

アメリカに於ける幼児教育

—アメリカの就学前幼児はどのようにして学んでいるのか—

市 來 恵 子

Early Childhood Education in the United States
—How American Preschoolers and Kindergarteners are Learning—
by
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1. Introduction

Many of the earliest kindergartens in the United States served the purpose of easing the acculturation of newly arrived immigrant children. Later, the purpose became easing the child's transition from home to the more formal aspects of the elementary school. For some children, the transition purpose continues to be important. The vast majority of children today, however, have experience at preschool and/or child care settings before they attend kindergarten. Nevertheless, many people in and out of education continue to perceive the kindergarten as the initial group experience for children.

In many other economically advanced countries national policy provides a free high-quality preschool education for all children beginning at ages 3 or 4. Not so in the United States. Preschoolers are not guaranteed any education at all, much less a high-quality education.

Unfortunately, many parents and elementary educator do not view experiences in child care or other prekindergarten programs as real learning. Many of the programs have shifted their emphasis from spurring kindergartners' development to highlighting specific learning goals¹⁾. While programs vary in quality, children of any age are learning in every waking moment. Education provided for children at any level simply serves to organize their learning into more well-defined paths, governed by the philosophical orientation of program planners and the quality of the program. Although broad variations in children's abilities are evident, all children can learn.

The purpose of this paper is to find how American preschoolers and kindergartners are

learning.

The researcher went to the U.S. in Sep. and Oct. 2006, to do classroom observations and research at several institutions. She observed a class at Macfeat Laboratory School at Winthrop University and Richmond Drive Elementary School. These included private nursery school, state and private kindergarten in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Also she observed a class at Roosevelt Elementary School and McPherson & Marion County Head Start. These included state prekindergarten, state kindergarten and Head Start in McPherson, Kansas. Also researcher visited Harvard Affiliated Child Care Center in Boston, MA.

2. Definition of Terms

During the course of this study, the following terms were used:

Infants : ages 0-through 1.5-year-olds.

Toddlers: 1.5-through 2.5 or 3-year-olds.

Preschoolers: 3 and 4-year-olds.

Kindergarteners: 5-year-olds.

Preschool: center-based programs that provide educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten. They can be located in a child care center, state prekindergarten, private nursery school, or Head Start center.

3. How Preschoolers are Learning

3 • 1 Preschoolers are not Guaranteed Any Education

In a world where young children are routinely served, it seems odd that America, a nation so concerned about human rights and social equity, would not have had young children higher on its social agenda long before now. However, with a history that promotes the privacy and the primacy of the family, this nation has been reluctant to intervene in family affairs. Unlike universal public education, services for children younger than age 5, were summarily discounted as a parental—not a societal—right and responsibility²⁾.

In many other economically advanced countries, national policy provides a free high-quality preschool education for all children beginning at ages 3 or 4. Not so in the United States. Here preschool education is a combined federal, state, and local responsibility.

Unlike children in the K–12 system, preschoolers are not guaranteed any education at all, much less a high-quality education. Indeed, 11 states actually reduced the numbers of preschool children they served. Many states cut budgets or flat-funded programs despite inflation³⁾. Clearly these states do not yet treat prekindergarten as real education that must be delivered in good and bad financial times.

Preschool enrollment of the population 3 to 5 years old in October 1998 is 37.6 percent of 3-year-old children (Nursery 1457,000 Kindergarten 41,000) and 66.6 percent of 4-year-old children (Nursery 2402,000 Kindergarten 263,000) and 93.4 percent of 5-year-old children (Nursery 653,000 Kindergarten 2971,000) are in early childhood program⁴⁾.

A total of 801,902 children were enrolled in state prekindergarten initiatives in 2004–2005. National data show that the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state prekindergarten grew by 3 percent from the 2001–2002 school year to the 2004–2005 school year, with 17 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds enrolled in 2004–2005. The percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled remained steady during this time period. From fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2005, state spending decreased by \$278 per child enrolled, in inflation adjusted dollars³⁾.

3 • 2 Fewer Than Half of Preschool Teachers Hold a Bachelor's Degree

New research finds that young children's learning and development clearly depends on the educational qualifications of their teachers. The most effective preschool teachers have at least a four-year college degree and specialized training in early childhood. Despite overwhelming evidence in its favor, Americans have yet to fully recognize the value of well-educated, professional, early education teachers.

Once they begin kindergarten, America's children are taught by professionals with at least a four-year college degree. Prior to kindergarten their teachers are far less prepared. Fewer than half of preschool teachers hold a bachelor's degree, and many never even attended college. In most states, a high school diploma is all a person needs to teach in a licensed child care center. As a result many preschool programs are educationally ineffective.

Nearly 90% of preschool teachers in public school programs have at least a four-year college degree. Typically they have degrees that require specialized preparation in early childhood education. Most early childhood teachers in public schools have a teaching credential or license that has requirements beyond completing a bachelor's degree, such as

taking additional courses in teaching methods, having had supervised teaching experiences, and passing a test of teaching knowledge and skills⁵⁾.

Until recently, the federal government's Head Start program did not require teachers to have any higher education. Only a quarter of Head Start's teachers have four-year college degrees. Others have some college and many have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, which may not require college coursework. Half of Head Start teachers must have a two-year college degree by 2003⁵⁾.

Less than half the teachers in child care centers have four-year college degrees, and many teachers have just a high school education. More teachers in child care centers have just a high school education than in Head Start and other programs. Forty states require no formal education beyond a high school diploma for teachers in child care centers⁵⁾.

Several studies of state-supported preschool programs have found that quality is higher in programs where more teachers have at least a four-year college degree. The higher quality of preschool programs in the public schools is plausibly related to better pay and benefits that enables them to hire teachers with at least a bachelor's degree. Teachers with four-year degrees also have been found to be better teachers in Head Start⁵⁾.

Also multi-state studies of 521 preschool classrooms, the percentage of teachers with a four-year college degree was related to preschool classroom quality as measured by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale and to teacher warmth, attentiveness, and engagement⁵⁾.

Using data from two massive studies, Howes examined the effects of four levels of teacher education on teaching quality and child development. She found that higher education was associated with better teaching and better language acquisition. Also, children whose teachers had four-year degrees engaged in more creative activities⁵⁾.

Better-educated teachers have more positive, sensitive and responsive interaction with children, provide richer language and cognitive experiences, and are less authoritarian, punitive and detached. The result is better social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development for the child. Overall, teachers with the most advanced education and training appear to be the most effective.

3 • 3 No Child Left Behind Act—Early Reading First

Every child deserves highly qualified teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act requires States to have a highly qualified teachers in every public school classroom by the end of the

2005–2006 school year. For example, all new teachers will have to be licensed or certified by the State, hold at least a bachelor's degree, and pass a rigorous State test on subject knowledge and teaching skills. Existing teachers will also have to meet similar criteria⁶⁾.

The historic No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law by President Bush in January 2002, provides a variety of new tools to enable the Federal Government, State, and local districts to improve teacher quality and elevate the teaching profession. These needed reforms are backed up with historic levels of funding for teacher quality initiatives in President Bush's FY-03 budget⁶⁾. These reforms are the foundation of the Bush Administration's agenda to improve teacher quality and enhance the teaching profession.

The No Child Left Behind Act is the greatest federal investment ever, nearly \$4 billion to recruit, prepare and train teachers. The Act, passed overwhelmingly by Congress, gives schools much more flexibility to use federal funds where the local need is greatest⁷⁾.

Every child in America deserves a quality teacher. In an era of increasing standards and accountability in education, teacher quality and teacher training will be more important than ever. President Bush knows the challenges facing today's teachers. For years, Federal programs have promised to strengthen State and local teacher quality efforts – but with few results. Through the No Child Left Behind Act and in his budget proposals, President Bush proposes to address these challenges of teachers quality and teacher training in three major ways by providing: (1) assistance to States as they strive to improve teacher quality; (2) specific steps to enhance the teaching profession and work environment; and (3) new tools for teachers in specific areas of instruction⁶⁾.

President Bush proposes to spend a record-level \$2.85 billion in grants to States to improve the quality of teachers and principals⁶⁾. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, these funds will be used to increase the number of highly qualified teachers and principals, and to hold school districts accountable for showing progress.

The No Child Left Behind Act established Early Reading First program. Early Reading First is designed to prepare young children to enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive, and early reading skills for reading success when they enter school. Early Reading First will transform early childhood education programs into centers of excellence for young children, especially those from low-income families. Early Reading First will not only provide resources and training to preschool teachers, but will also benefit teachers in all grades by helping to increase the number of children who enter school ready

to learn to read.

President Bush signed legislation that provided \$75 million for this program in 2002. President Bush has proposed to continue this commitment to Early Reading First in his FY-03 budget⁶⁾.

Teaching reading is one of America's top domestic priorities. The Bush Administration wants parents, caregivers and classroom teachers to have the most effective tools and information for teaching reading, the skill upon which all other learning skills are based.

As a former public school teacher, Mrs. Bush also knows that the quality of a child's education hinges on the quality of that child's teachers. With this in mind, Mrs. Bush launched her Ready to Read, Ready to Learn initiative with two major goals. Ensure that all young children are ready to read and learn when they enter their first classroom and ensure that once there, children have well-trained, qualified teachers, especially children whose families are impoverished⁷⁾.

3 • 4 State-Funded Preschool: Spending per Child Declined

In decades past, the prevailing ethos of modest public investment in young children in the United States was hardly a national cause celebre. Parents were home, the early years were not thought to be all that significant and early care services were costly. Today none of these facts are true. First, parents, even those with young infants, are in the workforce. In fact, 55% of mothers with a child younger than age 3 are currently employed. Second, the early years matter, and matter significantly. Third, early care and education offer a return on investment that is perhaps unparalleled in any sphere of education, with estimates that a dollar invested in young children saves at least \$7 in expenditures²⁾.

State expenditures to support preschool programs are a key indicator of each state's commitment to expanding access and ensuring educational adequacy for young children. State spending per child in the prekindergarten program is a key influence on program quality and a measure of state support for equal access to a good preschool education.

The state-funded preschool movement is young. Fewer than half the state-funded preschool programs existed 20 years ago. By the 2001–2002 school year, 38 states were funding programs and enrolling nearly 700,000 children. By 2004–2005, those states served more than 800,000 children, surpassing the 40-year-old federal Head Start program in number of 4-year-olds served. This represents an astounding jump of 20 percent in 4-year-olds and an 8 percent increase in 3-year-olds enrolled during those four years³⁾.

Total state spending reached \$2.84 billion in 2004–2005. This reflects an increase in spending of 7.5 percent over four years after adjustments for inflation. State governments spent about \$240 billion on K–12 education in 2004–2005. That makes state spending on preschool education equal to about 1 percent of the state K–12 budget. State spending on preschool remains quite modest and will continue to be so unless the growth in state commitments to preschool education accelerates. Average state spending per child enrolled was \$3,551 in 2004–2005. States vary tremendously in their per-child spending. The top-ranked state—New Jersey—spent 10 times more per child than Maryland, the lowest-ranked state³⁾.

In 2004–2005, 38 states funded one or more state prekindergarten initiatives. There were 12 states without state-funded prekindergarten. There were Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Florida has since started a state prekindergarten initiative. In November 2002, Florida voters amended their state constitution to require the provision of a free high-quality preschool education to every 4-year-old whose parents or guardians wished to enroll them. Florida began its new program in the 2005–2006 school year. Oklahoma is the only state that can be said to offer publicly-funded preschool education to virtually all children at age 4. In 2004–2005, more than 90 percent of Oklahoma's 4-year-olds were enrolled in state prekindergarten, preschool special education, or Head Start programs. Georgia offered the next highest level of access to publicly-funded prekindergarten, with 67 percent of 4-year-olds enrolled in one of these programs³⁾.

State prekindergarten programs continued to focus primarily on 4-year-olds. In 2004–2005, 17 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds were enrolled, an increase from 14 percent in 2001–2002. Meanwhile, only 3 percent of the nation's 3-year-olds were enrolled during 2004–2005, roughly the same percentage served in 2001–2002. Some states appear to have reduced enrollment of 3-year-olds in order to increase or maintain the number of 4-year-olds served. Unfortunately, state preschool spending per child enrolled has not been improving in recent years. Inflation-adjusted spending per child declined from 2001–2002, by 7.3 percent. Poorly funded programs reach fewer children and can be of such limited quality that they put at risk the gains in children's learning and development and the high returns to taxpayers that research has shown are possible. It can also be seen in teacher salaries. A 2004 study found the average state preschool teacher salary to be \$32,000, far below the average K–12 teacher salary of \$46,000³⁾. Good teachers cannot be hired and

retained in prekindergartens at such poor levels of pay. The higher quality of preschool programs in the public schools is plausibly related to better pay and benefits that enables them to hire teachers with at least a bachelor's degree.

3 • 5 The Quality of State Prekindergarten Programs

The quality standards represents a set of minimum criteria needed to ensure effective prekindergarten programs. The quality of state prekindergarten programs involve teacher credentials and training. State Pre-K polices are evaluated based on whether programs require teachers to have a bachelor's degree; whether they require teachers to have specialization in preschool education; whether they require assistant teachers to have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent credential; and whether they require teachers to have at least 15 hours of annual in-service training³⁾.

Early learning standards are critical factor in determining the quality of a state's prekindergarten program. Statewide early learning standards offer programs guidance and ensure that they cover the full range of areas essential to children's learning and development. States should have comprehensive early learning standards covering all areas identified as fundamental by the National Education Goals Panel—children's physical well-being and motor development, social/emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge. Unfortunately, just over half (27) of the states had comprehensive early learning standards for prekindergarten program³⁾.

Teacher qualifications to be critical in determining the quality of a program. Better education and training for teachers—both before they begin working with children and on an ongoing basis as they update their skills and knowledge—can improve the interaction between children and teachers. This, in turn, affects children's learning.

Twenty-five states required all state preschool programs require teachers to have a bachelor's degree; thirty-five states required all state preschool programs require teachers to have specialization in preschool education; twelve states required all state preschool programs require assistant teachers to have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent credential; thirty-three states required all states preschool programs require teachers to have at least 15 hours of annual in-service training³⁾ .

Class size and staff-child ratios are also emphasized in the Quality Standards. States are expected to limit class sizes to 20 at most, and to have no more than 10 children per teacher.

With smaller classes and fewer children per teacher, children have greater opportunities for interaction with adults and can receive more individualized attention. Twenty-six states required all states preschool programs to limit class sizes to 20 or fewer children. Twenty-eight states required staff-child ratios of 1: 10 or better. There are still several states that do not limit class size and/or ratio. Many have strong guidelines that are followed by all (or nearly all) programs and function as virtual states standards. This is not always true, however³⁾.

Twenty states required all programs to provide vision, hearing, and health screening and referral, as well as additional support service. Finally, 16 states required meals to be available to all participating children³⁾.

3 • 6 Head Start

3 • 6 • 1 What Is Head Start?

Head Start is a Federal program for preschool children from low-income families. The Head Start program is operated by local non-profit organizations in almost every county in the country. Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They also receive free medical and dental care, have healthy meals and snacks, and enjoy playing indoors and outdoors in a safe setting.

Head Start helps all children succeed. Services are offered to meet the special needs of children with disabilities. Most children in Head Start are between the ages of three and five years old. Services are also available to infants and toddlers in selected sites.

The federal government's major contribution to preschool education funding in 2004 – 2005 was the \$6.8 billion. It spent on the federal Head Start program. Head Start targets preschool education and other services to young children in families in poverty, and in 2003 – 2004 served 11 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds and 7 percent of the nation's 3-year-olds. This is less than half of the children who qualify, as 21 percent of children under 5 are in poverty in the United States³⁾.

Federal Head Start enrollment of the population 3 and 4 years old in 2003 – 2004 is 733,414. Total federal Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment of the population ages 0 to 5 years old in 2003 – 2004 is 896,299. State-funded Head Start enrollment of the population in 2003 – 2004 is 17,431⁴⁾.

Head Start is the safety net for the education of young children in poverty. The federal

Head Start program provided \$7,222 per child, and programs obtain additional funding (20 percent) locally from cash or in-kind contributions of resources³⁾. Head Start is an entirely federal program, not a joint state-local program relying heavily on local revenue as with many state preschool programs.

3 • 6 • 2 What Can the Head Start Program Offer ?

Head Start provides children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. Head Start staff members offer children love, acceptance, understanding, and the opportunity to learn and to experience success. Head Start children socialize with others, solve problems, and have other experiences which help them become self-confident. The children also improve their listening and speaking skills.

The children spend time in stimulating settings where they form good habits and enjoy playing with toys and working on tasks with classmates. Head Start child will also be examined by skilled professionals for any health problems. Professionals will arrange vision and hearing tests and any needed immunizations. Head Start offers a nutrition assessment and dental exams as well. Children with health need receive follow-up care. Mental health and other services are available for children and families with special needs.

3 • 6 • 3 Child's Routine in a Head Start Program

Most children who enrolled in Head Start attend a half-day center-based program. However, some communities may operate a full day programs or provide Head Start services through a home-based setting. In a home-based program, staff called Home Visitors teach parents how to provide learning experiences for their own children.

Some center-based programs offer children bus rides to and from home. When the children arrive at the center, they are greeted warmly by their teachers. They put whatever they have brought from home in a place which is their own to use every day.

Classroom time includes many different activities. Some teachers begin the day by asking the children to sit in a circle. This encourages the children to talk about an idea or experience they want to share with others. In some centers, the children plan their activities. They may choose among art, playing with blocks or toys, science activities, dancing to music, looking at books, or pretend housekeeping. Children can switch activities if they prefer another challenge. Each day, they have time to work in a small group with other children and play outdoors on safe playground equipment.

At lunchtime, children receive a nutritious meal and brush their teeth. All the children are taught to wash their hands before meals, and are encouraged to develop good personal and health habits. If they come for an afternoon session, they also receive a healthy snack.

3 • 6 • 4 What Can Head Start Offer a Child's Family

Head Start offers a child's family a sense of belonging, other support services, and a chance to be involved in activities to help the whole family. The family can take part in training classes on many subjects, such as child rearing, job training, learning about health and nutrition, and using free resources in the own community. Some parents learn the English language; others learn to read. Head Start also offers assistance to parents interested in obtaining a high school General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or other adult education opportunities.

If a child's family have a family member with a special problem, such as drug or alcohol abuse, job loss, or other family crisis, the family can receive help through Head Start.

A family can become a Head Start volunteer and learn more about child development. This experience may later qualify the family for training which can help them find employment in the child care field.

A family can also have a voice in the Head Start program by serving on various committees. Parents' experiences in Head Start have raised their own self-confidence and improved their ability to make decisions.

3 • 6 • 5 McPherson and Marion County Head Start

McPherson & Marion County Head Start is located in McPherson, Kansas, and population is about 15,000. It is one hour drive from Wichita, Kansas. The researcher observed at McPherson & Marion County Head Start in September, 2006. It opened in Spring, 1994. There are 60 children who attend the program. Morning class: 30 and afternoon class: 30. There are 3 children with disabilities.

Qualifications: To qualify, the family must live within the boundaries of McPherson or Marion Counties and meet the federal income guidelines (2006–2007 Income Guidelines: Size of Family 1~Annual Income \$ 9,800, 2~\$ 13,200, 3~\$ 16,600, 4~\$ 20,000, 5~\$ 23,400, 6~\$ 26,800, 7~\$ 30,200, 8~\$ 33,600, for each additional person, add \$ 3,400.) and the child must be at least three years old by August 31st. Enrollment is open to children regardless of race, sex, creed, color, national origin or handicapping condition. Special services are

provided for children with disabilities.

Enrollment: Enrollment is simple, all that is needed is to provide a copy of the child's birth certificate, immunization records, social security card and medical card. Proof of family income is also needed to meet eligibility requirements. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

Health: All children have a physical exam, dental exam, and updated immunizations upon enrollment in Head Start. Children without insurance or a medical card will receive these health services free of charge.

Social Services: Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the program by helping in the classroom and also serving on policy making committees.

Education: Children learn through play during the preschool years. Learning centers are set up within the classrooms to teach children the skills that they need to be successful in kindergarten. Half day morning or afternoon sessions are available. Classes are held Monday through Thursday during the school year. All day all year services are available for working families that qualify.

Nutrition: Head Start children who attend the morning session receive breakfast and lunch. Afternoon children receive lunch and a snack. There is no charge for these meals or snacks.

The Sample of a Menu

- October 5th. Breakfast: Cereal, Biscuits & Gravy, Fresh fruit, Cold Milk
Lunch: Hamburger, French Fries, Whole Kernel Corn, Strawberries & Banana, Cold Milk
Snack: Peaches & Cottage Cheese
- October 17th. Breakfast: Pancake & Sausage on a Stick, Cereal, Fruit Juice, Cold Milk
Lunch: Chicken Sandwich, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Snow Peas Pears, Hot Roll, Cold Milk
Snack: Mandarin Oranges, Raisin Toast
- October 31st. Breakfast: English Muffin with Ham, cereal, Fruit Juice Cold Milk
Lunch: Tuna Casserole, Peas, Slice of Bread, Peaches, Cold Milk
Snack: Blueberry Muffin, Milk

Transportation: Free busing to and from Head Start may be available.

3・7 Roosevelt Elementary School: 4-year-old Pre-kindergarten Program

Roosevelt Elementary School is located in McPherson Kansas, and population is about 15,000. It is one hour drive from Wichita, Kansas. McPherson Elementary Schools are Eisenhower Elementary School, Lincoln Elementary School, Roosevelt Elementary School and Washington Elementary School. The researcher observed a 4-year-old pre-kindergarten program at Roosevelt Elementary School in September, 2006. The school offers a half-day prekindergarten program for qualifying 4-year-olds living in the school district. Classes meet daily with morning sessions from 8:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and afternoon sessions from 12:15 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Programs are located at Roosevelt Elementary School.

This program is offered free of charge to children who qualify and reside in the McPherson USD 418 boundaries. To qualify for this program one of the following must apply to the child.

- Child comes from a single parent family.
- Child has a parent that was a teen when the child was born.
- Child has a parent that did not complete high school or receive a GED.
- Child's family qualifies as low income according to school lunch guidelines.
- Child comes from a limited English speaking family.
- Child has possible academic delays.

Income Eligibility Guidelines for Child Nutrition Program Benefits

July 1, 2006—June 30, 2007

Household Size	Annual Income	Monthly Income
1	\$ 0 to \$ 12,740	\$ 1,062
2	\$ 0 to \$ 17,160	\$ 1,430
3	\$ 0 to \$ 21,580	\$ 1,799
4	\$ 0 to \$ 26,000	\$ 2,167
5	\$ 0 to \$ 30,420	\$ 2,535
6	\$ 0 to \$ 34,840	\$ 2,904
7	\$ 0 to \$ 39,260	\$ 3,272
8	\$ 0 to \$ 43,680	\$ 3,640
9	\$ 0 to \$ 48,100	\$ 4,009

10	\$ 0 to \$ 52,520	\$ 4,378
Each additional family member		
	+ \$ 4,420	+ \$ 369

To be eligible for this program a child must be 4-years-old by August 31.

Enrollment decisions are based on academic pre-testing as well as the above qualifications.

4. How Kindergartners are Learning

4 • 1 The No Child Left Behind Act and Teachers

Kindergarten is an important transition year for young children. Generally, children must be 5 years old on or before September 1st. of the year they will be starting kindergarten program. Kindergarten education is not necessarily compulsory.

School enrollment of the population 5 years old in October 1998 is 93.4 percent. 2971,000 children are in kindergarten and 653,000 children are in nursery school⁴⁾.

For the last 20 years, there has been a persistent escalation of academic demand on kindergartens. In one survey, 85% of elementary principals indicated that academic achievement in kindergarten has medium or high priority in their schools. Many middle-class parents who visit their child's school convey the message that their only criterion for judging a teacher's effectiveness is the teacher's success in advancing their child's reading accomplishments⁸⁾.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires States to have a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by the end of the 2005 – 2006 school year. No Child Behind Act, signed into law by President Bush in January 2002, provides a variety of new tools to enable the Federal Government, State, and local districts to improve teacher quality and elevate the teaching profession. Through the No Child Left Behind Act and in his budget proposals, President Bush proposes some key elements of the President's teacher quality agenda include: Improving Teacher Quality, Enhancing the Teaching Profession and Work Environment, Tools for Teachers in Specific Area of Instruction⁶⁾.

Kindergarten classroom activities typically cover many of the language arts and mathematics concepts and skills that provide important foundations for learning throughout the elementary school years. Kindergarten teachers play an important role in children's

kindergarten experiences. The importance of quality teachers in students' educational experiences has been highlighted with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Act requires that schools have a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by the 2005–06 school year.

In the fall of 1998, over 190,000 teachers were teaching in public and private school kindergarten programs. Approximately 80 percent worked in public school and about 20 percent worked in private schools, with 5 percent teaching in Catholic schools and 15 percent teaching in a diverse group of private schools such as those affiliated with non Catholic religious organizations and non-religious school association, and those not affiliated with any association. Overall, about 61 percent of all kindergarten teachers taught a full-day class, 22 percent reported they taught one half-day kindergarten class, and 16 percent reported they taught two half day kindergarten classes⁹⁾.

Attendance in full day kindergarten programs has increased over the years. In the early 1970s, less than 20 percent of all kindergartners attended a full day program. By spring of 1999, 56 percent of all kindergarten children attended a full day program.

The majority of kindergarten teachers were female (98 percent). Fifteen percent of public school teachers at the elementary school level were male in the 1999–2000 school year. The paucity of male teachers was even more pronounced in kindergarten classrooms. In fall 1998, about 2 percent of kindergarten teachers were male⁹⁾.

Most of the nation's kindergarten teachers were White (84 percent), and a small percent were members of minority groups (6 percent Black, 6 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent other race/ethnicity or multiracial)⁹⁾.

In the fall of 1998, almost all (98 percent) of the nation's kindergarten teachers had at least a bachelor's degree and many had earned advanced degrees. Two percent of kindergarten teachers reported not having a bachelor's degree. For about 63 percent of kindergarten teachers, a bachelor's degree was the highest degree held. Twenty-nine percent had earned a master's degree, and 6 percent reported having an education specialist or doctoral degree. The highest concentration of kindergarten teachers without a bachelor's degree taught in non-Catholic private schools (13 percent). More public school kindergarten teachers reported having earned a master's degree as their highest degree (32 percent), compared with Catholic school kindergarten teachers (18 percent) and other private school kindergarten teachers (19 percent). Eighty-four percent of all kindergarten teachers reported having full certification, 12 percent reported having other types of certification, and

3 percent reported having no teaching certificate⁹⁾.

Public school kindergarten teachers found that, on average, teachers had about 9 years of kindergarten teaching experience. On average, kindergarten teachers reported having about 8 years of kindergarten teaching experience.

4 • 2 Macfeat Laboratory School at Winthrop University:Kindergarten

Macfeat Laboratory School is located in Rock Hill, South Carolina and population is about 50,000. It is 30 minute drive from Charlotte, North Carolina. The researcher observed a kindergarten program at Macfeat Laboratory School in September, 2006.

The Macfeat Laboratory School is operated by the College of Education as a training/demonstration/research facility. Macfeat is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC), an organization that recognizes outstanding early childhood programs which meet national standards of quality. Staffed by professional educators with advanced degrees, graduate and undergraduate students, and numerous volunteers.

The classroom is child-centered, designed with learning centers that foster independence, and social/emotional needs of each child while exploring ways to best meet the educational challenges facing parents and teachers of young children in the twenty-first century.

The child must be five years old on or before September 1st.

Daily Schedule: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
 After School Care 3:30 – 5:30
Location: Winthrop University

Hot lunches and morning and afternoon snacks are provided.

The sample of a Lunch Menu: September 7th. Fried Turkey Cutlet, Yellow Rice, Baby Carrots Applesauce, Milk
September 14th.
Sliced Ham, Macaroni & Cheese, Green Beans, Pineapple, Milk
September 27th. Hamburger with Bun, French Fries, Carrots with Dip, Bananas, Milk

The fees for the 2007–2008 school year are as follows:

Application fee (non-refundable)	\$ 25
Registration fee (non-refundable, due upon acceptance)	\$ 80
Materials fee (non-refundable, due August 2006)	\$ 175
Tuition: \$4100 for the year, After School Care (3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)	\$ 20 per week

Classrooms are arranged in learning centers and a quiet center. Each center is designed to facilitate learning in one or more developmental areas and promote the development of specific skills. The following centers are incorporated into each classroom: Reading/Language, Math/Manipulatives, Home Living/Dramatic Play, Computer Literacy and Blocks.

Macfeat Laboratory School is not only accredited by the NAEYC but also affiliated with Winthrop's nationally-accredited teacher education program. Also the school is certified to participate in the ABC Voucher Program and Licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Service to ensure a safe, protected learning environment. The information about this school is as follows: Certified head teachers with master's degrees and Assistant teachers with bachelor's degrees; Low child-to-teacher ratio (16 children and 3 teachers); Computer networked classrooms.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's largest professional organization of early childhood education published position statements on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in 1986 and 1987. Many Childhood educators and other professionals define developmentally appropriate programs as programs that contribute to children's development. This book is published by NAEYC promote high quality, developmentally appropriate programs for all children and their families. More than a half million early childhood educators, other professionals, decision makers, parents, have read Developmentally Appropriate Practice. This book is a guidelines for making decisions in the classroom. NAEYC's goal is not only to improve the quality of current early childhood practice but also to continue to encourage the kind of questioning and debate among early childhood professionals that are necessary for the continued growth of professional knowledge in the field.

5. A Wide Gap Between Lower-and Higher-Income Children

As states implement the No Child Left Behind Act, designed to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and math by 2013–14. It is also needed to ensure that children enter school ready and able to succeed. However, that far too many children enter school ill-prepared.

Studies document a wide gap between lower-and higher-income children before they enter kindergarten.

Preschool education services are not readily and equitably available to all. Even when service are available, parents are the prime payers, often expending more of their income for child care and early education than they do for college. . . . at precisely the time in life when they are beginning their careers and can least affords such burdensome expenditures. Payment for early care and education can amount to 7% of annual income, often soaring higher for low-and moderate-income families²⁾.

By the time children enter kindergarten, there already is a wide gap in their readiness for school. At age 3, high socio-economic status (SES) <–in addition to income, SES takes into account such characteristics as parental education and social status–> children have average vocabularies of 1100 words, middle SES children have average vocabularies of 750 words, and low SES children have average vocabularies of 480 words. Lower SES children enter school with much poorer skills in the major areas of development and learning. Average achievement scores for kindergarten children in the highest SES group are 60 percent higher than those in the lowest SES group. Only 47 percent of low SES kindergarteners are likely to have attended a center-based program (including Head Start) prior to kindergarten entry, compared with 66 percent of higher SES children. Moreover, higher SES children have access to higher-quality programs, further benefiting them¹⁰⁾.

When children begin kindergarten behind, they continue to fall further and further behind. High-quality early childhood program can make a different in school readiness despite poverty and other risk factors in children's backgrounds. Children, including those low and high SES, who attend high-quality centers, score significantly higher on measures of skills and abilities that are important for school success compared with children from lower quality centers. While children's abilities are typically related to their families' income level, the quality of the early childhood experiences can make a difference over and

above the effects of family characteristics.

High-quality early childhood education program have a high return on investment for low-income children. In the short term, longitudinal studies of high-quality early childhood programs find increased achievement test scores, decreased rates of being held back in school, and decreased placement in special education among low-income children. In the longer term, studies also find increased high school graduation and decreased crime and delinquency rates¹⁰⁾.

In the U.S. state funded kindergarten programs are offered free of charge. State funded preschool programs are offered free of charge to children who qualify. Among 50 states 29 state preschool programs have an income requirement. Few state preschool programs focus on 3-year-olds. As a result, state program's enrollment is only 3 percent of the nation's 3-year-olds. Only 17 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds are enrolled in state preschool programs in 2004–2005. Many preschool age children have to go to child care centers or nursery school on payment of quite high monthly fees.

The researcher visited Harvard-Affiliated Child Care Centers in Boston MA. Soldiers Field Park Children's Center is located on campus of Harvard Business School. The information about this center is as follows: Ages 2 months to 5 years; 5–day enrollment; parent participation encouraged but not required; parents serve on board; hot lunch, snacks, infant formulas included in tuition; limited financial assistance; open academic year; summer session.

Hours for Infants, Toddlers and Preschool

Full time 8a.m. – 6p.m.
Half-day 8a.m. – 1p.m.

Monthly Fees	Full time	Half-day
Infants I & II	\$ 2,126	\$ 1,361
Infants/Toddlers	\$ 1,860	\$ 1,265
Toddlers I	\$ 1,820	\$ 1,165
Toddlers II	\$ 1,692	\$ 1,083
Preschool I	\$ 1,452	\$ 929
Preschool II	\$ 1,366	\$ 874

Monthly fees of preschools vary considerably. Although average fees are around \$ 500, one of the highest (Harvard-Affiliated Child Care Center) is \$ 1452, and it shows that

prestigious preschools demand higher fees.

6. Conclusions

Once they enter kindergarten, America's children are taught by professionals with at least a four-year college degree. Prior to kindergarten, their teachers are far less prepared. Young children's learning and development clearly depend on the educational qualifications of their teachers. This paper concludes with following policy recommendations:

Require preschool teachers to have a four-year degree and specialized training

Design professional development programs enabling current early education teachers to acquire a four-year degree

Pay preschool teachers salaries and benefits comparable to those of similarly qualified teachers in K-12 education.

In some districts, as many as 60% of kindergarteners are judged to be unready for first grade. When children begin kindergarten behind, they continue to fall further and further behind. Studies show that there is already a wide gap between children from lower income families and those from higher income families before they enter kindergarten. America's preschools vary widely in school fees. Most 3- and 4-year olds in France attend public schools but not in America. Only 3 percent of the nation's 3-year-olds and 17 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds attend public schools. Many preschool age children have to go to child care centers, nursery school or private preschool on payment of quite high monthly fees. By the time children enter kindergarten, there already is a wide gap in their readiness for school.

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要 旨

日本では格差社会の到来が言われているが、米国でも家庭の所得差が幼児教育格差を作っていると考える。世界のリーダーを自認する米国では、60%近くの幼児が小学校への準備教育を十分に受けておらず、幼稚園に入った時点で教育の遅れを示している。

米国での就園率は全5歳児の93.4%であるが、幼稚園は多くが公立小学校に併設され、ほとんど無料であるため幼稚園児は多い。教育内容も2002年、ブッシュ大統領が定めた条令（No Child Left Behind Act）により、更に望ましい姿となっている。しかし3～4歳児が通う幼稚園就園前施設（Preschool、保育園など）は多くが私立であり、ほとんど無料の公立に通う幼児の数は2004–2005年度で全3歳児の3%、全4歳児の17%と少数である。これは全米50州の内、12の州では全くpreschool教育を行っていない事、また、行っているとされる29の州でも入園資格規定（片親である事や親のどちらかが高校を卒業していないこと等）がある事が理由として挙げられる。即ち、3～4歳児が公立での教育を受ける機会をほとんど与えられていないのである。

また米国では5歳以下の子どもの21%が貧困家庭に属し、その子ども達を対象としてヘッド・スタート計画が行われている。主として3～4歳の子どものための補償教育であるが、貧困家庭の半数以下の子どもしか参加していないのが現状である。

全3歳児の37.6%が何らかの教育を受けているとはいえ、そのほとんどの子ども達が私立の保育園に通っているのであり、4歳児では66.6%が何らかの教育を受けているが、72%が私立保育園に通っているのである。

このように、多くの3～4歳児は、保育料を払って私立園に通っているのであり、その教育内容も保育料も園により大きな開きがある。おしなべて良い教育を掲げる園ほど保育料も高く、親の収入が幼児教育に多大な影響を与えるという不平等な状況を生み出している。この事は、幼稚園に入った時点で既に大きな教育格差ができていた事を示している。

米国は幼児教育、特に3～4歳児教育により一層の公的資金を投入し、教育環境の充実を図る事が喫緊の要事である。