THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES: VIEWS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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Abstract

The transition from early intervention programs to inclusive school settings presents children with developmental disabilities with a range of social challenges. In Queensland, in the year of transition to school, many children with developmental disabilities attend an Early Childhood Development Program for 2 to 3 days each week and also begin attendance in a mainstream program with the latter increasing to full-time attendance during the year. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected by parent interviews and teacher questionnaires for 62 children participating in the Transition to School Project regarding their perceptions of the success of the transition process and the benefits and challenges of inclusion. Both parents and teachers saw a range of benefits to children from their inclusion in ‘regular’ classrooms, with parents noting the helpfulness of teachers and their support for inclusion. Challenges noted by parents included the school’s lack of preparation for their child’s particular developmental needs especially in terms of the physical environment while teachers reported challenges meeting the needs of these children within the context and resources of the classroom. Parents were more likely than teachers to view the transition as easy. Correlational analyses indicated that teachers were more likely to view the transition as easy when they felt that the child was appropriately placed in a ‘regular’ classroom. Findings from this project can inform the development of effective transition-to-school programs in the early school years for children with developmental disabilities.
Introduction

The transition to the first year of school has been perceived as pivotal in a child’s experience and a major challenge of early childhood. The success of this transition can be critical in determining future school outcomes (Fabian & Dunlop, 2006). During this period, children and their families face changes in the physical environment, discontinuities in curriculum and educational goals and changes in social interactions and expectations (Dockett & Perry, 2004a; Margetts, 2011). Adjustment to school is dependent on children’s abilities to respond to the demands of a new environment, including behavioural expectations and acceptance of rules as well as the ability to work independently and interact with others (Margetts, 2011). For children with disabilities, this transition can be even more complex and challenging (Janus, Kopchanski, Cameron & Hughes, 2008). The success of the transition to school for children with disabilities depends very strongly on the supports available at the school and the ability of the school to accommodate the child’s needs (Janus et al., 2008).

Research has indicated that typically developing children experience the transition to school as a qualitative change in expectations for behaviour and performance with an emphasis on more formal instruction and specific academic goals (Margetts, 2011; Rimm-Kaufmann, Pianta & Cox, 2000). Recently, there has been a move away from the notion of children’s perceived readiness for school towards a view of the transition process in terms of the connections between different contexts such as family, classroom and community (Dockett & Perry, 2004b). Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000) have proposed a contextual model of the transition to school, drawing upon Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), which describes a network of relationships that has both a direct and indirect influence on children’s transition to school. This model highlights the importance of contexts (for example, community, family and classroom) and relationships between contexts that change over time. The relationships between contexts may support or challenge children’s transition into school and also influence later school outcomes (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). From an ecological perspective, it is therefore important that links between home and school are built in order to ensure successful transitions to school.

In Australia, 4% of children under the age of five years are reported to have a disability (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This proportion rises to 11% among school-aged children. Consistent with Australian educational policy which emphasises inclusion (Education Queensland, 2005), most of these children attend school in ‘regular’ classes. While research on the effects of inclusion in mainstream classrooms is limited, there is
evidence that children with disabilities continue to be faced with a higher risk of negative outcomes across academic, social, emotional and behavioural domains (Baker, Blacher & McIntyre, 2006). In this context, it is imperative to build knowledge about children’s transitions into ‘regular’ education settings so that all parties involved are able to support the children, their families and teachers during this challenging time.

Taking an ecological perspective (Rimm-Kaufmann & Pianta, 2000) means recognising that both parents and teachers are important to the success of children’s transition, and emphasises the need to understand their respective experiences of this process. Studies exploring the expectations of parents and teachers regarding the transition to school for typically developing children indicate some common expectations but also differences (see e.g., Dockett & Perry, 2002; Dockett & Perry, 2004a; Dockett & Perry, 2004b). For example, while both parents and teachers view social skills and communication skills as important, parents appear to place more emphasis on the importance of academic skills than teachers (Dockett & Perry, 2004a; Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Monsen, 2004). In contrast, teachers emphasise organisational adjustment, as demonstrated by being able to follow school routines, as indicative of a successful transition (Dockett & Perry, 2004b).

While the nature of support afforded to parents is regarded as critical to children’s successful transition in mainstream schools, this has received relatively little attention in Australian research (Giallo, Treyvaud, Matthews & Kienhuis, 2010). Parents often express concern about their child’s adjustment during the transition to school (Landesman Ramey, Gaines Lanzi, Phillips & Ramey, 1998; McIntyre, Eckert, Fiese, DiGennaro Reed & Wildenger, 2007) and greater levels of parental worry about their child’s transition is associated with poorer outcomes for children both academically and socially (Giallo, Treyvaud, Matthews & Kienhuis, 2008). Conversely, when parents feel confident about their child’s transition, children demonstrate better social adjustment as they start school (Giallo et al., 2008).

Australian studies of both parents’ and teachers’ perspectives regarding the transition to school of children with developmental disabilities are lacking. This study is unique in its focus on children moving from their supported early childhood programs into progressively increasing amounts of time in mainstream classrooms. It was designed to (1) assess parent perceptions of the inclusive program, satisfaction with the support provided to their child and judgements of the success of the transition process, (2) assess teacher perceptions of the appropriateness of the inclusive placement for the child, satisfaction with the support provided and judgements about the success of the transition process, and (3) examine how
these relate to children’s level of disability and approaches to learning and teachers’ perceptions of the appropriateness of the child’s placement.

**Method**

**Context**

In Queensland Australia, young children with developmental disabilities attend sessional programs at Early Childhood Development Programs (ECDPs). In their transition year, many of these children continue to attend an ECDP for 2 to 3 days each week, while beginning attendance in a mainstream Preparatory (Prep) school program for 2 to 3 days; increasing to full-time attendance if the transition is successful. Prep is a non-compulsory program for children from four and a half to five and a half years of age, provided in schools in the year prior to formal compulsory schooling. Although the curriculum is play-based, there is an expectation that there will be periods of focused teaching and Prep programs are more academically oriented than other prior to school programs (e.g., Preschool). This study was conducted in the year in which children made the transition from full-time ECDP attendance to a mainstream Prep program placement. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from parents and teachers via phone interviews and questionnaires respectively.

**Background to the research**

The Transition to School Project is a longitudinal study which began in 2008. Three sequential year cohorts of children have been recruited from ECDPs and are being tracked across the year in which they begin attendance in a Prep program and the next two years. Eligibility criteria for children included: four to six years of age; experiencing mild to moderate developmental delays; currently attending both an ECDP and Prep program; and expected to participate in a full-time school program in the following year. Relevant permissions and consent were obtained from principals, teachers, and parents. This paper reports on the first wave of data collection.

**Data collection**

Data were collected from the parents and teachers of 54 children (39 boys, 15 girls). The mean age of the children was 5.6 years (age range: 4.11 years to 6.10 years). The most common diagnostic category as identified by parents was Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) including Asperger’s Syndrome.

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1 Funded by the Australian Research Council, 2008-2011, DP0877587
**Parent interviews**

Telephone interviews were conducted with parents (43 mothers, 7 fathers, 1 foster parent and 3 grandparents) to collect both quantitative and qualitative data about their experience of their child’s transition to school. Parents rated their experiences of the Prep program staff (6 items, 5-point scale, see Table 1), their satisfaction with the Prep program and the school (3 items, 4-point scale, see Table 2), the ease of the child’s transition to school (single item, 4-point scale; 1 = very easy, 4 = very difficult) and the adequacy of the support provided by the school to their child (single item, 3-point scale; 1 = more than needed, 3 = less than needed). Parents were asked two open ended questions: (1) What do you think are the benefits of having your child in their current program? and (2) Are there any challenges for you in the inclusion of your child in their current program? Responses were recorded in written notes by the interviewer.

The child’s health and disability status was assessed by parent reports on the 8-item Child Competency Index (adapted from the PEELS Disability Severity Index, Daley, Simmeonsson & Carlson, 2008). Parents rated their child’s expressive language, ability to communicate, understanding of language, ability to learn, think and solve problems (each rated on 4-point scales), activity level, ability to pay attention (rated on 3-point scales), overall health (5-point rating scale), and whether the child’s activities were limited due to a health problem (no = 0; yes = 1). The Competency Index score was the sum of all items, with higher scores indicating lower competence.

**Teacher questionnaires**

Teachers \( n = 50 \) completed a questionnaire to collect data about the child’s transition to school. Teachers rated their experiences with the child on three items assessing the ease of the child’s transition to school (4-point scale; 1 = very easy, 4 = very difficult); the adequacy of the support provided by the school (4-point scale; 1 = very adequate, 4 = not at all adequate); and the appropriateness of the child’s placement in the Prep program (4-point scale; 1 = very appropriate, 4 = not at all appropriate). Teachers were asked to provide written responses to two open-ended questions: (1) What do you think the benefits are of having this child in your classroom? and (2) What challenges are there for you in the inclusion of this child in your classroom?

Teachers also completed the 6-item Approaches to Learning scale (adapted from the Social Skills Rating Scale [SSRS], Gresham & Elliot, 1990, as used in the ECLS-K). rating the
child’s attention, persistence, independence, ease of adaptation to change, ability to keep belongings organised, and eagerness to learn new things (4-point scales; 1 = never to 4 = very often). Items are summed and an average score calculated. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency with this sample (Cronbach’s alpha = .87).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics are presented for the quantitative data and relationships between variables are explored using Spearman correlation coefficients. Spearman’s rho is appropriate for non-normal distributions; it is not affected by outliers and can be used when the associations between variables are non-linear (DeVeaux, Velleman & Bock, 2008).

Qualitative data from the open-ended questions regarding the benefits and challenges of inclusion were analysed by content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) to develop a framework of categories for teacher and parent responses. Content analysis, as described by Graneheim and Lundman, is a method of analyzing interview data in a systematic way. Categories were developed from the data enabling the complexity of categories to emerge from the data, rather than being made to fit within a theoretical framework (Creswell, 2012). These themes are presented with illustrative quotes reconstructed from the interviewers’ notes and teachers’ written comments and discussed in the findings.

Findings

Parents’ perspectives

Parent ratings on the teachers in the Prep Program are presented in Table 1. Overall, parents were very positive about the support received from teachers and the teachers’ interactions with themselves and their children. The majority of parents felt that teachers helped them to gain knowledge and skills, agreed that teaching staff let them know about the good things their child does and felt that teachers valued their opinion about what their child needed to learn. Parents also agreed that the Prep teachers were available when they needed to talk, showed respect for their family’s values and beliefs and were friendly.

Parents’ perspectives of the transition process are presented in Table 2. While approximately a third of parents reported that the transition into the Prep program was ‘very easy’, one

| INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE |

Parents’ perspectives of the transition process are presented in Table 2. While approximately a third of parents reported that the transition into the Prep program was ‘very easy’, one
quarter felt that the transition was ‘very difficult’. Most parents were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’ that the Prep program could accommodate their child’s needs and ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’ with the level of communication from the Prep program. The majority of parents were also ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’ with the school’s commitment to support their child’s learning.

Half of the participating parents (n = 29) reported benefits associated with their child’s attendance in the Prep program. As noted from the telephone interviews these benefits included:

- It gives [child] the chance to associate with normal kids and learn how to relate with them. He is less socially awkward now. (Mother)
- A benefit is in preparing him for school life ahead. It is essential that [child] moves into a mainstream environment. There are gains in social skills. (Mother)
- There are huge benefits. There is more progress this year being in a structured program. It is good being around other children with higher level of ability. He has more confidence. (Mother)
- It is a benefit being mainstream with other children; he is not segregated because of his special needs. Being able to participate with regular children in school-related activities is a benefit. (Mother)

The main themes emerging from the data included benefits with respect to: socialisation opportunities; children gaining confidence in interactions with peers; learning how to engage with others; academic learning; and significant improvements in language and communication.

More than one-third of parents (n = 20) identified concerns about their child’s attendance in the Prep program. The main themes included challenges with respect to: behavioural issues and frequent contacts from school related to their child’s challenging behaviours; supervision and support concerns (e.g. toileting); the school being unprepared for their child; and resistance from the school to the inclusive placement:

- The classroom teacher didn’t know anything about [child’s] disability. There is a lack of understanding about how difficult tasks are for [child] (Mother)
- Initially, the teacher was new to the school and the teacher found him [child] difficult and there were a couple of other children with challenging behavior.
[Child] had some tantrums and he ran away a few times. I found the transition stressful because the teacher was finding it so stressful. (Mother)

Finding the right school was difficult, there is a lack of flexibility with things like the buddy program which was only operating on the day he isn’t attending. It is very stressful. I don’t feel we received any support from the regional office. [The school] did not understand ASD or the problems we were facing. (Father)

These comments centred on the difficulties that their child experienced in a ‘regular’ setting due to a lack of knowledge or experience on the part of school staff with respect to their child’s particular needs. The last summary in particular highlights the parent’s perception that the school was not making an effort to accommodate their child by conducting the ‘buddy program’ on a day when the child was not able to attend. The ‘buddy program’ was designed to support children’s transition to school by pairing them with an older ‘buddy’ to assist children with school routines and activities. This parent perceived that his child was disadvantaged by not having access to the program.

Teachers’ perspectives

Teacher perspectives on the transition process are presented in Table 3. Over half the teachers felt that the child’s transition to Prep was ‘very easy’ or ‘somewhat easy’ while the remainder reported a ‘somewhat difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ transition. Most teachers felt that the child’s placement in the Prep program was ‘appropriate’ or ‘very appropriate’ and that the school level of support for the child was ‘adequate’ or ‘very adequate’. Most teachers also felt that the level of support provided to them was ‘adequate’ or ‘very adequate’ although a few teachers (n=6) felt that the support was ‘not at all adequate’.

Teachers reported a number of benefits from the child’s attendance in the Prep program. Key themes emerging from the data included benefits for the child, benefits for peers and benefits for themselves. Some teachers (n=32) discussed the benefits for the child in terms of opportunities for social interactions within the inclusive setting as illustrated by the following written comments from the open-ended questions:
This child benefits from interacting with children who have different strengths to him

He learns skills through peer modeling in a natural environment

More than half of the teachers \((n = 38)\) also saw benefits for peers with respect to learning about difference and developing tolerance:

Children see there are others who have different needs, skills and learn to take these into account

Other children learn to accept/tolerate all children’s ideas and feelings especially those with special needs

Benefits for classmates – appreciation of difference and developing an ability to understand and assist the needs of others

A similar number of teachers \((n = 37)\) also identified benefits for themselves in terms of their own learning and professional development:

He allows me to expand my knowledge and understanding of his issues, concerns, behavior and needs which I can apply to my whole class to allow for more flexibility and range of activity levels

It reinforces the need to be an explicit teacher that will benefit all children. It makes you reflect on teaching strategies constantly which benefits all children’s learning

Able to interact and develop relationships with children like this child that has a diverse range of strengths, interests and needs

Teachers also reported challenges from the child’s attendance in the Prep program. While some teachers reported no challenges, others reported multiple challenges. Key themes identified included challenges related to the child, to teaching and learning and to a perceived lack of support. Challenges related to the child and their particular needs \((n = 57)\) concerned supervision, safety and behavioural issues as the following comments indicate:

Child requires frequent adult support/monitoring to ensure he is staying on task which impacts on the time I can spend with the rest of the class
Physical/behavioural reactions often need one on one attention and with limited aide time, sometimes the rest of the class is put at risk which this child is being attended to.

Behaviour issues, these cause a lot of disruption. Ninety percent of my time is given to this child which means others are not getting the attention they deserve to learn and excel in their learning environment.

These comments suggest that teachers had difficulty managing non-compliant behavior and were concerned about the disproportionate amount of time required to support the child in the classroom.

Some teachers \( (n = 19) \) reported they experienced challenges related to teaching and learning and ensuring that the child’s needs were met in the Prep program:

*Finding the time to monitor her participation and learning. Her learning is not keeping up with her peers and so it is hard to juggle the curriculum to meet everyone’s needs all the time*

*It is a challenge to ensure that this child’s needs and goals are met every day and that each experience is enjoyable and worthwhile*

*[Child] needs support in most areas of the Prep program to provide him with equal opportunities to access learning*

As these comments make evident, teachers recognised the need to adapt their planning and the curriculum for the child and this was sometimes difficult to achieve.

Half of the teachers \( (n = 25) \) reported challenges related to a lack of support:

*Limited teacher aide time makes it difficult to adequately support this child’s needs*

*Not enough hands. I am flat out coping with the demands of a full Prep class*

*Lack of specialist professional help and support*

As these comments indicate, teachers felt that they needed more support in terms of aide time and specialist support to enable them to work effectively with the whole Prep class.

*INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE*
Correlational analyses

The associations between ease of transition, teacher perceptions of the appropriateness of the Prep placement, child approaches to learning, child competence and parent satisfaction were explored through Spearman correlations. Results are presented in Table 4. Spearman correlations indicated that there were significant relationships between how appropriate the teachers felt the Prep placement was for the child, teacher reported ease of transition ($r_s = -0.371$) and teacher ratings of the child’s approaches to learning ($r_s = -0.466$). Teachers were less likely to report that the Prep placement was appropriate when the transition was difficult and when children were rated lower on their approaches to learning. Teacher reported appropriateness of placement was also positively related to parent satisfaction with the school ($r_s = 0.327$). Children who were rated higher by their teachers in their approaches to learning, were also rated as more competent by their parents ($r_s = -0.413$). These are all moderate associations. There was not a significant relationship between parent and teacher ratings of ease of transition. There were no significant relationships between parent and teacher ratings of ease of transition and child health and disability status as measured by the Child Competency Index. The relationship between parent-rated ease of transition and teacher-rated approaches to learning was not significant.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

This paper presented cross-sectional analyses of data collected from parents and teachers in a study that is tracking children with developmental disabilities who are making the transition from early intervention programs into mainstream schools. These children will be tracked over time from Prep to Year 2. This paper presented data from a sample of children in the study from their first year of participation when these children entered the Prep year. As longitudinal data for these children become available, factors that lead to successful school transitions over time will be identified.

Most parents were happy with the classroom teachers and the Prep programs that their children attended. Parents felt that their child was treated with respect, that teachers were supportive and valued their opinions. Overall, both parents and teachers reported more benefits than challenges in the child’s inclusion in the Prep program. However, while most
teachers and parents viewed the entry into Prep as very easy or somewhat easy, a sizeable proportion of children were seen as experiencing a difficult transition. Nearly half of the Prep teachers indicated that the child’s transition had been either somewhat difficult or very difficult. Given the significance of school transition as a factor affecting children’s overall success at school, these findings are a cause for concern. As noted by McIntyre, Eckert, Fiese, DiGennaro, and Wildenger (2007), differences in perceptions between parents and teachers at the initial transition into school for children with additional learning needs are problematic. It is important that teachers in their practices provide outreach to parents to build collaborative relationships in order to address any problems that arise.

Teachers who rated the child’s transition as more challenging were likely to view the placement of the child in the Prep program as inappropriate and to evaluate the child’s approaches to learning less positively. Teachers reported that the children who experienced difficulty in the transition to Prep had problems keeping their belongings organised, difficulty working independently, lacked persistence and did not pay attention well. The lack of such skills is likely to make the transition experience challenging for many young children with developmental disabilities and they are likely to struggle to learn these skills. Greater attention to these learning-related social skills, such as persistence and cooperation, prior to entry into school and at the outset of the transition year is essential. This is needed in order to maximise opportunities for a positive adjustment into the more formal school environment then these children will have previously encountered.

Social outcomes were regularly identified by both parents and teachers as benefits of having a child with special needs attend a mainstream class. Results from parent interviews indicated that most parents saw socialisation and learning to play with other children as a major benefit of their child attending an inclusive setting. Clearly, the parents and teachers in our study are identifying gains in children’s development as a benefit of having the child in an inclusive program. In line with previous research (e.g., Frederickson et al., 2004), teachers in this study emphasised the social advantages of inclusion over the academic advantages while parents identified both social and academic benefits. Teachers also identified benefits for the typically developing children in the classroom in terms of acceptance of difference and developing an understanding of children with special needs and benefits for themselves in terms of their personal and professional development.
Parent satisfaction with the school placement was related to the extent that they felt the school provided support to the child. A few parents also felt that there had been some resistance to their preference regarding placement of their child in a Prep class at the school and several parents felt that there was insufficient support provided. However, the majority of the parents were satisfied with the school and perceived that the teaching staff valued their opinions. In contrast to some previous research (e.g., Frederickson et al., 2004; Janus, Kopechanski, Cameron & Hughes, 2008; Wolery, 1999), the parents in this study were generally satisfied with the level of communication from the school and the school’s ability to provide for their child’s needs. Given that previous research has indicated that parents consider good communication to be a particularly important issue, these findings are encouraging.

Although this study is not without limitations, including the potential bias associated with survey respondents, the findings are generally in line within the larger transition to school literature. There are several implications for practice. Parents of children with developmental disabilities are likely to have a long history of relationships with professionals in early intervention programs and these parents may expect to be quite active participants in supporting their children’s through the transition to a mainstream school. Individualised family involvement in planning for the transition may be essential to optimise outcomes for children. Family-centred communication strategies are also important (Knopf & Swick, 2008). Teachers can actively seek the ideas of families in planning and evaluating the transition process.

In conclusion, while the majority of parents and half of the teachers participating in this study reported that the child’s transition to the Prep program was at least somewhat easy. A number of parents and teachers indicated that the experience was not always positive. For teachers, but not for parents, perceived difficulties appeared to be greater for children who had fewer learning-related social skills that enabled an easy transition into the more formal school environment. There also was evidence of ‘poorer fit’ between some teachers’ expectations, the classroom’s resources, and the children’s competencies. While the finding that parents and teachers have different perspectives about the transition process is not unexpected, this research is important in raising the issues that may promote a more positive and successful transition to school for young children with additional learning needs. From an ecological perspective, families’ and teachers’ values and expectations can be facilitators or barriers to successful inclusion. How these values and expectations contribute to the long-term success
of these children in the early years of school will be examined as further waves of data from this longitudinal project become available.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree/agree % (n)</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree % (n)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree/disagree % (n)</th>
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<td>Help me to gain knowledge and skills about what I can do to help my child learn</td>
<td>61% (33)</td>
<td>30% (16)</td>
<td>9% (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let me know about the good things my child does</td>
<td>85% (46)</td>
<td>7% (4)</td>
<td>7% (4)</td>
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<td>Value my opinion about what my child needs to learn</td>
<td>74% (40)</td>
<td>19% (10)</td>
<td>7% (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are available when I need to talk</td>
<td>87% (47)</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
<td>7% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show respect for my family’s values and beliefs</td>
<td>93% (50)</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are friendly</td>
<td>96% (52)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
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</table>
Table 2.
Parent ratings of the child’s transition to the Prep program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How easy was the transition into the Prep program?</th>
<th>Very easy % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat easy % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat difficult % (n)</th>
<th>Very difficult % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30% (16)</td>
<td>30% (16)</td>
<td>15% (8)</td>
<td>26% (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with ability to accommodate child’s needs</th>
<th>Very satisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41% (22)</td>
<td>43% (23)</td>
<td>11% (6)</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with level of communication</th>
<th>Very satisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54% (29)</td>
<td>33% (18)</td>
<td>11% (6)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with commitment to helping child learn</th>
<th>Very satisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied % (n)</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% (27)</td>
<td>41% (22)</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
<td>4% (2)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Table 3.
Teacher ratings of the child’s transition to the Prep program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How easy was the transition into the Prep program?</th>
<th>Very easy</th>
<th>Somewhat easy</th>
<th>Somewhat difficult</th>
<th>Very difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% (n)</td>
<td>18% (9)</td>
<td>38% (19)</td>
<td>30% (15)</td>
<td>14% (7)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How appropriate is the placement of this child in your classroom?</th>
<th>Very appropriate</th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Not appropriate</th>
<th>Not at all appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% (n)</td>
<td>31% (15)</td>
<td>58% (28)</td>
<td>8% (4)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How adequate is the school level of support for the child?</th>
<th>Very adequate</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Not adequate</th>
<th>Not at all adequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% (n)</td>
<td>16% (8)</td>
<td>57% (28)</td>
<td>16% (8)</td>
<td>8% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How adequate is the level of support provided to you?</th>
<th>Very adequate</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Not adequate</th>
<th>Not at all adequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% (n)</td>
<td>12% (6)</td>
<td>61% (30)</td>
<td>12% (6)</td>
<td>12% (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.
Spearman correlations - teacher and parent reports on child’s transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher Appropriate placement</th>
<th>Teacher Approaches to learning</th>
<th>Teacher Support from school</th>
<th>Parent Support to child from school</th>
<th>Parent Satisfaction with school</th>
<th>Parent Competency index</th>
<th>Parent Ease of transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Ease of transition</td>
<td>-.371**</td>
<td>-.333*</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Appropriate placement</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.466**</td>
<td>.477**</td>
<td>-.154</td>
<td>.327*</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Approaches to learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>-.188</td>
<td>-.262</td>
<td>-.413**</td>
<td>-.047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Support from school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Support to child from school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.546**</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Satisfaction with school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Competency index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * = p < .05, ** = p < .01