ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:	A DESCRIPTION OF MOVEMENT-BASED
	PROGRAMS FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AGES 3-5
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This research examined how movement companies serving children ages 3-5

implemented critical pedagogical components suggested in the NASPE Standards for

Preschool programs. The participants were directors and teachers of three companies

who traveled to daycare settings. Three data collection methods, observation,

documentation analysis, and interviews, were used to describe program philosophy and

content scope and sequence as implemented and compare them with current best

practices for this age group. Data were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding.

Findings suggested that none of the program directors or teachers was aware of the

NASPE Standards. Programs varied according to type and degree of teacher training and

beliefs. These two factors influenced teachers' ability to provide effective programs and

empower students to make decisions and solve problems creatively. Although all teachers

reported feelings of empowerment, they varied in their willingness and ability to

empower preschool children.

THE DESCRIPTION OF MOVEMENT-BASED PROGRAMS FOR PRESCHOOL

CHILDREN AGES 3-5

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2004

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals whom I would like to thank for their inspiration, encouragement and advice throughout this process.

To my Mother and Anita, I thank you for being the source of inspiration that gave me the courage to begin this journey and for your support each step of the way which allowed me to complete my journey. To Dr. Ennis goes my deepest gratitude for providing me with the challenge and support necessary to extend my thinking to a more complex understanding of pedagogy. Without your encouragement, advice, direction, extreme patience and wonderful humor during all of my "life twists and turns," I would not have persevered. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the directors and teachers of the movement programs for allowing me into your classrooms, sharing your lesson plans and giving me your personal thoughts on the subject of movement.

On a more personal note, I want to thank my husband for all of his support and patience. He tolerated all the inconveniences of being married to a "grad student." It is because of his encouragement during the writer's blocks, his humor during the revisions and his love and support through all of it that truly allowed me to fulfill a dream. I thank each and every one of you for being a part of this amazing journey.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Physically active playtime has become a scarce commodity for children. Instead of running around the neighborhood, playing with friends, exploring and using their imagination, children are spending an increased amount of time on the computer and in front of the television. Additionally there has been an increase in the number of children attending structured early childhood programs and the age at which they attend has become much younger (Werner, Timms, & Almond, 1996). The reasons for increased early attendance in structured programs reflect complex family lifestyles. With both parents working and the acknowledgement that early childhood is a fertile time for cognitive development, parents are eager to enroll their child in early childhood education (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Unfortunately, "many parents, teachers, and caregivers think the needs of the mind should take precedence over those of the body; thus they devote little time to physical activity" (Pica, 1997, p. 4). In a report to the President, the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education (2000) stated, "physical inactivity has contributed to an unprecedented epidemic of childhood obesity that is currently plaguing the United States" (p. 1). Because sedentary habits in children often lead to sedentary habits in adulthood, with each passing year the risk of heart disease and other negative physical and psychological effects increase (Campbell, 1997).

Individuals who participate in exercise can gain numerous physical and psychological benefits. These benefits include, but are not limited to, improved strength, endurance, flexibility, enhanced motor skills, an increase in self-esteem, and the enhanced ability to control stress and depression (Howley & Franks, 1997). While many caregivers understand the need for children to participate in movement-based experiences for the development of the psychomotor domain, the benefits of movement for the cognitive and affective domains are not always recognized. According to a 1997 position statement by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains" (p. 10). The early childhood years are an opportune time to develop various fundamental movements, cognitive functions, and affective development (Gallahue & Ozum, 1998). Movement-based experiences are valuable for development in all domains. Therefore, during these vital years, it is imperative to create an environment where children are encouraged to be active and are challenged to explore different ways of moving.

During the early childhood years, children's brains are growing as quickly as their bodies. Flinchum (1988, p. 63) explains, "The movement experience enhances cognitive development because it adds another dimension (such as feeling/touching) to ideas, words and symbols." According to Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl (1999, p. 186), "Preschool children have brains that are literally more active, more connected, and much more flexible than ours." It is during early childhood that cognitive development is at its peak. However, this does not mean that children should be sitting at a desk

being drilled with facts and figures. Frost (1998) submits, "During the first years of life, it is playful activity, not direct instruction, seclusion, deprivation, or abuse that makes a positive difference in brain development and subsequent human functioning"(p. 8).

Movement helps both the physical and cognitive development of children while also providing an outlet for their feelings. Because some children may have difficulty using words to express their feelings, movement allows them to play out their problems and find ways to better deal with their emotions (Frost, 1998). Movement-based experiences also give children the chance to interact with others as they learn to cooperate, take turns, and play by the rules. Through positive movement experiences children increase their self-esteem, which in turn gives them the confidence to challenge themselves both physically and cognitively (Flinchum, 1988). Movement-based classes are the perfect medium to initiate change in students' exercise habits. According to Strand, Scantling, and Johnson (1997), physical habits of students are positively affected when they participate in a school based fitness program that instills a love of activity. "Students should feel that fitness is fun and establish health related fitness as a priority in their lives" (Martincich, & Peters, 1993, p. 3).

<div align="center">Background and Theoretical Framework</div>

Movement offers many benefits to children and can have a life long impact on their future physical and mental health (Flinchum, 1988; Strand, et al.1997; Howley & Franks, 1997). Unfortunately, many early childhood programs lack attention to motor development in the preschool setting. Ignico (1994) stated that, although a developmentally appropriate program for preschool children should include emphasis on the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor areas, it is the psychomotor area that usually is

neglected. Administrators, educators, and even parents tend to push more for academic skills placing less emphasis on motor skills in school and preschool environments. According to Louis Bowers (1988) this is because "play does not result in a product which has obvious value, [and] adults sometimes find it difficult to see its true worth" (p. 47).

According to The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "A high-quality early childhood program is one that provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, and language development of each child while being sensitive to the needs and preferences of families" (1997, p. 8). A high-quality program should not only include movement, but also should be sensitive to the developmental appropriateness of the movement as well. Activities and techniques that enrich the lives of preschool aged children should be based on motor, cognitive and affective tasks that are consistent with the child's current abilities and encourage appropriate exploration of new tasks. Additionally, sequencing and cumulative skill building are essential. "The cognitively and physically normal child progresses from one stage to another in a sequential manner that is influenced by both maturation and experience" (Gallahue, & Ozum, 1998, p. 212). Although children will move through different stages, it is important to remember that each child develops at a different rate and needs opportunities to practice the various fundamental skills. Not only are children in need of various opportunities for skill acquisition, it is also important to select developmentally appropriate activities for their current stage of development (Leppo, Davis, & Crim, 2000).

To establish a developmentally appropriate program and select developmentally appropriate activities for a movement program, directors and teachers use established criteria to make informed decisions. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) "is a nonprofit professional organization comprised of individuals engaged in the study of human movement and the delivery of sport and physical activity programs" (AAHPERD, 2002). Through NASPE a special task force was assembled to create physical activity guidelines. This task force consisted of professionals from different areas of expertise such as "motor development experts, movement specialists, exercise physiologists and medical professionals" (AAHPERD, 2002).

NASPE has developed criteria related to program quality and appropriate movement practices for young children published in two position papers: *Developmentally appropriate practice in movement programs for young children ages 3-5* (1994) and *Active start: A statement of physical activity guidelines for children birth to five years* (2002). The 1994 publication by NASPE issued a position statement on best practices concerning movement programs:

> …. a general 'activity' oriented program consisting primarily of traditional games and dance is not an appropriate process for maximizing children's development. A more appropriate approach for this age group would be to focus on basic motor skills and movement concepts and how these activities can assist in the child's psychological, physical, intellectual, and social development. (NASPE, 1994, p. 3)

In addition, NASPE (1994) articulates five assumptions or premises useful when designing effective movement programs for 3-5 year old children:

1. Three-, 4- and 5-year-old children are different from elementary school-aged children.

2. Young children learn through interaction with their environment.

3. Teachers of young children are guides or facilitators.

4. Young children learn and develop in an integrated fashion.

5. Planned movement experiences enhance play experiences. (p. 5-6)

NASPE (1994) identified 25 components that explain appropriate and inappropriate practices in movement programs. These components, listed in Appendix A: Components of appropriate and inappropriate practice in movement programs for children ages 3-5, provide a broad overview of class structure and components of quality programs. NASPE (2002) proposed physical activity guidelines for children birth to age five. Their position statement reads: "All children birth to age five should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills" (p.1). The five guidelines discussed for preschoolers concentrate on (a) the kind of activity, (b) the type of environment, and (c) the individuals in charge of facilitating the activity. These criteria set forth by NASPE are intended to aid educators in making developmentally appropriate decisions about movement programs. "A developmentally appropriate movement program accommodates a variety of individual characteristics such as developmental status, previous movement experience, fitness and skill levels, body size, and age" (NASPE, 1994, p. 4). There are many theories that explain how children develop and the type of environment that stimulates growth, however; the developmental approach appears to provide a comprehensive, balanced perspective useful for both understanding and identifying components of an effective preschool movement program. According to Kirchner & Fishburne (1998):

The developmental approach to curriculum development rests on the premise that each child learns concepts and motor skills according to her own rate and level of development. This process-based, rather than product-base curriculum views each child as progressing through stages of development according to her own time clock. A stage of development is not a rigid set of standard academic, motor, and social skills that a child must acquire before advancing to the next stage. Rather, developmental stages are approximate time periods from early through late childhood in which children acquire psychomotor, cognitive, and affective concepts, skills and understandings. (p. 190)

Recognizing the need for developmentally appropriate movement education, individuals have created companies to provide these classes for children ages 3-5. There exists substantial diversity in the way companies provide programs to children. Some movement education companies utilize a freestanding facility where the children come to the premises to participate, while other companies travel to the daycare centers and hold classes inside the center. Some companies are part of a chain or franchise, while others are independently owned and operated. Interestingly, many of the companies that travel to the daycare center are not hired directly by the center to teach classes to all the children. Instead, only those children whose parents wish to pay an extra fee in addition to their child care costs get the benefits of the movement class. In this situation, it is typical for the movement education company to pay a room fee or a portion of its profit to the daycare center for use of the room. The movement company pays its staff and provides its own equipment for the classes.

Since research shows that movement education is vital to rearing healthy children, these classes have the potential to meet a growing need. As stated above, there is a dearth of concentration on movement for the pre-school age child and these companies provide a needed service.

Assumptions of this Research

Research examining preschool curriculum and instruction rely on some elementary assumptions. The assumptions that underlie this study are summarized in the following statements.

1. Today's youth spends less time in active play and more time watching television and using computers (Werner et al. 1996).

2. Movement education can have numerous physical and psychological benefits (Howley & Franks, 1997).

3. There appears to be little standardization regarding the quality of existing movement programs for children between the ages of 3-5.

4. The NASPE standards represent the ideological curriculum in the form of educationally sound researched based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts.

Statement of the Problem

Avery (1994) argued that an increasing number of American children are entering early childhood education programs and entering them at a younger age. Furthermore, there are an ever-growing number of young Americans who are overweight, putting them at risk for a variety of health problems. Additionally, America's youth are less physically active now than they have ever been (Center For Disease Control, 2000). This is due in part to more time spent in sedentary pursuits such as watching television, playing video

games, and working at the computer (Virgilio, 1997). Thus it appears increasingly important that young children have opportunities to participate in enjoyable, developmentally appropriate physical activity.   It is unclear, however, the extent to which movement-based programs are a part of the required curricula in most early childhood programs. Furthermore, there is limited research to examine and evaluate the quality of movement-based experiences in existing early childhood programs. An assessment of this nature should critique the developmental appropriateness, theoretical framework, curriculum components, and sequencing of tasks essential to positive growth and development. Although the developmental literature includes recommendations for independent domain components, such as the cognitive, motor, and affective, additional research is needed to examine the nature of the complex learning environment in preschool movement programs.

  With the health of future generations at risk, intervention is mandatory. However, before successful interventions are implemented, a description of current programming is necessary. Therefore, the procedural problem requires research to determine systematically if current movement-based programs for preschool children are following researched based guidelines, concepts and philosophies.

<div align="center">Purpose Statement</div>

  The purpose of this study was to examine how critical pedagogical components of movement programs are implemented in for-profit movement program companies for preschool children ages 3-5. The research identified and described program philosophy, content scope and sequence as implemented in practice and compared them with current best practices for this age group.

<div align="center">9</div>

Research Questions

The questions that guided this research were:

Does the for-profit franchise build its curriculum on an educationally sound, research-based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts?

- A.   If so, does the curriculum include learning goals and developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences?
- B.   If not, what is the content and how is the program organized and delivered to students?

Limitations

Within this study I examined only movement-based classes for children ages three to five in large metropolitan areas. Additionally, I collected data only in for-profit companies that traveled to daycare settings to provide movement-based classes. Due to the fact that only those children whose parents wished to pay an extra fee in addition to their child care costs, most of these daycares were in a high socio-economic area. Furthermore, the students in this research were three to five year old children; interviews were unlikely to provide viable data regarding their perceptions of the learning environment, program philosophy, or compliance with guidelines and standards. These factors limited my ability to generalize the data to other age groups and settings.

Definition of Terms

Affective domain: *"…feelings and emotions as applied to self and others through movement"* (Gallahue, 1998, p. 16).

Belief system: "Beliefs, attitudes, and values form an individual's belief system"

    (Pajares, 1992, p.314).

Cognitive domain: *"…* those objectives which deal with the recall or recognition of

    knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills" (Bloom, 1956,

    p. 7).

Curriculum: "The planned sequence of formal instructional experiences presented by the

    teachers to whom the responsibility is assigned"(Jewett, Bain, & Ennis, 1995,

    p.12).

Developmentally appropriate: *"* refers to the suitability of the activity, equipment, or

    instruction for the present performance or ability level of the infant, toddler, or

    preschooler" (NASPE, 2002, p. 17).

Domain theory: A theoretical framework used for organizing and understanding

    curriculum based on multiple perspectives of curriculum developers and

    participants appropriate for describing aspects of a curriculum. (Goodlad et al.,

    1979).

Early childhood program: "…any group program in a center, school, or other facility that

    serves children from birth through age 8" (Bredekamp et al., 1997, p. 3).

Educational program: A formal systematic study of methods and theories outlined by a

curriculum showing goals and outcomes to be met. The goals and outcomes involve

learning and experiencing specific movement skills.

Empowerment: "…believing in yourself and your own ability to act. (Irwin, 1996, p. 4).

Experiential curricula: The students' perceptions of the curriculum (Goodlad, et al.,

    1979).

Formal curricula: "are those [curriculum] which gain official approval by state and local school boards and adoption, by choice or fiat, by an institution and/or teachers" (Goodlad et al., 1979, p.61)

Fundamental motor skills: "The foundational skills that provide the building blocks for specific movements such as those found in sport, games, and dance. Examples of fundamental motor skills are jumping, hopping, throwing, kicking, and running" (NASPE, 2002, p. 17).

Ideological curricula: Is a curriculum designed by experts external to the setting in which it is implemented. It represents theoretical, scientific, philosophical, or other types of formal knowledge that experts believe should be taught. (Goodlad, et al., 1979).

Motor Behavior: "Study of change in motor learning, motor control, and motor development brought about by the interaction of learning and biological processes" (Gallahue, 1998, p. 20).

Motor Control: "Study of the underlying mechanisms responsible for movement, with particular emphasis given to what is actually being controlled and how the processes governing control are organized" (Gallahue, 1998, p. 20).

Motor development: "…the changes in motor behavior over the lifespan and the process(es) which underlie these changes" (Clark & Whitall, 1989, p. 194).

Movement Education: "The lifelong process of changes in movement behavior brought about by opportunities for practice, encouragement, instruction, and the ecological context of the environment itself "(Gallahue, 1998, p.19).

Operational curricula: The curriculum as perceived by an outside observer. (Goodlad, et al., 1979).

Perceived curricula: The teachers' perceptions of the content and teaching strategies they implement (Goodlad, et al., 1979).

Preschoolers: "Children ages three to five years" (NASPE, 2002, p. 4).

Psychomotor domain: *"*All observable voluntary human motion ranging from reflex movements to the ability to modify and create aesthetic movement patterns"(Melograno, 1996, p. 18).

Recreational Program: A program designed to fill up a time slot with activities that keep the students engaged and content.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As more and more children spend greater amounts of time in structured early childhood education programs, the need to investigate important aspects of these programs becomes paramount. The following literature review will document the importance of a curriculum grounded in theory as the appropriate means of facilitating effective movement-based programs for the preschool aged child. This chapter presents a review of current literature in the areas of developmental theory, motor development, early childhood education, and curriculum design.

Developmental Theory

Examination of the development literature suggests that three theories, maturation, behaviorism, and constructivism, explain aspects of children's development differently. Theorists differ in the definition of both the starting point and the nature of the developmental path. For example, maturationists (e.g., Gesell, 1943; McGraw, 1963) view the starting point as biologically determined and the path as predictable and sequential, while behaviorists (e.g., Pavlov, 1941; Skinner, 1974) define the starting point as environmentally determined with the path evolving as the individual reacts to the environment. Constructivists (e.g., Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978) conceptualize the starting point as "constructions" or understandings children create from sensory input and the path as a series of patterns, schemes, and adaptations by which the child organizes and generalizes actions (Thomas, 1992). A closer look at each of these theories provides insight into their basic structures.

Maturation

Maturationalists such as G. Stanley Hall and, of particular note, Arnold Gesell, argued that development occurs in stages that are both predictable and sequential, and that development is a genetically determined biological process that all children experience automatically (Wortham, 1998). Gesell asserted, "Development takes time. It is a continuous process. Beginning with conception (the fertilization of the egg-cell) it proceeds stage by stage in orderly sequence" (Gesell & Ilg, 1943, p. 60). Gesell developed age norms to explain at what age children will achieve certain behaviors. He argued that using a developmental chart allowed parents, teachers and researchers to make comparisons and understand the developmental flow (Gesell, & Ilg, 1943). Even critics of this theory agree that maturation is an important component in a child's development, however, they argue that to understand fully the developmental process, consideration must also be given to the child's environment and learning (Gabbard, 2000). Because maturational theory postulates that motor development is a function of mere biology, this theory came to be viewed as too narrow. Other researchers, most notably behaviorists, while taking into consideration the work of the maturationists, extended their investigations into more concrete descriptions of motor skills and performance measures.

Behaviorism

Contrary to maturational theory, behaviorists (e.g., Pavlov, 1941; Skinner, 1974) maintained that a child's environment determines their development. Behaviorists suggest that it is not genetics, alone, that directs development but individuals' reactions to their environment. Behaviorists argue that development is learned and is not reflected in

predictable stages as the maturationalists proposed (Wortham, 1998). Day (1983) claimed, "Central to this theory of development is the assumption that the individual learns, or changes behavior, in direct response to systems of rewards and punishments" (p. 82). Two researchers of particular note during this time period were Ivan Pavlov and B.F. Skinner.

The Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov, is credited with laying the foundation for behaviorist theory. He determined that by using stimuli, animals could learn new physiological responses. He maintained, "an animal from the time of its birth is subjected to the various effects produced by its environment which it inevitably has to answer by definite activities" (Pavlov, 1941, p. 178).

The work of Harvard professor, B.F. Skinner elicited both public fame and criticism. Simply stated, Skinner believed that all behavior was learned and could therefore be manipulated, adapted, modified, and shaped. Behavioral change occurs through a system of rewarding positive behavior and punishing bad behavior (Wortham, 1998).

Behaviorism was embraced by many researchers and the theory was stretched to apply to many situations and environments. In fact, Skinner admitted he was plagued by his theory. In his book, *About Behaviorism* (1974), Skinner listed twenty widely held beliefs about behaviorism with which he did not agree, such as:

1. It ignores consciousness, feelings, and states of mind.
2. It neglects innate endowment and argues that all behavior is acquired during the lifetime of the individual.

3. It formulates behavior simply as a set of responses to stimuli, thus representing a person as an automation, robot, puppet, or machine,

4. It does not attempt to account for cognitive processes.

5. It has no place for intention or purpose.

6. It cannot explain creative achievements-in art, for example, or in music, literature, science, or mathematics. (p. 4)

When addressing the over simplification of behaviorism Skinner remarked,

> A science of behavior is especially vulnerable to the charge of simplification because it is hard to believe that a fairly simple principle can have vast consequences in our lives. We have learned to accept similar apparent discrepancies in other fields. We no longer find it hard to believe that a bacterium or virus can explain the devastation of a plague or that the slipping of parts of the earth's crust can explain the tragedy of a city leveled by an earthquake. But we find it much more difficult to believe that contingencies of reinforcement can really be the roots of wars, say, or – at the other extreme- of art, music, and literature. (1974, p. 231)

Like Maturationist theory, Behaviorist theory eventually came to be seen by a new wave of theorists as too narrow. These new theorists, described as constructivists, argued that an individual's interaction with his environment did not account for the wide range of differences in individual competencies, maturational differences, and individual interests. Instead, constructivists espoused that individualsconstructed their understanding of their environment resulting in unique skills and interests consistent with observations of individual learning.

Constructivist

Constructivists (e.g., Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978) build their theory on the foundations of previous theories. Constructivist theory incorporates both the maturationalist view that "the human organism is born with particular competencies which, in many ways, serve to direct the course of development" and the behaviorist view that "some forms of human behavior assumed to be universal and innate will not appear without appropriate experience" (Day, 1983, p. 88). "The basic tenet of [constructivist] approach is that, rather than being able to directly perceive information in the environment, individuals make a 'construction' out of the sensory input from their eyes plus information retrieved from their memories" (Gabbard, 2000, p. 178). Through their extensive research, constructivist theorists, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, brought this theory to prominence. Piaget (1969) declared, "In the development of the child, there is no preestablished plan, but a gradual evolution in which each innovation is dependent upon the previous one" (p. 153). Piaget explained that the child organized and constructed new and existing knowledge by means of schemes, assimilation, and accommodation. Schemes are the mental processes of adaptation that enable the child, through repetition, to organize and generalize actions. These schemes allow the child to adapt satisfactorily to the environment (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Piaget (1969) defined assimilation as "the filtering or modification of the input" and accommodation as "the modification of internal schemes to fit reality" (p. 16). In other words, the child has an experience, pleasant or unpleasant, and he organizes that experience according to his internal reality. Based on that internal organization, the child now has developed beliefs that can lead to action and/or behaviors.

Additionally, Piaget (1969) argued that the child's biological-mental processes are organized so that all schemes are appropriately adjusted and interrelated, as the integration of personhood occurs. He identified four stages of cognitive development, sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational, leading to mature processing. Both Vygotsky (1997) and Piaget (1969) suggested that developmental processes go through predictable stages. "It was Piaget, however, who had the most influence in helping us understand that development, though continuous, must be seen as a succession of separate and different stages, each based on the one that proceeded it" (Day, 1983, p. 90).

Vygotsky's theory of development maintains that individuals are a product of their environment and their biology. Individuals are not passive learners; they must interact with their environment in order to learn. "We have seen that the individual's own experience is the only teacher capable of forming new reactions in the individual. Only those relations are real for an individual that are given to him in his personal experience" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 47). Each interaction we have with the environment builds on itself. We bring to each experience an individual interpretation, so every experience holds a different perspective for the individual based on previous experiences. Development is seen as the process of learning from one's own interactions with the environment. "It is impossible to exert a direct influence on, to produce changes in, another individual, one can only teach oneself, i.e., alter one's own innate reactions, through one's own experience"(Vygotsky, 1997, p. 47).

Vygotsky (1978) developed what he called the zone of proximal development to explain development. He avowed, "It is the distance between the actual developmental

level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential

development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in

collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The zone of proximal development is best

described when a child, working under the guidance of an adult or other more advanced

peer, can perform better than when acting alone. Vygotsky saw the zone of proximal

development as a tool that educators could use to understand children's development. He

explained, " By using this method we can take account of not only the cycles and

maturation processes that have already been completed but also those processes that are

currently in a state of formation that are just beginning to mature and develop" (p. 87).

Movement based programs grounded in developmentally sound theory assist

educators as they operationalize their philosophical approach into a well-designed

curriculum. Resulting curricula may utilize different or similar techniques and activities,

and may differ according to their theoretical perspective. In any case, effective

movement education programs are based on sound developmental theory.

<div align="center">Motor Development</div>

The study of motor development has a long and somewhat confusing history.

Indeed, the very definition of motor development has often been at question. Is motor

development defined by the product or by the process? A brief review of the history of

motor development is, therefore, useful. The study of motor development can be divided

into four distinct time periods: "(a) Precursor Period (1787 – 1928) (b) Maturational

Period (1928 – 1946), (c) Normative/Descriptive Period (1946 – 1970) and, (d) Process-

oriented Period (1970 - present)" (Clark & Whitall, 1989, p. 185). The Precursor Period

was the era in which the foundation for motor development was laid. It was during this

time that Charles Darwin's research stimulated the nature versus nurture debate (Clark & Whitall, 1989). While the Precursor Period is important for its historical perspective, the latter three periods provide more insight into the development of the discipline and the application of knowledge to children's movement.

Maturational Period

Serious study of motor development began during the maturational period (1928 - - 1946). "The maturationalists contended that development is a function of inborn biological processes that result in a universal sequence in infant movement skill acquisition" (Gallahue, & Ozum, 1998, p. 6). Two researchers who initiated research in infant motor behavior were Arnold Gesell and Myrtle McGraw. Arnold Gesell took on the task of explaining the motor changes that were observed in a child from birth to adolescence. The Gesell Institute states, **"**The Gesell philosophy of human behavior maintains, and has always maintained, that behavior is a function of structure. This means that to a large extent we behave as we do because of the way our bodies are built, and because of the stage of development we have reached" (Ames, Gillespie, Haines, & Ilg, 1979, p. 3). Through his many studies, Gesell found that children develop in stages and, although each child progresses through the stages at an individual pace, all children mature through every stage in sequence (Gesell, & Ilg, 1943). Gesell's observations of children provided information on the "acquisition of early rudimentary movements to mature patterns of behavior" (Gallahue, & Ozum, 1998, p. 7).

Myrtle McGraw (1963), like Gesell, was interested in documenting infants' behavioral development. McGraw, however, differed in her methodology from other investigators. Rather than focusing on milestones of achievement that she explained,

"did not move beyond the category of inventory taking," she attempted to determine the process of development (p.xiv) and how and why a behavior exists. McGraw also varied from previous scholars in her methods of obtaining the data. Instead of using "scales, landmarks, and standardized exams, McGraw watched what babies actually did and then devised ingenious means for manipulating their behavior" (Dalton & Bergenn, 1995, p. xi). Thus the maturational period was significant because it began to see children as individuals who developed at differing rates and in different sequences. The significant finding of this era was that children do mature, develop, and learn to perform tasks in sequences that adjust to their environment and their structure.

Normative/Descriptive Period

Following the maturational period, scholars such as, Anna Espenschade, Ruth Glassow, and G. Lawrence Rarick, placed an increasing emphasis on normative and descriptive explanations of development. During the normative/descriptive period (1946 -- 1970) researchers focused not on the biological processes of development, as the maturationalists did, but rather on the products of development such as skill acquisition and measures of motor performance. Additionally, Lolas Halverson's work "did much to revive interest in children's research [sic] because of its emphasis on identifying the mechanisms behind the acquisition of skill rather than the final skill itself" (Gallahue, & Ozum, 1998, p. 7). Although children learned the same fundamental motor skills, they learned them at different rates and had different experiences in their learning. Roberton and Halverson (1984) explained:

> Behavioral or structural change is the result of interactions between a child and the environment. Learning and development do not occur solely through features

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within the individual (as the old term "maturation" implied) or through features

solely outside the individual. Rather, they result from the unique coincidence of

each acting upon the other. For example, children cannot learn to throw forcefully

without an object to throw and without practice in throwing it; however, the

presence of that environmental stimulus, even practice of throwing. Instead, they

may change the object or the task to fit their present throwing behavior, or they

may choose to ignore the stimulus entirely. A child's nervous system and mental

state must be "ready" for change. The child must then encounter the proper

experience for her particular level. Only this unique circle of interaction between

the child and the environment will result in learning (p. 2).

Process-oriented Period

Research during the earlier part of the Process-oriented Period focused on

developing descriptions of motor performance. A researcher of note during this time was

Vern Seefeldt whose work "sought to identify, order, and classify children's fundamental

movement patterns" (Clark & Whitall, 1989, p. 192). Gabbard (2000) explained that this

particular research has aided in the identification and description of motor skills. This

research, however, did not identify how the motor behavior emerges. The second or latter

half of the period focused on explaining the process of motor performance instead of the

description (Clark & Whitall, 1989). During this period Kugler, Kelso, and Turvey (date)

were researchers who introduced the dynamical systems approach to motor behavior.

"Since its inception dynamical systems research has done much to provide a better

understanding of how motor behavior emerges" (Gabbard, 2000, p. 26).   Clark and

Whitall (1989) claimed that this theory offers " a new theoretical perspective for studying

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movement control and coordination that is founded on the principles of physical biology and ecological realism" (p. 192). Both the product and the process of moving are central to the study of motor development. Each aspect contributes knowledge essential to effectively meeting the needs of individuals through their lifespans and, therefore, to effective curricula development from preschool to lifelong learning programs.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education can be found in many forms and usually encompasses the ages from 2-5. Education for young children can be categorized into (a) day-care for those children under the age of 3, (b) nursery school/preschool ages of 3-5, and (c) kindergarten serving children age 5. Within these various programs, millions of children are served in churches, homes, university campuses, corporations, hospitals, and private homes. After examining these programs, Peters, Neisworth and Yawkey (1985) commented on the diversity in program structure:

> Some accommodate 2- to 5- year-olds, some only one age group. Some operate
> on a half-day schedule, some for a full day. Some meet five days per week,
> others only two or three days. Some operate year round, others for only part of the
> year. In short, variations within this form of early childhood education are the
> rule rather than the exception. (p. 20)

Historical Perspective

Early efforts at formal education for children under the age of six can be traced to Frederick Froebel, a German educator, who opened his first class in 1837. Froebel used an organized curriculum including both play and teacher-directed activities (Wortham, 1998). In the U.S. it was not until 1856, that Mrs. Carl Schurz, a student of Froebels,

established the first formal program for children under the age of six. From 1880-- 1900 early childhood programs in the United States experienced a rapid increase in the number of classes being formed for this age child. "There seemed to be almost universal acknowledgment by parents, educators, and social reformers that some form of education for three-to five-year-olds was beneficial to child and society and perhaps necessary for child development" (Day, 1983, p. 18).

It was during the 1920's that many colleges and universities established programs to have readily available human subjects for child development research. A few of the earliest programs were established at the Gesell Child Guidance Nursery at Yale University, Columbia Teachers College, and Bank Street College. These programs for the young child were not only instrumental in producing research on child development but also played a large role in training early childhood personnel as well as providing a tool for parent education. (Peters et al. 1985). In the 1960's, Head Start was funded by the U.S. government to serve children living in low-income families. It has grown to be one of the most widely known and successful federally funded programs that educate economically challenged children. "Head Start programs are designed to foster general well-being and enhance school readiness, so that these children might gain the full benefit of their school experiences and be more successful in life generally"(Cotton & Conklin, 1989, p. 1).

Today, early childhood education programs are continuing to grow. In many families both parents work and need daily childcare services. Additionally, there is an increased realization that this time in a child's life is developmentally important. As a result not only are more children attending these programs, they are attending at an

earlier age (Werner et al. 1996). Between the ages of two and six, children are rapidly growing both physically and cognitively. This period of rapid growth provides an opportune time for laying foundational skills, such as basic motor and socialization skills that will aid them later in life (Gallahue et al. 1998; Riggs, 1980). Positive experiences in educational programs can have a lifelong impact on cognitive, social, and physical development. Therefore, during these formative years, it is imperative that children participate in high-quality programs that follow developmentally appropriate practices.

Research (Jones, 1998; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1998) suggests that children in quality preschool programs have a higher degree of academic success and self-esteem and a lower rate of behavioral problems than those in poor quality programs. According to The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "A high-quality early childhood program is one that provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, and language development of each child while being sensitive to the needs and preferences of families" (1997, p. 8). Educators and developmentalists agree that children need a high quality program as defined above; the dilemma arises when one seeks consensus on program implementation. Over the years many different types of early childhood curricula have been designed and implemented by educators to address diverse criteria associated with "quality" programs

<div align="center">Best Practices for Movement Programs</div>

A quality program includes developmentally appropriate activities for the students it is serving. One way for directors and teachers to make informed choices is to follow standards and guidelines established for movement programs. The National Association

for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has developed criteria related to program

quality published in two position statements: *Developmentally appropriate practice in*

movement programs for young children ages 3-5 (NASPE, 1994) and *Active start: A*

statement of physical activity guidelines for children birth to five years. (NASPE, 2002).

The NASPE (1994) statement on best practices concerning movement programs argued

that:

> …. a general 'activity' oriented program consisting primarily of traditional games
>
> and dance is not an appropriate process for maximizing children's development.
>
> A more appropriate approach for this age group would be to focus on basic motor
>
> skills and movement concepts and how these activities can assist in the child's
>
> psychological, physical, intellectual, and social development. (NASPE, 1994, p.
>
> 3)

Further NASPE (1994) maintains five assumptions or premises useful when

designing movement programs for three to five year old children:

6. Three-, 4- and 5-year-old children are different from elementary school-
    aged children.

7. Young children learn through interaction with their environment.

8. Teachers of young children are guides or facilitators.

9. Young children learn and develop in an integrated fashion.

10. Planned movement experiences enhance play experiences. (p. 5-6)

NASPE also identified 25 components that explain appropriate and inappropriate

practices in movement programs. These components, listed in Appendix A: Components

of appropriate and inappropriate practice in movement programs for children ages three

to five, provide a broad overview of how classes should be structured in order to provide

a quality program. The NASPE (2002) physical activity guidelines for children birth to age five states, "All children birth to age five should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills" (p.1). NASPE divides the ages into three categories: (a) infants, (b) toddlers, and (c) preschoolers; for the purposes of this paper, only the category of preschoolers, ages 3-5, will be addressed. The five guidelines discussed for preschoolers concentrate on (a) the kind of activity, (b) the type of environment, and (c) the individuals in charge of facilitating the activity:

Guideline 1. Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes daily of structured physical activity.

Guideline 2. Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.

Guideline 3. Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.

Guideline 4. Preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.

Guideline 5. Individuals responsible for the well being of preschoolers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills. (p. 9-11)

Movement Programs

Various companies have been created to fill the need for movement education for children ages 3-5. There exists an enormous diversity in the way companies provide programs to children. Some movement education companies utilize a freestanding facility

where the children come to the premises to participate, while other companies travel to the daycare centers and hold classes inside the center. Even within the above structure some companies are part of a chain or franchise, while others are independently owned and operated. Interestingly, many of the companies that travel to the daycare center are not hired directly by the center to teach classes to all the children. Instead, only those children whose parents wish to pay an extra fee in addition to their child care costs get the benefits of the movement class. In this situation, it is typical for the movement education company to pay a room fee or a portion of its profit to the daycare center for use of the room. These daycare centers do not provide equipment or use of daycare staff for the movement program, these are all provided by the movement company. This program delivery scenario contains both opportunities and constraints to early childhood movement programs that, to date, have not be formally examined.

<div align="center">Curriculum</div>

Developmentally Appropriate Movement Education

The developmental approach has had a strong influence on the design of physical education curriculum for young children. Most designs emphasize educating the whole child at their developmental level. According to Kirchner & Fishburne (1998):

> The developmental approach to curriculum development rests on the premise that each child learns concepts and motor skills according to her own rate and level of development. This process-based, rather than product-based, curriculum views each child as progressing through stages of development according to her own time clock. A stage of development is not a rigid set of standard academic, motor, and social skills that a child must acquire before advancing to the next stage.

Rather, developmental stages are approximate time periods from early through late childhood in which children acquire psychomotor, cognitive, and affective concepts, skills and understandings. (p. 190)

In this approach to physical education it is not just the psychomotor domain that is targeted but also the cognitive and affective domains. Jewett, Bain, and Ennis (1995) assert, "Developmental models emphasize the holistic nature of the individual. Holistic developmental models place the primary curriculum focus on integration of objectives across the cognitive, affective, and motor domains" (p. 254). Another significant aspect of this model is the importance of learning skills and concepts and their application to various areas of their lives. Gallahue (1998) claims, "the developmental approach to physical education aims to instruct individuals in the use of their bodies so that they can execute a wide variety of fundamental movements effectively throughout life, and apply these basic abilities to a wide range of specialized movement skills for daily living, recreational, or competitive sport needs" (p. 465).

Curriculum Models

Ideally, movement education programs focus on helping young children learn basic skills and participate in physical activity consistent with the NASPE (1994,2002) best practices and guidelines. They often use a curriculum, or planned set of learning experiences (Jewett et al. 1995) to structure and sequence the experiences leading to desirable educational goals. Several curricula have been packaged and published as curricular models useful in elementary and preschool settings. According to Kirchner and Fishburne (1998), "The fundamental purpose of a curriculum model is to provide an effective means of choosing activities, developing teaching strategies, and providing

experiences that meet the objectives of the instructional program" (p. 188). Educators

use various curriculum models to provide quality programs for children. Two models,

the movement education model, and the meaningful movement model, appear appropriate

for early childhood physical education programs. I will discuss four components of each

model. These components include (a) assumptions/beliefs that act as the guiding

principles for selecting content and (b) the conceptual framework, which "sets the scope

or content boundaries that can be included in physical education lessons. The conceptual

framework organizes the structure of the body of knowledge in a way that teachers can

understand the primary concepts and their relationships" (Jewett et al. 1995, p. 229).

Other components essential to understanding a model include its (c) curriculum

framework (its practical organization and operation) and (d) the role of the teacher within

the model.

 Movement education model. Human movement is the focus of this concept-based

curriculum that uses a child-centered approach in which children are given the

opportunity to learn movement concepts at their own developmental level. One goal of

the movement education model is to "develop competent movers who move with

efficiency in deliberate movement situations and who can adapt their movements to

effectively meet the unpredictable and unexpected demands of dynamic movement

environments (Allison & Barrett, 2000, p. 26). Model advocates seek to teach students to

be both skillful movers and to enhance the quality of children's movement.

 Assumptions/beliefs are the guiding principles for the selection of curriculum

content. According to Allison and Barrett (2000) within the movement education model,

the child should be seen as a whole person who deserves respect for the developing

individual they are. Students should be allowed to construct their own meaning of their physical education experiences based on their prior experiences and knowledge. "Education of the child for participation in dynamic movement environments must be focused on adaptable, flexible, and versatile ways of moving. Problem-solving and decision-making skills are among the essential skills of adaptability, flexibility and versatility"(p. 31).

The conceptual framework of this model is based on Rudolph Laban's movement framework. Rudolph Laban first introduced the movement framework in England in the 1940's before it made its way to the American educational system (Julius, 1978). Laban (1975) developed 16 basic movement themes for dance ranging from movement awareness to movement expression. The 16 themes are listed in Appendix B: Laban's Movement Themes.

Even though Laban initially intended for his work to be used for dance, his themes have been expanded for use in other movement fields. Laban's movement themes have provided educators with a broad system for increasing their own knowledge and awareness of movement (Logsdon, Alleman, Straits, Bleka, & Clark, 1997). "Laban's study of movement represents a systematic way of describing all four aspects of movement: effort aspect, body aspect, space aspect, and relationship aspect. Respectively, these four aspects describe: how the body moves, what the body does, where the body is as it moves, and the relationships which exist in movement" (Logsdon, & Barrett, 1977, p. 97). For further examination of the movement framework refer to Appendix C: Movement Framework.

The curriculum framework explains how the conceptual framework is operationalized for young children. The curriculum framework of this model uses games, dance and gymnastics content as examples of Laban's aspects and themes (Kirchner & Fishburne, 1988). These movement tasks are structured and sequenced to reflect developmentally appropriate practice. Allison and Barrett (2000) provide developmental sequences for certain skills to provide a more complete understanding of what is expected in the way children react to the movement being taught. "Approaching teaching developmentally encourages you [educator] to think of movement along a continuum of change so that it can be ordered, or put in sequence, indicating progress along the way to skillfulness" (Allison & Barrett, 2000, p. 38).

The teacher's role is to identify their students' developmental level and select appropriate content and tasks to enhance students' skillfulness. Allison and Barrett (2000) claim, "Developmentally appropriate teaching practices in physical education enhance the opportunities for children to make meaning of their educational experiences" (p. 37). Teachers within this model are expected to guide the students instead of directing them in their learning experience and give students the opportunity to explore movement and learn at their own developmental rate (Kirchner and Fishburne, 1988).

Meaningful movement model. One particular model, "Meaningful Movement" by Hoffman, Young and Klesius (1985), exemplifies models in this category. The assumptions/beliefs guiding this model, like the movement education model, consider the student to be at the center of the curriculum, and suggest that the curriculum should be holistic, focusing on all domains. Each student comes to class at a different developmental level, with a different knowledge base, and with an ability to learn at a

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different rate. As such, curriculum development is individualized so that each student will experience success.

The conceptual framework of this model focuses on the holistic growth of the student. The conceptual framework for this model is presented in Appendix D: Themes of the Meaningful Movement Model. Each domain is addressed and integrated across units. Hoffman et al. (1985) present one example of a conceptual framework for the developmental model. They maintain:

> The developmental theme approach provides for planning the curriculum around intended student behaviors instead of specific physical activities. Each of the six themes [in this model] focuses on a specific kind of behavior that teachers seek to foster in students. The activities in each developmental theme are related to other curriculum areas so that teachers can plan coordinating and reinforcing experiences for their students. This approach assures that the development of the child remains the central focus of the curriculum. (p. 22-23)

The curricular framework and role of the teacher are difficult to separate in this model. It is the teacher's responsibility to ascertain how he/she might teach the content within the conceptual framework. Since the conceptual framework is based on the student's holistic development, teachers design curricula, which incorporate all domains, placing the student at the center of the curriculum. Hoffman and his colleagues (1985) suggested that establishing this type of curriculum

> Will require a shift away from planning around movement activities (exercises, games, dance, gymnastics) toward a focus on desired student behaviors. These traditional activities are not replaced in the developmental themes, rather they are

selected and combined with appropriate teaching methods to develop the desired

behavior. (p. 27)

The role of the teacher in this model, therefore, is to develop a program that facilitates

learning in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Emphasis is placed on

students' holistic learning so lessons are designed to cross all domains and connect with

their previous knowledge. The teacher creates an environment where activities are geared

towards the children's individual developmental levels, allowing them to learn and grow

at their own rate. Teachers within this model encourage students to make choices, solve

problems, explore various ways of performing skills, and challenge themselves so they

can expand their knowledge and continue to progress to the next stage of development.

(Jewett et al. 1995).

Choosing developmentally appropriate activities, strategies, and motor

experiences is the primary focus of preschool and elementary curriculum models.

Proponents of the various physical education models develop curricula based on the

assumptions, conceptual framework, curriculum framework, definitions, and teacher and

student roles specific to their chosen model. Each model has its champions and its critics

and each model strives to address the best interests of the students it will serve. The two

models discussed present viable, educationally sound movement-based approaches

appropriate for preschool- age children. Programs should provide developmentally

appropriate motor experiences in an enjoyable and supportive educational environment.

The child is a complex organism who has social, mental, emotional, and physical

developmental needs. This paper is designed to address the physical needs of a child,

which are equally as important as the other developmental processes. And those physical

needs are to be designed consistent with children's unique developmental progress. Pre-school and day care centers are the perfect milieu for beginning a lifelong devotion to movement and physical health. The earlier children begin to be challenged physically, the healthier their adulthood. It is extremely important that educators learn developmentally appropriate movement practices for their students so they can design and implement comprehensive movement education programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine how critical pedagogical components of movement programs were implemented in freestanding, for-profit movement-based companies for preschool children ages 3-5. The research identified and described program philosophy, content scope and sequence as implemented in practice. The operations of three preschool movement programs were examined and compared with current best practices for this age group. Because my examination depended on gathering richly detailed examples of the content and its implementation in the program settings, I chose a qualitative research design. In this chapter I discuss the study's methodological approach, research design, participant and setting selection and characteristics, data collection, and analysis.

Research Paradigm

I used a qualitative ethnographic design to gather richly detailed descriptions of the program setting and the participants. According to Rossman and Rallis (1998) qualitative research is particularly effective when the purpose of the study is to interpret participants' intentions within specific contexts. Qualitative researchers go to the participants; they do not take individuals out of the setting. They interact with people, watching and listening as they go about their everyday lives. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret, not measure and predict. Because qualitative research is sensitive to emerging themes and concepts it is particularly well suited for research conducted in complex field settings. In this study, I examined how preschool companies organized and delivered movement based programs. Specifically, I wanted to

know if these programs sponsor educationally sound, research-based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts. In order to discover if these companies followed an educationally sound curriculum, it was necessary to observe directors, teachers, and students in action. Because questionnaires and surveys use self-reporting techniques, they are not effective tools to uncover the complexity of participant interactions within these complex settings. A survey would not reflect what is actually occurring, specifically, how the teachers instruct the children, what techniques they use to implement movement concepts, and how developmental differences in each child are handled. Qualitative research allowed me to interact with the teachers in their setting and understand and interpret their perspective. For example, I observed how the teachers implemented the curriculum in each program, read company documents, and interviewed the directors and teachers. By immersing myself in the setting I was given the chance to uncover new themes, something that a survey would not have allowed. I described each program in detail and searched for themes and concepts relevant to each setting and those that were common across programs.

Qualitative Research Design

Overview

This research began with observations of preschool movement programs taught by teachers in three movement-based companies selected as the sample. This observation period was followed by document analysis of program brochures, parent handout materials, and lesson plans. I then interviewed teachers and directors to understand their purposes and rationales for content selection and delivery decisions. The order of this qualitative design was important because it assisted me to minimize bias and address

threats to the reliability and validity, or trustworthiness, of the findings. I began my observations with very little understanding of the programs and teachers. I described program content and delivery in rich detail and conversed informally with teachers before and after class to enhance my understanding of their intended content. By collecting document data after observations, I was able to use my first hand knowledge of the three programs to critique the promotional literature. Likewise, collecting observation data and analyzing documents prior to interviews allowed me to draw my own preliminary conclusions regarding answers to the research questions. I used the data from the observations and documents analysis to develop interview questions. The three data sources (i.e., observation field notes, document content analysis, and interview transcripts) were triangulated to confirm (or deny) potential conclusions.

Data Collection Time Line

The data collection required a minimum of nine weeks. I spent three weeks observing each company with a minimum of 10 hours of observations for each company. I collected data for one company at a time. I first observed the classes then analyzed their documents and after carefully deciding on questions for the interview, I interviewed the directors and teachers. For two of the companies the director and teacher were one in the same.

Data were analyzed concurrently with the data collection. At the conclusion of each observation, I elaborated my field notes into detailed descriptions. I then reviewed each day's notes for major themes and properties. Each interview was transcribed immediately and analyzed in a similar manner. Analysis is an iterative process in which each data file is analyzed repeatedly for emerging themes. Analysis continued until no

new themes emerged and until each of the primary themes required to answer the research questions had been saturated.

Participants

In order to recruit participants, selection criteria were established. Suitability for inclusion in this study was defined as a movement-based company that:

a) Was of a free standing nature (i.e., is not associated with a school or other agency)

b) Was established on a for-profit rather than a non-profit basis

c) Taught movement-oriented classes to preschool children ages 3-5.

Using the yellow pages from two large metropolitan areas, on the East coast, I identified three movement companies that met the stated criteria. I called each director in an effort to solicit participation. All three program directors gave permission for me to observe their classes and interview their staff.

Setting

The three movement programs that were selected were (a) Jumping Jacks and Jills (b) Tumble Gym, and (c) Stepping Up (pseudonyms)

Kim Watts' (pseudonym) program, Jumping Jacks and Jills, began in 1989. The goal of this program was to "give your child an enjoyable creative movement experience using a variety of activities that will benefit them throughout their life"(Parent Handout) The activities "work on motor skill development, kinesthetic awareness, flexibility, strength, coordination, cooperation, listening skills and of course gymnastics skills" (Parent Handout). Classes were 30 minutes for all age groups and there were a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 children with one teacher per class.

The second company selected, Tumble Gym was a movement program created by Marci Winds (pseudonym) in 1994. Marci was a competitive gymnast in college and bought a gymnastics studio soon after graduating from college. Marci decided to branch out from her studio and offer classes to daycare centers when a friend of hers, who taught children, inspired her. The Tumble Gym handout indicated that the program's purpose was to provide an opportunity for young children to learn various skills. "This movement education and gymnastics program is designed to enhance motor skills. These classes will build self-esteem and introduce an "I CAN" attitude " (Tumble Gym handout). Classes were 35 minutes for all age groups and there were a minimum of six and a maximum of 10 children per class. Each class had two teachers present.

Kate Wilson (pseudonym) created the Stepping Up program in 1984. The Stepping Up brochure stated that the program "is designed to promote a positive attitude and provide a strong foundation of fitness skills, thus setting the groundwork for a child's enjoyment of and participation in arts and sports activities." The classes combined pre-gymnastics skills, creative movement, and physical fitness to achieve program goals. Classes ranged from 30 to 60 minutes depending on the age group. The maximum and minimum number of children per class depended on the location and number of teachers available.

Entry into the Setting

All three program directors gave permission for me to observe their classes and interview their staff. Approved procedures for informed consent were used and followed carefully throughout the study. I first called each teacher, introduced myself and provided a general explanation of my research. I was particularly careful not to alert the teachers to

the research questions because I did not want to bias their presentations. Rossman and

Rallis (1998) suggest that the research purpose be explained to the participants in a

truthful, but general or vague manner. This minimizes the extent to which teachers alter

or adjust their lessons (e.g., plans, goals, tasks), to "help" my research. I was careful NOT

to use terms and concepts such as, curriculum, teaching model, standards, sequences,

developmental appropriateness, and guidelines, because they may have biased teachers'

responses, changing the natural setting. Thus, the teachers were less likely to change their

usual content or teaching method tendencies to reflect their perceptions of my research

interests.   Instead, each director and all teachers observed were told that I was a graduate

student conducting thesis research describing different types of preschool movement

programs. I explained that I was particularly interested in the traveling company format

and was interested in documenting how movement programs operate in this format.

My Role in the Research/Movement Programs

I collected data by observing preschool movement-based classes taught by one

teacher from each company. My degree of involvement in the movement class was

limited to that of "spectator" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).   In other words, I sat at the side

of the room and attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible. My repeated appearance in

the class helped teachers and students become comfortable with my presence and, over

time, they were less likely to change or react, distorting the way they normally taught the

classes (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

Data Collection

I used three data collection methods, observation, documentation analysis, and interview, in that order.

Observation

During the observation period I observed at least 10 instructional hours for each program. I followed one teacher from each movement-based company to various daycare settings to observe the program in action. Because each class lasted between 30-45 minutes and only a few classes were held daily, observations took three weeks to complete.

I observed the teachers' actions and recorded their comments and overall behavior to gather data specifically dealing with my research questions. As the study progressed I compared my findings with published guidelines and best practices for preschool movement programs (e.g., NASPE, 1994, 2002). I took field notes during the class observations and transcribed them as soon as possible so that class events, sequences, and participant dialogues were as fresh in my mind as possible. I kept separate notes of my impressions and interpretations during the observations.

Documentation

Collection of program documentation occurred throughout the observation period. Documents that were collected included philosophy statements, goals and objectives, teacher lesson plans, and other information provided by the director of the movement company. I was particularly interested in materials that documented the company's philosophy, goals, standards, and lesson plans. These documents assisted me to describe and evaluate program fidelity, or the consistency between the program's documentation

and teacher's daily operating procedures. Document analysis occurred following the

observation period. By collecting document data after observations, my first impressions

of the program were not biased by document rhetoric. After the observation period, I was

able to use my first hand knowledge of the programs to critique their promotional

literature. Likewise, collecting and analyzing documents before the interviews allowed

me to prepare more direct and relevant questions for the director and teacher interviews.

This type of documentation helped me confirm and question the participants' interview

responses.

Interviews

I conducted interviews with the director of the movement companies and the

observed teachers using the interview guide approach. The purpose of the interview

guide is to "…elicit the participant's worldview, the researcher develops categories or

topics to explore but remains open to pursuing topics that the participant brings up"

(Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 124). Questions for the interviews were developed from

teacher and program observations and an analysis of the company's documents. The

interviews were audio taped and then transcribed as soon after the interview as possible.

The length of the interview was approximately 45 minutes and was conducted at the

participant's convenience in a quiet location.

Data Analysis

Analyzing ethnographic qualitative data is a systematic process. It requires

cleaning and organizing the observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation

that have been collected (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe

three strategies or levels of data analysis, open, axial, and selective coding, for use with

qualitative data. Open coding is the process of closely examining words and phrases used by participants and the researcher when describing phenomena, impressions, or interpretations in the setting. Open coding results in the grouping of like examples and the assignment of categories to groups. Categories reflect the lived events, issues, and concerns experienced by the participants in the setting. As new categories emerge during the data collection and analysis period, all previously coded material will be reviewed again and recoded to reflect the most up-to-date and thorough coding scheme. "In open coding, the analyst is concerned with generating categories and their properties and then seeks to determine how categories vary dimensionally" (p.143).

Strauss & Corbin (1998) state, that categories are "concepts that stand for phenomena" (p. 102). Identified categories were examined for properties and dimensions. "Properties [are] characteristics of a category, the delineation of which defines and gives it meaning. Dimensions [represent] the range along which general properties of a category vary, giving specification to a category and variation to the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). I used the data to search for actions, interactions, objects, words, and phrases to establish categories. These categories allowed me to group related actions, interactions, happenings, and objects under a mutual heading. Once I had categories established, I then broke them down even further into properties and dimensions. This gave me the opportunity to give my categories precision and differentiate them from other categories.

The second level of coding described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) is axial coding. At this level "categories are systematically developed and linked with subcategories" (p. 143). When appropriate, subcategories were developed to give further

explanation. Categories were analyzed to determine a core category or family that represented a main theme in the data. With the main themes in mind, specific events, actions, behaviors, and interpretations from the data were used to support that theme, connect and relate concepts and ideas around that theme, and build theory. Data analysis in qualitative research occurs while data are being collected. Analysis is an iterative process that continually seeks to revise and refine categories and to determine the relationships between and among events, interactions, philosophies, and perspectives to understand the reasons and meanings of phenomena as perceived by the participants.

In the third level of data analysis, selective coding, I used the emerging themes to direct additional data collection (e.g., more interview questions)) to support or extend my findings to (a) novel situations (other for-profit traveling movement programs), (b) new contacts (other directors, teachers who might have similar or different viewpoints), or (c) novel themes (creative ways to conceptualize the events, experiences, and interpretations). "However, it is not until the major categories [themes] are finally integrated [at this level] to form a larger theoretical scheme that the research findings [can] take the form of theory. Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories" (p. 143).

In this research, the open coding process began after the first day of observation and continued daily as new data were added. As new codes emerged, previous files were recoded to reflect all codes currently identified. As themes emerged, the data were examined to determine supporting categories and dimensions and evidence was accumulated to support each theme.

Trustworthiness

"The goal of research is to search for truth" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 315). The research objective is to gather data accurately to describe and tell the participants' stories. Researchers aim to make sure that the research is as valid and reliable as possible and take into account any biases or limitations that may pose a threat to a comprehensive and truthful piece of work (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Validity and reliability are terms used in the evaluation of research. According to LeCompte and Preissle, "reliability refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated" (p. 332). Reliability presumes that if other researchers were to use the same methods on the same type of population within the same type of setting they would be able to get the same results. Qualitative researchers, however, conduct their observations, interviews, and other data gathering in a natural setting and not a lab setting. This makes reliability in qualitative research a daunting task. LeCompte & Preissle state, "Unique situations cannot be reconstructed precisely because even the most exact replication of research methods may fail to produce identical results (p. 332). Strauss & Corbin explain "reproducing social phenomena can be difficult because it is nearly impossible to replicate the original conditions under which data were collected or to control all the variables that might possibly affect findings" (p. 266). With this in mind qualitative research has had to expand its meaning of reliability. Strauss and Corbin state,

> "Given the same theoretical perspective of the original researcher, following the
> same general rules for data gathering and analysis, and assuming a similar set of
> conditions, other researchers should be able to come up with either the same or a

very similar theoretical explanation about the phenomenon under investigation."

(1998, pp. 266-267)

Although exact replication of this study would be difficult, presenting a clear research

design with a time line will allow future researchers to replicate the process used to

collect and analyze the data.

Validity is viewed in two parts: internal and external. LeCompte & Preissle

(1993) explain, "Internal validity raises the problem of whether conceptual categories

understood to have mutual meanings between the participants and the observer are

shared" (p. 342). LeCompte & Priessle look at external validity as comparability and

translatability.

> Comparability is the degree to which the components of a study, including the
>
> units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and setting, are
>
> sufficiently well described and defined that other researchers can use the results to
>
> compare to other studies addressing related issues. Establishing the comparability
>
> of a study makes it scientifically useful. Translatability is related, but distinct; it is
>
> the degree to which the researcher uses theoretical frames, definitions, and
>
> research techniques accessible to and understood by other researchers in the same
>
> or related disciplines. (p. 348)

The strategies that I used to address threats to the reliability and validity and

establish trustworthiness for this study were (a) triangulation, (b) extended data

collection, (c) member checks, and (d) personal biography.

Triangulation

Triangulation, according to Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsey (1999), refers to "the use of multiple methods… that can strengthen the validity of findings if results produced by different methods are congruent. Using multiple methods is a means of offsetting different kinds of bias and measurement error"(p. 423). I triangulated or compared data from the three data collection methods used in this study: observations, document analysis, and interviews. I compared my observations of daily program operation with the purposes and materials documenting each program, and the directors' and teachers' explanations and interpretations of events and behaviors. When I found that all three sources agreed, I was more confident that the phenomena existed. If, however, one or two sources disagreed, I continued to extend my understanding of the phenomena until I was satisfied that either I could support it with data or it did not reflect the program accurately.

Extended Time Period

I collected data over an extended period of time that lasted a minimum of two weeks as opposed to a one-time visit to the classes. This minimized the reactivity effect caused by my initial presence in the class, allowing both teachers and students to become comfortable. Use of an extended time frame for data collection permitted adequate time to collect enough rich data from multiple sources (i.e., observation, document analysis, and interview) to support the emerging themes. Proceeding in this manner allowed me the opportunity to saturate relevant data categories, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings.

Member Checks

Member checks were used to establish internal validity by providing evidence that the conceptual categories are meaningful to the participants. At the conclusion of my interview with the teachers and directors, I asked them to respond to the relevance and accuracy of my major data categories and themes that have emerged to this point. I also sent them a copy of their transcribed interview and asked each to comment on its accuracy and edit or extend parts that may be inaccurate or only partially explained. At the conclusion of the member checking process, I was more confident that the themes accurately reflected the participants' perspectives and interpretations.

Personal Biography

The personal biography is used in qualitative research to acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher and to overtly alert the reader and the researcher to the researcher's possible biases and potential ways they could negatively affect the research findings. During the data collection and analysis period, the researcher uses a separate folder or file to record their perceptions or responses to phenomena in the setting. These are kept separate from the more neutral, descriptive records of events, dialogue, and behaviors that form the observation field notes and interview transcripts. Later as findings are reported, the researcher again acknowledges particular events, perceptions, or interpretations that may reflect the subjectivity of the researcher.

My biography. Certain experiences in my personal history could have biased this study. I started my career as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist working with troubled children and teenagers. I used movement as a way to teach them coping skills for stress and anger. I also used movement as a way to build self-esteem and as a way to

help the children express feelings. I have seen first hand how movement can positively affect the lives of children and that awareness has made a large impact on my views of movement. After working as a Recreational Therapist, I worked as a personal trainer for five years; this time-spent training has made me feel very strongly about the benefits of health and fitness for all age groups. My most recent work experience was to teach movement-based classes to children, ages three to five for a limited time. For five months I taught movement-based classes to preschoolers in daycare centers. My teaching experience provided some insight into the challenges of teaching this age group, but due to my limited time in the field, I was aware that there was still much I was not subjected to as a teacher. Further, I had no training as a dancer, gymnast, or as an athlete in a specific sport.

In this research, some of the directors of the companies were experienced athletes. Due to differences in experiences, I may have perceived components of the curriculum as more or less important than the directors and/or teachers did. Not part of my career but equally important in establishing my views on children, movement, and fitness is the fact that I am a mother. During the time I collected and reported these data, my daughter, Hannah, was two years old and Ava was only a few months old. Thus, I not only saw these programs through the eyes of a businesswoman and researcher but through the eyes of a concerned mother. I had concerns for safety, small class size, and appropriateness of activities that I never realized before. In part, I was researching, reading, and listening in order to determine what would be the very best curriculum for my child. My interest in this topic has expanded beyond simply an academic concern. On a very personal level, I was involved with the daily activities that promoted health and well being for my

children. My expectations for what a child should learn and experience were greater for it involved Hannah and Ava. And finally, I spent the last few years studying curriculum and instruction at the graduate level and have learned practices that are research-based and established as effective in pedagogical settings.

As I look back over my limited but varied experiences with children and movement, I was more convinced than ever that children need structured and unstructured movement as a daily routine. Not all families have the resources to take a child to movement classes, however, families can insist on time spent outside playing ball, catch, walking as a family, hiking, bicycle riding and Little League. There are a myriad of ways to incorporate movement into a child's life without large financial expense. The greatest expense is time – time to encourage play that involves movement and time to participate with a child. When a parent encourages a child to be entertained passively (videos, computer games) rather than through physical activity, the child suffers. I believe the child suffers not only physically but also emotionally and socially.

Through my different job experiences and through my own childhood experiences, I do believe that structured and unstructured movement is important to the development of each child. My history could have possibly biased the study, yet these very experiences piqued my interest in this thesis topic and helped me to report the research in an accurate, knowledgeable, and honest manner.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

America's youth are less physically active now than they have ever been. Various

fitness companies have realized the need for children to be engaged in movement-based

programs and have capitalized on this need by offering programs to preschoolers.

However, there appears to be little standardization regarding the quality of existing

movement programs for children between the ages of three and five. The purpose of this

study was to examine how critical pedagogical components of movement programs are

implemented in freestanding, for-profit movement-based companies for preschool

children ages three to five. The questions that guided this research were: Does the

movement company build its curriculum on an educationally sound, research-based

philosophy, guidelines, and concepts? If so, does the curriculum include learning goals

and developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences? If not, what is the

content and how is the program organized and delivered to students? This chapter

presents evidence to answer these research questions and is divided into the following

sections: domains of curriculum, case descriptions, and domain analyses.

Domains of Curriculum

Curricula are abstract structures used to select and organize content for teaching.

A curriculum can be perceived as including and emphasizing many different types of

content or experiences depending on one's point of view. For example, curriculum

writers may envision ideal content structured to convey information or experiences often

without regard for the local context. Conversely, teachers may focus on the most practical

aspects of content and instructional methods, selecting and organizing experiences based

on what "works" in a particular setting with specific students (Richardson, 1996). John

Goodlad (Goodlad, Klein, & Tye, 1979) proposed a theoretical framework for organizing

and understanding curriculum based on multiple perspectives of curriculum developers

and participants appropriate for describing aspects of the curriculum in the three

preschool movement programs examined in this research. This framework consists of

five domains or perspectives, the ideological, formal, perceived, operational, and

experiential, which occur simultaneously in most educational programs. I will describe

each and then explain how the framework can be used to structure and inform the

interpretation of results in this research.

Ideological Curricula

Goodlad and his colleagues (1979) explained that the ideological curriculum is a

curriculum designed by experts external to the setting in which it is implemented. This

ideal curriculum represents theoretical, scientific, philosophical, or other types of formal

knowledge that experts believe should be taught. Ideological curricula often directly

reflect standards or guidelines for a specific group of students. The content of the

curriculum is seen as an ideal by those who created it and is proposed as a model to

inform development and implementation in the local setting. However,

> …implementation is left for someone else. Consequently, it is rare for the
>
> elements of some ideal curriculum to be carried through to students in their
>
> original form. Even if the content remains reasonably intact, the methodological
>
> structure of a discipline may be distorted through the pedagogy employed.
>
> (Goodlad et al., 1979. p. 60)

In this research, the NASPE (1994) components represented the ideological domain. The ideological elements of the curriculum were examined by comparing program elements with the developmentally appropriate practices by NASPE. Observations, interviews, and document analysis were used to describe and evaluate program fidelity or the consistency between the program's components and the ideal curriculum. Analysis of this domain within the preschool movement programs was instrumental in answering the research question: Does the movement company build its curriculum on an educationally sound, research-based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts?

Formal Curricula

Formal curricula usually are constructed by local educators or program directors to meet perceived needs of students at the state and local level. Goodlad emphasized that, although formal curricula often include elements of the ideological curriculum (e.g., standards, outcomes), they also reflect the priorities of the communities in which they are implemented. "Formal curricula are those which gain official approval by state and local school boards and adoption, by choice or fiat, by an institution and/or teachers" (Goodlad et al., 1979. p. 61).

At the public school level, these curricula are found as part of state standards and curriculum guides. In the private movement companies examined in this research, formal curricula were used to appeal to parents within the public and commercial documents developed as advertisements, day care center recruitment materials, and parent handouts. They included a number of critical documents for this research including philosophy statements, lesson plans, goals and objectives.

Perceived Curricula

Although ideological and formal curriculum documents are often available, teachers vary in the extent to which they use them to make curricular and instructional decisions. Likewise, each teacher who views ideological and formal curriculum documents interprets them differently and uniquely, omitting or emphasizing different aspects based on their educational philosophy and understanding of the students' needs and the contexts in which they teach. Thus, "perceived curricula are curricula of the mind. What has been officially approved for instruction and learning is not necessarily what various interested persons and groups perceive in their minds to be the curriculum" (Goodlad et al., 1979. p.61).

In physical education and other subject areas, which may not have extensive documents such as textbooks to shape and constrain the content, teachers have extensive freedom to include, omit, and elaborate movement content based on their perceptions of their educational purpose. Their perception may differ vastly from what was intended by curriculum experts in the ideological curriculum or described by program developers or directors in the formal curriculum. The perceived curriculum reflects the curricular priorities from the teacher's perspective. Teachers may choose to teach a curriculum using externally created outlines or documents provided, or may add, delete or alter the content based on their perceptions of student needs. At times teachers may perceive ideal or formal content as irrelevant or insignificant to their students and may change it to best suit their perception of students' needs and the constraints of their teaching setting.

In this research, some lessons were taught directly by the program directors ensuring a more consistent interpretation of the curriculum with program documents in

the formal domain. Other companies employed one or more instructors to implement the curriculum in multiple sites. In these instances, the perceived curriculum likely played a larger and more distinct role in student learning as teachers modified the formal curriculum based on their philosophies and perceptions of student needs and interests.

Operational Curricula

Although designers of the ideological, formal, and perceived curriculum often lay out a specific conceptualization of curriculum, the implementation process and the responses of the students often change or distort the intended objectives, influencing student learning. The operational perspective examines the curriculum as it is actively taught or operationalized. Like the other domains, this perceptive also is limited, relying on the perceptions of an outside observer witnessing the lesson. "The operational, too, is a perceived curriculum; it exists in the eye of a beholder" (Goodlad et al., 1979. p. 63). The observer may not be apprised of the lesson goals or objectives, but simply observes the events and interactions that occur, forming judgments about the content that is being conveyed and experienced.

In this research, I observed each of the programs for a three-week period prior to examining educational documents or interviewing participants. In this way, I developed an independent assessment of the purpose and quality of each program. Thus my perceptions of the program documented in field notes represented the operational domain.

Experiential Curricula

The experiential domain examines the students' perceptions of the curriculum. It attempts to report what the students are actually learning from the curriculum. Examining what the students are truly learning allows the researcher to gather important data. These

data can offer teachers and administrators insight into "what functions schools should and should not try to perform for various student subpopulations" (Goodlad et al., 1979. p. 64). Asking students to reveal what they experience and take away from a lesson enables the teacher or administrator to reevaluate their curriculum or perhaps their method of teaching the content.

Because the students in this research were three to five year old children, interviews were unlikely to provide viable data regarding their perceptions of the learning environment, program philosophy, or compliance with guidelines and standards. Thus, it was determined that the experiential domain was unlikely to be as helpful in answering these research questions as were the other domains. Therefore, for the purposes of this study only the ideological, formal, operational, and perceived domains were examined. The four domains within Goodlad's curriculum framework were used as a lens through which to analyze each preschool program. For the purposes of this research, I interpreted the ideological domain to be the NASPE (1994) developmentally appropriate practices (Appendix A). I examined each company's documents as representative of the formal domain. My informal conversations and formal interviews with teachers and directors constituted the perceived domain, while my observations and impressions of the program formed the operational domain. Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsey (1999), emphasized, "Using multiple methods is a means of offsetting different kinds of bias and measurement error" (p. 423).

The NASPE components represented the ideological curriculum in the form of educationally sound, researched based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts. Therefore, I answered and supported the research questions by comparing the relevant NASPE

components with each companies' curriculum in the formal, perceived, and operational

domains. The domain framework not only assisted in answering the research questions,

but also in structuring the data triangulation, thus, enhancing the validity of this research.

Case Descriptions

The case descriptions of the three preschool movement programs provide an

overview of the research findings associated with each setting. It is my goal to help the

reader visualize and understand aspects of these settings from the perspective of the

operational domain. I used program director's and teachers' comments in this section and

throughout this chapter to balance or triangulate my perspective with that of the formal

and perceived domains. Each program description was constructed by synthesizing the

findings from the three data sources, observation, document analysis, and interview, to

identify both unique and common factors that were indicative of these programs.

Tumble Gym

One of the movement programs that I observed was called Tumble Gym. Tumble

Gym had been successfully operating for nine years and was the only company that

conducted its classes on a bus and not inside the daycare center.

In 1994, Marci Winds (pseudonym) started Tumble Gym, a movement program

for children between the ages of two and six. Marci had been a competitive gymnast in

college and, after graduating, opened a gymnastics studio. A few years later she decided

to branch out and offer classes to preschool aged children in daycare settings. This idea

came to her after a friend started a similar business. The Tumble Gym parent handout

indicated that the program's purpose was to provide an opportunity for young children to

learn various skills. "This movement education and gymnastics program is designed to

enhance motor skills. These classes will build self-esteem and introduce an "I CAN" attitude (Tumble Gym handout).

Teachers drove to each day care center in a renovated school bus. The bus had been gutted, completely padded, carpeted and filled with pre-school sized gymnastics equipment. The equipment included: tunnels, beams, rings, balls, vaults, trampoline, beanbags, parachutes, bars, and ropes. Classes, serving from six to ten children, were 35 minutes in length for all age groups and were taught by two instructors. The teachers' day began by picking up the bus from headquarters and arriving at the daycare a few minutes before class to assemble the children. The children's routine consisted of lining up, walking onto the bus, taking off coats, if necessary, and sitting against the wall. After roll was taken, each child gave a "big Tumble Gym smile."

Each class began with a warm up song, which varied, but always included movement to engage the children. Then, the children did a stretching game called silly sandwich. This game gave each child an opportunity to suggest what he/she would want on a sandwich and then everyone must stretch to put it on his or her legs. After stretching, children lined up against the wall and waited for the teachers to set up and explain the day's circuit. The circuit contained a sequence of motor skills the children were expected to perform on various pieces of equipment. The teachers spotted each child three to four turns through the circuit. It was while the children waited for their turns that most of the behavioral problems occurred. Behavior problems included moving out of line, touching another child, climbing on equipment out of turn, and talking too loudly. Teachers redirected children's attention and tried to keep things running smoothly. After completing their turns, children stretched again before getting their coats and a hand

stamp on the way out. The teachers escorted them back to their class and then picked up the next class.

During the holidays and special occasions Tumble Gym incorporated special theme weeks to interest and engage the children. According to a Tumble Gym Parent handout,

> During March we celebrated March Madness with a basketball theme week. We practiced shooting, dribbling and catching basketballs, as well as doing straddle jumps on the trampoline with pom-poms. We also had an Easter theme week, when we included bunny hops, egg rolls and waking up the Easter bunny by ringing the bunny bell at the top of the ladder. During the first week of April, our activities were centered on Nursery Rhymes. The children climbed Jack's beanstalk, as well as walked up Jack and Jill's Hill and then tumbled (f. roll) down the other side. They did the Itsy Bitsy Spider walk to a handstand, jumped "nimbly" over Jack's candlesticks, vaulted to the top of Humpty Dumpty's wall and crossed London Bridge.

Tumble Gym's advertisements suggested that the instructors were vigilant about making the program varied and interesting. The different theme weeks were designed to hold the attention of a preschool age child as well as entice the parents to try this novel educational approach.

This company, however, was limited in what it could offer its students. Due to space constraints only certain types of movement could be incorporated into the lessons. The bus where they held the lessons did not allow for locomotor skills such as running, galloping or skipping, so the content of this program was mainly focused on tumbling

skills such as forward/backward rolls and walking on the balance beam. They also did not

incorporate sport related or manipulative skills within this program.

Stepping Up

The second program observed was called Stepping Up. This company offered

many types of classes such as ballet, jazz, and sports. The classes I observed combined

creative movement and pre-gymnastics.

The Stepping Up curriculum incorporated movement and health-related fitness

activities specifically designed for young children. Kate Wilson (pseudonym) created the

Stepping Up program in 1984. She received her degree in dance education from a state

university. Kate designed various documents stating her philosophy, goals, objectives,

and descriptions of her classes. The Stepping Up brochure stated,

> Curriculum is specially designed to assist each child in achieving long-term health
>
> and fitness goals. Through non-competitive activities, the classes provide numerous
>
> mental and physical benefits, which include cardiovascular training, flexibility,
>
> muscular strength, confidence and self-esteem. The end result is a healthier and
>
> happier child.

Also the brochure included Kate's objectives for the class:

1. Body awareness through creative movement activities

2. Increased self-confidence through successful accomplishment

3. Readiness for sports, ballet, advanced dance, and gymnastics

4. A sense of rhythm, coordination, balance, and posture

5. The ability to recall a sequence of movements physically and verbally

6. Leadership through inventing and exploring new ways to move

7. Social skills through taking turns and watching other children perform

Kate provided a list of gross motor skills (Appendix F) to the teachers in her movement company. This list detailed expectations for the children by the end of the semester. The maximum and minimum number of children per class depended on the location and number of teachers available. As I observed Kate, it became apparent that she always taught alone and would teach a maximum of twelve students per class. A teacher student ratio of one to five is more appropriate to an educational environment for preschool children. It is questionable if classes greater than five children could hope to have an educational content associated with skill development. Therefore it appeared that this program was geared towards a recreational program, which focuses on entertaining the students and keeping them occupied.

The observed classes were held inside the daycare center in a room that was designed as a movement studio. The room had hardwood floors, mirrors and steps along one-wall that were carpeted to allow for visitors to sit and watch. Kate went to each classroom to pick up her students and brought them back to the studio. Once in the studio, they were expected to sit on the steps until their name was called. At that time they were told to go to their spot by using a form of locomotor movement that Kate designated (e.g., skipping, hopping, running etc.). She used a warm up song to encourage them to move around the room and perform various stretches to the directions on the song. Kate explained, "I try and alternate fast and slow songs and up and down songs, I also pick songs with different rhythms." During the songs children followed the song cues, such as moving like a certain animal. Kate demonstrated the proper animal movement and then children mimicked her performance. Time was then set aside for

practicing two gymnastics skills on mats. Each student moved individually while the others waited their turn while sitting on their polyspot. Kate assisted and spotted each child through the movement. Class ended with children thanking the teacher and each other and then each child received a sticker and a cookie. Kate then escorted the children back to their classes.

Jumping Jacks and Jills

The last program observed was named Jumping Jacks and Jills. Jumping Jacks and Jills, like the other two movement programs, used a gymnastics format as the basis for the curriculum. The director, Kim Watts (pseudonym), began the program in 1989. Kim and her husband originally owned a gymnastics school and were asked to offer a program in a daycare setting. Although her husband had a gymnastics background, he needed Kim to run the daycare classes; Kim had a B.A. in English from a state university. Prior to beginning, she attempted "to find out everything she could about teaching this age group." Kim explained:

> We belonged to USA gymnastics and they had some courses and videos to help
> me out. Patti Komara …had videotapes [not only] on how to run all aspects of a
> gymnastics business but also on how to run a gymnastics program in a daycare.
> That was such a big help because she had equipment lists, lesson plans, contracts
> and everything was covered and it was such help. So we started buying
> parachutes, beach balls and all kinds of preschool equipment and we started to use
> the ideas from her lesson plans. We found out there were other people who taught
> seminars on this and I started going to those. There was also USA gymnastics that

taught a program called Kinder Accredited Teacher. You go do a course and take

a test and then you become a Kinder Accredited Teacher.

Jumping Jacks and Jills had no formal documents stating their philosophy, goals,

or objectives. However, they did pass out handouts to the parents, stating, "Our goal in

this class is to give your child an enjoyable creative movement experience using a variety

of activities that will benefit them throughout their life." The activities "work on motor

skill development, kinesthetic awareness, flexibility, strength, coordination, cooperation,

listening skills and of course gymnastics skills" (Parent Handout). Classes were 30

minutes for all age groups and there were a minimum of five and a maximum of 10

children with one teacher per class. Each class was held inside the daycare. At the site

where I observed, Kim did not have a special space exclusively designated for her use.

Instead, she taught in a large area, which served as a foyer between rows of classrooms.

Consequently, during the class, teachers and students walked through her space,

distracting the students in the movement class.

Kim organized her space each day by setting up the mats and placing a long line

of masking tape down on the floor. She then gathered the children from their classrooms

and asked them to sit on the tape and remain quiet until roll was taken. Similar to the

other for profit programs, lessons began with a warm up song to begin movement

followed by stretching. After stretching, they practiced handstands and then returned to

sit on the tape while Kim set up the circuit and explained the directions. Then she spotted

each child for two to three turns through the circuit. Class ended with children sitting on

the tape, hands on their head so they could receive a fun stamp before returning to their

room.

The primary content of this program was tumbling skills such as forward rolls and cartwheels. This company's teacher-student ratio could go as high as one to ten; this is not an appropriate ratio associated with skill development for preschool children in an educational program. Therefore, like the other two companies, the purpose of this program appeared to be more focused on the enjoyment of the activities as opposed to educating the students.

Summary

All three of the observed movement programs used music interwoven with specific exercises/games to entice the children to work on their gross motor skills. No sport related activities or activities involving manipulative skills were observed in the movement programs. All three programs' classes were about the same length of time (30-35 minutes) with both boys and girls participating. Throughout all of the observed sessions, there was positive reinforcement for the children from the teachers. This was evidenced by comments such as "Way to go" "Good try" and fun stamps at the end for participation. One of the major differences was the extent to which program and teachers allowed and encouraged creativity. One program made sure the children moved in a prescribed way while another allowed the children to interpret the activity in their own manner. All of the companies observed had space constraints that did not permit certain locomotor skills; therefore, the programs had to focus on tumbling skills such as forward rolls and handstands. Two of the three programs, Jumping Jacks and Jills and Stepping Up, were also limited by their teacher-student ratio. Classes with more than a one to five ratio are not appropriate to an educational program for preschool children. The limitations these companies worked around were often self-imposed. In a for-profit

company, the ultimate goal is to make money, so hiring extra teachers, acquiring more space and/or buying creative equipment may have been counter to this goal. These factors contributed to the impression that these programs were geared towards a recreational environment in which children were kept occupied in an enjoyable setting and not an educational one focused on learning.

Curricular Structure, Philosophy, and Content

In reporting the results of a study, the researcher must adhere to the basic research questions that guided the study from its inception. The research question that guided this study was: Does the for-profit franchise build its curriculum on educationally sound, researched based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts? If so, does the curriculum include learning goals and developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences? If not, what is the content and how is the program organized and delivered to students?

In analyzing the data I employed four of Goodlad's five domains, ideological, formal, perceived, and operational, to examine the curricula implemented by the three companies. The ideological domain was used as the standard for educationally sound, researched-based philosophy, guidelines and concepts. Using the formal domain, I analyzed each company's documents. From the perspective of the perceived domain, I examined teachers' perceptions of their program using the formal and informal interview notes. I then compared the public information that the companies used to describe their programs and the teachers' perspectives of their goals and teaching with my observations of the teaching environment in these three companies. I used the operational domain as a vantage point from which to view the formal and perceived domains. By examining three

data sources for each program I was able to compare and contrast each curricular

perspective with the developmentally appropriate practices by NASPE.

Stepping Up

Formal domain. Stepping Up had a variety of handouts that described the

company's philosophy, goals, objectives, class descriptions, and skills to be learned by

the students. These handouts were given to parents and daycares and were also used as

promotional literature. The Stepping Up philosophy was reported in parent handouts, the

teachers' curriculum sheet, and marketing literature for daycares. The philosophy

statement read:

> We are founded on the belief that physical education and the arts are vital to the
>
> growth and development of a healthy child. Regular involvement in athletic and
>
> artistic activities promotes physical, social and emotional well-being.
>
> Participation also improves concentration, expression, self-confidence and
>
> control. Stepping Up is designed to promote a positive attitude and provide a
>
> strong foundation of fitness skills, thus setting the groundwork for a child's
>
> enjoyment of and participation in arts and sports activities. (Parent Brochure,
>
> Stepping Up, 2003)

This philosophy was consistent with the NASPE components (Appendix A) associated

with the development of movement concepts and motor skills (#3), cognitive

development (#4), affective development (#5) and fitness development (#7).

Kate, the director/ teacher, designed a list of instructional objectives presented in

Appendix G, to aid her teachers in planning their classes. The objectives were also part of

a parent handout, which discussed the company's philosophy, goals, objectives, and class

descriptions. The objectives focused on the cognitive, affective, and motor domains. For

example, the cognitive domain was represented with objectives such as; students will

develop "The ability to recall a sequence of movements physically and verbally." The

affective domain indicated that students would acquire (a) "Increased self-confidence

through successful accomplishment, (b) Leadership through inventing and exploring new

ways to move, and (c) Social skills through taking turns and watching other children

perform." The physical domain objectives suggested that students would acquire (a)

"Body awareness through creative movement activities, (b) Readiness for sports, ballet,

advanced dance and gymnastics, and (c) A sense of rhythm, coordination, balance, and

posture." These objectives are consistent with the NASPE components (Appendix A)

associated with the development of movement concepts and motor skills (#3), cognitive

development (#4), and affective development (#5).

 According to a parent handout, the Stepping Up curriculum

> …Is specially designed to assist each child in achieving long-term health and
>
> fitness goals. Through non-competitive activities, the classes provide numerous
>
> mental and physical benefits, which include cardiovascular training, flexibility,
>
> muscular strength, confidence and self-esteem. The end result is a healthier and
>
> happier child.

The curriculum Kate's employees used to design their lessons consisted of one sheet of

paper containing the philosophy, a list of movement skills (Appendix F) to be taught

during the session, and the following explanation of program goals:

> This program is a combination of creative movement, physical fitness, and pre-
>
> gymnastics skills. Students begin with basic locomotor and non-locomotor

movements, and progress to fitness skills that improve rhythm, balance,

coordination, and self-control as well as self-confidence. The children develop a

physical awareness of space, direction and sequencing. For strengthening and

stretching activities, props such as hula-hoops, balls, the tunnel, the parachute,

and mats are used to enhance their movement experiences. (Curriculum sheet,

Stepping Up, 2003)

Weekly handouts were given to the parents to explain the schedule of classes for the

month, registration deadlines, fees, and information regarding the end of the session

recital.

From the perspective of the formal domain Kate developed a program that was

consistent with the following NASPE components (Appendix A), curriculum (#1),

development of movement concepts and motor skills (#3), cognitive development (#4),

affective development (#5), fitness (#7), dance/rhythmical experiences (#10), educational

gymnastics (#11), competition (#14), and parent-teacher communication (#25).

Perceived domain. The perceived curriculum reflects the curricular priorities from

the teacher's perspective. It was important to examine if Kate's perceptions of her

classes were consistent with her documents. Did she perceive that she was following the

curriculum and meeting the goals touted in the documentation?

Kate, owner, director, and teacher of Stepping Up, had a B.S. in dance education

from a state university. She developed a variety of movement programs for preschool

aged children and was a contributing author and speaker for a number of industry

presentations. Since 1984, Kate has taught classes for preschool age children. When

asked how she chose this career she stated,

I started taking dance classes at age three and fell in love with moving. Whether it was cheerleading, volleyball, swimming, working out, or dancing, I continued being physically active through out my school years, college years, and middle age years of life. I was fortunate enough to take my love of movement and create a career for myself. I am given the opportunity to help foster children at an early age to develop the same love for movement, which I have had all my life.

The classes Kate taught were composed of boys and girls ranging in age from two to six. She taught the two to threes in one class and the four to sixes in another. A parent handout described the class as:

A combination of creative movement, physical fitness, and pre-gymnastics skills. Students begin with basic locomotor and non-locomotor movements, and progress to fitness skills that improve rhythm, balance, coordination, and self-control as well as self-confidence. The children develop a physical awareness of space, direction and sequencing. For strengthening and stretching activities, props such as hula-hoops, balls, the tunnel, the parachute, and mats are used to enhance their movement experiences. (Teacher handout to parents, Stepping Up, 2003)

In an interview with Kate that discussed how she designed the curriculum for her classes, she affirmed, "Since my degree is in education from a state university with a major in dance and a minor in exercise science, I based the curriculum on the physical activities a child between the ages of 3-5 should be learning how to do." She stated that the main goal for her classes "is for the child to have fun by performing specifically designed physical movement activities while becoming a healthier and self-confident child." Kate used a list of stretches and motor skills as her curriculum, reported in

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Appendix F, that she expected the children to learn by the end of the session. Upon examination of this document, I asked if this was the entire curriculum or if there was a day-to-day lesson plan? She responded:

I have the curriculum sheet and a theme for the recital and I work the children towards the recital. The curriculum is a list of skills the students need to be able to do by the end of the session, such as forward rolls, backward rolls, etc. I take that curriculum and design the class from that.

When asked to describe her class and how she works towards her goals and objectives that are written in the promotional literature she explained:

I have a recital so the kids have to learn certain choreography to complete the session. The choreography is harder than the beginning of the year so they have to progress. It's based on tying the steps together to show what they have learned throughout the year. For example, they can jump up spin around and do five pushups, whereas in the beginning they can't do any of that. By the end of the year, they do the movements to the steps in a certain sequence and they have to do it at the same time with the music. When they repeat the sequences their little muscles become stronger and they can do the more difficult movements. It's a building block teaching method that I do.

Another of Kate's handouts stated, "The classes provide a balance of activities that are age appropriate." In conjunction with her comment about her "building block method of teaching," I asked how she handled the obstacle of children arriving at her class at various levels of ability. Kate replied, "They tend to catch up at their own rate. No one is going to be that much ahead of each other. They are all the same age. They are

all about the same level." Kate believed that no matter what their level, repetition is a key to their learning. She stated, "I always repeat the basics and I either do more of it or make it harder. They like repetition and behave much better when they know what to expect." I then asked if each child must perform the same task. She replied,

> No, because then the more advanced kids would get frustrated and they would not want to be there and the kids who aren't getting it will get frustrated as well because they are trying and not getting it. They will eventually succeed in accomplishing the task. The way I teach, everybody goes at their own level. Different levels for different kids. I don't want kids to be embarrassed because they can't do the movement. …One student can do cartwheels and no one else can, so I take him to the next level so he doesn't get bored. Because I spot them, they can do their mat work one at a time and that way I can ensure that each child learns at his own rate of readiness.

Kate's perception of her curriculum and how she taught her classes appeared to be consistent with her documents. Both in her documents and interviews, Kate stated that she provided age appropriate activities in a program that used various ways of teaching the children motor skills in a "building block method"

Operational domain. I used the operational perspective to examine the curriculum as it was actively taught or operationalized. I observed this program over a three-week period prior to examining educational documents or interviewing participants. In this way, I developed an independent assessment of the purpose and quality of this program, before being influenced by the documents or the teachers' perspectives.

An analysis of field note data collected during this time period revealed that each lesson was structured with little variation in the learning experiences. For example, every day the children warmed up to the same song. Each class was identical in the songs used and the movements followed. When asked if she changed songs, Kate stated, "I use the same songs almost all year long with a few exceptions for holiday songs because when I introduce new things they giggle and get off task." During one observation period the children came in and were able to do the first three songs without Kate actively leading, because they had done it so often. Kate stated, "They like repetition and behave much better when they know what to expect."

Kate structured the majority of the lesson using direct, command style approaches to teaching (Mosston & Ashworth, 1990). Children either performed the same movements together as a group or performed one at a time under the teacher's direction. For example, during songs that encouraged the students to move like certain animals, they were not allowed to move the way *they* thought a monkey might, but, instead, were required to follow the teacher's lead. This was true for every song presented during my observations. Even during what Kate called a pretend play song, she told them exactly how to move like the witch presented in the song. When they improvised she required them to start over again. When working with equipment, the children were not given an opportunity to explore the equipment but rather were required to follow the teacher's lead. Even during a follow- the-leader song, Kate was always the leader and did not give the children a chance to be leader. When children started to handle the equipment in a different way from the teacher-designated movements, they were told to stop and only do what she was doing. No questions were ever presented to the children on how to move

with the equipment nor were the children allowed to use their imagination or problem solve during class. Since most of her class was following song prompts, there were very few opportunities for witnessing individual instruction. Likewise, during the observed period there were no competitive games used to introduce and build motor skills. All activities allowed for either individual participation or cooperative activities.

Towards the end of class period, however, when children worked on individual skills such as forward rolls or cartwheels, there was one instance observed when the children were taking turns doing forward rolls that individual skill differences were accommodated. In this instance one boy was more advanced than the other children and Kate encouraged him to practice cartwheels instead of the forward rolls.

Although the documents examined within the formal domain appeared to construct a program that followed many of the NASPE components, observations suggested that many of those guidelines and the policies described in the company's documents were not followed. For instance, NASPE component #1, which deals with the curriculum design states, "The movement curriculum has an obvious scope and sequence based on goals and objectives…" (NASPE, 1994. p. 1) Although this structure was evident in program documents, observations did not identify examples of varied content consistent with curricular scope. Likewise, the similarity of tasks and task difficulty across lessons suggested that content was typically not sequenced from simple to complex consistent with effective educational progressions.

Although Kate's documents suggested that she structured lessons using specific objectives, she appeared to repeat lessons continuously, rarely progressing to more complex content because of her concerns with the children's behavior. Thus, because

Kate rarely introduced new content, her students did not progress to learn new materials. It appeared that due to the repetition of her classes Kate's own objectives were not met. Further, although the NASPE cognitive development (#4) component was described in her documents, I did not witness cognitive tasks or activities in her lessons. Instead of giving children opportunities to learn from their movement by asking questions and letting them problem solve, they were required to perform specific movements exactly as directed. Without being given the chance to explore or problem solve, students were less likely to become cognitively engaged in the movement.

Inconsistency between the program documents and the curriculum implemented in the lessons was also documented using NASPE component #10 dance/rhythmical experiences. Instead of encouraging children to "use their imaginations and move to the sound of their individual rhythms" (NASPE. 1994), Kate required them to follow specific movements to the songs. As with Kate's documents, field notes also indicated that a number of other NASPE components were not implemented in her program

Interestingly, from the perspectives of the formal and perceived domains, the domains that a parent or day care administrator are most likely to see, this program appeared to be effective, following research guidelines and standards consistently. However, when analyzed from the perspective of the operational domain, many of the company's objectives as well as some of the NASPE components were not evident. Due to the fact that each class observed was exactly the same and, according to Kate, it remains the same for much of the year, I was unable to observe developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences consistent with the requirements of a high quality program.

What was written in the formal documents and what was actually taught were two very different approaches. The documentation led one to believe that this program fostered creativity, self-expression, and cognitive development. In fact, this program was based primarily on repetitive movement.

Jumping Jacks and Jills

Formal domain. A company's documentation is what is shown to the public and what entices a parent to sign up with a specific program. Jumping Jacks and Jills had only three handouts that discussed the company's program. These three handouts were the only information given to the parents and staff at the daycares to explain Kim's philosophy, goals, objectives, and description of the program taught. The first handout states:

> Research shows that children who are physically fit feel better, perform better in school and display more confidence. Some studies indicate that tumbling activities even help with reading readiness. Our goal in the class is to give your child an enjoyable creative movement experience using a variety of activities that will benefit them throughout their life. The class will consist of a musical warm-up and /or game, stretching, basic tumbling skills and balance and jumping activities. It will encourage gross motor skill development, kinesthetic awareness, basic coordination and social interaction. All this in the safe, secure environment of your child's school!

This handout gave a class description as well as stating Kim's goals. It also discussed fostering physical health and developing the cognitive process as well as ensuring safety by explaining that the activity will be provided in a known and tested

environment. The second handout was very similar and it states: "Did you know we have a GREAT gymnastics program here every week? We work on motor skill development, kinesthetic awareness, flexibility, strength, coordination, cooperation, listening skills, and of course gymnastics skills. All that in every lesson." Each class consisted of a musical warm-up or game, stretching for flexibility, a review of old skills, followed by a progression through the mats and equipment for the new lesson. A reward stamp, sticker and/or coloring paper was handed out at the end of each class.

Just to let you know… I have recently become a "Kinder Accredited teacher" through USA Gymnastics. I am also safety certified through USA Gymnastics. Parents are always welcome to observe the class or to call and discuss any aspect of the program with me.

While this handout is similar to the previous one, it adds the information about accreditation, which will certainly appeal to astute parents. However, it did not offer any more information regarding the program itself.

The third and final handout was titled "Why is perceptual motor development important to your child?" The handout then proceeded to answer this question in one page. Making statements like "Much of basic school readiness depends upon many muscles working together." and "Movement experiences become a vital part of the normal development for all children." Once again Kim's handout gave important information about physical activity and the benefits to children, but no information regarding her own program.

Kim Watts used skill sheets, which listed the motor skills she taught. She wrote a progress note for each child and sent the motor skill sheet with the progress note attached

home to the parents. She also had detailed lesson plans for every week. The lesson plans included the equipment and songs used, the layout of the equipment and the sequence of the circuit.

Kim's written documents were consistent with the following NASPE components, cognitive development (#4), affective development (#5), dance/rhythmical experiences (#10), educational gymnastics (#11), and parent-teacher communication (#25). Kim had very few documents to give her audience insight into her program. If these documents were the only means by which Kim's program was evaluated, it would fall short of a balanced preschool movement program.

Perceived domain. Using the perceived domain, I investigated if Kim's perceptions of her classes were consistent with her documents. I also explored how she designed her curriculum, the components of her philosophy, and objectives for her children. Did she perceive that she was following the curriculum and meeting the goals advertised in her documentation?

Kim, owner, director and teacher of Jumping Jacks and Jills, had been running this program since 1989. When asked how she became involved in this field she stated,

> We (she and her husband) bought this gymnastics school, and we got a phone call asking for a teacher to come to the daycare and do a gymnastics program at the daycare. We were looking to expand the business and thought this was a great opportunity without really realizing what we were getting into. But that's when we decided to at least try it out and see how it worked.

Kim had received a bachelor's degree in English from a state university; it is her husband who had the gymnastics background. When asked how she ended up being the one to plan and implement the curriculum for the program, she explained:

> My husband was having so much trouble with the preschool department that he said to me "you gotta come help me, it's out of control" I had three children at the time and that was my only experience with children, and I started helping him out with the preschool classes and the daycares that came to the gym. So he taught me what he did with them but I felt inadequate so my goal was to find out everything I could about it.

Since no formal philosophy was stated in Kim's literature, I was prompted to ask her "What is your program philosophy?" She replied,

> I feel like I am light to the captives. My idea is to bring a little light, a little fun, and a little movement into those little structured lives; that's why I'm not a huge disciplinarian. I try to keep them from killing each other, but I'm not there to make them do the perfect forward rolls or cartwheels. I'm there to just get them to move anyway they can and to have a little fun. To bring cheer into their lives.

Although she had daily lesson plans, there were no formally written goals or objectives for her classes. When asked, she explained that her goals and objectives were:

> …To introduce them to different ways of moving. To get them to skip, hop, jump and do as many equipment things as they can do in the room we have. Anything I can do to get them to move in fun and different ways. So basically I want to introduce them to basic movement skills, dance, and games all the little things we took for granted growing up that they don't get now. Also, I do have a basic skills

list that I try to teach them, but if they don't learn how to do it perfectly it doesn't

bother me. I base my curriculum on basic gymnastics skills.

Kim's basic skills sheet was broken down into different levels of skills, for example,

level one was tuck forward roll; level two, forward roll to straddle stand; level three

handstand forward roll with arms bent; and level four, handstand forward roll with

straight arms. I then asked how she handles children who come to class at different levels

of ability. She replied, "I do lots and lots of repeating and some of the kids are at a lower

skill but it's amazing how fast they catch up. There isn't a huge emphasis on perfect skill

so they can pick it up quickly."

Kim's lesson plans did not differentiate between the different age classes. When

asked about this she explicated that her classes were divided by age and that each lesson

plan was the exact same for every class at every daycare during the week:

I try to get them to do a little bit more, like a better cartwheel or forward roll and I

try to challenge them, for example, if they can do a perfect cartwheel. I may ask

them to try and do a one handed cartwheel.

Kim's lesson plans were written out for the entire year and as stated before did not

change with the age group, except for level of difficulty. She had mentioned before in an

informal interview that she had the same children from year to year. So I inquired if her

lesson plans changed on a yearly basis to give the children who attend year-to-year

different lessons. Her answer was,

The kids seem to benefit from the repetition; it allows them to hone their skills

and do it better. Plus they forget what we've done; they may remember some of it

but they enjoy doing it again because they only see me once a week and the new

ones don't know.

Kim's perception of her program appeared to focus mainly on giving the children a

chance to move and have fun and not necessarily on learning and perfecting motor skills.

Based on the interview with Kim, she was much more interested in bringing fun into their

lives then in teaching specific skills. If the skills were learned as a secondary gain, she

was pleased, but as she stated, her main purpose was to bring "light into their lives."

Operational domain. I observed this program over a three-week period prior to

examining educational documents or interviewing the participants. Field notes recorded

revealed a program that was consistent with program documents and the teacher's

perception. Every day the children warmed up to a song and then went through a

stretching routine. After stretching, they practiced handstands and then returned to sit on

the tape while Kim set up the circuit and explained the directions. Then she spotted each

child through two to three turns through the circuit. Class ended with children sitting on

the tape, hands on their head so they could receive a fun stamp before returning to their

room. Songs and circuits changed from week to week, however, the stretching routine

remained the same each week.

The warm up songs also varied from week to week. Some songs required the

children to follow the song prompts while other songs encouraged them to use their

imagination to portray various animals or types of food. Other songs allowed them to

play follow the leader with children getting a chance to lead. Although the stretches were

the same, Kim asked various questions while stretching, for example, during the butterfly

stretch, she asked, "If you could fly, where would you fly to? What would you see?" Or

during another stretch she stated, "Let's pretend to be a tree and have the wind blow us side to side." To get the children to line back up on the tape she used various ways, for example, she asked for everyone whose name begins with an "A" to line up, then "B," and so on until all the children lined up. While the children waited their turn on the circuit, Kim had them cheer the child on who was going through the circuit. During the observed period there were no competitive games used to introduce and build motor skills. All activities allowed for either individual participation or cooperative activities.

Kim stated many times in the interview that she did not mind if the children did not perfect their skills. Instead she was mainly there to "bring a little light and a little fun into those little structured lives." This was confirmed in observations by witnessing many instances where Kim would not stop and correct a child who was performing an incorrect movement while on the circuit. Instead she cheered them on. This was not to say she never corrected improper movements; if they were in jeopardy of harming themselves or not performing the movement requested, she would correct them and help them to perform the move correctly. When asked what she did for children who did the movements with perfect form and with ease, she commented," I try to challenge them, for example, if they can do a perfect cartwheel, I may ask them to try and do a one handed cartwheel." This was confirmed by watching Kim have the more skilled children go through the circuit using advanced movements. Kim also challenged children by asking them to find different ways to move through the hoops, tunnel, ramp and other various pieces of equipment she used.

Kim's documents emphasized the importance of working not only on motor skills but also on social skills. When asked about this Kim stated, "The social part is probably

almost bigger than the other part because the hardest part is to get them to listen, to

interact appropriately with each other and to be able to take turns." She went on to say,

"I'm not a huge disciplinarian." Field notes documented that the children did not follow

directions, stepped out of line, and talked when asked not to. Kim would verbally

reprimand them, but not follow through with consequences when they repeated the

behavior.

Although the documents examined within the formal domain appeared to

construct a program that did not follow or take into account many of the NASPE

components, observations showed that many of those components *were* followed

intuitively perhaps without her knowledge. For instance, none of her documents

discussed cognitive development and how she incorporated this into her program;

however, in observations, I witnessed that NASPE component (#4) (Appendix A)

cognitive development was part of her program. She gave them opportunities to learn

from their movement by asking them to problem solve with questions like "What are

some ways you can move underneath the limbo stick?" Or "How can you make the letter

V with your body?" Her equipment also encouraged the use of cognitive skills. For

example, during parachute games she had them discuss colors, shapes, and the concepts

of up and down, and slow and fast. Another example of the formal domain vs. the

perceived domain is NASPE component (#10), dance/rhythmical experiences. Although

this component was not discussed in her documents, I observed that she offered various

rhythmical experiences and allowed the children to use their imaginations while moving.

From the perspective of the formal and perceived domain, the domains that parents

and daycares are most aware of, this program did not seem to follow researched

guidelines and standards. However, when analyzed from the perspective of the operational domain, many of the NASPE components were evident. Kim's lesson plans and skills sheet as well as the observed classes revealed a program that offered appropriate simple to complex sequences consistent with the requirements of a high quality program.

Tumble Gym

Formal domain. The third and final program evaluated was Tumble Gym. Tumble Gym had a variety of handouts that included a description of the company's philosophy, class descriptions, skills to be learned by the students, and weekly lesson plans. These handouts were given to parents, daycares and used as promotional literature.

Tumble Gym called itself a "mini-gym on wheels" that offered 35-minute classes to children from the ages of two through five. One of the handouts stated:

> This movement education and gymnastics program is designed to enhance motor skills. These classes will build self-esteem and introduce an I CAN attitude. The Tumble Gym is a great opportunity for children to have a physical education program in the pre-school setting.

There were no formal goals and objectives listed in their documents. However, every few weeks Tumble Gym sent the parents a handout describing what the children had been working on (Appendix H). There were also weekly lesson plans that listed the activities and skills that were taught (Appendix I). The program ran September through June and their lesson plans changed each week for the entire year.

Tumble Gym's written documents were consistent with eight NASPE components: affective development (#5), fitness (#7), dance/rhythmical experiences

(#10), educational gymnastics (#11), competition (#14), repetition (#24), and parent-teacher communication (#25). As with the previous two companies, if documentation were the only method used to evaluate the company it too would fall short of a balanced preschool movement program.

Perceived domain. This company employed one or more instructors to implement the curriculum in multiple sites. In this instance, the teachers who viewed the formal curriculum documents may have interpreted them differently. They may have, omitted or emphasized different aspects based on their educational philosophy and understanding of the students' needs and interests.

Unlike the other two companies Tumble Gym's owner, director and teacher were three different individuals. The owner, Marci, brought the idea to her gymnastics school but after that had very little to do with the Tumble Gym program and was not interviewed. The director, Kris, wrote and implemented the curriculum as well as taught classes, and Deb was one of the first teachers for the program. Tumble Gym began in 1994 and both the director and teacher had been with the company since its inception.

When asked about their backgrounds and how they got involved. Deb stated," My background is really just loving kids, being physically fit, and realizing the importance of fitness for children." Deb also knew the owner very well since she spent many years bringing her own children to the gymnastics school. Kris came to work for the company as the director with a background in elementary education. She explained, "I've been teaching for 17 years now. I also have a background in gymnastics and I was a competitive athlete in high school and did dance and cheerleading in college."

Because Kris was in charge of the curriculum, I asked how she decided on the format of the curriculum and its content. She explained, "The format was already in place because Marci got the idea from a friend who was doing a similar program. The content is based on learning various gymnastic skills and just getting a chance to move in various ways."

Since no formal goals and objectives were listed in the company's documents, I asked both Deb and Kris what they felt were the goals and objectives for the program. Kris answered,

> First of all we want them to move. We know that kids need to move and they
> don't always get the opportunity in a daycare situation. We want them to have fun
> and feel better about themselves and better about moving and to be successful at
> the things they try.

Deb added,

> It's a great self-esteem confidence booster for them to be able to master skills. To
> know that their hands and feet can be doing different things at different times or
> together doing whatever they need to be doing. So they really have to know the
> concepts of hand and feet, body movement.

The Tumble Gym program ran September through June and their lesson plan changed each week for the entire year. Given that the program had been running for almost 10 years, I asked how the curriculum had changed over the years. Deb declared,

> Our circuits are so different now than in the beginning. We started off with two
> circuits on the bus, one in front and one in the back and we realized that wouldn't
> work so we changed that.

Kris added,

> The philosophy back then was to really try and introduce actual gymnastics skills
>
> like Deb would try to teach a back roll and I would in the back of the bus be
>
> trying to teach toe touches. We would introduce the skills before the circuit. We
>
> discovered with the two of us there it was just as easy to introduce it as part of the
>
> circuit. Then class ran more smoothly and they got more turns, and opportunities
>
> to move. So the structure has changed and so have the lesson plans from year to
>
> year. We cross off and add on and constantly change the lessons to work for our
>
> classes.

Deb included, "We always have had a circuit, but over the years we have added
equipment, different songs, and games."

Tumble Gym had only one set of lesson plans and the plans did not differentiate
between age groups. I inquired about how the teachers developed and implemented the
curriculum for the different ages and abilities. Kris explained,

> Our lesson plans are more of an outline that we adjust for our students. It's not set
>
> in stone. It's not written on the lesson plans that this is for two or three or five
>
> year olds, but we know what they can do and not do.

Deb added, "Our circuits are pretty consistent, but we adapt the skills to be appropriate
for the children's age and abilities."

Tumble Gym's documents discussed the motor skills that were taught but failed to
touch on the cognitive or the social aspects of the program. When asked to discuss with
me how they see their program contributing to these two areas. Deb responded, "Social
skills are the hardest part. They don't want to wait, but they will wait and that's part of

the whole learning process. They have to listen and follow directions, which is a great feat for them but still it's part of learning social skills." Kris added, "I have seen the children, especially our Downs [Syndrome] children who have been on our bus do so much better with their listening skills and confidence." As for the cognitive aspect, neither Deb nor Kris felt it was part of their program. Kris stated, "We know from research findings that movement does help the cognitive, but other than that we don't really focus on that."

Tumble Gym served a large population, so the program required many teachers. When asked how they trained the teachers and what sort of background they required, Kris stated,

Most of them are former athletes, or some just love kids and teaching. As for training, they observe in the gym and then on the bus, they go through skill training where we bring in older kids who can actually do the skills. This way they learn to spot and learn the critical skills and how it should be done. Then they just follow the lesson plans. However, they are always paired with an experienced teacher.

Kris and Deb's perception of the program appeared to be consistent with their documents, which focused mainly on learning gymnastics skills. Although the teachers were aware of the importance of social and cognitive skills, these were not emphasized in their documentation.

Operational domain. I observed this program over a three-week period prior to examining educational documents or interviewing participants. In this way I developed

an independent assessment of the purpose and quality of this program before being influenced by the documents or the teachers' perspectives.

Observations during this time period revealed a program that was in accordance with its documents. Every class observed warmed up with a song that required them to move around the bus performing different movements. The majority of the songs asked them to use their imagination to move like a certain animal or in a certain shape. A few of the songs required them to follow along to song prompts. Then, the children did a stretching game called Silly Sandwich. This game gave each child an opportunity to suggest what he/she wanted on a sandwich and everyone stretched to put it on his or her legs. Then they went through a series of stretches, i.e. straddle stretch, lunge stretch, pike stretch and so on. For the older children the teachers asked them to name the type of stretches they were doing. During the stretches the teachers had them pretend to be doing various types of things, for example, during the butterfly stretch, Deb had the children pretend to be in outer space flying. They had to sit up tall then bend down low to go through a tunnel and hide. Children were given a chance to say what they would hide from.

Consistent with the lesson plan, each lesson included a circuit. The circuit contained a sequence of motor skills the children were expected to perform on various pieces of equipment. The teachers spotted each child three to four turns through the circuit. If a child had mastered one of the skills, the teacher would ask him/her to do a more advanced move the next time through the circuit. If time allowed and the children had followed directions and remained on task, they are allowed to play the "popcorn game". Deb explained that they loved this game and asked for it almost every time. This

game had the children sit in a circle holding onto a parachute and hundreds of small pom-poms in the middle. They went around the circle allowing each child to say what they wanted to put on the popcorn. They pretended to put it on, and then they slowly shook the edges of the parachute to cook the popcorn and then shook it faster and faster until all the pom poms fell off. Throughout this observation period, the teachers constantly asked the children to use their imagination and/or to problem solve. Problem solving was witnessed when the teachers would ask the children to explore different ways of moving, for example, they asked, "How else could you swing on a rope, go under a pole or climb over the barrel?"

Although the documents and perceptions of the director and teacher revealed a program that lacked many of the NASPE components, observations suggested otherwise. For instance, neither the documents nor the teachers talked about the cognitive domain in the curriculum, but observations indicated that the teachers constantly challenged the children cognitively. The same is true for NASPE component (# 2), teaching strategies; movement exploration, guided discovery, and creative problem solving were all used in their program, yet not discussed formally in documents.

From the perspective of the formal and perceived domains, this program lacked many of the components to be an effective program for children. However, when examined from the perspective of the operational domain, many of the NAPSE components were followed. Through both observations and examination of documents developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences were evident.

Summary

As I analyzed the three programs from the perspective of the research questions within the Formal, Perceived and Operational Domains, I found that Tumble Gym, Jumping Jacks and Jills, and Stepping Up programs had many substantive and superficial elements in common. From my perspective within the operational domain, all three programs effectively used music interwoven with exercises/games to entice the children to perform various gross motor skills. All three touted their programs as being based on creative movement and pre-gymnastics skills; lessons were 30-35 minutes in length with both boys and girls participating. All three divided their classes based upon age and encouraged the more skilled students to attempt advanced moves. Each program started its lessons with a warm-up and stretching routine followed by reviewing and learning various pre-gymnastics skills. They all ended the lesson with a fun stamp for the children. All of the observed teachers offered positive reinforcement and encouragement throughout the observed sessions.

Although their lessons may have looked very similar, there were differences among the companies. One of the major and most significant differences was in their approach to teaching. Tumble Gym and Jumping Jacks and Jills both allowed the children to explore movement and be creative in the ways they moved. Stepping Up required each child to move in a prescribed way, not allowing the children to problem solve, explore, or use their imagination.   Another teaching method that differed among the companies was the extent to which they taught and reinforced skillful movements. Tumble Gym and Stepping Up both worked with the children to ensure that they performed the skills correctly. For example, if a child performed a forward roll incorrectly, the teachers

worked with him/her to execute it correctly. Whereas, Jumping Jacks and Jills was more concerned with students having fun than performing correctly as evidenced by the owner/teacher stating "I'm not there to make them do the perfect forward rolls or cartwheels. I'm there to just get them to move anyway they can and to have a little fun."

The similarities and differences in the three programs were evident in the formal and perceived as well. None of the programs exhibited *all* of the NASPE guidelines in all three domains. The extent to which the NASPE guidelines were represented varied from company to company and from domain to domain. One factor, however, was consistent across all three companies and that was the fact that not one director, or teacher mentioned being aware of or using the NASPE guidelines to design or implement their curriculum. Instead, they appeared more focused on the gymnastics aspects, and sought guidance and training from gymnastics organizations.

Although apparently unaware of the NASPE components, the Stepping Up director and teacher appeared to incorporate effective practices in the formal and perceived domain advocated in the NASPE guidelines. Specifically, this director built her program materials on educationally sound, researched-based philosophy, guidelines and concepts. However, when examining the functional program from the perspective of the operational domain, it was clear that these guidelines were not carried out in the lessons. In the implementation of the curriculum no learning goals or developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences were witnessed during observations or identified in lesson plans.

In fact, Stepping Up appeared to organize its program, not around NASPE best practices and guidelines, but around the upcoming recital. The teacher used a set of skills

interwoven with a theme, specifically designing her daily lesson routine around the recital performance. She was not concerned with creativity or NASPE best practices; she was concerned about the students' performance in the recital.

Although less clearly structured around best practices in the formal and perceived domains, Tumble Gym and Jumping Jacks and Jills implemented a program that *displayed* many of the NASPE components. Observations showed programs that did offer a curriculum based on NASPE components that included learning goals and developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences. Both allowed creativity and problem solving as daily components of their programs. However, because their documents lacked detail and provided little information about the educational nature of the program, it *appeared* that these programs were not built on educationally sound, researched-based philosophy, guidelines and concepts. Data gathered in the operational domain, however, confirmed the educational nature of these programs.

In conclusion, it seems to be imperative that parents as consumers actually visit and *observe* a preschool movement program before enrolling a student. The literature may or may not be deceiving; the teachers' perceptions may or may not be accurate. It is through reading the literature, interviewing the teachers, *and* observing one or more lessons that consumers can make the most educated choice.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Children have complex social, mental, emotional, and physical developmental

needs. Although much attention has been focused on children's cognitive, social, and

emotional health, their physical development is equally deserving of attention, especially

during their preschool years. Pre-school and day care centers are the perfect environment

for beginning a lifelong devotion to movement and physical health. The earlier children

begin to be challenged physically and enjoy physical activity, the greater the likelihood

they will continue to maintain a physically active lifestyle as adults.

The purpose of this study was to examine how critical pedagogical components of

movement programs were implemented in for-profit movement programs for preschool

children ages three to five. The questions that guided this research were: Does the

movement company build its curriculum on educationally sound, research-based

philosophy, guidelines, and concepts? If so, does the curriculum include learning goals

and developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences? If not, what is the

content and how is the program organized and delivered to students? The operations of

three preschool movement programs were examined and compared with current best

practices for this age group. In this research, the NASPE *Developmentally Appropriate*

Practice in Movement Programs for Young Children Ages 3-5 (1994) represented current

best practices for pedagogical effectiveness and were used as a template against which to

compare program philosophy, guidelines, and concepts. Goodlad et al's (1978) domain

theory was used as a multidimensional lens through which to examine and analyze each

program.

The data revealed substantial differences among the three companies and inconsistencies within particular companies regarding the quality and effectiveness of their philosophy, guidelines, and concepts. Interestingly, none of the owner/directors or teachers mentioned being aware of or using the NASPE best practices to design the program's curriculum. Therefore, factors influencing decisions about philosophy, guidelines and concepts probably originated from other sources, including the USA Gymnastics Kinder Accreditation for Teachers workshop, "Patti Komara" videotapes describing implementation and management of a gymnastics program, and the directors' personal interests, values and beliefs, and professional backgrounds. Further, directors and teachers reported that many of the policies and the actual operation of the curriculum had been learned and developed through trial and error. In the first part of this chapter, I will discuss how the director/teachers histories, values, and beliefs may have shaped program curriculum and implementation.

Although the directors and teachers appeared to control many of the curricular and instructional decisions associated with program implementation, the instructors varied on the number of opportunities they provided for students to explore content or create uniquely personal interpretations of movement through exploration consistent with the NASPE components. In this chapter, I examine the directors' and teachers' backgrounds that appeared to be related to issues of control and opportunity to learn within their programs. It is likely these factors were connected to the level of autonomy and empowerment shared with students. As part of this discussion, I explain how teachers and children can be empowered and how empowerment may have affected the teachers and children involved in these programs.

Directors' and Teachers' Backgrounds

Ideally, directors and teachers design and implement quality movement programs that focus on helping young children learn various skills to participate in physical activity. According to NASPE (1994),

Quality movement programs are both developmentally and instructionally suitable for the specific children being served. Developmentally appropriate practices in movement programs are those which recognize children's changing capacities to move, and those, which promote such changes. A developmentally appropriate movement program accommodates a variety of individual characteristics such as developmental status, previous movement experiences, fitness and skill levels, body size, and age. (p. 4)

Ideally, those individuals who design movement programs use a curriculum or a planned set of learning experiences (Jewett et al., 1995) to structure and sequence the experiences, leading to desirable educational goals.

Because the three companies examined in this research did not use the NASPE developmentally appropriate practices to design or guide their program, the directors probably created their programs using other information. It is certainly possible that they intuitively could build and execute an educationally sound program consistent with current research. However to accomplish this, the directors needed to identify and structure a myriad of elements in a coherent and consistent manner. In the following sections, I will discuss several factors that influence the nature and quality of program development. These factors include, the directors' and teachers' professional training,

experience, values, and belief systems that influenced program design and implementation.

Training and Experience

Few can argue that physical education is an important part of a child's life. Movement offers many benefits to children and can have a lifelong impact on their future physical and mental health (Flinchum, 1988; Howley & Franks, 1997; Strand, et al., 1998). Therefore, during these vital years, it is imperative to create an environment where children are encouraged to be active and challenged to explore different ways of moving. Recognizing the need for movement-based classes, individuals have created companies to provide these classes for children ages 3-5. There exists substantial diversity in the way companies provide programs to children. Many factors influence the content of a program and the way in which it is implemented. Factors such as time, space, equipment, the size of a class and the diversity of students can all make a difference in the program and how it is implemented. One of the most important influences on the program is the teacher. Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) found that "more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor" (p. 63). In other words, the teacher affects both program quality and student learning.

 It is well documented that teachers with little or no training have a negative effect on students' learning and achievement. Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) explains that in schools:

> Studies of teachers [hired] with less than full preparation ranging from no
> preparation to preparation through quick alternative certification routes of only a

few weeks duration reveal serious shortcomings. These recruits tend to be

dissatisfied with their training; they have greater difficulties than fully prepared

teachers in planning curriculum teaching, managing the classroom, and

diagnosing students' learning needs. They are less able to adapt their instruction

to promote student learning and less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming

students when their teaching is not effective. (p. 309)

Without extensive preparation in teaching methods, classroom management, and

curriculum development, it is unlikely that a teacher will be effective in complex school

settings. Although there are some people who are inherently "good" with children, that

virtue alone does not mean they are effective teachers. Teaching a class of 25-35

students is enhanced greatly by formal preparation in both content and pedagogical

methods leading to student learning. Darling-Hammond also is critical of some formal

preparation programs that do not produce competent teachers,

Many teachers' preparation has not taught them how to create situations in which

learners can have real breakthroughs in understanding or how to evaluate learning

and adapt their teaching. Thus they teach as they remember being taught, creating

a flow of lessons and activities aimed at fairly superficial coverage that moves

along comfortably oblivious to student learning. (p.13)

In this thesis research, teacher training varied across companies. One director, for

example, had a degree in dance; another attended a few workshops, while the third had a

background in gymnastics and a degree in elementary education. None had extensive

initial training or on-going training in movement for preschoolers or in providing

developmentally appropriate instruction in these challenging environments.

In addition, all three companies observed operated independently, so they were not obligated to adhere to standards for instructor training, on-going training, or trainer evaluation. As such they did not have access to the latest research and practice in preschool movement or assistance to organize and structure activities to enhance student learning. Thus, the level of teacher training required at all three companies was minimal. More importantly no on-going training was required to inform teachers of the recent guidelines and standards for effective programs and the latest research informing best practice for preschool children. "Once trained, always trained" appeared to be the operational model.

Of the three companies, Kim, owner, director and teacher of Jumping Jacks and Jills, appeared to have the least amount of initial experience and training in the field of children's movement when she began her company in 1989. When asked how she became involved in this field she stated,

> We (she and her husband) bought this gymnastics school, and we got a phone call asking for a teacher to come to the daycare and do a gymnastics program at the daycare. We were looking to expand the business and thought this was a great opportunity without really realizing what we were getting into. But that's when we decided to at least try it out and see how it worked.

Kim had received a bachelor's degree in English from a state university; it was her husband who had the gymnastics background. When asked how she ended up being the one to plan and implement the program curriculum, she explained:

> My husband was having so much trouble with the preschool department that he said to me "you gotta come help me, it's out of control." I had three children at

the time and that was my only experience with children, and I started helping him

out with the preschool classes and the daycares that came to the gym. So he taught

me what he did with them but I felt inadequate so my goal was to find out

everything I could about it.

Kim was able to find two instructor development programs that offered seminars and

tapes on running a movement program for preschoolers. The first was USA Gymnastics'

Kinder Accreditation for Teachers (KAT) program. It consisted of a six to seven hour

workshop on preschool movement education. Workshop content covered topics from

teacher effectiveness and classroom management to lesson plan development and safety.

Kim described the KAT seminar and the instructor, who led the program,

She [the instructor] was more into a creative movement kind of program. She

wanted everybody to pretend they were snakes and follow along the jungle floor.

It put a lot of emphasis on the teacher as movement leader, so the children were

all copying your movements. Although the USA Gymnastics preschool manual

itself was very scientifically oriented, like we had to know the developmental

stages of children at each age and whether a movement was along this or that axis.

And of course they were very careful to stress the safety issues. It was interesting

to me that the instructor for the course and the course material itself seemed to

come from such different philosophies.

Additionally, Kim took a number of video courses from Patti Komara's The

Tumblebear Gym program. Video topics included selections such as, What Makes A

Great Teacher, How to Spot Preschool and Beginner Gymnastics, Preschool Discipline

and Class Management, Creative Preschool Themes, and Teaching Tumbling to Preschoolers. Videos ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour 40 minutes.

All of the training in both the KAT and Tumblebear programs were specifically geared to educational gymnastics. A look at the Jumping Jacks and Jills' curriculum reflected the training of the teacher. The training Kim received from the workshops and videotapes allowed her to formulate a curriculum that she was able to follow.

The KAT training does not require recertification or any continuing education credits to keep the certification current. The Patti Komara tapes do not officially "certify" an instructor so there is also no motivation or need to update oneself. Further, Kim was not trained to design a curriculum or to assess student needs and adapt the curriculum accordingly. It appeared, instead, that she followed the process Darling-Hammond discussed: "they teach as they remember being taught, creating a flow of lessons and activities aimed at fairly superficial coverage that moves along comfortably oblivious to student learning" (p.13).

Conversely the one owner/director/teacher, who appeared to have the most training in movement, was Kate of Stepping Up who had a B.S. in dance education from a state university. Since 1984, Kate had been teaching movement classes for preschool age children. When asked how she chose this career she stated,

> I started taking dance classes at age three and fell in love with moving. Whether it was cheerleading, volleyball, swimming, working out, or dancing, I continued being physically active throughout my school years, college years, and middle age years of life. I was fortunate enough to take my love of movement and create a

career for myself. I am given the opportunity to help foster children at an early age to develop the same love for movement, which I have had all my life.

In an interview with Kate, she discussed how she designed the curriculum for her classes, "Since my degree is in education from a state university with a major in dance and a minor in exercise science, I based the curriculum on the physical activities a child between the ages of 3-5 should be learning how to do." Kate used a list, reported in Appendix F, of stretches and motor skills as her curriculum that she expected the children to learn by the end of the session. She continued:

I have the curriculum sheet and a theme for the recital and I work the children towards the recital. The curriculum is a list of skills the students need to be able to do by the end of the session, such as forward rolls, backward rolls, etc. I take that curriculum and design the class from that.

The recital the children performed at the end of the semester mirrored class activities. At the recital I attended, the children performed the same songs in the same order with the same moves as they had been performing in every class during the semester. Kate reported that she repeated the songs in every class because she wanted the children to be able to perform to the songs without her leading.

Kate's background was much more directly related to dance and the field of movement than the other directors, yet her program offered the children a very structured, rigid experience. Instead of allowing children to explore and be creative, she taught them to perform according to a prescribed script. In Kate's lessons there was only one way a snake moved and one way to move to her selected music. Because of Kate's background and training she had a great opportunity to have both a developmentally sound and an

instructionally suitable program. This would include allowing the children opportunities to engage in creative movement and problem solving. Yet her narrow view of movement and pedagogy appeared to determine her command style of teaching.

The third company examined was Tumble Gym. Tumble Gym began in 1994 and both the director and teacher had been with the company since its inception. The director, Kris, wrote and implemented the curriculum and taught classes along with Deb, one of the first teachers for the program. When asked about her background and how she became involved. Deb stated," My background is really just loving kids, being physically fit, and realizing the importance of fitness for children." Deb also knew the owner very well since she spent many years bringing her own children to the gymnastics school. Deb had received her B.S. in psychology from a state university and spent many years as an art teacher at the elementary level. Kris came to work for the company as the director with a degree in elementary education. She explained, "I've been teaching [gymnastics] for 17 years now. I also have a background in [Olympic] gymnastics and I was a competitive athlete in high school and did dance [jazz] and cheerleading in college."

Because Kris was in charge of the curriculum, I asked how she decided on the format of the curriculum and its content. She explained, "The format was already in place because Marci [the owner of the gymnastics school] got the idea from a friend who was doing a similar program. The content is based on learning various gymnastic skills and just getting a chance to move in various ways."

Both Kris and Deb held college degrees from accredited universities and were interested in being physically fit. They both loved children, and Kris had a background in

gymnastics. Deb's introduction to gymnastics was through her children. Therefore, it is not surprising that Tumble Gym's everyday operation was based solely on gymnastics.

Lee Shulman (1987) explains that, "To teach is to first understand" (p. 14). It is not enough for teachers simply to know the content. They must fully comprehend how it should be taught to the children in their classes. Shulman offers the example of a teacher who, when confident in the material, is able to teach "in a highly interactive manner, drawing out student ideas …accepting multiple competing interpretations" (p 18). However, when she teaches a subject about which she is not confident, her teaching style is completely different. She does not allow students to ask questions or discuss the topic, creating a very teacher-directed lesson. This case exemplified how a teacher's instructional style and confidence is tied to his/her comprehension of the subject matter. Thus, teachers' feelings of efficacy or beliefs about themselves and their ability to teach may include beliefs about what content they feel they can or cannot cover, what age or type of students they feel they can instruct, and even what kind of pedagogical strategies they are comfortable using (Silverman & Ennis, 1996).

From the review of the literature and the observation of classes, it is apparent that training, teacher evaluation, and on-going training are essential for an effective, developmentally appropriate movement program. Shulman's (1987) remarks are consistent with my observations. The more comfortable the teacher was with the material the more open and flexible were the classes. While Kate had the academic training to create an effective program, there was another factor, her belief system, that constrained her willingness to create a program that encouraged children's creativity or problem solving.

Belief Systems

Teacher training is only one factor that influences effective programming. Other factors, such as the teacher's belief systems can also impact programming decisions (Silverman & Ennis, 1996). Pajares (1992) states, "Beliefs, attitudes, and values form an individual's belief system" (p. 314). He goes on to say, "Teachers' attitudes about education ---about schooling, teaching, learning, and students---have generally been referred to as teachers' beliefs" (p. 316). Teachers must make decisions on a daily basis that include *what content* to teach, *how* to teach the selected content, what activities and techniques reinforce the content, and *how to manage* the classroom. In each of these decisions the teacher's beliefs are in some way involved. Teachers must also take into consideration the many logistical and administrative limitations posed by their specific teaching situation such as time, space, equipment, and the varied needs of parents and administrators. Working within their teaching setting, the teacher then has to decide, "What outcomes are of most worth for my students, in my teaching situation, with these opportunities and these limitations?" (Ennis, 1992, p. 321). Most teachers' decisions about programming and the value of a course of study are made through the eyes of their belief system. Although many decisions are based on knowledge they have acquired through training, their beliefs may influence content and strategy selection more than the teachers realize.

Beliefs are deeply rooted in an individual's fabric; they are not simple feelings that can be easily swayed. Information individuals acquire is screened through their belief system before that information is acted upon. Further, when an individual is presented with scientific explanations inconsistent with their beliefs, often the beliefs will

overshadow the evidence (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' beliefs also affect how they treat their students. For example, they may have low expectations of smaller, younger, or disabled students, and, thus, may not provide opportunities for these children to experience challenging content. In these instances, the students' ability to challenge themselves to learn and to be successful is also constrained. Further, they may underestimate their students' ability to make decisions or to solve problem limiting an individual's chance to be creative in movement. Likewise, teachers can show favoritism, have higher expectations of students they perceive as more gifted or expect more of students who have previously done well. Pajares (1992) states,

> Once beliefs are formed, individuals have a tendency to build causal explanations surrounding the aspects of those beliefs, where these explanations are accurate or mere invention. Finally, there is the self-fulfilling prophecy---beliefs influence perceptions that influence behaviors that are consistent with and that reinforce, the original beliefs. (p. 317)

Teachers have beliefs about learning, curriculum, and students. These beliefs form the foundation for teacher perceptions, which in turn influence teacher behaviors, circling, back to substantiate beliefs. For example, the teacher who believes in nurturing student creativity exhibits behavior that encourages creativity. Students in this class learn creatively reinforcing the teacher's beliefs. The belief-behavior-reinforcement-belief cycle exists and persists, thus forming the teacher's philosophical framework of education. Whether the construct is creativity, expectations, identity, role or any of a myriad of issues facing teachers, teachers' beliefs influence their teaching and nurture or constrain student learning.

In this research, teachers' beliefs appeared to shape their curriculum and instruction, enhancing or constraining students' opportunities. For example, Kim, owner/director/teacher of Jumping Jacks and Jills discussed how the videos she used influenced her program stating,

> Patti Komara helped me structure my classes. She wanted the kids to have fun; her teaching philosophy would be for the children to have fun learning gymnastics. Everything about her classes was geared toward making gymnastics at every level fun for kids.

This was very similar to Kim's discussion of her philosophy:

> My idea is to bring a little light, a little fun, and a little movement into those little structured lives; that's why I'm not a huge disciplinarian. I try to keep them from killing each other, but I'm not there to make them do the perfect forward rolls or cartwheels. I'm there to just get them to move anyway they can and to have a little fun.

Kim's instruction was influenced by Patti Komara's philosophy or she gravitated toward Komara's philosophy because it spoke to Kim's beliefs and values. Kim wanted "to bring some light, a little fun…into those little structured lives." Kim stated that the KAT instructor believed in creative movement, and Komara wanted the children to have fun learning. While Kim certainly designed her program around the training of both programs, her teaching style reflected her belief that learning should be fun, not rigid and disciplined. Kim stated many times in the interview that she did not mind if the children did not perfect their skills. Instead, Kim's belief system dictated that the curriculum she developed was designed to make certain that the children enjoyed the experience rather

than worrying about skills. This was confirmed in observations by witnessing many instances where Kim would not stop and correct a child who was performing an incorrect movement while on the circuit. Technique and skill development gave way to cheers of support. This was not to say she never corrected improper movements. If students were in jeopardy of harming themselves or not performing the movement she requested, Kim would correct them and help them to perform the correct movement. She also stated, "I'm not a huge disciplinarian." During observations, I witnessed children who did not follow directions, stepped out of line, and talked when asked not to. Kim would verbally reprimand them but not follow through with consequences when they repeated the behavior. Despite Kim's training in teacher effectiveness, classroom management, lesson plan development, and stages of childhood development, in the end, Kim managed her class in a way that reflected her belief system.

"Researchers have demonstrated that beliefs influence knowledge acquisition and interpretation, task definition and selection, interpretation of course content, and comprehension monitoring"(Pajares, 1992, p. 328). This results in "a strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions, and classroom practices" (p. 326). In this research, it appeared that the instructor's beliefs and values influenced every aspect of the classroom. From lesson plans, to discipline, to course content – the teacher's belief system shapes the instructional process. To understand a particular teacher's classroom methods, one must first understand his/her belief system.

Based on Pajares' findings, it follows that the Tumble Gym teachers' training explains only a portion of Tumble Gym's format. Kris and Deb's beliefs and values

about movement and about children lay the foundation for everything from curriculum development to teaching strategies at Tumble Gym. Both the director and teacher stated they loved children and wanted children to have fun. In an interview, Deb said she had reared her own children with freedom to express and explore and that was the way she wanted to work with the children of Tumble Gym. She believed that children could not find their way without freedom of expression and that they must learn what did and did not work without her always telling them.

At Tumble Gym, Kris's background in gymnastics provided the structure for the curriculum, and Kris and Deb's beliefs influenced their daily teaching style. Through their belief system, they expanded the program to include creative exploration and problem solving opportunities. This was exemplified by the teachers asking the children to explore different ways of moving. For example, they asked, "How else could you go under the limbo stick or get over the balance beam or get the bean bag through the hole?" Creative movement was part of this program as evidenced by the use of the warm-up songs, which required children to use their imagination to move like various animals or to stretch like different shapes. Tumble Gym teachers also encouraged students to use their imagination when going through the circuit, especially during what they called theme weeks. Theme weeks revolved around holidays or special occasions such as the circus coming to town. For example, staff would decorate the bus in a circus motif and, instead of just walking across the balance beam they had the children pretend to walk the tightrope, swing on a trapeze, crawl through the circus tent, and dive role like clowns.

The Stepping Up program was at the opposite end of the spectrum of program flexibility. Although Kate, owner/director/teacher for Stepping Up, had an extensive

background in kinesiology and dance, her class format reflected her beliefs as well as her training. She stated,

> I have a recital so the kids have to learn certain choreography to complete the session. The choreography is harder at the beginning of the year so they have to progress. It's based on tying the steps together to show what they have learned throughout the year.

Kate structured the majority of the lessons using direct, command style approaches to teaching (Mosston & Ashworth, 1990). Children either performed the same movements together as a group or performed one at a time under the teacher's direction. For example, during songs that encouraged the students to move like certain animals, they were not allowed to move the way *they* thought a monkey might, but, instead, were required to follow the teacher's lead. Kate was always the leader and did not give the children a chance to be leader. When children started to handle the equipment in a different way from the teacher-designated movements, they were told to stop and only do what she was doing. No questions were ever presented to the children on how to move with the equipment nor were the children allowed to use their imagination or problem solve during class. From observations, it is apparent that Kate's beliefs centered on the teacher as the final authority, the sole leader. She believed that children needed to prove to parents that they had been taught a skill and the proof was in a final recital presented to the parents. If the children performed the skills correctly, then the teacher was successful. Success was measured by an end or terminal goal and all progress was measured by attaining that goal. No accounting was given for what a child might learn

along the road to the goal. Kate's beliefs had a narrow focus, and she funneled the students along her chosen path.

Teachers' belief systems also have a substantial impact on how they choose to teach the content. Schiro (1992) explains, "Educators' curriculum belief systems develop over time, their belief systems develop in response to professional and personal transitions that occur in their lives…" (p.281). Schiro argues that educators' curriculum beliefs can and do change over time as a result of influential stimuli. His research demonstrates that teachers are forced to change when they change grade level, curriculum, or school setting. Likewise, an intervention such as a new program or training can influence an educator's belief and thus change their teaching styles and/or curriculum. Without such stimuli, teaching can become rote and routine (Schiro, 1992). In the case of the observed programs, the teacher's belief systems had not changed over time in response to professional transitions. Likewise, they received no additional training which might have challenged beliefs to change. Additionally, grade level and curricula did not change as teachers followed a long established set program. Perhaps, when an owner sells programs to other locations, minor changes would occur in response to a new environment, but even that would have little impact on the fundamental belief system of the program's teachers.

Teaching certainly appeared rote and routine for the teachers in the three observed companies. Most lessons exhibited the same routine, the same basic content in the form of songs and skills and circuit. Kim who believed in a relaxed, permissive atmosphere provided a less structured environment than Kate who believed there was only one way to perform a task in order to meet the goal. The observed teachers who had the most training

in teaching, not just training directed at a specific curriculum, appeared to create programs that were more creative and flexible. Yet, all of the programs relied on a specific routine that appeared to meet the comfort level of the instructor. If the teachers had had a greater understanding of curriculum, child development, more extensive training, and mentoring, they may have had the freedom to explore, to develop more creative ways of teaching and to allow their students more involvement in the learning process.

Summary

Although standards and curriculum models are often available, teachers vary in the extent to which they use them to make curricular and instructional decisions. One aspect that appears to have a profound impact on the nature of the program design is the teacher's experience and scope of training. Each teacher views curriculum models and interprets them differently, omitting or emphasizing different aspects of the model based on their educational philosophy, the extent of their understanding of childhood development, their knowledge of curriculum development and the total breadth and depth of their own educational endeavors.

Teachers with more limited training tend to have greater difficulty planning and executing a developmentally sound program. Additionally, they tend to rely more heavily on what they know and what they have experienced, rather than being able to extend the boundaries of curriculum development into more creative avenues. Each of the observed programs reflected their unique characteristics, in part, due to the type, scope, quality and depth of training, or lack thereof, of the teacher/director.

Teacher training is not the only factor affecting program development. A teacher's belief system influences both curriculum development and the nature of decisions that teachers are willing to share with students. Empowering students to make movement choices and solve movement problems is a central focus of the NASPE standards and instrumental in students' cognitive and emotional growth and development. Programs observed for this study support the research that suggests the importance of a teacher's belief system in designing and implementing educational programs and in sharing decision making with students. Factors that influence teacher decision-making are the teacher's level of training and their beliefs about content, lessons structure, and student decision making. In fact, it appears that training and beliefs are instrumental in teachers' empowerment and their ability and willingness to empower their students.

<center>Empowerment</center>

It was apparent that teacher training and teacher belief systems were major contributors to the differences in program curriculum and design among the observed preschool movement programs. The lack of teacher training appeared to limit the scope of teachers' understanding of possible movement content and the range of pedagogical methods available to engage children and enhance student learning. Likewise, teachers' beliefs both focused their efforts and limited the extent to which they sought new knowledge on a range of content and pedagogical practices. Advocates of school reform such as Darling-Hammond (1997) argue that engaging students effectively requires that they be permitted to have some voice in the selection of content and ways of learning that are interesting, meaningful, and relevant. She notes that by sharing the control of the learning process, students are empowered to become involved, facilitating engagement.

Ashcroft (1987) states, "An empowered person, then, would be someone who believed in his or her ability/capability to act, and this belief would be accompanied by able/capable action" (p. 143). Other scholars, such as Kohn (1993) and Ashcroft (1987) note that before teachers can consider empowering students, they must first be empowered themselves. There are many ways that teachers become empowered. It may occur as the result of education which fosters effective management of students engaged in personal choice activities, heightens understanding of students' developmentally appropriate needs and interests, and examines new approaches to content for this age child.

In the three preschool movement programs examined in this research, the amount and nature of teacher and student empowerment varied among the programs. It was not unusual to observe a teacher instructing all students to perform the same skills and activities in exactly the same way. Moreover, I documented numerous instances in which an instructor refused to permit students to move in original and creative ways. As I identified the theme of empowerment, it became important to investigate the meaning of empowerment to teachers, to further understand the extent to which these teachers perceived that they, themselves, were empowered, and to identify the extent to which teachers believed that students should be permitted to move originally and creatively.

The Role of Teacher Empowerment in Pedagogical Decision Making

Stone (1995) explains, "Empowerment grants an individual the ability to direct his or her own life" (p. 294). When applied to teaching and learning, empowered teachers have the trust and consent of administrators to make educational decisions in the classroom. When applied to preschool programs, empowered teachers have the freedom to make decisions that are appropriate to their students' physical, cognitive and socio-

emotional development. Irwin (1996) extends this perspective by emphasizing that "Empowerment means believing in yourself and your own ability to act. Power … is thought to be an internal state of self-confidence that is accompanied by action" (p. 4). Empowered teachers can encourage preschoolers to believe in themselves and their ability to take action, whereby they can develop a sense of self-confidence that will allow them to find success through their actions.

For individuals to empower themselves or to be empowered by others requires both a belief in the value of empowerment and a plan to facilitate the process. Stone (1995) argues that in order for teachers and students to be empowered three things must occur: respect, validation, and success. Respecting teachers involves ensuring that they have valuable input into the teaching/ learning process and acknowledging their talent and ability to teach. As teachers prove themselves to administrators and to parents, more respect is given and more privilege is allowed. Ongoing respect must be earned. Fostering respect can lead to both teacher and student empowerment. Teachers' perceptions of themselves (both personally and professionally) affect the way they teach. For example, teachers who feel respected feel good about their work and take pride in their performance (Short & Greer, 1997). The teacher who feels respected is more likely to feel empowered and to respect and empower children. Stone explains, "Respecting children involves recognizing and accepting who they are and what they do. Individual learning rates and styles must be respected and honored" (Stone, 1995, p. 294).

Validation is a process that often begins externally as others support and affirm individuals and acknowledge their value and importance. One way a teacher receives validation is through compliments from an administrator in the presence of others.

Likewise, praising a young student in front of classmates is certainly a method teachers can use to validate a child. Teachers can provide developmentally appropriate tasks in which students are likely to succeed. In this way, students can assess their own performance and teachers can acknowledge student successes on a regular basis.

In addition, teachers often report a sense of validation when they realize that they have made a difference in their students' lives. Administrators can further contribute to teacher validation by recognizing students' achievements and seeking opportunities to praise their efforts. Through this recognition, administrators are acknowledging that the students' teachers made the success possible (Goyne, Padgett, Rowicki, & Triplitt, 1999).

One of the most powerful empowerment tools is success. Teachers find success through their ability to manage students effectively and increase student learning. They are more likely to be successful when they are properly trained and strive to implement effective practices in the classroom. Effective teachers are able to design developmentally appropriate tasks for students so they, too, find frequent success in accomplishing tasks that they perceive to be interesting and meaningful. Understanding children's developmental level and structuring tasks appropriately are keys to nurturing success and avoiding failure or feelings of disempowerment. There are many opportunities in a day to empower students, as well as numerous ways to encourage a student to empower themselves. These might include ownership, choice, autonomy, and shared decision-making (Stone, 1995).   An empowered teacher can encourage all of these methods within the classroom; however, to do so they must feel empowered themselves. Suleiman (1998) points out that, "Only the professionally empowered educators have the ability to become empowering for their students" (p. 3).

Choice, decision-making, ownership, and autonomy are empowerment strategies that give the teacher and student control over the learning process. Choice and decision-making help teachers and students share responsibilities for classroom management, including selecting activities and managing instructional time. In other words, when freedom of choice is present and encouraged in a classroom, it can be an exceptional motivator for teachers and students. This freedom of choice allows everyone to feel ownership. Giving students more ownership of their learning can result in a more meaningful learning experience (Stone, 1995).

Giving teachers the right to make curricular decisions validates them as instructors. In the observed private movement companies, the director may imply a belief in the teachers' abilities by confirming their educational values and approving their instructional methods. Empowering teachers in this way not only increases job satisfaction (Goyne, et al 1999), but also contributes to increased self-respect (Suleiman, 1998).

Increased self-respect is a direct result of allowing the teacher and the students a measure of autonomy. A teacher needs freedom to set goals and methods of reaching those goals to feel autonomous.   This is also true for children. Clearly, even preschool children will be more responsive when given freedom within limits to express themselves and pursue some of their own interests. When teachers or children believe they have control over their work they are more willing to make decisions and take risks (Stone, 1995). Teachers who feel autonomous may also feel free to explore new content and teach novel concepts which can also lead to a sense of accomplishment and success (Goyne, et al., 1999).

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Autonomy, decision-making, and choice are more likely to be given to teachers when a supervisor knows that the teacher has been trained properly and is willing to act responsibly. A poorly trained teacher often has fewer options and limited choices. Poorly trained instructors may rely on a set of rigid guidelines for children in order to maintain their feelings of control. It is through proper training that a teacher can feel empowered and then aid or share power with students. Conversely, a fully trained, empowered teacher knows how to facilitate and guide, rather than control. Empowered students can be allowed to operate freely within clear boundaries (Kohn, 1993).

Empowered teachers also appear to be more excited than disempowered teachers about going to work and find their work fascinating and energizing (Stone, 1995). Not only do teachers benefit from empowerment but students benefit as well. Suleiman (1998) makes the point that children cannot find empowerment from an educator unless that educator also is empowered. The empowered educator often takes more risks, has more autonomy, is more independent, makes more choices, gives students more freedom within limits, and freely praises more often than a disempowered educator. If empowerment results from success, validation, and respect, then teachers who have developed this sense of empowerment are likely to facilitate these characteristics in their students. Once empowered, teachers and students become motivated to learn, take risks, and appraise their performance. Through all levels of education, as students and teachers become empowered, their desire to assess themselves and then act accordingly becomes evident. Stone (1995) explains that when students and instructors become empowered, they will take more risks with learning and self-evaluation; and feel more confident about what to teach and what students should learn. This internal motivation and follow-

through is reflected in the definition of empowerment: the ability to believe in yourself and to take actions according to your beliefs (Irwin, 1996). By being empowered, teachers experience more satisfaction with their jobs, increased commitment to the profession, and overall improved quality of teaching (Goyne, et al., 1999). As stated by Short and Greer (1997) teachers with self-respect take pride in their teaching. In part, that self-respect comes from the feeling of empowerment, which, in turn, increases job satisfaction. Without taking the risks encouraged by an attitude of empowerment, the teachers would be likely to rely on routine without enthusiasm. The students would be more apt to learn by rote in a limited manner. On the other hand, the empowered teacher and student would be more likely to look for possibilities and to make choices that enhance learning (Suleiman, 1998).

In the three movement companies observed, Jumping Jacks and Jills, Stepping Up, and Tumble Gym, the dynamics of teacher empowerment varied with consequences for the children enrolled. Tumble Gym was the only company that appeared to empower teachers and encourage teachers to empower students. At Tumble Gym, the teacher and director designed the curriculum in a collaborative effort which provided the teacher with direct input into critical programmatic decisions that was in itself empowering. The owner trusted and respected the talents of the directorand teacher, thus enabling them to create the program. The owner/director/teacher in Jumping Jacks and Jills and Stepping Up, therefore, must look to the daycare staff, parents and even the students to contribute the elements that lead to empowerment.

Kim

Kim of Jumping Jacks and Jills discussed respect, validation, and success as they related to her feeling of empowerment. When asked if she felt respected in her role as a movement teacher, Kim explained that initially she worked with her husband and one other employee when setting up the preschool movement program. Their ability to exchange ideas and feedback really helped her gain respect for them and vice versa. Kim interpreted parents enrolling their children repeatedly for the class as a signal that the parents respected her abilities as a teacher and wanted their children to be exposed to her program. "It must be a good sign." Kim stated as she attempted to explain her repeat business. Unfortunately this was not the case with the daycare center staff. On numerous occasions she had tried to get the daycare staff to provide input into the curriculum, address student behavior problems, or simply to observe a class. Their attitude was, "Whatever you are doing must be OK because the students keep signing up for your class, so just go do your thing and leave us alone." When asked about validation she exclaimed, "I don't feel like I got that at all. Since the staff at the daycare centers never watched what I did, they could never give me positive feedback. The parents never watched the classes either."

Kim obtained success mostly through interaction with her students. She stated, "Success was walking into that daycare and hearing those kids say 'Yea! Miss Kim is here or I love you Miss Kim.' Can't beat it for feeling successful." Without any direct positive feedback except from the students, Kim had to seek out other methods to feel successful. One objective piece of data that helped her feel successful was the amount of money that she made. "I wanted to keep on making the income, so I made sure those

classes were the greatest thing those kids did all week. Making the money and having the kids glad to see me were the only successful things about the job." Thus, Kim had autonomy to make her own decisions and structure the curriculum without any outside authority influencing or limiting her program. Nevertheless, she was limited, by her lack of training.

Goyne et al. (1999) argues that professional development for teachers is essential if they are to learn new skills and improve their instructional ability. This specific training enables teachers to be empowered, which in turn allows for student empowerment. Due to her lack of training, Kim kept the program curriculum to a specific format: a warm-up song, routine stretches, and a prescribed circuit. Kim did not vary that format. The only differences in the lessons were the songs used for warm-up and the layout and skills selected each lesson for the circuit. Her limited training also inhibited her ability to incorporate varied curriculum into the classroom. Kim had not been trained to plan her own program; rather she had been trained to follow a set format of instruction. She had modeled her program after the videotapes, which had been her training. She was not adequately accomplished to deviate from what the tapes told her would be effective.

Although Kim had not thought about the concept of empowerment, she did make an effort to allow the students an occasional choice. Kim's autonomy in setting the program's routine did allow her the opportunity to give children room to be creative; although she would rarely relinquish control of her set routine. On occasion she did permit the children to decide how to move like a monkey or frog instead of showing them the standard way. This type of freedom was not a norm but an irregular deviation from her normal pattern of operation. Kim also respectfully acknowledged the children's

differences and allowed them to perform the skills at their skill level. If a child was more advanced than others, she gave him/her additional moves to attempt at a more difficult level. Kim showered the children with praise in front of the class and sent notes home to parents validating their child's accomplishments.

Although Kim had many of the ingredients that led to her own feeling of empowerment, she did not have the necessary training to empower her students. She appeared to make arbitrary rather than purposeful decisions about when, under what conditions, and how often she could let the children make their own decisions about learning. It seemed that Kim did not feel competent to vary her routine and could not give them freedom consistently. She explained:

> I'm comfortable with what I do but sometimes I would like to challenge myself and go beyond my level of comfort and do new things and the other thing is I haven't been to a seminar on any of the new things that are going on now. Sometimes I feel like I'm a little stale so I would like to come up with some new things.

Kim reported that she felt stale. She was limited in the degree and consistency to which she could empower students' creativity and problem solving skills. She appeared unable to impart confidence to the children, perhaps because she did not have confidence in her own professional abilities and knowledge. She knew precisely what worked for her, but had not reached a comfort level necessary to explore new methods of instruction.

In conclusion, Kim had complete autonomy over her program. She praised students, although she only received validation from the children and from the income she earned. She validated the children's progress, although she rarely received validation

from others. Kim stated that she continued with teaching because she enjoyed the children and she earned a good income with little effort. The children's' enjoyment of the program and the income made her feel successful.

Kate

Kate, owner, director, and teacher of Stepping Up, discussed with me how she obtained feelings of respect, validation, and success: "I don't feel like I'm disrespected by anyone. I feel as if the parents, children and staff of the daycares all respect me and my program." She explained that students following directions and parents enrolling their children in her classes were her measures of respect. She determined that the directors and teachers of the daycare "just like for me to take the children off of their hands for a while and make their school look good so they wouldn't dare disrespect me." When asked to comment on the following quote, "Validation often means sharing your knowledge of an individual's worth with someone else" (Stone, p. 294). Kate commented,

> "I guess I get validated when parents tell other parents how wonderful the class is and they should sign their child up. Also, I'm always part of the tours at the daycare. The director loves to bring prospective parents by to show them what they offer."

Kate received validation indirectly through parents continuing to register their children for the classes and the daycare directors coming by with prospective students.

Obtaining success is another way in which teachers are empowered (Stone, 1995). Kate stated that she felt successful with her business because,

I have lots of repeat business within a school, or a school recommends me to other schools, also sometimes a child has to switch schools and the parent will ask the new school to bring me in. I've actually gone in and had to clean up messes from previous companies. Like disorganization, they were constantly late, didn't offer make up classes and so on. Then I go in with my program and show them what a quality program is. That feels very good.

Another part of success for Kate was her recital at the end of each session. She stated, "It's great to see them doing the skills and steps and following directions just perfectly." To Kate, the recital was an objective measure of her success. She liked showing the parents the improvement in their children's skills from the beginning of the school year until the end.

Kate had the education and experience to make her an effective, empowered teacher. She received validation, respect, and success, the necessary ingredients for empowerment from her autonomy, from feedback from the students and daycare centers, and the parents' choice to enroll their children in the program. Yet, Kate did not appear to empower her students. Kate seemed to defy the logic that empowered teachers empower their students. She was reluctant to relinquish any power in her classroom. Observations of her class showed that every day the children warmed up to the same song. The majority of the time, each lesson was identical in the songs used, the movements followed and the instructions given. When asked if she changed songs, Kate stated, "I use the same songs almost all year long with a few exceptions for holiday songs because when I introduce new things they giggle and get off task." During one observation period the children came in and performed the first three songs without

Kate's active participation. Not only were the songs familiar but the beginning of class routine was so predictable that the children never considered other options. Kate stated, "They like repetition and behave much better when they know what to expect."

Kate did not allow the children to make any decisions during class. For example, during songs that encouraged the students to move like certain animals, she did not allow them to move the way *they* thought an elephant might but, instead, she required them to mimic the teacher's lead. This was true for every song presented during observations. Even during a follow-the-leader song, Kate was always the leader and never shared that responsibility with the children. When working with equipment, Kate did encourage the children to explore, but required them to approach the equipment exactly as the teacher did. When children started to handle the equipment in a different way from the teacher-designated movements, she told them to stop and follow her directions. The children were not allowed to use their imagination to problem solve during class. Goyne (1999) discusses the fact that some leaders may want to empower but do not really believe the students can handle the responsibility.

> They do not trust people to rise to the occasion and be willing to put more of themselves into their work. For empowerment to work, the leader must at least operate on the assumption that most people, given the opportunity, will invest more of themselves and function at a higher more creative level. A common fear of leaders is loss of control, especially when they are still held accountable by those above them. They equate 'power' with 'control' and fear that giving up any degree of control will strip them of power. In fact, giving up some control can actually enhance leaders' power. They take on new roles and become facilitators

and coaches, working for their employees to help them be more effective. Empowering teachers does not mean administrators relinquish the authority and responsibility that accompany their title and position. Rather it means they share power with the people who are responsible for helping them make and implement decisions about change within the school. (p. 7)

Although Kate may have been empowered, she was unable to empower her students. However, she did validate the children by complimenting them in the plenary sessions, sending positive progress reports to the parents, and saying complimentary things about them to the classroom teachers. Also the opportunity for children to be successful was built into her curriculum. Kate taught the children skills and stayed with them until they mastered the movements. With such attention, the children were able to perform their routine perfectly in front of their parents at the end-of-semester recital. Although Kate praised the children in appropriate ways and gave them the opportunity to achieve success, she did not give them a chance to be autonomous or have any ownership of their movement education experience. Stone's (1995) definition of respect averred that respect involves accepting who people are and what they can and cannot do. It means recognizing individual learning rates and respecting those differences. This definition was not utilized in Kate's classes. In Kate's classroom each child was expected to perform identically. Kate did not give them opportunities to show their creativity or decision-making skills. Instead, she gave them a task and expected them to learn it for the recital. On occasion Kate would allow a more advanced student to try a more sophisticated movement, but this privilege was not the norm. Kohn (1993) states,

Every teacher who is told what material to cover, when to cover it, and how to evaluate children's performance is a teacher who knows that enthusiasm for one's work quickly evaporates in the face of being controlled. Not every teacher, however, realizes that exactly the same thing holds true for students: deprive them of self-determination and you have likely deprived them of motivation. If learning is a matter of following orders, students simply will not take to it in the way they would if they had some say about what they were doing (p.11).

Kate believed that giving the students autonomy was tantamount to relinquishing control and creating chaos. Kate stated in an interview that she believed the children liked knowing what to expect each day. She had experienced the children getting off task when they were introduced to new situations and was not willing to risk this to give the children a voice in the decision-making. Thus, she presented very structured, non-creative lessons and was not able to empower her students.

Kris and Deb

Tumble Gym was the only company in which the owner, director, and teacher positions were held by different individuals. The director, Kris, and teacher, Deb had been with the company since its inception in 1994. Deb explained her perspective on the empowerment characteristics of respect, validation, and success:

I feel I get most of those met from my students. They respect me, they tell their parents how great I am and how much fun they have in the class. Ya know it makes you smile to have them come running at you saying Miss Deb is here, Miss Deb is here and they get so excited. I just love it! And I feel success when they have success. Also, to see a child's skills improve over time is so great.

When asked about the feedback she gets from the parents, daycare staff, her director, and the owner of the company, she stated,

> Well, the owner really doesn't involve herself at all. She only cares about the money coming in. The director, as you know is Kris and, well, since we started this together I don't see her as above me. If I need to make some changes I can. She totally respects my opinion and I don't need to OK things with her. The parents, they love it [the program] and I know they love it because they continue to sign their children up as well as their siblings. We've had three and four children from the same family go through. The teachers at the daycares love us because we take their children and give them a bit of a break. The directors love us because it's good for their school and students.

Deb explained that the owner and director permitted her to make decisions and have autonomy within certain limits. Since she had been with this company from its inception and played a large part in the design of the curriculum, she did, indeed, feel ownership.

Deb had a very definite philosophy about teaching. She believed that children could not find their way without freedom of expression and that they must learn to explore autonomously to discover what made them successful. Their program included definite experiences of creative exploration and problem solving opportunities. This was exemplified by the teachers asking the children to examine different ways of moving. Creative movement was part of this program, and many of the warm-up songs required children to use their imagination to move like various animals or stretch like different shapes. The teachers also encouraged the students to experiment when going through the

circuit especially during what they called "theme weeks." Kohn (1993) points out that,

"The way a child learns how to make decisions is by making decisions, not by following

directions" (p. 11). Deb respected the children sufficiently to allow them to make

decisions about the way they moved and permit them to be creative and work at their own

skill level. She encouraged them to find different ways of moving and, explore their

creative side, without the need to emulate the teacher or their peers. Deb validated their

decisions to use their imagination and to stretch their abilities with verbal encouragement.

Similar to other companies, validation took the form of praising the children in front of

their peers, sending notes home to parents, and commending their efforts to their

teachers. Success was also a part of the Tumble Gym curriculum. Deb assumed that her

students were successful when they finished the circuit, learned new skills, and had fun

doing it.

Thus, all the factors that lead to an empowered teacher were present for Deb. She

felt respected, validated, and successful. The owner and director permitted her to make

decisions regarding the curriculum and her teaching style, thus enabling her to have

ownership and autonomy within her program. Although Deb did not have on-going

training, she did have a degree in psychology from an accredited university and

experience teaching children in the school setting. Clearly, she felt comfortable in her

role as a movement teacher. For these reasons, she felt empowered and was able to

empower her students.

Teachers are empowered when they are respected, validated, and successful. This

often occurs when they have received comprehensive training and on-going continuing

education that keeps them up-to-date in their field. Empowered teachers have more

available tools with which to instill confidence in their students. Empowered teachers are more likely to have the ability to guide students to explore, create, take risks, and try new ideas. Being secure in the teaching role and having a strong background in curriculum design and understanding children's fundamental needs, the empowered instructor is free to explore and be creative, benefiting children's confidence, skill development, and feelings of success.

Summary

Teacher histories, training, beliefs, and level of empowerment converged in this research to create three unique preschool movement programs. None of the three programs investigated based their curriculum on NASPE guidelines for developmentally appropriate activities for specific age groups and only informally considered childrens' individual characteristics. Further there were no formal assessments of the children's skill level, limiting teachers' ability to create developmentally appropriate lesson plans for a specific child's unique characteristics such as age, body size, or skill level. Instead, instructors designed curriculum based on what they *believed* a child in preschool should be able to do. Since the programs did not use the NASPE components, they used other sources to plan their curriculum and influence the methods of delivering their product.

Curriculum decisions were influenced by each instructor's training and by their experience in the fields of gymnastics and dance. Kim based her ideas about what constituted an appropriate curriculum solely on the video program from which she received her training. Having no other movement education training, Kim had a limited foundation upon which to design developmentally sound movement programs for

preschool children. Without formal and continuing education, Kim kept to a structured routine that allowed little flexibility, became rote, and limited her level of effectiveness.

Kate based her ideas on her experiences in dance and gymnastics during childhood and during college. Her lack of ongoing training may have contributed to her adherence to a set routine. Keeping current in the field would expose Kate not only to a variety of new techniques but also keep her abreast of the latest research into the areas of curriculum design and childhood development.

Deb had training from an academic setting and had teaching experience. She also stated she felt validated, respected, and successful. Like the other teachers, she mentioned that she felt ownership because she was able to make decisions regarding her classes and teaching style. It was obvious from my observations that the children respected Deb as a person. The owner and director showed their respect for Deb by allowing her to make decisions regarding her classes. Deb measured the success of the program by parents enrolling their child repeatedly and by observing the children having a good time while learning successfully. Deb possessed all the components of empowerment.   When compared to the other two instructors, she was better able to empower the students. Her belief system supported the philosophy that children need to perform in developmentally appropriate ways, relax, be creative, and have fun. Of the three programs, Deb was the one instructor who truly empowered and worked conscientiously to empower her students.

Kim and Kate knew, informally, that they wanted the child to be able to perform certain activities, for instance, a forward roll. However, both lacked adequate formal training to design and implement a program that fully embraced sound educational and

developmental principles. Both teachers worked with children until each could perform that movement in an acceptable manner. There was no formal consideration of a child's developmental progress, aptitude, or of the many ways that curricula can be adapted to broaden the quality of student learning. Clearly, each program was heavily influenced in design and format by the instructor's level of training.

In addition to training, the methods used to deliver the product came partly from the instructor's belief system. Teachers tend to make program decisions based on their belief systems (Ennis, 1992). They use strategies with which they were comfortable philosophically. In this research, there was only one program that dared to vary from a rote instructional formula, and only then because the instructor's value system incorporated the belief that children should be allowed to solve problems creatively and make their own decisions. One teacher, Kim, due to lack of education and ongoing training, did not believe that she was capable of allowing much deviation in her classes, while Kate did not believe that students were capable of being responsible. Therefore, both felt it necessary to maintain rigid control over the classroom. All three observed teachers illustrated the point that teachers teach as they were taught and were most comfortable reproducing those learned strategies (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p.13). They focused so intently on children learning a designated movement that they were oblivious to children learning some less obvious lessons, such as respect, autonomy, and self-control.

The presence of or lack of empowerment was another factor that influenced the teacher's methods of program delivery. Research has shown that teachers must first feel

empowered to empower students (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Teachers are empowered when they believe in their own abilities and decision-making skills.

Of the three programs observed, one instructor, Kate, had the greatest amount of formal training, felt validated, appeared successful, and respected, and yet was the least willing or able to empower her students. Kate did not *believe* that her students could handle the responsibility of empowerment. She stated that whenever she let them decide about a song or a move, they became uncontrollable and rowdy. Kate's unwillingness to empower her students was a prime example of the impact one's belief system can have on ultimate educational outcomes, despite training and outward signs of respect, validation, and success. Although Kate had many of the necessary components for empowerment, her belief system would not allow her to break from routine.

Kim, on the other hand, had the least amount of formal training and ongoing training. She felt stale and lacked validation. She was, however, autonomous and through that autonomy was able to foster learning in her students. She would allow some creativity within narrow limits. She acknowledged her lack of training and maintained a structured routine that allowed for minimal flexibility, thus hindering her ability to fully empower her students.

Conversely, Deb was confident in her abilities to teach, her academic training, and her belief that children should freely express themselves. Her program included creative movement and problem solving opportunities. Deb was allowed autonomy; felt validated, and was successful. Deb experienced the feeling of empowerment and was able to empower her students.

Each of the movement programs was developed and implemented according to the instructors' training, beliefs, and sense of empowerment. These ingredients determined the manner in which each program curriculum was developed and the style with which each program was implemented.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Daycare center directors are seeing an influx of children. This increase in daycare population is due to both parents working and to the perceived need that each child deserves an earlier start to compete in today's world (Avery, 1994). The Center for Disease Control (2000) published a report alerting the nation to an epidemic of obesity in American youth due, in part, to inactivity. Sedentary pursuits appear to be the primary activities of today's youth (Virgilio, 1997). With these facts in mind, it is not surprising that a variety of movement programs have been created to address this need. Movement and fitness programs serving the general population appear to be increasing and parents are enrolling their children in movement programs provided by outside venders during the daycare hours.

The purpose of this study was to examine selected preschool movement programs and to report on their philosophies, curricula, and teaching strategies to determine if these programs are based on the best educational practices for this age group. The research questions were, "Does the for-profit franchise build its curriculum on an educationally sound, research-based philosophy, guidelines, and concepts?" "If so, does the curriculum include learning goals and simple to complex sequences?" "If not, what is the content and how is the program organized and delivered to students?"

A quality program includes developmentally appropriate activities for the students it serves. One way directors and teachers make informed choices is to follow standards and guidelines established for movement programs. The National Association for Sport

and Physical Education (NASPE) has developed criteria related to program quality published in two position statements: *Developmentally appropriate practice in movement programs for young children ages 3-5* (NASPE, 1994) and *Active start: A statement of physical activity guidelines for children birth to five years* (NASPE, 2002). The NASPE (1994) statement on best practices concerning movement programs argued that:

> …. a general 'activity' oriented program consisting primarily of traditional games and dance is not an appropriate process for maximizing children's development. A more appropriate approach for this age group would be to focus on basic motor skills and movement concepts and how these activities can assist in the child's psychological, physical, intellectual, and social development. (NASPE, 1994, p. 3)

NASPE (1994) also identified 25 components that describe appropriate and inappropriate practices in movement programs. These components, listed in Appendix A, provide a broad overview of how classes should be structured to provide a quality program. The NASPE (2002) physical activity guidelines for children state, "All children birth to age five should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills" (p.1). Although NASPE divides the ages into three categories: (a) infants, (b) toddlers, and (c) preschoolers, this research examined movement programs for the preschoolers, ages 3-5. This age group was chosen because it is the prevalent age group of children for whom movement classes in day care settings are designed. Pre-school and day care centers can be the initial setting for a lifelong devotion to movement and physical health. It is extremely important that preschool

movement program owners, directors, and teachers learn developmentally appropriate movement practices and use them effectively to design and implement comprehensive movement education programs.

In this research, the operations of three preschool movement programs were examined and compared with current best practices for this age group. Because my examination depended on gathering richly detailed examples of the content and its implementation in the program settings, I chose a qualitative research design. This research began with observations of three selected preschool movement programs Tumble Gym, Jumping Jacks and Jills, and Stepping Up. This observation period was followed by document analysis of program brochures, parent handout materials, and lesson plans. I then interviewed teachers and directors to understand their purposes and rationales for content selection and delivery decisions. The order of the data collection within this qualitative design was important, because it assisted me to minimize bias and address threats to the reliability and validity, or trustworthiness, of the findings. I began my observations with limited knowledge of the programs and teachers. I described program content and delivery in rich detail and conversed informally with teachers before and after class to enhance my understanding of their intended curriculum. By collecting document data after observations, I was able to use my first hand knowledge of the three programs to critique the promotional literature. Likewise, collecting observation data and analyzing documents prior to interviews allowed me to draw my own preliminary conclusions regarding answers to the research questions. I used the data from the observations and documents' analysis to develop interview questions. The three data sources (i.e., observation field notes, document content analysis, and interview

transcripts) were triangulated to confirm (or deny) potential conclusions. Data were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding to determine core categories that represented the main themes in the data. In open coding, the analyst is concerned with generating categories and their properties and then seeks to determine how categories vary dimensionally. With core themes in mind, axial coding is used to support themes, and connect and relate concepts and ideas around themes. Later, selective coding is used to build theory. Analysis is an iterative process that continually seeks to revise and refine categories and to determine the relationships between and among events, interactions, philosophies, and perspectives to understand the reasons and meanings of phenomena as perceived by the participants. I used four strategies, (a) triangulation, (b) extended data collection, (c) member checks, and (d) personal biography to address threats to the reliability and validity and establish trustworthiness for this study.

   As I analyzed the three programs from the perspective of the research questions within Goodlad's Formal, Perceived and Operational Domains, I found that the Tumble Gym, Jumping Jacks and Jills, and Stepping Up programs had both substantive and superficial elements in common. From my perspective within the operational domain, all three programs effectively used music interwoven with exercises/games to entice the children to perform various gross motor skills. All three touted their programs as based on creative movement and pre-gymnastics skills. Lessons were 30-35 minutes in length with both boys and girls participating, and age was the criterion for the division of classes in all three programs. Each program started its lessons with a warm-up and stretching routine followed by reviewing and learning various pre-gymnastics skills, and all ended the lesson with a fun stamp for the children. Each program encouraged the more skilled

students to attempt advanced moves, and all observed teachers offered positive reinforcement and encouragement throughout the observed sessions.

Although their lessons may have looked very similar, there were major differences among the companies. One of the most significant differences was in their approach to teaching. Tumble Gym and Jumping Jacks and Jills allowed the children to explore movement and to be creative. Stepping Up required each child to move in a prescribed way, not allowing the children to problem solve, explore, or use their imagination.

None of the programs exhibited all of the NASPE components in all three domains. The extent to which the NASPE components were represented varied from company to company and from domain to domain. One factor, however, was consistent across all three companies ---not one owner, director, or teacher mentioned being aware of or using the information provided by NASPE to design or implement their curriculum. Instead, they appeared more focused on the gymnastics aspects and sought guidance and training from gymnastics organizations.

Because none of the owner/directors or teachers mentioned being aware of or using the NASPE components to design the program's curriculum, other factors influenced their decisions about philosophy, guidelines, and concepts. These sources included the USA Gymnastics Kinder Accreditation for Teachers workshop; "Patti Komara" videotapes describing implementation and management of a gymnastics program, the directors' personal interests, values and beliefs, and professional backgrounds. Further, directors and teachers reported that many of the policies and the

actual implementation of the curriculum had been learned and developed through trial and error.

It was apparent that teacher training and beliefs were major contributors to the differences among these preschool movement programs. Lack of teacher training appeared to limit the scope of teachers' understanding of possible movement content and the range of pedagogical methods that could be used to engage children and increase their learning. Teacher training is not the only factor affecting program development. A teacher's belief system also has been found to influence curriculum development and the treatment of students. Programs observed for this study support the research that suggests the importance of a teacher's belief system in designing and implementing educational programs. That same belief system influences a teacher's treatment of students in the classroom (Silverman & Ennis, 1996). In this research, teachers' beliefs focused their efforts and limited the extent to which they sought new knowledge on a range of content and pedagogical practices.

The presence of or lack of empowerment was another factor in the teacher's methods of delivering a program. When applied to teaching and learning, empowerment suggests that teachers have the trust and consent of administrators to make educational decisions in the classroom. When applied to three to five year old children, empowered teachers are likely to give children the opportunity to make decisions that are appropriate to their physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development. Training, beliefs, and empowerment converged to create the observed programs. In some ways they were similar and in other ways, dissimilar, depending on the influence of training, beliefs, and empowerment.

Conclusions

It was determined that the three movement programs observed in this study were influenced primarily by teacher training and teacher beliefs. These two elements affected curriculum, student empowerment, pedagogical style, and student creativity. In this section, I will discuss both programmatic and thematic conclusions.

Programmatically, none of the for-profit instructors was aware of the NASPE components; yet, two of the three instructors followed some of these components. The themes that emerged from the research can aid the reader in understanding how these programs were developed and how they operated on a daily basis.

Programmatic Conclusions

All three programs used music interwoven with exercises/games to entice the children to perform various gross motor skills. All three touted their programs as based on creative movement and pre-gymnastics skills. Lessons were 30-35 minutes in length with both boys and girls participating. All three divided their classes based upon age. Each program started its lessons with a warm-up and stretching routine followed by reviewing and learning various pre-gymnastics skills. Operationally, the programs differed. Two of the three programs did develop some simple to complex sequencing while one had a program designed for repetitive movement. All of the programs were interested in providing a good experience for the children and therefore keeping the parents and daycare centers satisfied.

Stepping Up. From the perspectives of the formal and perceived domains, the domains that a parent or day care administrator is most likely to see, this program appeared to be effective, following research guidelines and standards consistently.

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However, when analyzed from the perspective of the operational domain, many of the

company's objectives as well as some of the NASPE components were not evident. Since

each class observed had the same format and, according to Kate, it remained the same for

much of the year, I was unable to observe developmentally appropriate simple to

complex sequences consistent with the requirements of a high quality program.

Statements appearing in the formal documents were actually quite different from the

content taught in this program. Although the program's documentation led one to believe

that this program fostered creativity, self-expression, and cognitive development,

operationally, this program was based primarily on repetitive movement.

　　　　Jumping Jacks and Jills. Although the documents examined within the formal

domain appeared to construct a program that did not follow or take into account many of

the NASPE components, observations showed that many of those components *were*

followed intuitively. For instance, none of Kim's documents discussed incorporating

cognitive development into her program. Nevertheless, I witnessed that NASPE

component (#4) (Appendix A), cognitive development, was part of her program. She

gave the students opportunities to learn from their movements by asking them to problem

solve with questions like, "What are some ways you can move underneath the limbo

stick?" Or "How can you make the letter V with your body?" Her equipment also

encouraged the use of cognitive skills. For example, during parachute games she had

them discuss colors, shapes, concepts, such as up and down and slow and fast. Another

example of a conflict between the formal domain and the perceived domain was NASPE

component (#10), dance/rhythmical experiences. Although this component was not

discussed in her documents, I observed that she offered various rhythmical experiences and allowed the children to use their imaginations while moving.

From the perspective of the formal and perceived domain, the domains that parents and daycares are most aware of, this program did not seem to follow researched guidelines and standards. However, when analyzed from the perspective of the operational domain, various NASPE components were evident. Kim's lesson plans and skills sheet as well as the observed classes revealed a program that offered appropriate simple to complex sequences consistent with the requirements of a high quality program.

Tumble Gym. Although the documents and perceptions of the director and teacher in this program revealed a program that lacked many of the NASPE components, observations suggested otherwise. For instance, neither the documents nor the teachers mentioned the cognitive domain in the curriculum, but observations indicated that the teachers challenged the children cognitively. The same is true for NASPE component (# 2), teaching strategies; movement exploration, guided discovery, and creative problem solving are all used in their program, yet not discussed formally in documents.

From the perspective of the formal and perceived domains, this program lacked many of the components to be an effective program for children. However, when examined from the perspective of the operational domain, many of the NASPE components were included. Through both observations and examination of documents, developmentally appropriate simple to complex sequences were evident.

Thematic Conclusions

Three major themes emerged from this research that will provide a rationale for program design and implementation. These included (a) teacher training, (b) teacher beliefs, and (c) the presence of teacher and student empowerment.

Teacher training. "We expect teachers to understand what they teach and, when possible, to understand it in several ways" (Shulman, 1987, p. 14). A program's quality is dependent on the instructor not only knowing but also understanding the content to be taught. The instructors must fully comprehend what it is they are going to teach and be able to examine it in several different ways. For teachers to do this effectively, they require training. Darling-Hammond (1997) gives examples of the negative effects when teachers are not properly trained, such as difficulties in planning the curriculum, difficulties in managing the classroom, and inability to assess students' needs. Without proper training it is unlikely that a teacher will be effective in the classroom setting.

In this research, teacher training varied across companies. Kate (Stepping Up) had a degree in dance and no teaching experience; Kim (Jumping Jacks and Jills) attended a few workshops, while Deb (Tumble Gym) had both a degree in psychology and formal teaching experience. None of the teachers had extensive initial training, on going training in movement for preschoolers, or training in providing developmentally appropriate instruction in these challenging environments.

Kate's background was more academic in the field of Kinesiology and dance than the others, yet her program appeared to be the most structured, not allowing for individuality among the students. Kate stated that she kept the program this way to keep

disruption among the students at a minimum. She believed that they misbehaved when allowed choices or were given new songs or material to learn.

Kim had the least amount of experience and training in the field of children's movement when she began her company. Kim attended workshops and watched a series of videotapes to learn how to design her curriculum and teach the students. The training Kim received from the workshops and videotapes allowed her to formulate a curriculum that she was able to follow. However, it did not give her the ability to understand the content well enough to branch out from what the videotapes taught her. Kim stated, "I'm comfortable with what I do, but sometimes I would like to challenge myself and go beyond my level of comfort and do new things."

In the last company, Tumble Gym, both the director and teacher had experience teaching in a school setting before working for this company. Kris, the director, had a degree in elementary education and had been teaching gymnastics for 17 years. Deb, the teacher, had a degree in Psychology and spent many years as an art teacher in the public school system. Deb was comfortable managing a classroom, and Kris felt competent designing the curriculum. They still lacked the on-going training to keep them up-to-date on national standards and guidelines.

 In addition, all three companies observed operated independently, so they were not obligated to adhere to standards for instructor training, on-going training, or trainer evaluation. As such, they did not utilize the latest research and practice in preschool movement to organize and structure activities to enhance student learning. Thus, the level of teacher training required by all three companies was minimal. More importantly, no on-going training was required to inform teachers of the recent guidelines and

standards for effective programs and the latest research informing best practice for preschool children.

Teacher belief systems. Teacher training, however, is only one factor that influences effective programming. Other factors, such as the teacher's belief systems impact the programming decisions as well (Ennis, 1992). Teachers must make decisions on a daily basis about what content to teach, how to teach the selected content, what activities and strategies reinforce the content, and how to manage the classroom. In each of these decisions, the teacher's beliefs are in some way involved. The teachers' beliefs also affect how they treat their students. For example, they may have low expectations of smaller or younger children, or they may not give opportunities to disabled students, thus limiting the students' ability to challenge themselves to learn and to be successful. Further, they may underestimate their students' ability to make decisions or to problem solve, thus inhibiting an individual's chance to be creative in movement. Likewise, teachers can show favoritism, have higher expectations of students they perceive as more gifted or expect more of students who have previously done well. Teachers also have beliefs about themselves and their ability to teach. This may include beliefs about what content should be taught, the age of children with whom they chose to work, and the teaching strategies they are most comfortable using (Ennis, 1992).

Jumping Jacks and Jills' teacher, Kim, held as her belief system that a curriculum should be designed to "bring a little light and a little fun into those little structured lives" instead of perfecting movement skills. This was confirmed in observations, for Kim would not stop and correct a child who was performing an incorrect movement on the circuit. Technique and skill development gave way to cheers of support. Kim was not

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consistent in giving the advanced student an opportunity to learn more challenging moves. She did not work with individual differences in her programming. Her belief system was about having fun not specifically about learning.

At Tumble Gym teacher beliefs about movement and children lay the foundation for everything from curriculum development to teaching strategies. Both the director and teacher stated they loved children and wanted children to enjoy the classes. In an interview, Deb, the teacher, said she had reared her own children to question, express, and explore, and she wanted to carry that philosophy to the children of Tumble Gym. She believed that children could not mature and act responsibly until they learned, through trial and error, what worked and what did not. In a similar interview, Kris, the director, expressed the same opinions. Kris's background in gymnastics provided the structure for the curriculum, and Kris's and Deb's common beliefs influenced their daily teaching style. Through their belief system, they expanded the program to include definite experiences of creative exploration and problem solving opportunities. This was exemplified by the teachers asking the children to explore different ways of moving. For example, they asked, "How else could you go under the limbo stick or get over the balance beam or get the bean bag through the hole?" Creative movement was part of this program as evidenced by the use of the varied warm-up songs, which required children to use their imagination to move like various animals or to stretch like different shapes. The teachers used a wide selection of songs that would interest preschoolers. Tumble Gym teachers also encouraged students to use their imagination when going through the circuit especially during theme weeks. Theme weeks revolved around holidays or special

occasions such as the circus coming to town. For example, staff would decorate the bus in a circus motif and use circus images to engage the children in the theme.

From observations, it was apparent that Kate's (Stepping Up) beliefs included the teacher as the final authority, the sole leader. She believed that children needed to prove that they had been taught a skill and the proof was in a final recital presented to the parents. If the children performed the skills correctly, then she, as the teacher, was successful. Success was measured by an end goal and all progress was measured by attaining that goal. No accounting was given for what a child might learn along the road to the goal. She wanted all the children to learn the moves for their age group so that the parents would enjoy the end-of-semester recital. She believed that, if she deviated from her program, the students would become unruly and difficult to handle.

Teacher and student empowerment. The presence or absence of empowerment was another factor in the teacher's methods of delivering a program. Research has stated that a teacher must first feel empowered in order to empower their students (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Teachers demonstrate their empowerment when they believe in their own abilities and decision-making skills. One way teachers can empower themselves is to have adequate training for the job they will be performing. Two of the movement teachers, Kate (Stepping Up) and Deb (Tumble Gym), had adequate training in the field of education and would be more likely than Kim (Jumping Jacks and Jills) to feel empowered. Kate had developed a belief system that assumed children could not be responsible to handle empowerment. Conversely, Deb's belief system nurtured children's empowerment, encouraging autonomous decision-making. Training, beliefs,

and empowerment are the themes that emerged from these observations as primary influences in program curriculum and implementation.

<center>Recommendations</center>

In this section, I will provide recommendations for researchers, preschool movement program owners, directors, and teachers, and parents of preschool children. Recommendations for researchers will involve both methodological issues and topics for future study. There are policies and practices that directors and teachers can employ to improve their programs and to make them more beneficial to the children. Parents are a group that needs education on selecting not only a movement program for their child, but suggestions that can apply to the selection of any educational program.

Recommendations for Future Research

Qualitative research design requires a careful plan for data collection that is unbiased and permits opportunities to become familiar with the research setting. Likewise, it is important for the participants to feel comfortable and trust the researcher. In retrospect, it would have been beneficial to change the observation protocol to permit the observation of more varied lessons at each company. Each week the teachers taught the same lesson at every center. It may have been beneficial, although time consuming, to observe one or two classes a week for five weeks instead of 10 hours of observation in two to three weeks. This would have allowed me to observe a range of lessons across the three centers rather than observing one company teach the same lesson multiple times each week. Changing methods of observations would not have made a difference at Stepping Up since Kate stated that the lessons were basically the same each week for the

entire semester, but this protocol change could have provided different insights at the other two companies which varied their lessons each week.

The following are some suggestions for future research that would increase the body of knowledge associated with preschool movement programs and improve program quality for participants.

Recommendation 1: Examine the curriculum of daycares representing different socio-economic settings to determine the amount and quality of movement opportunities. In this study, the preschoolers were primarily Caucasian with both parents working. These parents could afford to pay for additional programs for their children. If the daycare centers have an outside company come in to provide a movement program, do they also have opportunities for those that choose not to pay for the program? Do all daycare settings have structured movement or is it just free time for the children? What movement opportunities are there for children in daycare settings at various socio-economic levels?

Recommendation 2: Examine these research questions in national movement programs that are freestanding franchises such as Gymboree or My Gym that operate independently of daycares. Hopefully, these programs would have continuing education requirements that would keep the teachers updated on the latest research. Would there be a decided difference in the curriculum and the teaching style in these programs? Would the better-trained teachers have a sense of empowerment that would be passed along to their students?

Recommendation 3: Compare the teaching methods of instructors who have been trained in and follow the NASPE (1994) document detailing developmentally appropriate

practices and those who have had no training in the components. Although two of the observed programs appeared to comply with some of the NASPE components, they were not employed consistently or formally. Will the teaching methods be different for teachers who follow the NASPE components versus teachers who are not trained? Likewise, will program curricula and student learning be markedly different in these programs?

Recommendations for Preschool Movement Company Directors/Owners

This research used the NASPE (1994) developmentally appropriate practices as a standard for evaluation program effectiveness. There were several standards-related recommendations that might prove particularly helpful to movement company owners and directors.

Recommendation 4: Directors of preschool movement programs could greatly improve their program quality if they received periodic updates and opportunities for on-going staff education. Accrediting agencies provide a number of services that assist affiliated organization to enhance the quality of their program by adhering to safety guidelines, training their staff, and incorporating the latest research into the curriculum. For-profit movement education programs for preschool children would benefit from accreditation by a large governing body, such as NASPE. Accreditation from a nationally recognized organization would give these programs a "stamp of approval" and would set them apart from other companies. By seeking accreditation it would permit daycares and parents to verify that a particular company adheres to certain standards of quality.

Recommendation 5: Preschool movement programs could enhance their program quality by adhering to the NASPE (1994) developmentally appropriate practices. It was evident from the research interviews that none of the three director/teachers was familiar with the NASPE components. These components were written by education and motor development scholars and master teachers to aid in the development and implementation of preschool movement programs. These components were based on research documenting the child's developmental stages. Further, movement programs could emphasize their knowledge of and ability to integrate the NASPE standards in parent- and daycare-oriented promotional materials. It would be beneficial for a movement company to know these standards and to be well versed in the developmental stages of a child.

Recommendation 6: Movement companies should make the time and commitment to develop goals and specific measurable objectives consistent with the NASPE components to enhance the companies appeal to parents and thus to daycare providers. A successful business is founded on definite goals and objectives. Companies spend large amounts of money to have a business consultant advise them on mission and vision statements, goals, objectives, and action plans. Very often these mission and vision statements are posted so that the public can understand company philosophy, goals and mission. Two of the movement companies observed did not have a mission or vision statement, and their goals and objectives were nebulous. Companies that made the time and commitment to develop goals and specific measurable objectives consistent with the NASPE components would be more attractive to parents and thus to daycare providers.

Recommendation 7: Movement companies should incorporate student assessment tools regularly to identify student needs and monitor progress on skill level and program objectives. Student assessment is one of the major elements of effective programs advocated in the NASPE guidelines. Assessment gives teachers the opportunity to "…individualize instruction, plan objective-oriented lessons, identify children with special needs, communicate with parents, and evaluate the program's effectiveness" (NASPE, 1994,p. 12). Unfortunately, the companies observed used no formal assessment techniques. For example, although the instructors informally observed children, it appeared that they gave no thought to the relationship between appropriate gymnastic skills and the child's motor and cognitive developmental. It would be worthwhile for movement companies to research possible assessment tools and include these assessments in their curriculum.

Recommendation 8: Teachers should receive initial and on-going training to enhance their ability to provide safe and effective instruction to children. Teacher training was minimal in these movement programs. The instructors were not trained in developmentally appropriate movements for children nor were they aware of appropriate teaching methods. Both types of trainings would markedly improve the quality of the programs. As more and more movement companies compete for business, those with the most effective teacher training, philosophy, goals and objectives stand a better chance of being successful.

Recommendations for Parents: Selecting Preschool Movement Programs

Parent support is critical for success of all preschool movement companies. Parents agree to enroll their children and pay for these services. Therefore, parents have a

very influential roll in motivating movement company and daycare owners and directors to enhance the quality of their programs. Educating parents to the issues associated with daycare-oriented movement education is vital to the development of safe and effective programs for children.

Recommendation 9: When selecting preschool programs, parents should educate themselves to opportunities available and research the best options based on their goals and expectations for their child. Parents should begin the selection of a preschool movement program by deciding their objectives for their child's movement education. They need to consider such factors as content (e.g., educational or recreational) and depth or intensity of the program. Further, it is vitally important for parents to interview the instructor to evaluate their personality, training, competence, and beliefs about teaching, and children. Further, parents should ask about the teacher's initial and on-going training, and review program goals and objectives. Instructors should be asked about their teaching philosophy, strategies and on-going efforts to remain current. Likewise, owners should be asked about how the teacher is supervised and evaluated and how often assessments occur. Further concerns revolve around the class size and length as they relate to the purpose of the lessons. It is important to understand if adequate time is provided to accomplish the purposes identified in the program materials. Even if the parent's goal is to fill a time slot with a variety of activities, safety, the teacher's dispositions and teaching style are critically important to the nature and quality of the movement experience. The movement programs examined in this research provided a range of opportunities for children. Although each program was different, there are standards of quality in curriculum and teaching that serve to enhance children's

movement experiences and provide them with a healthy start to a lifetime of physical

activity.

Appendix A

Components of appropriate and inappropriate practice in movement programs for
children ages 3-5.

Component One: Curriculum

*Appropriate Practice
        The movement curriculum has an obvious scope and sequence based on goals and
objectives that are appropriate fro all children. It includes a balance of skills and concepts
designed to enhance the cognitive, motor, affective, and physical development of every
child.

*Inappropriate Practice
        The movement curriculum lacks developed goals and objectives and is based
primarily on the teacher's interests, preferences, and background rather than those of the
children. For example, the curriculum consists primarily of large group games.

Component Two: Teaching strategies

*Appropriate Practice
        Movement exploration, guided discovery and creative problem solving are the
predominant teaching strategies employed. Children are provided the opportunity to
make choices and actively explore their environment; while teachers serve as facilitators,
preparing a stimulating environment and challenging activities.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Highly structured, teacher-directed lessons are the most common. Large group
instruction is used in which all children are expected to perform the same activities in the
same manner. For example, all children are expected to follow verbal cues on recorded
music.

Component Three: Development of movement concepts and motor skills

*Appropriate Practice
        Children are provided with frequent and meaningful age appropriate instruction
and practice opportunities which enable individuals to develop a functional understanding
of movement concepts (body awareness, space awareness, effort and relationships) as an
integral part of their total education. These opportunities are meaningful to the child and
are within the context of the child's experience.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Children participate in a limited number of games and activities designed to meet
a predetermined standard or which require just one correct answer. The opportunity for

individual children to develop basic concepts and motor skills is restricted. For example, children are directed to perform gymnastics skills with "perfect" form.

Component Four: Cognitive development

*Appropriate Practice
Movement activities are designed with both the physical and cognitive development of children in mind. The unique role of movement programs, which allows children to learn to move while also moving to learn, is recognized and explored. For example, teachers ask questions such as, "How can you jump and land quietly?"

*Inappropriate Practice
Movement programs are viewed as not contributing to other areas of instruction. Physical development, if addressed at all, is seen as strictly a recreational "play-time" activity, or a means of "burning excess energy" with no relation to the other areas of development. For example, teachers merely "roll out the ball" and intervene only if the situation becomes unsafe.

Component Five: Affective development

*Appropriate Practice
Many opportunities are provided for children to practice age appropriate social skills such as cooperating, taking turns and sharing. Teachers encourage the development of social skills, recognizing that younger children may not be ready to consistently exhibit these skills.
Teachers help all children experience the satisfaction and joy, which result from regular participation in physical activity.

*Inappropriate Practice
Teachers fail to intentionally enhance the affective development of children when activities which foster the development of cooperation and other social skills are excluded.
Teachers ignore opportunities to help children understand the emotions they feel as a result of participation in physical activity.

Component Six: Integration of movement with other curricular areas

*Appropriate Practice
The learning environment is structured to permit the inclusion of appropriate movement challenges for all children in a setting that seeks to integrate, whenever possible, the concepts, abilities, and actions that emerge through guided exploration and discovery. For example, colors and sizes are reinforced by using a variety of balloons for striking skills.

*Inappropriate Practice

Children's physical development is seen as fragmented from other areas of development. No attempt is made to relate learning in movement programs with other areas.

Component Seven: Fitness

*Appropriate Practice

Teachers recognize the importance of children valuing physical activity as a lifelong habit. Children learn the joy and value of exploring their physical capabilities as a lifetime pursuit. Fitness is considered a byproduct of participation in regular physical activity. For example, after an appropriate period of continuous locomotor movement, children are asked to discuss what is happening to their bodies during exercise.

*Inappropriate Practice

Children participate in activities designed specifically to enhance their fitness levels (e.g., running laps, calisthenics, or videotaped aerobic programs).

Component Eight: Assessment

*Appropriate Practice

Systematic assessment is based on knowledge of developmental characteristics and ongoing observations of children as they participate in activities. This information is used to individualize instruction, plan objective-oriented lessons, identify children with special needs, communicate with parents, and evaluate the program's effectiveness.

*Inappropriate Practice

Children are assessed solely on the basis of test scores, such as physical skill tests and standardized fitness tests. Fro example, children's progress is measured by the number of times they can successfully perform a physical skill in an artificial testing situation.

Component Nine: Active participation for every child

*Appropriate Practice

All children are encouraged to be involved in activities which allow them to remain active. Teachers recognize that younger children might need brief rest periods when participating in particularly strenuous activities. Continuous, extended aerobic activity is not expected.

*Inappropriate Practice

Activity time is limited because children are waiting in lines for a turn in relay races, to be chosen for a team, or due to limited equipment or playing mostly sedentary games such as "Duck, Duck, Goose." Children are eliminated with no chance to re-enter the activity, or they must sit for long periods of time, as in games such as musical chairs and elimination tag.

Component Ten: Dance/Rhythmical experiences

*Appropriate Practice
        The movement program includes a variety of rhythmical and expressive dance experiences designed with the physical, cultural, emotional, and social characteristics of the children in mind. Children are encouraged to use their imaginations and move to the sound of their individual rhythms.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Dances designed for adults (such as folk or square dances) are taught to the exclusion of other dance forms. Dances are not modified to meet the developmental needs of the children.

Component Eleven: Educational gymnastics

*Appropriate Practice
        Broad skill areas such as balancing, rolling, jumping and landing, climbing, and weight transfer are presented. Children are given many opportunities to explore these skills in a variety of situations appropriate to their ability and confidence levels.

*Inappropriate Practice
        All children are expected to perform the same predetermined stunts, such as forward rolls or cartwheels, regardless of their skill level, body composition and level of confidence.

Component Twelve: Games

*Appropriate Practice
        Games are selected, designed, sequenced, and modified by teachers and/or children to maximize the learning and enjoyment of the children.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Games are taught with no obvious purpose or goal, other than to keep children "busy, happy, and good." Emphasis is placed upon the structure, rules and formations of the games.

Component Thirteen: Gender directed activities

*Appropriate Practice
        Both girls and boys are equally encouraged, supported and socialized toward successful achievement in all realms of movement activities.

*Inappropriate Practice

Girls are encouraged to participate in activities which stress traditionally feminine roles (such as rhythmical and expressive movement), whereas boys are encouraged to participate in more aggressive activities.

Component Fourteen: Competition

*Appropriate Practice

Activities emphasize self-improvement, participation and cooperation instead of winning and losing.

*Inappropriate Practice

Children are required to participate in activities that label children as "winners" and "losers." Comparisons are made between one child's performance and another's.

Component Fifteen: Success rate

*Appropriate Practice

Children are given the opportunity to practice skills at high rates of success adjusted for their individual skill levels.

When necessary, children are provided an environment in which they can practice skills independently of other children in order to avoid the frustration and anxiety of low skill proficiency. For example, children are able to practice catching a ball which consistently rolls fro a chute.

*Inappropriate Practice

Children are asked to perform activities which are too easy or too hard, causing frustration, boredom, and/or misbehavior. All children are expected to perform to the same standards without allowing for individual abilities and interests.

Children are placed in small group or partner situations in which their success is limited, resulting in a lack of skill development. Fro example, when children throw and catch with a partner, more time is spent chasing the ball than practicing the skills of throwing and catching.

Component Sixteen: Class size

*Appropriate Practice

In order to provide young children with age-appropriate individualized instruction, the group size is limited. No more than 20 children ages 4- to 5- years old are assigned to two adults. Younger children require smaller groups (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 57).

*Inappropriate Practice

Children participate in physical activities in larger groups than recommended for other activities, thereby necessitating the use of more teacher-directed methods and limiting the opportunities for exploration and guided discovery.

Component Seventeen: Frequency

*Appropriate Practice
        Since movement is an integral part of the total educational program, opportunities for daily, quality movement instruction are provided, exclusive of free play sessions.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Children do not receive scheduled daily instructional movement opportunities
.
Component Eighteen: Facilities

*Appropriate Practice
        Children are provided an environment in which they have adequate space to move freely and safely. Both inside and outside areas are provided.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Movement activities are restricted due to lack of space and/or appropriate areas.

Component Nineteen: Equipment

*Appropriate Practice
        Equipment is available so that each child benefits from maximum participation. Fro example, every child is provided a ball. Minimal time is spent waiting in line to use large apparatus.
        Equipment is matched to the size, confidence and skill level of the children so that they are motivated to actively participate. Modified, nontraditional equipment is used where appropriate, such as scarves for catching and balloons for volleying, instead of balls.

*Inappropriate Practice
        An insufficient amount of equipment is available for the number of children (e.g., one ball for every four children). Children regularly wait in line to use large apparatus (e.g., climbing or balancing equipment).
        Regulation or "adult size" equipment is used which may inhibit skill development, injure, or intimidate the children.

Component Twenty: Movement programs and play

*Appropriate Practice
        Movement programs are a planned and organized part of the total educational program. They are integrated into the curriculum daily. Regularly scheduled indoor and outdoor play experiences enhance these planned movement experiences.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Children's only physical activity is scheduled as free time or play on the playground. Outdoor play is viewed as recess or a way to get children to use up excess energy; it is characterized by a lack of goals, organization, planning and instruction.

Component Twenty-one: Safe environment

*Appropriate Practice
        Children are provided a physically and psychologically safe environment in which to explore their capabilities. Opportunities are provided for children to participate in self selected activities that lead to feelings of self-confidence and self-worth. For example, children are allowed to choose whether or not to participate in an activity.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Each child's' readiness to learn is not considered. All children are presented the same tasks without allowing for a range of responses, thereby creating an atmosphere of apprehension and failure. For example, children are shown the "correct" way and encouraged to achieve it.

Component Twenty-two: Individual and free expression

*Appropriate Practice
        Children are encouraged to use movement as a form of individual expression. They are provided opportunities to ask questions and find individual solutions to problems through movement. They are encouraged to express themselves freely.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Children are required to move in prescribed ways and to meet set standards of performance. Only relatively quiet, controlled activity is allowed.

Component Twenty-three: Fine and gross motor activities

*Appropriate Practice
        Movement programs provide learning experiences with both fine (e.g., finger play activities) and gross (e.g., running, throwing) motor activities.

*Inappropriate Practice
        Gross motor learning experiences are emphasized to the exclusion of fine motor activities.

Component Twenty-four: Repetition

*Appropriate Practice
        Children are provided with a variety of learning experiences throughout the year that emphasize the same motor skill in order that they may develop desired movement patterns.

*Inappropriate Practice

Activities are introduced and practiced only once a year providing little opportunity for children to develop a foundation of motor patterns (e.g., scheduling kicking or throwing and catching activities only one time each year).

Component Twenty-five: Parent-Teacher communication

*Appropriate Practice

Teachers work in partnership, communicating regularly with parents. Information is provided about the movement curriculum with the intent of promoting parent involvement in children's motor skill development.

*Inappropriate Practice

No communication concerning children's motor skill development is provided to parents. (National Association for Sport and Physical Education 1994, pp 8-20).

Appendix B

Laban's movement themes

1. Themes concerned with the awareness of the body.

2. Themes concerned with the awareness of weight and time

3. Themes concerned with the awareness of space

4. Themes concerned with the awareness of the flow of the weight of the body in space and time

5. Themes concerned with the adaptation to partners

6. Themes concerned with the instrumental use of the limbs of the body

7. Themes concerned with the awareness of isolated actions

8. Themes concerned with occupational rhythms

9. Themes concerned with the shapes of movement

10. Themes concerned with combinations of the eight basic effort actions

11. Themes concerned with space orientation

12. Themes concerned with shapes and efforts using different parts of the body

13. Themes concerned with elevation from the ground

14. Themes concerned with the awakening of group feeling

15. Themes concerned with group formation

16. Themes concerned with the expressive qualities or moods of movement (Laban, 1975, pp. 29-44).

Appendix C

THE MOVEMENT FRAMWORK

Basic Body actions
Stretch-curl
Bend-Twist
Swing

Actions of Body Parts
Support body weight
Lead action
Apply force
Receive weight or force

Body
What the body does

Shapes of the body
Straight-thin-narrow
Wide
Round-curved
twisted
Angular
Symmetrical
Asymmetrical

Activities of the body

Locomotor	Nonlocomotor or Axial	Manipulative
Walking-running	Balance-off balance	Sending away:
Jumping-hopping-leaping	Counterbalance-countertension	Kicking-striking-throwing
Galloping-skipping	Spinning-swinging-hanging-turning	
Stepping and step-like actions	Twisting-stretching-circling	Gaining Possession:
Rocking-rolling	Rising-sinking	Catching-collecting
Sliding-side stepping	Opening-closing	
Flight	Bending-curling	Traveling with,
	Gesturing	Dribbling-carrying

Directions
Forward
Backward
Sideward
Up-Down

Levels
Low-Deep
Medium
High

Areas
General
Personal

Space
Where the body moves

Extensions
Large-Far from
Small-near to

Pathways
Air
Floor
Ground
Straight
Curved
Zigzag
Twisted
Angular

Planes
Wheel (sagittal)
Door (frontal)
Table (horizontal)

Time
Fast-slow
Accelerating-Decelerating
Sudden-Sustained

Weight (force)
Fine touch-Firm
Light-Strong
Soft-Hard
Relaxed-Tense

Motion Factors
Time/Weight/Space

Exploring One Factor

Combining Two factors
Time/weight
time/space
time/flow
weight/space
weight/flow
space/flow

Combining three factors
time/weight/space

Eight Effort Actions
thrusting-floating
slashing-gliding
wringing-dabbing
pressing-flicking

Effort
How the body performs

Space
Direct-Indirect
Straight-Flexible

Flow
Bound-Free
Stoppable-Ongoing
pausing-continuity
Hold-Release

Individuals and Groups

Above-below
Apart-together
Behind-in front of-alongside
Meeting-parint
Near-far
Close to -away from
Over-under
Following-copying-leading
Mirroring-matching-
contrasting
Successive-altrenating-
canoning
Questining-answering
Alone-unision
Acting-reacting
Lifting-being lifted
Supporting-being supported

Body Parts

Above-below
Apart-together
Behind-in front of
Facing-touching
Meeting-parting
Near-far
Onto-up against
Over-under
Through(via)-surrounding

Apparatus and Equipment
Over-under-alongside-on
Near-close-far-away
Above-below
Behind-in front of
Mounting-dismounting

Relationships
Occurring in Movement

Other Relationships
Rhythms-sounds
Music-percussion
Poems-stories-words
Artwork-props

Relationship Occurring in Games
Ball placement in relation to the situation, passing to spaces ahead
of player and behind player
Player placement when possessing, receiving, sending, or
intercepting an object
Creating spaces for self and others
Covering spaces
Marking

(Logsdon, Alleman, Straits, Belka, & Clark,
1997, pp. xiv-xv).

Appendix D

Themes of the Meaningful Movement Model

Developmental themes

1.   Becoming aware: Learning about and establishing basic movement capabilities

2.   Becoming independent: Increasing self-reliance and confidence in moving

3.   Accepting and expressing feelings and ideas: Communicating through movement

4.   Accepting responsibilities and acting cooperatively: Sharing the movement environment and respecting and interacting productively with others

5.   Improving quality of response: Refining and elaborating movement capabilities for a purpose

6.   Drawing relationships: Comprehending the significance of movement in one's lifestyle. (Hoffman, Young, & Klesius, 1985, pp. 22-23).

Appendix E

Examples of interview questions for the teachers and directors of the movement companies.

1. What is your teaching philosophy?

2. What are the goals and objectives you have for the class?

3. What is your background?

4. How did you decide on the curriculum?

5. How do you implement the curriculum?

6. How has the curriculum changed over the years of operation, if at all? And why?

7. How do you handle children of all different levels coming and going from your program throughout the year?

8. What experiences do you provide that work on the cognitive and affective domains?

9. What is the most challenging part of your job?

Appendix F

Stepping Up

<u>Warm-Up</u>

Stretching and strengthening exercises
Sitting stretches
Straddle stretch
Lying on the back stretches
Sit-ups/Push-ups
Spinal twist
Leg lifts
Hand-knee balance
Runner's stretch

<u>Locomotor Movements</u>

Running
Marching
Galloping
Skipping
Frog jumps
One-legged balance
Hopping Freeze and balance
Hula-hoop activities
Hopscotch in hoops

<u>Mat Exercises</u>

Log rolls
Forward rolls
Straddle Rolls
Crab walks
Bridge
Walkovers
Hand stands
Dive rolls
Cartwheels
Performance skills

Appendix G

Objectives for Stepping Up

8. Body awareness through creative movement activities

9.   Increased self-confidence through successful accomplishment.

10. Readiness for sports, ballet, advanced dance, and gymnastics.

11. A sense of rhythm, coordination, balance, and posture

12. The ability to recall a sequence of movements physically and verbally.

13. Leadership through inventing and exploring new ways to move.

14. Social skills through taking turns and watching other children perform.

Appendix H

Tumble Gym Parent Handout

Dear Tumble Gym Parents,

We have some super fun lesson plans to tell you about this month. During March we celebrated march Madness with a basketball theme week. We practiced shooting, dribbling and catching basketballs, as well as doing straddle jumps on the trampoline with pom-poms. We also had an Easter theme week when we included bunny hops, egg rolls and waking up the Easter bunny by ringing the bunny bell at the top of the ladder.

During the first week of April our activities were centered on Nursery rhymes. The children climbed Jack's beanstalk, as well as walked up Jack and Jill's hill and then tumbled (f. roll) down the other side. They did the Itsy bitsy Spider walk to handstand, jumped "nimbly" over Jacks candlesticks, vaulted to the top of Humpty Dumpty's wall, and crossed London Bridge.

This past week our focus was a circus theme. The children were able to swing on the trapeze, walk the tight rope, crawl through the circus then drive the circus train, climb over the baby elephant, and act like clowns doing dive rolls and tossing juggling pins. We still start every class with a musical activity, a stretching game, and practicing basic body positions and gymnastics skills. Our closing ritual has also remained consistent, with a counting activity and receiving hand stamps.

Happy Tumbling

Appendix I

Tumble Gym Lesson Plan

Week #1

Opening Song: Hop like a bunny…This song is very cute and pretty short. There are
three verses-hope like a bunny, leap like a froggie, bounce like a kangaroo.

Body Positions: Stretch and tuck

Stretching Game: Silly Sandwich

Circuit: Swing in a tuck on the rings. Hold ladybug beanbag in your lap.

     Walk up the balance beam

     Stretch-tuck-front roll down the hill-stretch

     Crawl through the tunnel

     Tuck jumps on the trampoline

Closing: Counting-start in a standing stretch. Count tucks as you bend your knees and do
a tuck.

Stamps Teddy Tumble bear tuck

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