early Childhood Professional has the option of following a career path, which focuses on expert direct practice or leadership functions. The final stage is Influential and this stage is attained as a result of long experience in a range of
roles and functions. At this stage the practitioner holds high-level professional leadership roles (as cited by Rodd, 1998, pp. 22-23).

According to Rodd (1998), Vander Ven revised her stages in 1991 and these three stages identify three distinct types of Early Childhood Practitioners. The first stage encompasses professionally immature, young and inexperienced individuals who are involved in Direct Care or Novice roles.

The second stage is considered Direct Care: Advanced describing individuals who are capable of logical and rational decisions. The can predict and explain outcomes of their own behavior and are moving from consolidation to renewal when compared to Katz’s Developmental Stages. The third stage is Indirect Care and this role moves the practitioner away with direct services with children and families to professional leadership roles utilizing their expertise for other responsibilities in the field (Rodd, 1998, p. 23).

Components of High Quality Professional Training

Investigating components of high quality professional training I found current training and professional development is far removed for daily practices and needs of educators. The political climate is advocating that early childhood educators provide evidence of their professional competence by measuring student outcomes in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Readiness skills. While training is needed in this area Early Childhood Educators are concerned that teacher quality and professional development will be tied to student outcomes rather than teacher dispositions and daily practices. Early Childhood practitioners are also hesitant to abandon the tenets and
foundations of Developmentally Appropriate Practices as they balance the social expectations and government mandates. “Beyond a safe place, the developmentally appropriate environment will continually invite children’s initiative and (provide opportunity for) active exploration of materials” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006, p. 28).

Professional development can be defined as “a process by which practitioners develop professional dispositions that are inextricable intertwined with their daily practices” (Swim & Isik-Ercan, 2013, p. 173). This type of professional development will require analysis, reflection, and documentation of the practitioner’s work with children and families.

Several early childhood researchers recommended using a dispositional development as a continuous professional development model. In 1993, Katz defined dispositions as “frequent and voluntary ways of thinking and doing” (Swim & Isik-Ercan, 2013, p. 175). Swim and Isik-Ercan (2013) concluded that positive professional dispositions develop over time as teachers analyze their knowledge and experiences. Implementing an individualized model of staff development will empower teachers to have more choice and control in the structure of their professional development. This begins by helping teachers’ gain an understanding of their strengths and dispositions, and their own professional development needs (Bloom, 2005).

A researcher investigating the effects of adult developmental stages on professional development of elementary school teachers asserted, “Staff development should occur as an integrated part of teacher’s daily teaching and learning experiences” (Burgess, 1995, p.153). In her model of Teacher Professional Development Based on
Career Stages, Burgess outlines four distinct stages: “Early, Early Middle, Late Middle and Veteran” (p. 185).

- **Early** - In the first stage of a teacher’s career the concerns and needs focus of these areas: Survival, Pedagogy, Classroom Management, Induction and Adult World.
- **Early Middle** – In this second stage the concerns and needs expand to: Family, Content and Curriculum Expertise, Knowledge Base, Cautious Experimentation
- **Late Middle** – Third Stage concerns and needs include: Family, Expand Role Outside Classroom, Assume Increased Responsibility Share Expertise, Build a School Community
- **Veteran** – Renewed Commitment, Fulfill Personal Needs, Leave a Legacy, Share Expertise

These stages are congruent with early childhood career stages proposed by Katz and Vander Ven (Table 1).

### Table 1

*Career Developmental Stages Teachers Develop Proposed by Katz, Vander Ven and Burgess*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Developmental Levels</th>
<th>L. Katz</th>
<th>K. Vander Ven</th>
<th>D. Burgess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First – Beginning Teacher</td>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second – 2 + Years Experience</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Early Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third – 3-6 Years Experience</td>
<td>Renewal</td>
<td>Informed</td>
<td>Late Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth – Master Teacher 7+ Years Experience</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Veteran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of Investigation

The purpose of this study was to identify changes in preschool teachers who participated in an online professional development intervention. The intervention provided the history of inclusive laws and practices and the benefits of inclusion for all children. One research purpose included examining teacher perceptions of possible need for increased university coursework and high quality ongoing professional development for early childhood educators currently in the field. This study evaluated how early childhood educators viewed teaching in the inclusive setting.

The next component involved participants to independently access and complete 2-3 online training modules by using links provided by the researcher. Online training modules used were Iris Modules and Autism Internet Modules. Participants chose from a variety of topics related to inclusive practices and classroom management topics. Participants were directed to view two presentations created by the researcher. The presentation titles were: Improving Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators: The Law, History and Best Practices and Improving Professional Development for Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms: Peer Reviewed Strategies for the Classroom. Participants were directed to complete a short reflection for the researcher.
and take part in a post treatment survey through Survey Monkey to conclude their participation.

Population/Sample

Participants were recruited through letters of invitation sent to head teachers, site supervisors, teachers, teacher assistants, and teacher aides who work directly with children in a variety of preschools in California. Letters of invitation were sent through the agency that administers a Head start grant that serves three counties in Northern California as well as through a countywide state preschool agency to participate in this research. In addition, preschool teachers at an inclusive preschool in the local school district, and early childhood education students at a local community college and university child development lab preschools were asked to participate. The researcher participated in a professional poster presentation at the California Mentor Teacher Institute in San Francisco, California in June of 2013 and attempted to recruit preschool teachers through the presentation.

To increase the number of research participants, invitations were sent to 100 contacts made through the California Mentor Teacher organization in January 2014 to share with their staffs. Seven teachers signed up for the research project at the Institute. Community college and university child development professors were invited to ask their students who were currently enrolled in classes and were also working or volunteering in the early childhood education. The intention of the researcher was to obtain a variety of educators of different ages and career development levels.
Despite extensive efforts on the part of the researcher to obtain an adequate sized participation sample only five participants completed the entire study. Fourteen respondents requested consent forms; six participants completed the pre-survey. This information is reported in the results section along with data provided by the participants who completed the study.

The research sample consisted of six participants who began the pre-survey. All were female teachers currently working in the field of Early Childhood Education. Two were employed at Head Start, three were teachers with the county-based state preschool agency, and one was a child development student from California State University, Chico. One Head Start teacher withdrew due to time constraints of a new preschool director position. The preschool teachers working in the Head Start and state agencies were from four different classrooms. The mean age of the participating teachers was 48 years old, with a mean teaching experience of over six years. Fifty percent self-identified their career stage as master teacher and 50% identified with the experienced teacher range (Table 2).

**Treatment**

Participants independently accessed and completed two to three online training modules. These were the IRIS Modules from the Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, and the Autism Modules, from the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. Participants were allowed to choose from a variety of topics related to inclusive practices and classroom management. Participants also viewed two PowerPoint presentations created by the researcher. The presentations were titled: Improving
Table 2

Participant Research Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Experience Range</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>3-6 years</td>
<td>33-37 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>3-6 years</td>
<td>53+ years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>7+ years</td>
<td>53+ years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>7+ years</td>
<td>43-47 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>7+ years</td>
<td>48-52 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>3-6 years</td>
<td>43-47 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators: The Law, History and Best Practices and Improving Professional Development for Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms: Peer Reviewed Strategies for the Classroom. The Internet links and instructions, survey instruments, reflection questions, research flyer, and PowerPoint presentations provided by the researcher are included in Appendix B.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from participants through online surveys created by the researcher and hosted on the Survey Monkey website. Information including the demographics and teacher/student ratios of their specific classrooms were obtained through the pre-survey. Number ranges were provided for questions pertaining to: ages, teaching experience, hours of professional development and credit hours completed in special needs college or university coursework. Data was coded and analyzed using
qualitative and quantitative techniques. Results are displayed in tables and figures in Chapter IV. The procedures that follow provide an outline of steps in the analysis:

1) Raw data collection.

2) Obtaining teacher knowledge baselines, professional development accessibility and identifying Inclusive Classroom Teachers

3) Grouping concepts into categories

4) Comparing similarities and differences between the participants.

5) Identifying any patterns that emerged overall.

6) Compared Teacher Adult Developmental Career Levels with several critical areas
CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

This study attempted to identify changes in preschool teachers who participated in an online professional development intervention. The intervention consisted of viewing presentations on the history of inclusive laws, and completing online training modules on teaching practices and benefits of inclusion for all children. One research purpose included examining teacher perceptions of the possible need for increased university coursework and high quality ongoing professional development for early childhood educators currently in the field. This study evaluated how early childhood educators viewed teaching in an inclusive setting.

Results and Discussion

Pre-Survey Results

The pre-survey determined self-identified teacher stages and if they were currently teaching in an inclusive classroom.

In Figure 1 self-identified teacher stages of participants are shown. Half of the participants were Renewal, Informed, Late Middle teacher stage and half were at the stage of Maturity, Consolidation and Veteran teacher. The researcher was unable to recruit Novice or Early Middle stage teachers in this study.
Figure 1. Self identified teacher developmental stages.

Figure 2 labels teachers with 3-6 years of experience with an E, the master teacher or veteran teachers 7 + years of experience with M. Figure 2 indicates teachers access to ongoing professional development, their knowledge of the acronym of IDEA and their knowledge of peer-reviewed strategies for working with children with special needs.

Four of the six participants worked in an inclusive classroom. The ratio of students with special needs to typically developing students were 5/24 or 20.8 percent for two respondents, and one respondent indicated 6/20 or 30 percent and one respondent 12/20 was 60 percent.

The experienced level teachers with 3-6 years experience indicated the greatest access to professional development opportunities. However only two of these three participants indicated a moderate level of knowledge of peer reviewed strategies.
The two teachers that did not work in an inclusive classroom indicated they had the highest knowledge level of the IDEA acronym.

In Figure 3 teacher responses regarding the need for additional education coursework showed that 5/6 scored high and one indicated moderately high. Teacher confidence and efficacy were predominately scored at the moderate level. Difficulty of teaching in an inclusive classroom scored moderately high with one teacher indicating high. Dispositional elements may contribute to the differences in teacher responses on whether or not they considered leaving the field due to inclusion practices. This tells the researcher that many early childhood teachers are committed to the field and open to inclusion practices despite the difficulties. The knowledge level of special need laws was evenly divided in the moderate to moderately low levels.
Figure 3. Attitudes and knowledge of inclusive classrooms.

Figure 4 reveals three master teachers indicated 3 semester units and 10 or fewer hours in Professional Development activities for working with special populations. One of three experienced teachers indicated 6 semester units whereas the other two had completed zero units. This confirms the low level of University and College coursework for both experienced and master teachers already working in the field.

Post Survey Results

Figure 5 indicates all participants responded High in their understanding of the history and the IDEA Laws as a result of the activities. In the analysis of the Post Survey data, 4/5 of the respondents indicated the individualized online training modules and power points scored Moderately High or High in being relevant to their teaching.
Figure 4. Hours in professional development and credit hours.

Figure 5. Treatment outcomes.
practice. Increased understanding of State and Federal Laws mandating inclusion scored Moderately High or High by 4/5 of the respondents. Post treatment results indicated teachers positive view of working in an inclusive classroom increased as well as their knowledge of IDEA and Inclusion and Special Education practices.

Figure 6 displays responses to the following question in the Post-Survey: “List 2-3 benefits of the Inclusive Preschool Classroom.” Five participants listed 12 benefits of the inclusive classroom that had previously reported difficulty teaching in an inclusive classroom as moderately high. This was a very positive outcome for teachers that initially reported a negative affect to their teaching practice. The Pre-survey measured if participants felt inclusion was a hindrance to a teacher’s ability to meet the needs of typically developing students due to the high level of students with special needs. Five of six respondents indicated Moderate to High in agreement with this statement.

Figure 6. Benefits of the inclusive classroom.
Figure 7 identifies the types of employee incentives teachers would prefer if employers provided on the job individualized Professional Development and Training opportunities with online modules and special needs trainings.

Three of the five teachers who completed the study indicated: four specific employer incentives for ongoing professional development:

- Opportunity to participate in mentoring and training opportunities.
- Continuing education credit for specialized training.
- Time at work to obtain necessary and relevant training.
- Pay increases for increased specialized training.
Reflection Responses

Figure 8 indicates the online training modules chosen by these participants. Time spent completing online modules ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours and 10 minutes. A total time of approximately 8 hours of online training was accessed as a result of this study. Online training accessed by participants was in the areas of behavior management, assessment and early intervention. All participants indicated employer incentives would motivate engagement in professional development opportunities. Three participants completed the reflection portion of the study.

When asked if the online training was helpful, the respondents provided these comments:

- Yes, very helpful.
- Insightful. It helped me realize the enormous struggles families with children with special needs go through.
o This was extremely helpful. I now understand the acting out cycle and when it is best to stop it.

o Most teachers realize it when it is at the peak and it is too late to stop it at this stage.

o Yes. Even though this was based on older school children scenarios, everything still pertains to the preschool setting.

o Yes, Again, even though these plans were for older children, it is a reminder to have a written plan for preschool aged children and to use visual prompts.

When asked if they would consider accessing these online training modules in the future, respondents responded with these answers:

o Yes

o Yes, I can access these at any time at home without distractions.

o Yes, I plan on accessing the entire series on Behavior and Class Management

o Yes I would definitely consider using the modules again. I found them informative.

o Yes, these modules give a lot of great information. It is almost just as good as having an online college course.

o Yes, I believe these modules are great and I would like to do more of them when I am not too busy with school.

In Table 3 participant responses based on individual Internet Training Module choices and self identified Adult Developmental Career Stages. These answers are in response to this reflection question: List something you can use in your classroom as a result of this training?
Table 3

Online Reflection Question: List something you can use in your classroom as a result of this training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experienced Teacher 2 with 3-6 years IRIS Online Modules</th>
<th>Master Teacher 4 with 7+ years IRIS Online Modules</th>
<th>Experienced Teacher 6 with 3-6 years Autism Internet Modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Prompts</td>
<td>Teach Others the Acting Out Cycle</td>
<td>ASD can be diagnosed between 1-2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize Triggers for Behaviors</td>
<td>Model Debriefing with Preschoolers</td>
<td>ASD Intervention models differ for older and younger children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the Acting Out Cycle</td>
<td>Written Behavior Plan</td>
<td>Evidenced Based Early Interventions are a good fit for younger children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate Clear Expectations</td>
<td>Use Visuals</td>
<td>Interventions focus on developing communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize Children Need Stress Release</td>
<td>Visual Daily Schedules</td>
<td>Teachers are an integral support for families of children with ASD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Before Behavior Escalates</td>
<td>Share with Staff</td>
<td>Provide Resources for Families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The study looked into five specific questions or issues. Based on the previous research and results of this study I will answer my research questions.
1. **How has the field of Early Childhood Education developed over time in regard to its history, philosophies, theories, and how these impact current best practices?**

The field of Early Childhood education early on recognized the need to provide services for young children. Educators, physicians and psychologists and two United States Presidents worked extensively to improve the methods of delivering high quality experiences to address child development and education needs. Advocates for improving the outcomes of typically developing children and the most vulnerable children, those with special needs is well documented in history.

Over a century ago several pioneers in this field demonstrated a spirit of inquiry and loving kindness towards children with special needs. Maria Montessori of Italy and founder of the first German Kindergarten Friedrich Froebel placed great value and respect for young children, their foundational work continues to impact early childhood education today. They developed philosophies where children would have opportunities to work, learn and play in environments designed especially tailored to meet their needs and provide social and educational opportunities.

In the 1930s, the work of notable psychologists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky left an indelible mark on early child development. Piaget introduced the cognitive learning stages of children zero-eight years old and Vygotsky proposed that children learn as a result of socio-cultural interaction. His theories asserted that cognitive development takes place when adults and more competent peers scaffold a child’s learning. In 1971 researcher Albert Bandura developed his Social Learning theories. Bandura asserted that social cues and modeling are indispensable aspects of learning. Bandura understood the
power of a good example being a much better teacher than the consequences of inexperienced or unguided actions (Bandura, 1971, p. 5).

In the 1960s, two United States Presidents introduced crucial legislation that merged two new important areas to the forefront: Redressing the rights of the mentally retarded and offering children in poverty the opportunity to attend preschool. President John F. Kennedy established The Presidential Panel on the mentally retarded. This panel outlined three important changes nationwide in the care of the mentally retarded: “Alternate methods of care, research guidelines, and new training programs for the enlarging the professional workers on behalf of the mentally retarded” (Mason et al. 1976, p.126).

President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a war on poverty after studies revealed that children in poverty needed extensive intervention and services to improve their outcomes. Head Start a federally funded preschool was developed in response to research on families and children living in poverty and their projected social and economic trajectories.

Urie Bronfenbrenner a noted psychologist was on the first Head Start panel in the 1960’s. Bronfenbrenner would develop a comprehensive ecological learning theory in 1979. This would be a very ambitious program to reach families and children in the area of early intervention, education, social, health and dental care. This layered approach to Human Development reflects the influence of several environmental systems identifying five such systems. The above work and theories continue to impact current practices in Early Childhood Education in positive ways.
This research indicated that despite the difficulties of working in an inclusive classroom early childhood teachers recognized the value of including children with special needs. Pre-survey results indicated participants felt inclusion hindered their ability to meet the needs of typically developing students due to the high level needs of special needs students in their classroom. In the post survey results teachers listed two to three benefits of an inclusive classroom. They believe in inclusion practices but lack skills, knowledge and education. Four out of six teachers reported ratios of children with special needs well above the best practice standard of 10 percent. Teachers indicated their confidence and efficacy levels as moderate.

2) **What are the characteristics of high quality inclusive preschool programs?**

Schools that create a mission statement that recognize inclusion communicate to families, children, and the staff that all children are welcomed and valued. The high quality inclusive classroom requires structure, consistency, positive interactions between children and adults, support systems for collaboration and access to peer reviewed strategies. These qualities support all children. English Language learners benefit from inclusive classrooms as they acquire a second language and need additional support from peers and teachers.

This research examined best practice standards recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2009. This Joint position statement indicates a high quality inclusive classrooms uses the natural proportion of students with special needs as are present in the population as a standard for Special Needs /Typically Developing children in the classroom. In 2013 the Center for Disease Control reported
one in six children in the U.S. have one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays (CDC, 2013).

Policy initiatives to create high quality inclusive preschools must recognize the importance of emphasizing the appropriate child/teacher ratios. Maintaining high quality interactions and high quality programs is possible when ratios and group sizes are manageable for teachers. These interactions are critical to child development, responsiveness, physical involvement, verbalizations, play interactions and social skill coaching (Hestenes et al., 2008).

Providing appropriate ongoing teacher training and support are imperative to the creation of sustained high quality inclusive classrooms. Technology is changing the face of education at a rapid pace. Utilizing technology in developmentally appropriate ways in the classroom and allowing teachers to access training through the use of technology would provide the essential part of an accessible, self-selected and sustained training model.

3) **What is the level of confidence and efficacy of early childhood teachers working in inclusive environments?**

Teachers indicated they have a moderate level of efficacy despite the high level of perceived difficulty working in an inclusive classroom. However, findings that emerged in this research revealed that teachers reported a definite need for accessible professional development in the area of IDEA laws and peer reviewed strategies.

Early Childhood Educators in this research indicated they lacked the necessary coursework and training for working with children who have special needs. Teachers indicated they were interested and receptive to ongoing, self-selected relevant training
opportunities. Swim and Isik-Ercan (2013) proposes a process for growth that includes “analysis, reflection and documentation of the work teachers perform daily in the sociocultural context of children and families” (p. 181) as well as self-examination of their dispositions and current interactions.

4) Are early childhood teachers likely to pursue training opportunities to improve their skills?

All participants indicated employer incentives would motivate engagement in professional development opportunities. The beginning of accepting new innovations in education is learning the history and the requirements written in the law. As educators learn these important concepts they can begin to reflect on becoming equipped with the necessary education and training to meet the growing needs of a classroom rich in diversity. The respondents in the post survey data and reflection reported the Training Modules were easily accessed and relevant to their current classrooms practices. Teachers reported they would continue to utilize the online training modules. The ability to self-select training modules was motivating and provided professional development that was specific to teachers perceived needs.

This researcher was unable to recruit any novice or early middle teachers as participants. However, many in this age group are busy with meeting the needs of their own families after providing direct care for children all day. Numerous coworkers at Head Start are currently enrolled in classes at the local community college while working full time. They expressed hesitancy in participating due to:

- Time restraints with working and going to school.
- Their family multiple family responsibilities at home.
• Lacked confidence in participating fully in this research due to their first language being Spanish.

Creating Continuing Education credits and certifications for master teachers with pay incentives would greatly improve the mentoring piece of classroom supervisors presently in the field. Just as children learn through modeling of more competent peers, Teacher Assistants can learn from Master or Veteran Teachers specialized and peer reviewed strategies in daily practice working with children with special needs.

5) What are the key components of long term, sustained adult professional development models?

Designing individualized professional development that is based on a teacher’s career and dispositions rather than solely on administrative mandates is essential. This type of professional development will encourage practitioners to take an active role in discovering their strengths, their current needs and dispositional development in order to improve their practice. By connecting professional dispositions and adult development theory to daily practices practitioners can reflect on the areas they need to develop to meet the needs of children, families and staff they serve.

All respondents in the study indicated high and moderately high agreement with additional university and community college coursework and professional development and training was needed in the area of special needs and inclusion in order to increase teacher preparation skills and competency.

As a supervisor and a technical lead in a Head Start classroom as well as a Mentor Teacher for a local community college I became highly motivated to learn how to best meet the needs of my students, families, staff and mentees. Over the next two years I
actively collaborated with therapists, inclusion specialists, education specialists and the school psychologist. I attended several classes offered by a local school district taught by an autism specialist. In addition I took several university level classes in the area of special needs in order to acquire the knowledge and skills I would need.

These classes introduced me to self-selected online modules I included in this study. The ongoing mentoring and education I received through the school district special needs staff and through university coursework was invaluable to my practice. It equipped me for mentoring roles as I learned and modeled peer reviewed practices and strategies for parents and staff.

Currently, most staff development is based on agency and administrative needs to comply with policies and procedures while neglecting the daily life and needs of individual teachers and classrooms. “Teachers must be entrusted with the planning, implementation and assessment of their own staff development, rather than the administration” (Burgess (1995, p.162).
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Preschool teachers more often work in classrooms that include a mix of children, including greater numbers of children with identified special needs. The researcher suspected that many preschool teachers have less than adequate education in the concepts and practices for successful work in the inclusive classroom environment. The purpose of this study was to determine if attitudes and teacher perceptions of self-efficacy in the area of inclusive classroom practice changed among preschool teachers who participated in the self-selected online training modules and were presented with the history and current best practice strategies in preschool. The research identified characteristics of high quality inclusive classrooms. The study examined adult developmental levels and whether or not teachers were likely to pursue additional coursework or professional development opportunities.

Conclusions

With the dramatic increase of young children with exceptional needs early childhood educators must answer the call for providing early intervention assessments and environments utilizing best practice strategies for children. In order to be effective in this endeavor educators must become proactive in obtaining the necessary skills and
education as they develop professional and educational development goals. Parents, early childhood educators, advocates and policymakers are the voice to stand for children that are often misunderstood and marginalized in our communities.

There is a crucial need to significantly increase the number of inclusive preschool programs in order to meet the needs of young children with special needs. Many of the current inclusive classrooms provide services for much higher percentages of children with disabilities than is recommended due to the shortage of high quality inclusive Pre-K programs. The reason this number has increased is that State and Federal Preschool programs are attempting to meet the growing need for services for young children with special needs in order to comply with legislation.

According to a policy brief published by the Education Law Center (2010) based on the federal data collected in 2005 that indicated the actual numbers of successful implementations of the FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education) requirement of the Part B IDEA for pre-k children who are eligible for special education was far below what the law prescribes. The US Department of Education reported the majority of students with special needs were placed in segregated special education classrooms or schools attended exclusively by children with disabilities, while only 33% were educated in typical early childhood classrooms. California ranked 26th in providing appropriate pre-k schools for children with disabilities.

Head Start mandates that ten percent of students enrolled in classrooms will be children with special needs. However, many Head Start classrooms serve well above this number. My full day Head Start classroom is licensed for 17 children so twenty percent would be 3-4 children with special needs. Currently I have 11 students with
special needs. The question remains: Will an unbalanced student ratio hinder children with special needs if there is a lack of normally developing peers to model higher level cognitive, language and social skills? I am concerned the benefits to children with special needs attending an inclusive program may be minimized, as the normally developing peers become the minority.

Best Practice Standards

This research study answered my questions about why best practice standards are lagging in this field. The implementation of Inclusive Classrooms preceded the support and training of teachers and assistants providing direct care. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Division of Exceptional Children provided a new standard in their 2009 Joint Position Statement on Inclusion.

The field of Early Childhood Education is beginning to address essential changes to prepare early childhood teachers for inclusion. The Joint Position Statement on Inclusion recognized that current Professional and Educational Standards in the field of Early Childhood Education and Child Development were designed for the general population. These standards must be updated to adequately prepare educators to meet the needs of diverse classrooms. It recommends that teachers “maintain high expectations for all students while utilizing the typically developing peers to provide critical interactions and modeling for children with special needs” (NAEYC & DEC, 2009, p. 44).

Inclusive Culture

Another component identified by the NAEYC is in creating high quality inclusive preschool programs is by teachers and families beginning to see the benefits and value of inclusion. It is an innovative change in education that will require educators,
Directors, administrators and legislators to change the way they view children with special needs and their rights under the law to a free and appropriate public education. It must be included in their mission statement, school handbooks and philosophy.

In my professional development experience I found my efficacy and acceptance of inclusion progressed over time. I found that by embracing all the students and challenges I improved the climate for everyone in our inclusive classroom. Creating an environment where all children had the right to learn and be accepted.

Collaboration and Support Systems

Establishing support systems and services for teachers and students is crucial in sustaining best practice standards in inclusive classrooms. When teachers and parents collaborating with local school district therapists, inclusion specialists, education specialists and the school psychologists the inclusive preschools can support the children with special needs and bring benefits to all students.

As a supervisor and a technical lead in the classroom as well as a Mentor Teacher for a local community college I became highly motivated to learn how to best meet the needs of my students, families, staff and mentees. Over the next two years I actively collaborated with therapists, inclusion specialists, education specialists and the school psychologist. I attended several classes offered by a local school district taught by an autism specialist. In addition I took several university level classes in the area of special needs in order to acquire the knowledge and skills I would need. These classes introduced me to the online modules I included in this study. The ongoing mentoring I received through the school district and special needs staff greatly assisted me in learning
many peer reviewed practices and strategies. This gave me extensive opportunities to mentor and model for staff members and mentees.

Recommendations

As a result of this study I propose five important recommendations:

1) **Improved community college and university coursework in the area of inclusive practice and working with children with special needs. Include field experience internship components to introduce teachers to inclusive classrooms and practices.**

   This study indicated a lack of coursework in the area of teaching special populations. Two participants indicated they did not have any coursework, three teachers reported they had three semester units and one completed six semester units. The NAEYC recommended, “revising national professional standards in early childhood education. Existing programs are primarily aimed at the general population. This is not sufficient to address the complexities and individual needs of diverse groups found in the inclusive classroom” (NAEYC & DEC, 2009, p. 45).

   Advocacy to improve coursework and professional training for teachers and assistants that provide direct care is long overdue. University and community colleges can develop field experience and coursework requirements to increase early childhood educators’ knowledge of the special needs systems and specialized training.

2) **Advocate for appropriate support systems and student/teacher ratios for inclusive classrooms.**
There is a crucial need to significantly increase the number of inclusive preschool programs in order to meet the needs of young children with disabilities. Many children with special needs will miss out on the wonderful opportunity to learn and grow in a high quality preschool environment where early intervention strategies could transform their later success.

However, many of the current inclusive classrooms provide services for much higher percentages of children with disabilities than is recommended due to the shortage of high quality Inclusive Pre-K programs. The reason this number has increased is State and Federal Preschool programs are attempting to meet the growing need for services for young children with special needs in order to comply with legislation.

Maintaining appropriate teacher/student ratios for high quality inclusive environments is needed. Peer interaction with normally developing children is an essential piece. The extensive social referencing and observational learning that takes place is critical in the preschool years. There is a great need to increase the amount of inclusive classrooms.

3) **Designing Professional Development and In-service Training to include self reflection of adult development and career levels of teaching staff and allowing staff to self-select relevant training that is directly related to their practice and individual needs.**

Many pre-service training sessions contain important policies, procedures and timelines however they do not bring relevant vital information to the individuals responsible with creating a high quality inclusive classroom. Time must be allocated to
allow practitioners to reflect on their individual strengths, their current levels of development and their perceived needs as professionals.

Designing individualized professional development that is based on a teacher’s career and dispositions rather than solely on administrative mandates is essential. It will encourage practitioners to take an active role in discovering their strengths, their current needs and dispositional development in order to improve their practice. By connecting professional dispositions and adult development theory to daily practices practitioners can reflect on the areas they need to develop to meet the needs of children, families and staff they serve.

Klein and Gilkerson (2000) determined that professional training that is high quality will include adhering with federal and state standards and learning “discipline specific knowledge, specialized knowledge, and abilities to meet the individual needs of the age groups they serve” (Thorp & McCollum, 1994, p. 454).

This researcher highly recommends utilizing technology for accessible and relevant training opportunities so early childhood practitioners can identify online training modules that are currently relevant to their individualized needs. Educators who desire to earn credit have two options with the Autism Internet Modules. Currently they offer Professional Development Certificates for completing specific training modules. Graduate level credits are now available through Ashland University.

The IRIS Modules are an invaluable resource for early childhood educators. Training modules are available in Spanish for second language learner teachers, support staff and families. These free accessible training modules offer a variety of topics related to working with children and families with special or exceptional needs. These online
training modules are effective tools for Directors, Regional Managers and Educational Specialists and Head Teachers who are responsible for designing pre-service training for staff involved with direct care of children.

4) **Provide Coaching and Mentoring Opportunities for Veteran or Master Teachers in the field.**

Coaching and mentoring is the current trend in supervising teachers currently in the field. As veteran teachers grow in their expertise there is a need to impart knowledge, skills and training to support best practices in the classroom. Burgess’ (1995) Teacher Development Model based on career stages recognizes the importance of ongoing, individualized staff development. It provides opportunities for more experienced staff to share their expertise and provide mentoring and leadership roles for veteran teachers. By assisting early childhood education practitioners in identifying their individual career stages they can be paired with Mentors that can provide reflective supervision. Burgess proposes that “staff development meet individual teachers’ needs rather than institutional needs” (1995, p. 162). Research by Fenichel (1992) supports “ongoing reflective supervision and continuing supervision for professional growth is essential to increase job satisfaction, performance and retention of staff at all levels” (Thorp & McCollum, 1994, p. 454).

5) **Introduce early childhood professionals to the California Early Childhood Competencies and advocate for the creation of Individual Professional Portfolios to enhance future ongoing professional development and growth.**

Teachers, teacher assistants and teacher aides as well as child development students should be introduced to creating their own Professional Portfolios to record and
document professional development experiences, current dispositions and reflective coaching sessions. This way educators and any level can begin to take ownership of improving their own professional development and educational practices. First 5 California and The California Department of Education recently completed the California Early Childhood Educator Competencies. It is accessible online at:

http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp

The four Developmental Educator Stages contained in this competency tool are:

i. Supporting Early Learning and Development

ii. Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development

iii. Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices

iv. Advancing the Early Childhood Profession

As teachers reflect on their current career levels and the expertise they can decide a course of action for areas of professional growth and training. The website offers training materials and videos to expand their knowledge in the areas they choose. The self-selected training modules would empower early childhood educators to choose professional development areas and establish meaningful goals for their individual needs. This would provide high quality, easily accessible and ongoing reflective learning.

This instrument is designed similar to a Desired Results Developmental Profile Assessment early childhood educators use for students in their classrooms. In each topic the competency contexts are outlined to show an adult development progression in the practitioners competency. As teachers and early childhood education professionals read the topics and competencies they can develop action plans to improve across the domains incrementally.
The twelve California Early Childhood Competencies performance areas and descriptors include the following areas:

1) Child Development and Learning
2) Culture, Diversity and Equity
3) Relationships, Interactions and Guidance
4) Family and Community Engagement
5) Dual Language Development
6) Observations, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
7) Special Needs and Inclusion
8) Learning Environments and Curriculum
9) Health Safety and Nutrition
10) Leadership in Early Childhood Education
11) Professionalism
12) Administration and Supervision

The Competencies would provide an excellent interactive online tool for educators and supervisors to identify individual strengths and develop needs assessment for future growth and development opportunities. Thereby allowing teachers to become proactive in their own professional development by taking part in designing their own individualized professional growth experiences. Educators can access these modules independently at home. However, supervisors will need to ascertain whether teaching staff has computer access at home. Teachers in lower socio-economic households would benefit from online training module access at work.
Implications for Future Research

The following are recommendations for research that should be conducted to further our understanding of effective professional development for early childhood educators.

- Future research should compare student outcomes and teacher efficacy in classrooms with appropriate ratios of students with special needs to classrooms with a minority of normally developing peers.

- A longitudinal study should be designed to measure teacher and student performance before and after professional development or coursework for teaching early childhood teachers to work in inclusive classrooms over a three-year period. This type of research may provide evidence for improving Early Childhood Education coursework, field experiences, individual mentoring and training opportunities, collaboration with multidisciplinary agencies, and ongoing professional development opportunities.

- Research to examine the extensive use of technology in designing future professional development that could be easily accessible to teaching staff currently in the field. This study could be designed to measure the effectiveness of the online California Early Childhood Educator Competency tools and the website.

- A research study that provides detailed definitions of career developmental levels to participants and ascertains the teacher’s actual years of experience and specific ages so that the relationship among these factors and teacher career developmental levels could be accurately identified.
REFERENCES


Research Invitation and Description

January 5, 2014

Dear Early Childhood Educators,

My name is Zina Bonham and I currently work for E Center Head Start as a Head Teacher at a Full Day classroom in Chico, CA. I am working on my Masters' in Education in Curriculum and Instruction at California State University in Chico, CA.

My research will examine the history of Early Childhood Education and Special Education, the Federal laws and current practices of working with exceptional children.

My Thesis is titled: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education Programs: Improving Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators.

I am very interested in identifying adult professional development levels, teacher efficacy and dispositions which will impact future professional development needs in order to prepare educators to work in high quality inclusive environments. I am currently recruiting Teachers, Assistants and Aides that are currently in the field working in inclusive classrooms.

The research will require participants to sign an Informed Consent for Participants form. Upon receiving this signed form I will email the links for

- Pre and Post Surveys,
- On Line Training Modules with a short reflection form
- Power Point Presentations summarizing my Literature Review and Peer Reviewed Classroom Tools.

When you complete the post survey and email me the final reflection your portion of the study is complete. You may indicate if you would like the results of this study sent to you when I complete my Thesis.

I will ask you to complete 2-3 on line training modules that vary in length from 45 minutes to 1-½ hours. You will choose the modules that best fit your interest level and professional needs. This commitment should not exceed 5 hours. This can be done at your own pace within a 30 day time period. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Please notify me at your earliest convenience if you decide to withdraw.

All data collected during the study will be kept strictly confidential and no names or identifying information will be included in my thesis. All surveys and reflections will be shredded upon completion of the study. If you are interested in participating in my research please complete and sign the attached

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Informed Consent for Participants form and mail it the address on then form or scan it to my CSU school email address zbonham@mail.csuchico.edu

Thank you so much for considering my request,

Zina Bonham
Head Teacher
E Center Head Start
Graduate Student in Education at CSU, Chico

1. DESCRIPTION:
You and your classroom staff are invited to participate in a research study regarding improving professional development for teachers and teacher assistants working in inclusive classrooms. This study will consist of three parts:

1) A pre-survey to measure how teachers and assistants feel about working in inclusive classrooms and information about their training and skill level for working with students with special needs. Teachers will be asked what Professional Developmental Career Level they are currently in.

2) Participants will access 2-3 On-line training Modules that will require approximately 1-1.50 hours to complete. In addition I will ask participants to:
   - View a Power Point of the literature review I completed for my Thesis titled: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education Programs: Improving Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators
   - Complete a reflection of how these resources may impact you practice or profession.

3) The post survey will be used to measure the current levels of knowledge in the Field of Inclusive Environments, Professional Development Levels, Teacher Confidence and Teacher Efficacy.

The purposes of this study is to measure the need for
   - Increased professional training for teachers and assistants working in inclusive classroom.
   - Improved classroom strategies and climates in inclusive schools.
   - Increased college and university coursework in the area of Special Needs
   - Identifying Adult Development Stages to design on-going High Quality Professional Development for Teaching Staff.

Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. All Survey Data will be shredded upon completion of my study.

At no time will a participant’s name be mentioned or made public.

2. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:
Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

3. RISKS AND BENEFITS:
There are no known risks associated with this study to teachers or assistants. The benefits that may reasonably be expected to result from this study are increased awareness of Inclusive Classrooms, Research Based Strategies and Teacher Efficacy and Confidence.
4. TIME INVOLVEMENT:
- The On-Line Modules, Power Point and reflection summary will require a 3-hour commitment.
- Pre and Post Surveys with a reflection component will take approximately 1 hour.

5. COMPENSATION
You will not be paid for participating in this study. However the training materials and on line resources are for you to keep for future reference or needs.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, its procedures, risks or benefits, please contact the researcher, M.A. in Education candidate, Zina L. Bonham, 530-680-9452 or by email at zbonham@mail.csuchico.edu

Independent Contact:
If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Michael Kotar, at 530-898-6610 or by email at mkotar@csuchico.edu.

Questions and requests for assistance may also be directed to the CSU, Chico Institutional Review Board by contacting Marsha Osborne at 530-898-5413.

7. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT
Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand and give consent for data collected in this study to be used in future teacher training sessions, Conferences and in a MA in Education Thesis project.

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I understand that my identity or my school site will not be revealed in any written data resulting from this study.

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

_________________________________________________  _______________
Signature of Research Participant            Date

You may print an extra copy of this consent form for you to keep.

Please Mail Completed and Signed Consent Forms to
Zina Bonham
869 Elliott Road
Paradise, CA 95969
530-680-9452
or scan signed forms to:
zbonham@mail.csuchico.edu

Thank you for your participation in my Master’s Research Work at CSU, Chico, California
APPENDIX B
Pre Survey

1. Do you work in an Inclusive Classroom?
   Yes
   No
   I'm not sure

2. On average what is the ratio of students with special needs included in your classroom?
   Please include students with Speech/Language Delays, Autism, PDD, ADD, ADHD, Cognitive Delays or Physical Disability. Indicate % of children with special needs currently enrolled in your classroom.

   (To compute this percentage divide number of children with special needs into your classroom total)
   5%-10%
   15%-20%
   25%-30%
   35%-40%
   45%-50%
   55%-70%
   75% +

3. Do you feel confident in your ability and skill level in your work with children with special needs?
   On the following question, choose your answer on a scale 1-5
   Low          Moderately Low         Moderate         Moderately High           High

4. How would you rate the difficulty level of teaching in an inclusive classroom?
   Low          Moderately Low         Moderate         Moderately High           High

5. Do you feel the inclusive classroom environment hinders a teacher's ability to teach typically developing peers due to the high needs of students with special needs?
   Rate your agreement to this statement on a 1-5 scale.
   Low          Moderately Low         Moderate         Moderately High           High

6. Do you know what the Acronym IDEA stands for?
   Yes
   No
   I'm Not Sure
7. Do you know the history of current education inclusion laws and legislation? Rate your knowledge about this topic on a rating scale of 1-5.
Low  Moderately Low  Moderate  Moderately High  High

8. What is your knowledge level in the area of Research Based Intervention Strategies for working with students with special needs?
Low  Moderately Low  Moderate  Moderately High  High

9. Do you have access to resources or strategies so you can partner with families of students with special needs and support their efforts at home?
Low  Moderately Low  Moderate  Moderately High  High

10. Are you familiar with the 2009 (NAEYC) National Association of the Education of Young Children’s position statement on Inclusion-Best Practices?
Yes
No
I'm Not Sure

11. Have you had professional training opportunities for working with students with special needs?
Yes
No
I am not sure

12. How many hours of training have you had in the area of working in inclusive classroom environments?
4-6 hours
7-9 hours
10 or more hours

13. Do you currently have access to professional development or training opportunities to assist you with working with students with special needs?
Yes
No
I'm Not Sure

14. Have you taken coursework in Special Needs at a Community College or University? Please indicate how many units you have successfully completed.
0 units
3 units
4-6 units
7-9 units
10 or more units
15. Do you feel additional coursework and training in the area of Inclusive Education and Special Needs is needed in order to feel competent and prepared as a teacher in an Inclusive Classroom environment? Please rate your agreement with this question on a 1-5 scale.
   Low       Moderately Low       Moderate       Moderately High       High

16. Have you ever considered leaving the field of teaching due to the challenges of working in an inclusive classroom?
   Low       Moderately Low       Moderate       Moderately High       High

17. How would you describe your teacher experience level?
   Novice Beginner 2+ years       Experience 3-6 years       Master Teacher 7 +

18. What is your gender?
   Male
   Female

19. What is the category below includes your age?
   18-22 years
   23-27 years
   28-32 years
   33-37 years
   38-42 years
   43-47 years
   48-52 years
   53 years or older

20. What is your ethnicity? (Please check all that apply.)
   African American
   Asian
   Caucasian
   Hispanic
   Hmong
   Pacific Islander
   Other
Post Survey for Improving Professional Development

1. Do you feel the online training modules allowed you to select relevant individualized opportunities?
   Low                     Moderately Low         Moderate         Moderately High        High

2. Would you advocate for increased college level requirements in the area of special needs?
   Yes
   No
   I’m Not Sure


4. What is your confidence level for working in an Inclusive Classroom?
   Low                     Moderately Low         Moderate         Moderately High        High

5. After completing the activities for the research do you feel more knowledgeable about inclusion practices?
   Low                     Moderately Low         Moderate         Moderately High        High

6. Have you ever used research based strategies in your classroom?
   Yes
   No
   I’m Not Sure

7. If you answered yes, please list a few you have tried.

8. If your employer provided incentives would you consider using online training modules and meeting with Special Education Mentors to improve your practice?
   Yes
   No
   I’m Not Sure

9. What kind of incentives would you consider?
   Increase in pay
   Continuing education credits
   Time at work to complete
   Mentoring or training responsibilities
   Other _______________

10. As a result of the information provided for you, do you have a better understanding about the history and laws regarding inclusion such as IDEA?
    Yes
11. Does this help you understand the State and Federal Laws that mandate inclusion?
Yes
No
I’m Not Sure

12. Are you able to connect colleagues and families with resources to help support their
growth in the area of working with children with exceptionalities?
Low   Moderately Low   Moderate   Moderately High   High
Participant Links

1) Pre Survey Link

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/inclusiveclassroomstudycsuchico

Links to Modules

2) Choose 2-3 Modules

http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/

3) Write a short reflection on the Modules you choose. (Form Provided)

4) View two the Power Point Presentations I have provided.

5) Post Survey Link

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Professionaldenvsurveycsuchico

Optional:
California Early Childhood Educator Competencies Link

6) To determine your strengths and future Professional Development Needs
http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp

Thank you for your participation in my Master’s Research Work at CSU, Chico, California.
Reflection Questions for On Line Modules

Module I
List the On Line Modules title you chose? And how long did it take?

Title: Site:  
Time:  

1. Was it helpful?

2. Would you consider accessing on line modules for future training?

3. List something you can use in your classroom as a result of this training:

Module II
List the On Line Module title you chose? And how long did it take?

Title: Site:  
Time:  

1. Was it helpful?

2. Would you consider accessing on line modules for future training?

3. List something you can use in your classroom as a result of this training:

Module III
List the On Line Module title you chose? And how long did it take?

Title: Site:  
Time:  

1. Was it helpful?

2. Would you consider accessing on line modules for future training?

3. List something you can use in your classroom as a result of this training.
APPENDIX C
Free Online Training Opportunity through CSU, Chico MA Research Project

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHING STAFF

FOR

Inclusive

Classrooms

PLEASE REQUEST RESEARCH PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT FORMS

BY FEBRUARY 16, 2014

zbonham@mail.csuchico.edu
Power Point Presentation I

Improving Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators:

The Law, History and Best Practices

Inclusion in Early Childhood Education Programs:

Improving Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators
The Law, History and Best Practices

Introduction

- 1976 – 1978 My career path as Preschool Teacher AA in ECE
- 1979-1980 Preschool Teacher/ Director
- 1994-2000 K-2nd Grade Teacher in a Private School
- 2007 AA Behavioral Social Science ..... Returned to ECE Field
- 2011 BA in Child Development
- 2013-2014 Completing a Masters of Education - Curriculum and Instruction

- My AA Education in Early Childhood Education or Behavioral Social Science did not require coursework in teaching children with special needs.
- I did not have adequate or appropriate training even though I was Director qualified in both Colorado and California. I held a CA Master Teacher Permit.
- I pursued a BA in Child Development with a minor in Special Needs in order to work effectively in my Head Start classroom.
Challenges in Inclusive Classrooms

- A majority of general education teachers feel unprepared to address the needs of children with disabilities.

- Early Childhood Education Romanticizes the field of teaching young children. Many teachers are not prepared for the challenges and changes in the preschool setting.

- Behavior Management difficult at times in the Inclusive Classroom.

- Adaptations for children with special needs are underused due to lack of funding or lack of training.

- Teachers need more support from administrators, peers and therapists.

The Law

- 1975 Public Law 94-142 - Children with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

- (IDEA) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was passed in 1997 and revised again in 2004 with (IDEIA) Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act

- Baca and Cervantes (1989) also provide a reminder that bilingual children with special needs are addressed in legislation by both Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibit discrimination based on race, national origin, and disabilities under any program receiving federal financial assistance.

- 2009 A Joint Position Statement was drafted by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) The National Association for the Education of Young Children.
2009 Joint Position Statement Recommendations:

The Joint Position Statement identified six key components of high quality inclusive programs:

- Create high expectations for every child to reach his/her full potential.
- Develop a program philosophy of inclusion.
- Establish a system of services and supports.
- Revise program and professional standards.
- Achieve an integrated professional development system.
- Influence federal and state and accountability systems.

A Need for More Inclusive Preschools

- “Ideally, using the principle of natural proportions will assist educators in providing the desired results from the practice of inclusion. This means the inclusion of children with exceptional needs must be in proportion to their presence in the general population.” Providing data of inclusion to federal and state agencies without providing the desired result data does not ensure accountability.

- Currently Federal and State Preschools accept well over the 10% due to limited Preschools providing Inclusive Classrooms.

- The success of Early Intervention with High Quality Preschool Environments is well documented.

The National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) 2009.
A Literature Review

Creating and Sustaining Inclusive Programs is a Challenging Task

**The critical needs in Effective Early Childhood Inclusive Programs:**
- Key Personnel and Shared Vision critical factors for initiating Inclusive ECE programs.
- Collaboration with Parents, Special Education Teachers, Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist.
- Employing a strong training and support model for staff
- A clear understanding of IEP, Expectations and Policies
- Sufficient support staff trained in Best Practices for children with special needs
- Appropriate ratios of 10-20% Special Needs to Typically Developing Peers

Benefits of High Quality Preschool

- Young children with disabilities are given opportunities to experiences of “belonging, being valued and having choices”

- Normally developing peers acquire leadership and modeling roles while they learn acceptance and diversity of others.

- Teachers gain valuable experience about their own practice and biases when faced with the challenges of working in an Inclusive Classroom

- Early Intervention strategies can assist children with low incidence disabilities so they can function in a general education classes with minimal assistance.
A Strong Professional Training and Support Model for Staff is Needed

- Existing College and University Coursework is designed for General Populations.
- Lack of requirements for Field Experience in Inclusive Classrooms, Special Education, and Collaboration with School District Staff.
- Lack of funding for Assistive Technology in Preschool & teachers do not experience modalities and strategies first hand.
- Professional Development Models need to be based on Adult Development Theory to insure effectiveness.

Early Childhood Professional Developmental Stages and Adult Development Theory

“Understanding the adult learner and the Adult Stages of Development is essential in order to meet the learning needs of teachers” (Burgess, 1995).

Dr. Lillian Katz ~ Early Childhood Professional Developmental Stages:

- Survival-Learning to juggle the responsibilities of the day!
- Consolidation-Building new information on what was learned!
- Renewal-Familiar and competent in direct work with children!
- Maturity-Energies directed to professional insight, perspective and realism.
Teacher Professional Development Based on 4 Career Stages

Researcher Deborah Burgess developed this Adult Developmental Theory to provide High Quality Professional Development:

- **Early-Survival**, Pedagogy, Classroom Management, Induction to Adults
- **Early Middle**, Personal Family, Content and Curriculum Expertise, Knowledge Base, Cautious Experimentation
- **Late Middle**, Family Responsibilities, Expand Role Outside of Classroom, Increased Responsibilities, Share Expertise, Building a School Community
- **Veteran**, Renewed Commitment, Fulfill Personal Needs, Leave a Legacy, Share Expertise

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

- This excellent tool for Professional Development Planning was developed in 2008 with input from the California Department of Education/Child Development Division, First Five California, WestEd Project Team, Practitioners and those responsible for Professional Development

**Competency Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Development and Learning</th>
<th>Special Needs and Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture, Diversity and Equity</td>
<td>Learning Environments and Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships, Interactions and Guidance</td>
<td>Health, Safety and Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Community Engagement</td>
<td>Leadership in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language Development</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations, Screening, Assessment and Documentation</td>
<td>Administration and Supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

- Follow this Link to determine your strengths and future Professional Development Needs or keep for future reference:
  

Future Research

Increasing numbers of young children with special needs are being cared for in early childhood settings. In addition there is a large increase in English language learners and behaviorally challenged students.

- Educational requirements will need to be modified so Child Development professionals can be prepared to effectively meet the multiple needs of the changing demographics in the classrooms.

- Training in Assistive Technology and best practices need to be provided for teachers currently in the field.

- Lowering the ratio of Children with Special Needs to 10% so they have typically developing peers to support their language and social skills
References


- Leatherman, J. M. (2007). "I Just See All Children as Children": Teacher’s Perceptions about Inclusion The Qualitative Report Vol 12 No.4 December 2007


References Continued

- Recchia, S. L., & Pugl, V. I. (2011). Challenges and Inspirations: Student Teachers’ Experiences in Early Childhood Special Education Classrooms. Teacher Education and Special Education 34 (2) 133-151


Improving Professional Development for Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms:

Peer Reviewed Strategies for the Classroom

Challenging Behaviors Serve a Purpose

Used with Permission by Tayla Kemper Ph. D.
Document Behavior Observations
Antecedent–Behavior–Consequence

- (A) Teachers consistently write down what happened before the Challenging Behavior
- (B) Document the behavior you observed and others involved
- (C) Reflect on what the outcome of the behavior

These observations can be analyzed for patterns and situations that may be driving the child’s reaction or need for control.
- By changing the routine slightly or by providing a simple choice may ease the transition.

Case Study Example

- (A) Time to wash hands for Breakfast.
- (B) Kiera cries and resists teacher prompting when it is time to wash her hands. She cries and throws herself on the floor saying No! No!
- (C) Teacher keeps saying First you Wash, Then You Eat. Finally after everyone else is seated she complies.

Analysis: After several days we discovered Kiera was afraid of the overhead fan noise and the sound of multiple toilets flushing.

Solution: When we asked Kiera to wash first or “Which sink would you like to use?” She would choose the classroom sink. The tantrums stopped.

Kiera is on the Autism Spectrum and is sensitive to sensory input overload.
Visual Prompts and Reviewing

- Many students in the inclusive classroom have communication challenges. By providing picture schedules andverbally stating expectations with picture icons students become more compliant with routines and transitions.
- Teachers state things assertively and briefly allowing time for children to process what is being stated.
- Some students benefit from placing their own icon after the task is completed.
Visual Schedules

Individualized Schedules

Arrival Routine

Used with Permission by Tayla Kemper Ph. D.

Evidence Based Practices

- Antecedent Package
- Behavioral Package
- Comprehensive Behavioral Treatment for Young Children
- Joint Attention Intervention
- Modeling
- Naturalistic Teaching Strategies
- Peer Training Package
- Pivotal Response Treatment
- Schedules
- Self-management
- Story-based Intervention Package
Antecedent Package

- 99 peer reviewed studies show~
- These interventions involve the modification of situational events that typically precede the occurrence of a target behavior.
- These alterations are made to increase the likelihood of success or reduce the likelihood of problems occurring.
- Treatments falling into this category reflect research representing the fields of applied behavior analysis (ABA), behavioral psychology, and positive behavior supports.

Social and Emotional Competency

- Children need predictable Class Schedules and Routines
- Classroom Rules or Guidelines are essential.
- Teaching and modeling emotion words is the first step in learning to Problem Solve.
- Teachers can provide Functional Language until they have sufficient practice to verbalize their feelings and needs.
- Puppet Shows are very effective in modeling social scenarios that utilize the Pro Social Skills and Problem Solving Steps.
Pro Social Station

http://csfel.vanderbilt.edu/

Functional Communication Therapy
Teaches Appropriate Replacement Behavior

Functional Communication Therapy teaches students a pro-social way of getting their needs met.

Teach student to say, "It's too loud!"

Loud environment

Escape environment

Scratching others

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Functional Communication Training Definition

An antecedent intervention in which an appropriate communicative behavior is taught as a replacement behavior for problem behavior usually evoked by an establishing operation.


Develop a Plan and Create a Toolbox for your Classroom

› School Districts will provide Picture Icons for students with IEP’s.
› (Microsoft Clipart also offers color Picture Icons.)
› You can purchase 6” plastic rulers or sturdy poster board strips. Place Velcro strips and add the Velcro to the back of your icons.
› Set up a Behavior Observation Binder
› Set up a Quiet Area for Calm Down time and Problem Solving

Visit this Web site for many resources
http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/

➢ Create Classroom Rules and Schedules
References

- *Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning*
  
  [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/)

- *Committee for Children, Second Step: Social Skills for Early Childhood K–8 years*  


- Slides used with permission from Tayla Kemper Ph.D. CSU, School of Education  
  * Challenging Behaviors Serve a Purpose  
  * Visual Schedule Slides  
  * Functional Communication Therapy

  Full Spectrum Learning  
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