AN ANALYSIS
OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' OPINIONS
OF STUDENTS WHO BEGIN SCHOOL EARLY

MASTER'S THESIS

Submitted to the School of Education
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose for the Study

Most people agree that children mature at different rates. Just because a child turns one does not mean it can walk or talk. However, by age two most people would expect a child to walk and at least say words or phrases. But, what if children of this age do not walk or talk. Does it mean something is wrong with them? Not necessarily. It may be they are just not ready. So, why is it when a child turns five he/she is expected to be ready to start school? In most states four year olds are permitted to enter kindergarten. Many of these children do have the skills necessary to begin kindergarten and, therefore, may be successful throughout their school days. But, what about the children who are not ready and enter school nonetheless?

The age at which a child should enter school has been a topic of controversy for many years and continues to be of great debate today (DeMeis & Stearns, 1992). Teachers, parents, and administrators all have different views as to the best age for children to begin school (Dietz & Wilson, 1985). States vary on the cutoff date for entering school. In Ohio, the researcher's state, the policy allows children who turn five before October 1 to enroll in kindergarten. Some states allow students to enter kindergarten as long as
they are five by December 31, and other states require children to be five by June 1 (Jacobson 1997a).

Gesell and Ilg (1946) described most five year olds as able to print letters, names, and numbers. They are also able to complete tasks and transition easily between activities. One would believe a child capable of these activities would be ready for school. However, the writer has observed many children entering school unable to do any of these tasks. In analyzing why these children cannot do these tasks, the writer has discovered that these children have more difficulty in school than their older peers.

Most often these students are referred to as summer children. They have birthdays in June, July, August, or September and begin school at age four or within two months after turning five (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986; Crosser, 1991). These students are sometimes a full year younger than their classmates, especially if some parents delay enrolling their child in kindergarten until the following year. These children often lack the social, academic, or emotional skills needed for school success (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

Much research has been done in the area of early entry. Many researchers believe these students should be in school (DeMeis & Stearns, 1992; Morrison, Alberts, & Griffith, 1997; Portner, 1997) while others support the idea of delaying entry until the following year (Crosser, 1991; Sweetland & De Simone, 1987; Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986). Teachers also have strong opinions about the readiness of
summer children who begin school early. Their perceptions are based primarily upon their personal teaching experiences. To determine the perceptions of the teachers toward this concern the researcher conducted this study.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to analyze teachers' opinions toward the readiness of summer children who begin school between 4 and 5.2 years of age.

Assumptions

As a means of gathering information on teachers' opinions a Likert-type survey was used. The researcher assumed the instrument was reliable and also that the respondents answered honestly and in a manner that reflects their true perceptions of summer children.

Limitations

One possible limitation was the interpretation of the questions on the survey. Other possible limitations were sample size and the number of teachers who responded.

Definition of Terms

Summer Children

Summer children are children who are born in June, July, August or September and enter school between 4 and 5.2 years of age (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

Elementary Teachers

Elementary teachers are teachers currently teaching in kindergarten through fourth grade.
Social Skills or Readiness

Social skills or readiness refers to the ability of the child to work with others (communicating, sharing, and cooperating in a school community).

Emotional Readiness

Emotional readiness refers to the ability of the child to adjust to different environments and pressures associated with school without emotional stress.

Academic Readiness

Academic readiness refers to academic knowledge a child should possess in order to complete activities require by a kindergarten curriculum (saying and recognizing numbers to ten; the alphabet; identifying shapes, colors, and patterns; writing their name; and copying letters).

Delayed Entry

Delayed entry refers to summer children who are held out of school the first year they are chronologically eligible to enter (Kundert, Brent, & May, 1995).

Early Entry

Early entry refers to summer children who begin school at the earliest, chronologically eligible time.

Developmental/Mental Age

Developmental age refers to the age at which a child is behaving (Ilg & Ames, 1972).

Actual Age

Actual age refers to a child's chronological age.
Maturity

Maturity refers to the way a child behaves or body develops compared to age appropriateness (Ames, 1967).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter the writer presents the literature related to children's age at which they enter school. It is divided into three sections: Arguments for Early School Entry, Arguments Against Early School Entry, and Recommendations of Researchers for Schools, Parents, and Practitioners.

Arguments for Early School Entry

One argument for early school entry is students who are economically disadvantaged often do not receive the skills needed for educational success (Viadero, 1998). Jacobson (1997b) stated that, "Many of the nation's young children are not attending early-education programs or getting the learning experiences they need at home to prepare them for school." Likewise, Cosden, Zimmer, and Tuss (1993) reported students who are classified as members of the lower socioeconomic class most often cannot afford to attend pre-school. Statistics show that more pre-school students come from families with higher education and incomes. Therefore, students who are not getting the necessary help from parents or pre-school teachers need to be in kindergarten where they would be exposed to educational instruction (Smith, 1995).

Another argument for early school entry is there is no significant difference between students who begin school
early and those who are delayed entering by a year (Kundert, Brent, & May, 1995). Morrison, Griffith, and Alberts (1997) conducted a study of 539 students: 152 old first grade students, 114 young first grade students, and 126 old kindergarten students. Children were selected over a three year period from twenty-six public elementary schools in Western Canada. Several background variables were examined to identify any factors that may have influenced the results obtained from the study. There was no significant evidence found which could have contributed to any differences obtained.

Students were tested in several areas. Of all the tests given only the reading and mathematics tests were administered in the fall and repeated in the spring. Midway through the year an intelligence test was given. Results showed outcomes of both older and younger first grade students to have discrepancies favoring the older students. But, compared to pretests (that had the same discrepancies) the younger first grade students achieved just as much, if not more, than the older first grade students. Older kindergarten students did not demonstrate as great a degree of improvement. Thus, based upon the results of this study older kindergartners test scores were significantly lower than the younger first grade students, who chose to begin school early. Also, the young first grade students showed as much progress from where they began the year as did the older students.
Similarly, Baer (as cited in Kinard and Reinherz, 1986) found the older students performed better in most areas but that the differences diminish after eighth grade. Bergin, Osburn, and Cryan (1996) found that differences subsided at about third grade. Furthermore, Kinard and Reinherz found no significant difference in scores based on age for students at third and fourth grade assessments.

DeMeis & Stearns (1992) support the position of Bergin, Osburn, and Cryan (1996) and Kinard and Reinherz (1986). DeMeis and Stearns concluded:

The teachers should not confuse temporary lower skill levels that are within the range of normal development with continued long-term failure. Past research indicates that in many cases, student academic and social skills will eventually even out and enable children with lower skill levels to compete satisfactorily with their classmates (May & Welch, 1986; Miller & Norris, 1967).

The above studies illustrate that although there may be a slight academic disadvantage to allowing children to enter school early the advantage the older students have seems to diminish somewhere after third grade.

Another argument for early school entry the literature seems to support is that behavior problems sometimes arise when students are not permitted to enter school early (Viadero, 1998). Byrd (as cited in Portner 1997) stated, "But holding children out of school may not give them any advantage, and may cause [behavior] problems." Researchers at the University of Rochester reported that students who are older than their classmates due to delaying school entry
tend to have more behavior problems in adolescence than their older classmates. The study also reported that the older students may feel stigmatized or self-conscious, thus they behave inappropriately such as; "...crying excessively, cheating, lying, and losing their tempers (Portner 1997)."

One other argument for early school entry supported by research is children need to be provided with an age appropriate education as early as possible. Jacobson (1997a) reported that the issue is not the cut-off date that poses the problem. There will still be the youngest and oldest in the class. Therefore, schools need to adjust to provide the appropriate education for the student no matter the age. Kundert, Brent, and May (1995) conducted a study of 473 students, 314 who had been retained and 157 who had delayed entering school at the earliest eligible time. In this study the researchers reviewed and compared records and scores from various intelligence and achievement tests. The researchers showed no significant differences in achievement for the two groups. Thus, they concluded, "...it is not that children are unready for school, rather it may be that the school's curriculum is unready to accommodate the individual needs of the child to learn."

In the previous section the author discussed literature that supported early school entry. In the following section the author now discusses the research against early school entry.
Arguments Against Early School Entry

Research argues that children who enter school early are not developmentally ready to be successful in kindergarten. Parents often decide to hold their children back from entering school based upon their young age and not because they are developmentally ready (Bellisimo, Sacks, & Mergendoller, 1995). Many young students are not able to conform to the rigorous curriculum now present in most kindergarten classrooms. Often, lack of maturity is the reason young students have difficulty (Bergin, Osburn, & Cryan, 1996).

Spitzer, Cupp & Parke, (1995) stated:

Psychologists and educators who advocate the maturational views of Gesell (Gesell, Ilg, & Ames, 1974) have issued caveats concerning the fate of "over-placed" children who begin school before they are developmentally ready. The consequences described for overplaced children include lower academic achievement; greater likelihood of grade retention and referrals for special educational services; emotional and physical immaturity; lack of peer acceptance; poor school adjustment; and even a higher rate of suicide by adolescence or adulthood.

Authors argue that much of these difficulties kindergartners experience can be attributed to changes in school philosophies over the past decade. Due to the increase of the academic content in the curriculum, kindergarten teachers cannot attended to the nurturing needs of their students; instead they are busy preparing them for the academic requirements of 1st grade (Cosden, Zimmer, & Tuss, 1993).
Thus, many early school entry students do not do as well academically as those who delay entering school a year (Crosser 1991). Researchers Sweetland & De Simone (1987) conducted a study of 152 students born in 1970 to see if entry age had an effect on academic performance. Scores were collected and compared from the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). Students were divided based upon the quartile they were born. The students in the fourth quartile were the youngest. The results showed a significant difference in academic performance between the groups with the younger students scoring lower in almost all areas in grades 1 through 4.

In a study conducted by Carter, 50 young first grade students, who were matched by gender and intelligence against older classmates, did not perform as well on the Metropolitan Achievement Test in grades 2 through 6. In fact, only 13% of the younger students scored as well or better than their older classmates.

One study conducted by Uphoff in 1995 showed that even early school entry students with higher average intelligence quotients scored lower than students who delayed entering a year. Another study conducted by Uphoff in 1984 using honor roll English students term papers show that 71% of the oldest seven received an "A" while only 14% of the youngest seven received an "A" (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

Another argument against early school entry is students who begin school early are more likely to be
retained or placed in remedial classes compared to those students who delay entering a year (DeMeis & Stearns (1992); Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986; Viadero, 1998). DeMeis and Stearns (1992) conducted five studies in New York to compare birth date to number of referrals for various services and/or programs. The cutoff date for beginning kindergarten for this school district was December 1. One study of 699 kindergarten through 12th grade students showed (from the Kendall's tau analysis of the relationship) the greater number of students born in a given month the more referrals for students born in that month. This study also showed that students born in later months (September, October, and November) had more referrals for social/behavioral difficulties than those born in earlier months.

Another similar study was conducted. It consisted of 234 students who were placed in a pre-1st grade class after kindergarten. The comparison of birth month to placement showed that more students with later birth dates (September to November) were placed in the pre-1st class.

Obrzut, Nelson, & Obrzut, (1984) conducted a study of 68 early school entry students whose intelligence quotients were greater than or equal to 132. They also were above average in other developmental areas. Their finding showed that during a four year span 28% of the early admitted students were retained compared to only 2% of the nonearly admitted students.
Uphoff's research in 1982 in Hebron, Nebraska produced astounding numbers. He studied 278 students kindergarten through sixth grade. He compared summer children who entered school at the earliest eligible time to summer children who delayed entering a year. He then noted the number of pupils that had repeated one or more grades and found:

Summer children [who entered early] accounted for 75% of all such repeaters; and (to add even more credibility to the theory) not one - not ONE! - held back summer child had failed. These figures become even more significant when we consider that summer children made up only 22.67% of the school population (Uphoff, Gilmore, & Huber, 1986).

Several studies discussed by Cosden, Zimmer, & Tuss (1993) showed that minority students and younger males were more likely to be retained. Consequently, young Anglo males were often held out a year to avoid retention.

Students who enter school early many times have more referrals for school difficulties (Braymen & Piersel, 1987). Diamond (as cited in Uphoff, Gilmore, & Huber, 1986) conducted a study in 1983 in Hawaii and found a significant increase in the number of early school entry students classified as learning disabled. In fact, the youngest children in the class were twice as likely to be retained. Often, the question arises: are these student truly learning impaired or just immature?

Among social referrals for difficulties were those children with emotional problems. It is often the
immaturity of the early school entry students that is credited for the maladjustment (Kinard & Reinherz). Campbell (as cited in Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986), attributes demanding kindergarten classes as causing high stress for students.

Braymen and Peirsel (1987) reviewed studies conducted by King and Baer and cited that younger students see the guidance counselors more frequently and display more social adjustment problems such as: "sullen," "immature," "aggressive," "timid," and "withdrawn" than do older students. Many teachers reported greater adjustment difficulties and made more referrals for younger students for social/emotional problems. Peer ratings also indicated that younger classmates were less socially accepted than older ones.

In studies by Weinstein (1968-69) and Pain (1981) (as cited by Braymen & Piersel, 1987), sociometric questionnaires were used to show how students were perceived by their peers. Weinstein had students name the five classmates they would be most likely and least likely to invite to a party. Pain's survey was similar. Both researchers found that younger students received more rejections and fewer positive comments than did older classmates. However, for students at sixth and tenth grades no significant difference was noted by Pain. The researchers commented:
Social acceptance by peers and emotional adjustment are viewed as essential to the development of a healthy personality. The results of poor social adjustment lead to a cycle of negative behaviors and responses, lowering self-esteem and resulting in less chance to succeed in school.

Another social/emotional disadvantage cited by Uphoff & Gilmore (1986) is summer students who entered school early have a higher rate of suicide. Their study conducted in 1983-84 in Montgomery County, Ohio showed that summer students who entered school early constituted fifty-five percent of the suicides of 25 year olds and under. The report stated, "The percentage of female suicides who had been summer children was a startling 83%.

In the previous section the writer discussed arguments against early school entry based upon research. The following section discusses the recommendations made by researchers for schools, parents, and practitioners.

Recommendations of Researchers for Schools, Parents, and Practitioners

One recommendation of researchers is for schools to administer entrance exams to screen for school readiness. Sweetland and De Simone (1987) reported their is a significant correlation between mental age and academic achievement. Students whose mental age meets the requirements for eligibility have been found to be more successful in school. This suggests that mental age may be a better criteria for determining if young students are ready for school. This is why many states require pre-kindergarten screenings. These screening processes take
time, people, and materials, but researchers believe it may prove to be beneficial (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

By screening students prior to entry, schools could decrease the likelihood of students beginning school unready. Braymen and Piersel (1987) found that school districts with early admission screenings, which included a trial period, reported their early school entrants were successful students.

Proctor, Feldhusen and Black (1988) presented guidelines for processing an early school entrance application. Some of their criteria recommended students undergo a comprehensive psychological evaluation by a psychologist to determine "the child's intellectual functioning, academic readiness, and social-emotional maturity." The child should not demonstrate any deficits in any of these areas. Health and motor skills should also be given consideration for entry. Receiving teachers need to be receptive with positive attitudes toward young students. Furthermore, all cases should be given a trial period.

Another recommendation of researchers is to change the cutoff date at which a child can enter school to see how well the child adjusts to the school environment (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986). Most school policies state that children must turn five by a certain date before they can enroll in school. Some states have cutoff dates as late as December or January. It is these states that are considering or need
to consider moving the cutoff date to early fall or late summer (Ames, 1967; Jacobson, 1997; Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) reported that 17 states during the 1970's and 1980's had changed their cutoff dates from early winter to late summer or early fall. Oklahoma and West Virginia changed their dates from November 1 to September 1.

Reasons for recommending school move their cutoff date to late summer or early fall is obvious when looking at the statistics. The research shows that students adjust and experience much more success the older they are when they enter school. As discussed in the previous section, older students are less likely to be retained, considered for psychological referrals, or have academic difficulties (Uphoff, Gilmore, & Huber, 1986).

Researchers also recommend schools change the curriculum to meet the needs of all students (Bergin, Osburn, & Cryan, 1996; Smith 1995). Kundert, Brent & May (1995) stated:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommended that educators move away from the academic demands often found in the lower grades, and use lessons that involve more active participation and hands-on learning rather than seatwork and worksheets (Bredekamp & Shepard, 1989). Inappropriate practices can result in high failure rates, and changing to developmentally appropriate practices can reduce the perceived need to use delayed school entry as a strategy to prevent failure, as well as the frequent use of retention as a remedial intervention in the schools.
Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) recommend schools adjust the curriculum and place topics formerly taught in the upper grades back into the upper grades. But, they add if a student is truly ready they should be given the chance as long as they are not pushed.

Another recommendation of researchers is for parents to delay entering their young children in school for a year in order to give them time to mature (Bergin, Osburn, & Cryan, 1996). If a student can be provided with enriching activities at home and/or entered into a good developmental appropriate preschool, it could be more beneficial for them to remain at home an extra year before entering school (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986).

Researchers also recommend having special classes for students who are not ready for kindergarten or the next grade. These classes would serve as an extra year of primary education for those unready, young students (Uphoff & Gilmore, 1986). Often school systems use these transitional classes such as a pre-first, instead of retention (Bergin, Osburn, & Cryan, 1996).

In the review of literature two perceptions are clearly represented, studies that support early school entry and those that oppose it. Many researchers have strong opinions based on their findings, such as Uphoff, Ames, and Gilmore. They often conducted or at least compared results of their studies. They strongly believe entering a child in school too young can have devastating consequences for the
child. Other researchers are not as strong in their convictions. However, the common ground seemed to be in recommendations given by the researchers. All seem to want what is in the best interest of the child. Uphoff and Gilmore (1986) stated:

Ilg and Ames (1951) of the Gesell Institute summarized the problem of the "unready" child when they observed, over thirty years ago, that too often we attack the child's attitude by saying, "He could do better if he would" when it would be more accurate to say, "He would do better if he could."

If this is a true interpretation of a child's attitude then it is society's responsibility to try to help each child be as successful as they can be. By applying some of the previous recommendations we may be able to assist the children of our society in being successful throughout their school days as well as adulthood.
CHAPTER III  
PROCEDURE  
Subjects  
The writer used a nonprobability sample for this study. The subjects were 57 elementary teachers from four school districts. There were 14 kindergarten, 11 first grade, 13 second grade, 10 third grade, and 9 fourth grade teachers who completed and returned the questionnaires.  
Setting  
Schools A, B, and C  
Schools A, B, and C are public schools within the same school district. They contain grades kindergarten through fifth with predominantly Caucasian students. School A has approximately 420 students, school B 280 students, and school C 400 students.  
Schools D  
School D is a public school with approximately 400 predominantly Caucasian students students in grades first through fifth.  
School E  
School E is a public school with approximately 360 Caucasian students in grades kindergarten through fifth.  
School F and G  
Schools F and G are public schools. School F has approximately 480 students in grades kindergarten through fifth. School G has approximately 380 kindergarten students.
Communities A, B, and C

Communities A, B, and C are located in a suburban area in Southwest Ohio. The socioeconomic structure for this area contains economically challenged and lower middle class populations.

Communities D and E

Communities D, E, and F are located in rural areas in Southwest and Central Ohio. The populations are of lower middle class and middle class.

Communities F and G

Communities F and G are suburban areas in Southwest Ohio. The socioeconomic structure contains middle and upper class populations.

Data Collection

Construction of the Data Collecting Instrument

The writer used a forced-choice Likert-Type questionnaire to gather information on teachers' opinions of "summer children". The researcher constructed the survey after reviewing the literature. This procedure establishes content validity (Best 1993). The questionnaire contained 18 Likert-type questions with 4 or 5 possible forced responses. The topics for the survey were emotional, social, and academic readiness. The instrument was field tested. It was given to three teachers who were not involved in the survey. They checked completion time, clarity, and gave input that improve the quality of it.
Administration of the Data Collecting Instrument

A teacher from each school was in charge of passing out and collecting of the surveys for their building. Two weeks were allowed for questionnaires to be completed and returned. Fifty-five percent, fifty-seven surveys out of One hundred four were completed and returned.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Presentation of the Results

Fifty-seven teachers responded to the survey. Nine tables are used to present the results to the Likert-type part of the survey. The first column contains the survey question. The following columns contain response choices for questions. Response choices for questions one-fourteen were "All", "Most", "Few", and "None". Questions 15 and 16 had response choices of SA (strongly agree), A (agree) U (undecided), D (disagree), and SD (strongly disagree).

All results are presented as percentages. Table I presents the percentages of all questionnaires returned. Tables II-VI present percentages based upon grade currently teaching (kindergarten-fourth). Of the fifty-seven responses, fourteen were kindergarten teachers, eleven were first grade teachers, thirteen were second grade teachers, ten were third grade teachers, and nine were fourth grade teachers.
## Table I
Teacher Opinions Toward Children Who Begin School Early Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summer children in my class who entered school early are able to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. work independently</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. follow directions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. complete assignments/activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. work well with others</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do well academically</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. have short attention spans</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. listen during teacher directed activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. are responsible for their belongings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stay on task</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ask appropriate questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. are withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. use time wisely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. need additional assistance to complete assignments</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table I (continued)
Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment as well as the older students in my class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA-strongly agree; A-agree; U-undecided; D-disagree; SD-strongly disagree
Table II
Kindergarten Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summer children in my class who entered school early are able to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. work independently</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. follow directions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. complete assignments/activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. work well with others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do well academically</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. have short attention spans</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. listen during teacher directed activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. are responsible for their belongings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stay on task</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ask appropriate questions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. are withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. use time wisely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. need additional assistance to complete assignments</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table II (continued)
**Kindergarten Teacher Opinions Toward Children Who Begin School Early Expressed in Percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment as well as the older students in my class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA—strongly agree; A—agree; U—undecided; D—disagree; SA—strongly disagree
Table III
First Grade Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summer children in my class who entered school early are able to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. work independently</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. follow directions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. complete assignments/activities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. work well with others</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do well academically</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. have short attention spans</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. listen during teacher directed activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. are responsible for their belongings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stay on task</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ask appropriate questions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. are withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. use time wisely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. need additional assistance to complete assignments</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table III (continued)
First Grade Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school environment as well as the older students in my class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA-strongly agree; A-agree; U-undecided; D-disagree; SD-strongly disagree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summer children in my class who entered school early are able to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. work independently</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. follow directions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. complete assignments/activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. work well with others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do well academically</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. have short attention spans</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. listen during teacher directed activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. are responsible for their belongings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stay on task</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ask appropriate questions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. are withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. use time wisely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. need additional assistance to complete assignments</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table IV (continued)
Second Grade Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment as well as the older students in my class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA-strongly agree; A-agree; U-undecided; D-disagree; SD-strongly disagree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summer children in my class who entered school early are able to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. work independently</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. follow directions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. complete assignments/activities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. work well with others</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do well academically</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. have short attention spans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. listen during teacher directed activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. are responsible for their belongings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stay on task</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ask appropriate questions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. are withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. use time wisely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. need additional assistance to complete assignments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Third Grade Teacher Opinions Toward Children Who Begin School Early Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment as well as the older students in my class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA-strongly agree; A-agree; U-undecided; D-disagree; SD-strongly disagree
Table VI
Fourth Grade Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summer children in my class who entered school early are able to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. work independently</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. follow directions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. complete assignments/activities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. work well with others</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do well academically</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. have short attention spans</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. listen during teacher directed activities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. are responsible for their belongings</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stay on task</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ask appropriate questions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. are withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. use time wisely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. need additional assistance to complete assignments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table VI (continued)
Fourth Grade Teacher Opinions Toward
Children Who Begin School Early
Expressed in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment as well as the older students in my class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA—strongly agree; A—agree; U—undecided; D—disagree; SD—strongly disagree
Discussion of Results

Question one referred to summer children's ability to work independently. Only two percent of teachers replied that "all" of their summer children worked independently. The majority of responses (fifty-six percent) stated that "few" of their summer children work independently. A greater number (eighty percent) of first grade teachers supported this opinion. Second grade teachers were the only class to choose "most" (fifty-four percent) more often than any other response. Fourteen percent of kindergarten teachers reported that "none" of their summer children work independently.

It is the writer's experience that to work independently students must possess some degree of academic ability of the content being taught. They also need the motor skills necessary to complete the assignment/activity. These student's academics suffer when the are give independent work to do or if the activity does not allow for much individual assistance.

Question two related to summer children's ability to follow directions. The majority of teachers (fifty-eight percent) claimed "few" of their summer children follow directions. This percent increased to eighty-two percent for first grade teachers and seventy percent for third grade teachers. Second grade teachers replied that "most" (sixty-two percent) of their summer children follow directions.
Many time students make assumptions has to how to do and/or complete an activity. They often work ahead or do not pay attention to the directions that are given. It is the writer's experience as a kindergarten teacher that at the beginning of the school year most students have a difficult time adjusting to the idea that there specific instructions to most activities. Furthermore, whether the student agrees or not does not matter the directions are to be followed regardless. This skill improves has the child gets older or is in school longer.

Question three concerned summer children's ability to complete assignments/activities. Over all the responses were relatively equal; forty-six percent replied "most" and forty-nine percent replied that "few" of their summer children complete assignments/activities. There were greater discrepancies for second, third, and kindergarten teachers. Sixty-four percent of kindergarten and seventy percent third grade teachers reported that "few" of their summer children complete assignments. Sixty-nine percent of second grade teacher selected "most" to this question.

Completing assignments is a concern for teachers due to the fact that most grades are assigned by averaging completed assignment scores. If a student possesses the knowledge of the subject but does not complete assignments, then likely his/her grade may not be a true reflection of his/her ability.
Interestingly, second grade teachers claimed "most" of their students were successful in the first three skills mentioned. However, first and third grade teachers noted that "few" of their students were successful in these areas. In analysis, it is the writer's experience that kindergarten children find first grade to be structured a great deal different than their previous grade. They begin to study formal reading, writing, and mathematics. They are involved in a higher level of teacher directed activities and group experiences. This is possibly the grade where weak students either make the adjustment or get retained. Therefore, second grade teachers do not receive students with these deficits. Research by Obrzut, Nelson, and Obrzut (1984) showed that summer children who entered school early with above average intelligence quotients were retained about twenty-five percent more often than those who delayed entering school a year.

For third grade teachers to observe some of the same problems as the first grade teachers; students not working independently, following directions, and completing assignments, students must again need to adjust to a more rigorous curriculum and class structure or the students who have been just getting by the previous three years are beginning to break.

Question four referred to summer children's ability to work well with others. The majority of teachers (forty-six percent) reported that "most" of their summer children work
well with others. However, only thirty percent of third and twenty-two percent of fourth grade teachers felt "most" of their summer children work well with others. The majority of their responses were "few". Surprisingly, though, twenty-two percent of fourth grade teachers said that "all" of their summer children work well with others.

The ability to work well with other is a social skill that can enhance group activities if most of the class possess it. However, if most of the class lack this skill it makes doing group activities difficult and often limits the use of them. Braymen and Peirsel (1987) reviewed studies conducted by King and Baer on peer ratings. They found that younger classmates were less socially accepted than older ones. In regard to this it would seem that it would be difficult for young students to experience success at very structured group. This may be why a greater percentage of third and fourth grade teachers noted few of their student worked well in group activities.

Question five dealt with how well summer children do academically. Sixty percent of teachers replied that "few" of their summer children do well academically. This is relatively representative of all grades with even a greater percentage (eighty-two percent) of first grade teachers with this opinion.

These percentages seem to correspond with research. Uphoff's research in 1982 in Hebron, Nebraska produced percentages for student retention of kindergarten through
six grade students. Seventy-five percent of retention's for
the group under study were summer child who entered school
early. On the contrary, not one summer child who delayed
entering school was retained.

Academic success such as, students making satisfactory
grades and being promoted to the next grade is effected by
many factors. There appears to be a relationship between
the percentages of teachers who responded "few" to questions
one, two, and three and the percentage of teachers who
responded that "few" of their summer children do well
academically.

Question six asked how many summer children have short
attention spans. Fifty-six percent of teachers reported
that "most" of their summer children have short attention
spans. Eighty percent of third grade seventy-three percent
of first grade teachers held this opinion. Fifty percent of
kindergarten teachers stated that "few" of their summer
children have short attention spans however; fourteen
percent selected "all" for their response. Likewise, the
percent of teachers who picked "all" were twelve percent.
Third grade teachers were the only teachers not to have a
response in the "all" category.

In general, active children seem to be described as
having short attention spans so it is not surprising to have
such high percentages of teacher responses for this
question. The highest percentage of teachers selecting
"most" were first and third grade teachers. As mentioned
previously, students in these classes may be having difficulty adjusting to the difference in the class structure at these grades.

Question seven related to the number of summer children who listen during teacher directed activities. Fifty-eight percent of teachers reported that "few" of their summer children listen during teacher directed activities. Interestingly, only thirty-six percent of kindergarten teachers reported "few". The majority of kindergarten teachers (sixty-four percent) replied that "most" of their summer children listen during teacher directed activities. The teachers who most often selected "few" were first grade (seventy-three percent) and second grade (seventy-seven percent) teachers.

These results over-all seem to be consistent. The majority of respondents claimed "most" summer children have short attention spans in turn they replied that "few" listen during teacher directed activities and "few" follow directions. The exception was second grade teacher in which seventy-seven percent replied that "few" of their students listened during teacher directed activities however, sixty-two percent of second grade teachers reported that "most" of their students follow directions.

Question eight referred to how many summer children are responsible for their belongings. Over all teacher responses were relatively equal with forty-seven percent choosing "most" and forty-six percent choosing "few".
However, when looking at grade level responses, it was interesting to find that kindergarten teachers (sixty-four percent) and second grade teachers (sixty-two percent) stated that "most" of their summer children were responsible for their belongings. In opposition, only eighteen percent of first grade teachers gave this response, whereas seventy-three percent selected "few" as a more appropriate reply.

It is the writer's experience that kindergarten teachers generally do not give a great deal of responsibility to their students. The students are often away from their caregiver for the first time and they have to learn how to become responsible. Kindergarten teachers often move from what is known as "spoon feeding" at the beginning of school to helping students become responsible for their belongings. Furthermore, the role of first grade teacher does not permit for much "spoon feeding" the students need to demonstrate responsibility from day one.

Question nine referred to summer children's ability to stay on task. Over all sixty-five percent of teachers said "few" of their summer children stayed on task with ninety-one percent of first grade teachers holding this opinion.

The over-all responses supported previous responses to having short attention spans. Students that have short attention spans tend to be unable to stay on task. However, the majority kindergarten teachers reported "few" of their students have short attention spans then replied that "few" stay on task. One explanation for this would be that longer
activities were more difficult for kindergarten, summer children to complete, thus they appeared off-task instead of having short attention spans.

Question ten pertained to summer children's ability to ask appropriate questions. Almost one-half (fifty-four percent) of teachers reported that "few" of their summer children can ask appropriate questions, thirty-nine percent replied "most", four percent responded "all" and four percent reported "none". Eighteen percent of first and eleven percent of fourth grade teachers replied that "none" of their summer children asked appropriate questions.

Teachers view question asking skills as part of a student's academic readiness for the subject matter. Students usually suffer a negative effect on their academic performance when students have a deficit in this skill. Research conducted by Crosser (1991) of 152 students who were born in 1970 demonstrated that younger students scored lower in almost all areas in grades one through four on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS).

Question eleven asked how many summer children are withdrawn. Sixty percent of teachers reported that "few" of their summer children are withdrawn. Furthermore, thirty percent said "none" of their summer children are withdrawn. Twenty percent of third and fifteen percent of second grade teachers reported that "most" of their summer children are withdrawn.
These statistics do not offer much support for the research conducted by Braymen and Peirsel (1987) found that younger students tended to have more social/emotional difficulties. Younger students were referred counselors more often than older students for difficulties ranging from being aggressive to being withdrawn and timid. This did however, seem to be a problem for a "few" of the students.

Question twelve pertained to summer children's ability to use time wisely. Sixty-one percent of teachers claimed that "few" and thirty-two percent that "none" of their summer children use time wisely. The percent of teachers that identified "few" as the proportion of summer children who use time wisely was eighty-two of first, seventy percent of third, fifty seven percent of kindergarten, fifty-four percent of second, and forty-four percent of fourth grade teachers.

Throughout the survey first and third grade teachers felt that summer children lack many of the necessary skills to be successful in school. They vastly reported that their students have difficulty in attending to and completing to their work. These reasons are also the reasons parents decide to hold their summer children out of school a year (Bellisimo, Sacks, & Mergendollar, 1995). The rigorous curriculum found in the kindergarten classroom that cause difficulty for kindergarten summer children (Bergin, Osburn, & Cryan, 1996) could also be the same factor that causes problems for summer children in other grades.
Question thirteen referred to the number of students who need additional assistance to complete assignments. Forty-nine percent claimed "most", sixteen percent "all", and thirty-five percent "few" need additional help. Over one-half of the second, third, and fourth grade respondents reported that "most" of their summer children need additional assistance. Thirty-six percent of first and twenty-one percent of kindergarten teachers claimed "all" of their students need additional help.

These responses show the difficulty summer students have academically. They may be on task as well as trying to follow directions however, in order to correctly complete assignments they need additional help. More teachers selected "all" for their response than any other question on the survey.

Question fourteen asked how many summer children receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.). The percent of teacher responses were relatively equal in the categories of "most" (thirty-seven percent), "few" (thirty-two percent), and "none" (thirty percent). However, seventy-three percent of first grade teachers reported that "most" of their students receive special services.

This question was placed on the survey based upon the findings reported by Braymen and Peirsel (1987) who reported that summer children often have more referral for school difficulties than do older students. First grade responses
greatly support this finding. Over-all it appears that there were some concern for sixty-nine percent of teachers reported some of their students received special services.

Question fifteen asked teachers if children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year. Forty-six percent "strongly agreed" that children with summer birthdays should delay enter school a year, eighteen percent "agreed", and thirty percent were "undecided". No teachers "strongly disagreed" and only seven percent "disagreed" that summer children should delay entering school a year. Twenty-one percent of kindergarten teachers "disagreed" that summer children should delay entering school a year.

Since such a large percent "strongly agreed" was surprising that so many kindergarten teachers "disagreed" that summer children should delay entering school a year. Several kindergarten teachers commented that these students need to be in school to receive instruction at the earliest eligible time. This supports the argument of Smith (1995) that students who do not receive support from home and do not attend pre-school should be enrolled in school as early as possible.

The response to this question appears to support teacher opinions in regard to how they rated their summer students on questions one through fourteen. Most teachers have reported that the summer children in their classes have
difficulties in school either academically, socially, emotionally, or some combination of the three.

Question sixteen asked teachers if the children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school environment as well as the older students in their class. Forty-two percent of teachers "disagreed" that the summer children have adjusted as well whereas twenty-six percent "agreed". The majority of kindergarten teachers (forty-three percent) "agreed" that their summer children have adjusted as well as the older students in their class. Teachers of grades first through fourth "disagreed" the majority of the time.

Over-all fifty-six percent of teachers felt the summer children in their classes were not adjusted as well as the older students in their classes. This questions in general targeted the entire perception teachers had of the summer children in their classes. Students who demonstrate adjustment usually experience success in school. They feel confident in their abilities and it shows.

Question seventeen asked teachers to state under what condition(s) would they recommend a child with a summer birthday to begin school at the earliest eligible time. Most teachers had strong opinions. They were in agreement that the child should demonstrate some readiness skills. One teacher stated, "Students should be tested, behavior observed, recommendation from pre-school, with examples of work, school psychologist observation as well as principal
[observation]. Other teachers also mentioned that young students should have been successful in pre-school, have had some type of readiness screening, either by a teacher or psychologist, to evaluate the child's academic, social and emotional maturity. Teachers described their some of their young children as cryers, tattlers, unable to follow the rule or get along with others.

Research supports the effectiveness of screenings. Sweetland and DeSimone (1987) showed a significant correlation between the mental age (the age a child behaves) and actual age. Greater success was experience by those students whose mental age met the requirements for entrance eligibility.

Some teachers said they would not recommend any child with a summer birthday to enter school at the earliest time possible. In response to question seventeen one teacher replied, "Very seldom-maybe a child prodigy." A few teachers felt that if there were supportive parents in the home the student's chance would be better for beginning school early. Others claimed that these parents should keep their children at home to let them mature another year. Ironically this argument was apparent when teachers commented about the lack of parental support. Some believed children entering school with this type of home life would be behind the other children in their classes while others felt it was better for them to be in school getting some type of instruction. Research by Cosden, Zimmer, and Tuss
(1993) showed that children of lower economic status did not receive the support they needed from home nor could they afford pre-school.

Question eighteen asked for additional comments. Several teachers described personal experience with their children; their brothers or sisters; or students they have had in the past. Others responded with interest to the survey topic. Several teachers wanted to see the completed thesis. Some teachers listed hypothetical situations for when they would enroll a child early and when they would not.

Many teachers had strong opinions. Their opinions seemed to be based on personal experiences instead of the research. Nonetheless, their opinions agreed with the research. Teachers made comments as to an awareness they gained by participating in the survey. One teacher said, "No wonder I am having a difficult year; almost half of my class are summer children." This could be a realization that the survey confirmed that summer children often require additional assistance, longer time to complete activities, and very structured lessons.

The reason for this survey was to assess the opinions of elementary teachers toward children with summer birthdays who begin school at the earliest eligible time. Most of the respondents reported that the summer children in their classes do not perform over-all as well as the older students in their classes. First grade teacher responses
appear to be in agreement the most with percentages being very unproportionate. The majority of their responses had over a fifty percent discrepancy. Only nine percent of first grade teachers claimed that "most" of their summer students could stay on task while an overwhelming ninety-one percent claimed only "few" could.

Research, such as that by Bergin, Osburn, and Cryan (1996), that argued that any difficulties summer children have when they begin school early disappear as they get older did not seem to hold true in the survey. The majority of third and fourth grade teachers alike reported that only a "few" of the summer children in their classes do well academically, follow directions, and work independently.

There appeared to be differences between first grade and second grade teacher responses in several areas. The majority of first grade teachers report "few" of their summer students being able to work independently (eighty-two percent), follow directions (eighty-two percent), and are responsible for their belongings (seventy-three percent). However, the majority of second grade teachers reported that "most" of their children possess these abilities.

The majority of the research found was against early school entry. The result of the survey appear to support that delaying early school entry is best. Uphoff, Gilmore, and Huber (1986) found students do not do as well academically. Respondents agreed that summer children have difficulty academically.
Respondents did not note as many summer children being referred for special services as the research claimed. First grade teachers (seventy-three percent) reported more of their students receiving special services than any other grade. Other grades reported "few" or "none" the majority of the time.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Children mature at different rates. They crawl, walk, and talk at different ages. Most people accept this without reservation. So why is it when a child turns five he/she is expected to be ready, emotionally, socially, and academically to attend kindergarten. The age of five is not a magical age at which all children are at the same level of maturity and independence.

Most educators are open-minded to the fact that each child possesses different abilities and are at different developmental stages when they enter their classrooms. The concern is for children with summer birthdays, June, July, August, and September who begin school at the earliest eligible time. These children are between 4 and 5.2 years of age. They are usually the youngest children in their class. Teachers have strong opinions as to whether it is detrimental to a child's education for him/her to begin school at the earliest eligible time. This study was conducted to determine the perceptions of teachers toward this concern.

To obtain the information desired a Likert-Type questionnaire was developed. It contained sixteen forced choice responses and two open-ended questions. Five school districts were chosen to participate in the survey and
fifty-seven respondents took part in completing and returning the questionnaire.

After the results were tallied the percentages were presented in six tables. Table I presented the overall response to each question. Table II through VI broke teacher responses down by grade they currently teach.

In review of the data it appeared that teachers did not support early school entry for summer children. Most teachers reported that few summer children do as well academically, work independently, stay on task, follow directions, listen during teacher directed activities, or ask appropriate questions. Fifty-six percent of teachers claimed that most have short attention spans and need additional assistance to complete assignments. This supported much of the research done by Uphoff and Gilmore (1986). Their research showed that younger students do not do as well academically. When compare the results stated most would agree if students were having the described problems that academics would be negatively effected.

Conclusions

It would be nice if all students had the luxury of beginning school at the optimal time when they could realize all of their potential. However, this is not an option for most students. Often they are sent to school whether they are ready or not. This places them at a disadvantage from the beginning. As the results from the survey show most summer children are unsuccessful. Some teachers commented
that the brightest student in their class was a summer child. However, this seemed to be the exception rather than the rule.

Interestingly, there was a considerable discrepancy between first and second grade teacher responses. The consensus of first grade teachers had extreme discrepancies in students ability to work independently and follow directions. Eighty-two percent first grade teachers reported that "few" of their students possessed these skills while fifty-four percent of second grade teachers claimed "most" of their students could work independently and sixty-two percent said "most" could follow directions. Then at third grade the majority of teachers said "few" could do these skills. This poses the question of whether the curriculum and class structure of each grade has a significant effect on the success of young students.

Recommendations

It is appears that if parents want to give their summer child the opportunity to be successful in school, they need to evaluate them to see if they are ready to be enrolled in school early. If not, they should make every effort to hold them out of school until they are ready to begin their formal education.

Teachers made recommendation on their survey's for parents as to what to look for in a child they were considering to send to school early. They suggested children to have had a successful pre-school experience, be mature,
have high self-esteem, good social skills, good academic skills, and be emotionally and developmentally ready. If possible teachers recommend students to be screened before entering school.

By screening children areas of weakness are identified. Therefore if parents choose to enroll their child in school anyway the teacher and parents are aware of weaknesses and can help compensate for them.
Grade currently teaching
(K)  (1st)  (2nd)  (3rd)  (4th)  

Years of teaching experience
(1-10)  (11-20)  (21-30)  

Approximately how many summer children are in your class
(0-2)  (3-5)  (6-8)  (9 or more)  

Please circle one response for each question.

All--All of the summer children
Most-- Above 50% of the summer children
Few-- Below 50% of the summer children
None-- None of the summer children

The summer children who entered school early who in my class are able to...

1. work independently.
   All  Most  Few  None

2. follow directions.
   All  Most  Few  None

3. complete assignments/activities.
   All  Most  Few  None

4. work well with others.
   All  Most  Few  None

5. do well academically.
   All  Most  Few  None
6. have short attention spans.
   All Most Few None

7. listen during teacher directed activities.
   All Most Few None

8. are responsible for their belongings.
   All Most Few None

9. stay on task.
   All Most Few None

10. ask appropriate questions.
    All Most Few None

11. are withdrawn.
    All Most Few None

12. use time wisely.
    All Most Few None

13. need additional assistance to complete assignments.
    All Most Few None

14. receive special services at school (counseling, tutoring, resource room, speech, etc.).
    All Most Few None
SA strongly agree, A-agree, U-undecided, D-disagree, SD strongly disagree

15. Children with summer birthdays should delay entering school a year.
   SA   A   U   D   SD

16. Children with summer birthdays appear to have adjusted to the school environment as well as the older students in my class.
   SA   A   U   D   SD

17. Under what condition(s) would I recommend a student with a summer birthday to begin school at the earliest eligible time.

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

18. Comments
REFERENCES


