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Outreach Efforts Between Teachers, Parents, and Administrators as Children Transition from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten

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Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Mariah Crew McCoy

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University

2021

Abstract

Outreach Efforts Between Teachers, Parents, and Administrators as Children Transition
from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten

by

Mariah Crew McCoy

Ed.S. Brenau University, 2016

MA, Georgia Southern University, 2014

BS, Georgia Southern University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2021

Abstract

The problem addressed was the gap in research on practice regarding outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators during the transition to kindergarten. The purpose and research questions for this basic qualitative study involved how individuals representing these groups described their outreach efforts when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten and their perspectives regarding the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement. Two administrators and four teachers were recruited through a public database. Four parents were recruited through the study site's Facebook page and through purposeful snowball sampling. Criteria for participation was 3 or more years of experience with the district for school personnel. Parents must have had a child who transitioned from a pre-K to a kindergarten classroom within the past school year. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory served as the conceptual framework. Data from semistructured interviews were analyzed using thematic inductive analysis to identify patterns and themes. There were five themes that emerged from the data. Pre-COVID traditional outreach efforts were effective, created an open door policy, and allowed the establishment of relationships with parents to inform and engage them in their children's education. During COVID, all stakeholders had to reach out in innovative ways, and parental involvement and engagement were limited. Implications for positive social change include improving outreach efforts between all stakeholders when children transition from pre-K to kindergarten that could positively influence parental involvement.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. My husband, Demetrius, never wavers in his support so I could achieve this dream. I am blessed to have him by my side throughout this process. Your faith and inspiration encouraged me to continue and never to give up. Demetrius Jr., thank you for all the long nights you allowed mommy to complete this task. Malik, thanks for encouraging mommy to finish strong. My entire family has been my support system every step of the way. Thanks to my dad and mom for your encouraging words throughout the journey. I give all praise and glory to God for giving me the strength to make it through this task.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Puccioni (2018) stated that parental involvement in a child's education helps to ensure student success. Parental involvement is considered a crucial part of a child's early educational career, which can play a significant role in their social and academic development (Kurtulmus, 2016). Children develop and learn from an early age, with their parents being their first teachers (Kurtulmus, 2016). Parents who are active in their child's education provide them with an opportunity for success (Benner & Yan, 2015).

Past researchers have focused on children transitioning to kindergarten and academic and social outcomes expected of them when starting a kindergarten program (Brotherson et al., 2015). Less information is available regarding outreach strategies between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition, representing a gap in research on practice (Brotherson et al., 2015; Puccioni, 2018). The problem addressed in this study was the gap in research on practice regarding the outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators. My study promotes social change through examination of outreach efforts between these groups when children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how they influence parental involvement. Results from the study may help stakeholders improve communication when pre-K students transition to kindergarten.

Chapter 1 includes the study's background, which involves interactions between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how this can influence parental involvement in their children's education. In this chapter, I examine the background of the problem and why outreach strategies need more

research. The study's purpose is explained and followed by the research questions (RQs) that helped guide it. I summarize the conceptual framework and discuss the study's nature. I include definitions of terms used in the study and address assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the study's significance.

Background

Parental involvement is a crucial part of a child's academic and social development while in the school system (Kurtulmus, 2016). Researchers have made connections between a lack of parental involvement and poor grades, low GPAs, inconsistent attendance, and problematic social behaviors. Kurtulmus (2016) found a direct correlation between parental involvement and children's academic achievement and positive social-emotional outcomes. Parental involvement is associated with positive social and psychological consequences for children (Berryhill, 2017).

Parents' involvement in their children's education indicates a direct connection between family and school (Kang et al., 2017). There is a need to research this gap in practice that involves families and explores outreach efforts for children transitioning to kindergarten (Kang et al., 2017). Researchers have looked at how socioeconomic status can impact family involvement patterns in their children's education and found that when families and schools collaborate, it contributes to student success (Jarrett & Cobar-Rodriguez, 2019). Studying outreach strategies involving communication between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten may help provide ways to enhance parental involvement, which is needed to bridge the gap between school and parents (Puccioni, 2018). In this qualitative study, I explored

outreach strategies to bring together and coordinate teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten to positively influence parental involvement.

Problem Statement

Currently, little is known about transition practices involving teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these influence parental involvement (Puccioni, 2018). Researchers have shown that parents' involvement in their children's schooling promotes positive educational outcomes, including smoothing school transitions and furthering academic success (Alaçam & Olgan, 2017). Parents are their child's first teacher; however, it is a classroom teacher's responsibility to continue educating them in the school setting (Alaçam & Olgan, 2017). The connection between parents and educators can be a critical factor in easing the transition from pre-K to kindergarten and ensuring the child's educational success (Benner & Yan, 2015).

Frequently used pre-K to kindergarten transition practices have ranged from sending parents information about the kindergarten classroom setting to holding a formal open house after the school year has begun (Alaçam & Olgan, 2017). More information is needed regarding the gap in practice and outreach strategies between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement (Puccioni, 2018).

Parental engagement in schools helps increase the quality of learning (Erol & Turhan, 2018). An examination of efforts between all stakeholders during the transition

process provided information regarding outreach strategies used by administrators and teachers and how these efforts influenced parental involvement in their children's education. This information can improve outreach efforts between parents and schools and allow all stakeholders to enhance their practices as well as understand the importance of reaching out to parents early to engage them. The problem addressed in this study is the gap in research on practice regarding the outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. With the transition to kindergarten, parents take on different roles and responsibilities in their children's education compared to those they had during preschool (Dove et al., 2015). The early years are considered critical in children's educational experience.

Research Questions

The following RQs helped to guide this study:

RQ 1: How do teachers, parents, and administrators describe their outreach efforts when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten?

RQ 2: What are teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of development served as background for understanding the roles that family, school, and community play in child development, growth, and learning. According to Bronfenbrenner, the microsystem refers to the immediate environment in which children live. Initially, the family constitutes the child's microsystem. This model applies to this study because it provides an understanding of how the home environment is the primary setting for learning and how school activities are reinforced when aligned with this microsystem via parents' support in their children's schooling. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory informed the interview questions used in this study. These questions reflected the influence of the environment in which the family operates and how that environment impacts attitudes and behaviors in the school environment.

According to the ecological systems theory, a child's home, school, and community need to work together to help them develop academically (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory provided the theoretical framework for the promotion of systems that lead to stronger parental involvement in early childhood education. For this study, I used Bronfenbrenner's theory as the conceptual framework because it helped define how effective relationships between parents and teachers can work to impact children's development directly within the school system. The conceptual framework and its role in framing this study are further addressed in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

I conducted a basic qualitative study consisting of interviews with open-ended questions. Qualitative research is based on understanding the way people view their approach to life and experiences (Clandinin et al., 2017). Interviews provided firsthand descriptions of how teachers, parents, and administrators viewed effective outreach efforts when children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and their perspectives regarding how their efforts influenced parental involvement.

The study's participants consisted of four teachers, four parents, and two administrators from a primary/elementary school in the state of Georgia. Criteria for participation was 3 or more years of experience in the district for school personnel; parents were required to have a child who transitioned from a pre-K to a kindergarten classroom within the past school year. Four parents were recruited through the study site's Facebook page and purposeful snowball sampling. The two administrators and four educators were recruited through a public database. I used snowball sampling as I was unable to recruit enough participants through social media. In qualitative studies, there must be a large enough sample size to confirm the majority of perceptions; however, too large of a sample can lead to redundant data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Researchers often use a basic qualitative research design to obtain answers to questions regarding participants' experiences and perspectives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

There are various methods that can be used to collect data in qualitative research, including interviews, which can be used by researchers to gain an understanding of the participants' lives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). I analyzed data from semistructured

interviews using thematic inductive analysis to identify patterns and themes. The participants either worked in the selected school or their children attended class there. I do not teach or have any connections with participants in the school or district where the study was conducted.

Definitions

Family-school engagement: Family support for home and school behavior, including learning, shared reading, and homework assistance (Garbacz et al., 2019).

Outreach: Initiatives that include identifying key principles to bring education and the community together (Rai, 2003).

Socioeconomic status: An individuals' economic and social position in society, measured in part by financial standing (Sullivan et al., 2019).

Assumptions

For this study, I assumed that teachers, parents, and administrators (stakeholders) were honest when answering the interview questions. I also assumed that stakeholders accurately represented their perspectives regarding outreach efforts aimed at parental involvement. I asked the participants to be honest and forthcoming during interviews. Armstrong and Kepler (2018) noted it is important that participants are precise and explicit to ensure there are no casual inferences; therefore, follow-up probes were used when needed.

The second assumption in this study was that the participants had an interest in being part of the study. I assumed they did not have any other motives, such as impressing school personnel by agreeing to participate in the study. The third assumption

was that the participants provided explicit answers to the interview questions to ensure the findings were reliable. I also assumed that all data were accurate and reliable because the participants volunteered for the study and were not pressed to answer any interview questions. The participants were able to drop out of the study at any time. These assumptions were necessary as the participants had knowledge of transition practices and were able to address this topic.

Scope and Delimitations

The participants were teachers, parents, and administrators of students who completed pre-K and transitioned to a kindergarten classroom. The school selected for this study was one where I do not teach or have any connections with participants. Interview questions focused on stakeholders' outreach efforts and perspectives regarding the influence of these efforts on parental involvement. I only interviewed parents of students who transferred from a pre-K to kindergarten program because this is considered a crucial transition time for students. I interviewed teachers and administrators who had worked in the school for 3 or more years. The study included a purposeful sample of 10 participants: four teachers, four parents, and two administrators. Students were not part of the study because it focused on outreach efforts in place for them to be successful.

Based on the scope of this study, there were several delimitations. First, the results of this study have limited transferability beyond the school site to the extent that other schools may differ demographically and socioeconomically. The study included stakeholders involved in the transition of students from pre-K to kindergarten and was conducted in a southeastern state at a Title 1 school. Only stakeholders who had

transitioned pre-K students to a kindergarten public school were considered for participation in the study.

Limitations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. When researchers consider limitations, they evaluate the quality of the source, type of data, how data are analyzed, and how these could impact the integrity of the research methodology (Roberts, 2010).

The first limitation in the basic qualitative study was that I selected and used a small sample consisting of four teachers, four parents, and two administrators from a Title I school. This limited the number of perspectives collected during the interviews. The second limitation was difficulty in recruiting participants. The school did not have a large staff, which affected the number of participants who met the study criteria. Availability of participants was also challenging. A third limitation was that the participants may not have responded honestly and accurately. Administrators and teachers may have had a difficult time describing their perspectives regarding outreach efforts that occur at the school. To address this limitation, I made the participants feel comfortable and assured them I was not evaluating them as teachers, administrators, or parents. Another way I addressed this limitation was to ask clarifying questions when needed. The participants were asked to be honest throughout the study.

My bias was that I believe there exists a gap in communication between teachers, parents, and administrators. My own bias did not have an effect on the outcome of the study. I worked hard not to allow my thoughts and perspectives interfere with the study. One way I addressed my bias was by avoiding personal relationships with the participants; I excluded any teachers who were friends from the study. My bias as a kindergarten teacher was considered via reflective journaling during and after the interviews and when analyzing data. I had an expert reviewer with a doctorate in early childhood education examine the final data analysis to check for bias.

Significance

Transitioning to kindergarten can have a long-term impact on a child's life, with family involvement in this process being important (Kang et al., 2017). Therefore, it is imperative that outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators are examined. More research is needed to explore outreach between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and the influence this has on parental involvement. The results of this study provided insight for stakeholders regarding various strategies used to effectively reach out to one another to support children's transition from pre-K to kindergarten.

The findings of this study could be implemented in several ways. Educators at the school site could use the results of the study to improve outreach efforts between stakeholders. The results could also be used to offer educators at the school a framework for developing more effective communication with stakeholders, which will benefit both stakeholders and students. The results from the study could also be used to make

recommendations for outreach efforts between stakeholders to help support the transition from pre-K to kindergarten.

Summary

Chapter 1 included definitions and a brief discussion of how parental involvement plays an important part in children's education. I described the purpose and nature of the study as well as the conceptual framework. I listed the RQs and assumptions and outlined the scope of the study.

In this basic qualitative study, I examined teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. This was accomplished through semistructured interviews with the participants to understand their outreach efforts when transitioning students from pre-K to kindergarten. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature, outline the conceptual framework, and provide themes related to parental involvement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this study, the problem is the gap in research regarding outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten. During the search for literature, it was difficult to find studies that reflected outreach strategies used between these stakeholders and how these efforts influence parental involvement. Frequently used transition practices, also known as outreach efforts, have ranged from sending parents information about the kindergarten classroom setting to holding a formal open house after the school year has begun (Alaçam & Olgan, 2017). More information is needed on the gap in practice regarding these outreach strategies (Puccioni, 2018) and how these efforts influence parental involvement. Understanding efforts between all stakeholders during the transition may help create better outreach strategies for teachers, parents, and administrators.

The literature review includes research involving the gap in practice regarding outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten. It is divided into three sections. In the first section, I discuss the conceptual framework: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. The second includes subsections on parental involvement, the transition from pre-K to kindergarten, and parental involvement. The third section highlights the gap in the literature on practice.

Literature Search Strategy

To search for peer-reviewed literature, I used the following databases: Google Scholar, ProQuest, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), SAGE Journals,

Education Source, PubMed, and Taylor and Francis, Early Education Research Connections, ChildCare, and Early Education Research Connections. When searching databases for relevant literature, I used the following terms: *preschool, early childhood, prekindergarten, kindergarten, parent involvement, teacher perspective, teacher beliefs, teacher attitudes, transition, population, outreach, communication, outreach efforts, parental engagement, and parent participation*. There were 40 articles published from 2016 through 2020 and nine published before 2015. The studies I used included the most recent and applicable information from the literature. These included significant and foundational studies regarding the problem addressed in this study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological-developmental model. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of development served as useful background for understanding the roles that family, school, and community play in a child's development, growth, and learning. Bronfenbrenner found that a child's growth and development must be considered within the context of their environment. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory explains how a child's environment could have a direct effect on how they grow and develop.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the environment in which a child and their family function is the exosystem, which contains continuous interactions and influences that have a significant impact on the child. Bronfenbrenner identified different levels of influence on child development. The stages are labeled the macrosystem, mesosystem, microsystem, and exosystem. In the microsystem, the focus is on a child's immediate

environment, the one in which they live. The mesosystem involves how the family experience relates to the child's school experience. The exosystem, which contains parts of the microsystem, does not affect an individual directly but may be felt indirectly. The exosystem can be temporary and is affected by an individual's environment. Various environmental factors have an influence not only on the child and their direct environment but also the degree to which their parents are engaged with the school. Bronfenbrenner believed that a person's development was directly affected by everything in the environment that surrounds them and demonstrates that family, peers, teachers, and communities have an effect on a child's development.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory was used as a guide to examine the outreach of teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and the influence of their outreach efforts on parental involvement. Bronfenbrenner stated that positive communication between teachers and parents creates the best conditions for a child's development. This is relevant to this study because individual interactions and perspectives are critical in a student's transition to kindergarten. The ecological systems theory helped guide the study because it emphasizes how parental involvement plays an important part in a child's early stages of life, which is central in addressing the RQs.

Bronfenbrenner advocated that school and family are two of the most important influences on a child's life (Firmin et al., 2019). Bronfenbrenner's theory has been used to suggest that parental involvement in the educational setting is directly correlated with positive student achievement (Firmin et al., 2019). This study shows how

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is related to parenting practices and school engagement (Firmin et al., 2019).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Brain Development

Early childhood brain development starts before children transition to school environments. This can be supported by incorporating social-emotional learning; therefore, teachers in early grades can help children manage their emotional responses and succeed in school (Barr, 2018). A child's early childhood teacher is often perceived as having an impact and influence on their brain and behavioral development (Mitchell & Stoney, 2017).

Brain development has become an important topic when exploring parental involvement in early childhood education. Wall (2018) stated that the importance of attachment to brain development is a child that feels safe and also feels secure will have a greater chance at developing a stronger brain development that is associated with emotional and cognitive competency. When examining the connection between brain development and schools, parents have been advised not to rely on educational programming or toys to enhance brain development but provide stimulation themselves. When parents are consistent and responsive when working with their young children, they often grow up to be resilient, able to deal with stress, and have the capability to learn new things.

Parental Involvement Outreach

Parental involvement is a significant part of a child's academic and social development (Kurtulmus, 2016). The first years of a child's life are crucial to their school success; enhancing and supporting parental involvement in the education setting is an important part of their early school years. Studies have shown a connection between parents' involvement in their children's academic achievement and social and emotional outcomes (Kurtulmus, 2016). Fang-Hua (2019) noted that students whose parents were involved in their education showed greater gains when it came to academic subjects. When parents are involved, it provides students with motivation to complete tasks. Parents are their children's first teacher, which is an important part of early educational success.

Examining the importance of parental involvement in a child's educational career aligns with student success (Puccioni, 2018). Kindergarten teachers can help support a child's transition to school by reaching out and encouraging parental involvement. Transition practices can help support transitioning to school. Studies have shown that a variety of skills and behavioral attributes help children with successfully transitioning to the kindergarten setting. Puccioni (2018) found that teachers' beliefs regarding transition practices helped stakeholders to understand how these are related to developing home and school partnerships. Kindergarten teachers' beliefs concerning parental involvement shaped how they reached out to parents to encourage and support their involvement. Teachers in the study believed that children benefited from having a variety of academically oriented skills and behavioral attributes, such as sitting and listening when

they transition to elementary school. This also helped increase parental involvement to support their children's transition.

One of the most important factors that affect parental involvement in schools is the socioeconomic status of the parents the schools serve. Martin (2015) found that parents who lived in low socioeconomic areas did not feel the school culture was inviting, which resulted in not feeling welcome at the school. Many educators have found that this group of parents has been less involved in the school setting. The connection between parents and educators is a critical factor for children who are transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten to ensure their educational success (Benner & Yan, 2015). Benner and Yan (2015) found that teachers can create a classroom culture that is welcoming and inviting to parents. It is also important for teachers to ensure that parents feel comfortable and confident so they will likely participate in suggested parental involvement strategies (Alaçam, & Olgan, 2017). The involvement of parents in the kindergarten years is important and plays a significant role in a child's educational journey.

Researchers have shown that parental involvement can begin with simple techniques, such as a discussion with the child of what they learned at school and the activities in which they participated during the school day (Alaçam & Olgan, 2017). This can also help promote positive student engagement (Dove et al., 2015). Transitioning is an experience that can have a lasting impact on a child's school performance (Kang et al., 2017). Transition is formal and can be difficult for young children and their families (Griebing & Gilbert, 2020); therefore, it is important that all stakeholders are ready and prepared. The various influences of parental involvement are directly connected to the

early experiences that align with a child's social adjustment and academic achievement (Kang et al., 2017).

Velasquez (2019) argued that outreach efforts could help parents and students to become more engaged and increase their ability to understand information. Outreach often requires an assessment of the process to help develop and serve parents and students, which should include input from the staff and may often require a specialist to help increase outreach attempts (Velasquez, 2019). Sullivan et al. (2019) found correlations in the areas of parental involvement, depression, and socioeconomic status in the household. Outreach efforts may assist teachers in discovering the needs of the students they serve and increase parental involvement (Velasquez, 2019).

Chun and Devall (2019) noted that when addressing parental involvement and academic achievement, one must have an understanding of cultural influences. Creating a welcoming school climate may appear straightforward; however, when interacting with parents with diverse cultural backgrounds, the teacher might be required to have a higher level of sensitivity and consideration. Chun and Devall suggested that misunderstandings and role disagreements between the parent and teachers can interfere with parental involvement. Chun and Devall identified a need for a survey at a public middle and high school to better understand parental involvement in cultural approaches.

Teachers and families need to have a home and school connection. Global practices include family engagement. Partnership initiatives are also essential for teachers and parents as this helps support children's educational views and academic success (Hutchison et al., 2020). Partnerships are critical to developing meaningful ways for

teachers, parents, and students to connect. Hutchison et al. (2020) found significant challenges for schools and teachers to connect when it came to home and school. There must be some creativity to make family and school partnerships work for the students.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

Parents play an important role in the process of their child's education and in improving it. Garbacz et al. (2016) found that family involvement was associated with positive outcomes for children, including higher levels of academic achievement. There are several factors that influence family involvement. These can include a child's characteristics, maternal and paternal education, sources of support, and satisfaction with educational services. Parental beliefs regarding their role in their child's education determine if they become involved or not.

Parental school involvement and home-based involvements are not the same. Home-based involvement practices include assisting children with school-related tasks, such as helping with homework and talking with children about their academic work and day at school (Berryhill, 2017). School-based involvement refers to parenting practices that include direct contact with the school, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, initiating contact with teachers, and volunteering during the school day (Berryhill, 2017). Studies have shown that parental involvement early in a child's educational career may have a lasting positive benefit (Berryhill, 2017). Parental school involvement is important for the child during the transitional stages to ensure that school-based support is present during these times. This type of involvement includes the parents going to the school to exchange information, receiving advice from teachers, and participating in parental

meetings (Erol & Turhan, 2018). The purpose of parental involvement is to help increase educational goals for the child. Parents' knowledge and involvement in their child's early education years play a key role in preparing children for a successful transition into school (Brotherson et al., 2015).

If parental involvement is present in a child's early educational career, it can help those entering kindergarten who are considered high risk academically with school readiness knowledge and skills (Jarrett & Coba-Rodriguez, 2019). Parental involvement activities can help ensure that children are ready for kindergarten. Jarrett and Coba-Rodriguez (2019) researched the home-based practices of low income African American families to learn about promoting children's education development. The researchers interviewed 20 low income mothers of students enrolled in a Head Start program. The results of the study showed that the mothers' involvement and school readiness were part of a partnership-focused pattern, which reflected the belief of the parents and school policymakers when it came to school readiness.

School Transition Practices

Transitioning to kindergarten is a critical period for children and their families, and when successful, there can be short and long term social and academic success (Cook & Coley, 2017). It is imperative that all stakeholders use best practices to assist with easing children and their families' transition into primary school. It is essential to understand how schools can help and support a smooth and positive transition for kindergartners and their families. Cook and Coley (2017) found that kindergarten teachers sent information home with the child and held parent orientations to help with

the transition process. They found that outreach through parent orientation was one of the key transition practices for supporting a child's academic success.

When students transition to kindergarten, it can have a long-term impact on school performance (Kang et al., 2017). Schools have established strategies to ensure family connections with a focus on understanding the role of family involvement in the school setting. Kang et al. (2017) noted that there is an understanding of the role of family involvement in kindergarten transition; however, the process is still limited compared to other topics that concern parental involvement.

Benner and Yan (2015) researched possible mechanisms in which classroom race and ethnic composition influenced young children's development following the transition to school. They examined how home-to-school connections were purposeful during student transition. Schools and families represent the primary proximal developmental context for young children, and they play a critical role in a child's development. Benner and Yan's study demonstrated that there is a connection between parental involvement and communication quality that accounted for the association between classroom composition and a child's academic and socioemotional functioning when transitioning to elementary school. Teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote and support and healthy home-school connections. This is imperative to ensure that all students are served. Benner and Yan's longitudinal study used a random sample of school-family connections, parental involvement, and communication quality from children who were enrolled in kindergarten. The study data was collected from kindergartners, parents, and teachers. The study was designed to identify the possible

mechanisms by which a classroom's racial and ethnic composition might influence young children's development when transitioning to school.

Transitioning into elementary school has been studied using various methods (Crosnoe & Ansari, 2016). There are several aspects that need attention when exploring transitioning into schools. The school transition model includes categories that focus on (a) socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity; (b) social, psychological, experiential, and personal; (c) school readiness and early achievement; and (d) educational and socioeconomic attainment. Crosnoe and Ansari (2016) argued that transition into schools should not be limited to children but also include adults shepherding the transition, such as parents, teachers, and caregivers.

Socioeconomic Status

From childhood through adulthood, parents play an important role in their children's lives. However, socioeconomic status can affect the ability to acquire material goods and cause complications between family members (Anderson, 2018). The quality of a relationship between parent and child has been closely associated with early cognitive functioning and literacy development in a child (Anderson, 2018). A parent's ability or lack of ability to provide for a child can have an impact on their relationship. Evidence suggests that families who experience financial strain feel more stress as well as conflict with their children (Anderson, 2018). Low social-economic status can make it difficult for parents to determine their child's readiness to attend school because of their lack of exposure to the school environment. Ansari and Winsler's (2016) investigation revealed that students who came from low income families often attended a public

school-based pre-K program. Although socioeconomic status was not a focus of this study, it is an important factor in a child's transition into elementary school. Children who transition into an elementary school go through a critical period in their educational journey, and the transition could have a long-term effect on their educational career (Crosnoe & Ansari, 2016).

Matthews et al. (2017) examined how the school-parent relationship differed between student poverty levels. The purpose of their study was to increase awareness of factors that could strengthen the school-parent relationship. Matthews et al. found that this type of relationship among all income levels was similar in the areas of outreach and volunteering; however, non-poverty parents tended to have a positive attitude regarding communicating with their child and the child's school. Matthews et al. noted that the school-parent relationship was weaker in schools where a higher percentage of students received free lunch and was stronger in schools where numerous outreach activities were available.

School Readiness

Early childhood education is important because these formative years are when a child is being prepared to perform in their learning environment (Burns et al., 2018). The term school readiness is used to describe a process in which students are prepared by caregivers and society for a successful school experience. School readiness should include a combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that the child should learn, understand, and be able to perform as they enter a school environment.

School readiness is important for children to succeed in the learning process (Setiawati et al., 2017) and an essential measure of academic and life success (Ferretti & Bub, 2017). School readiness consists of the child's abilities in aspects such as language, social, and motor skills (Setiawati et al., 2017). Researchers have defined and redefined the meaning of school readiness and the various components that should be examined. Setiawati et al. (2017) researched the impact parental involvement had on preparing students for school. Their findings demonstrated that parents played a significant role in preparation, and when they were involved at school and at home, this had a significant influence on their children's academic success. Setiawati et al. also found that children's learning readiness was not only affected by their age but also by developmental aspects, which played a significant role in determining readiness.

Improving school readiness has become a priority; teachers have reported that nearly half of typically developing children experience some degree of difficulty during the transition to kindergarten (Ferretti & Bub, 2017). Head Start pre-K program goals are in place to help close school readiness gaps that often occur with children from low income families and racial or ethnic minorities (Joshi et al., 2016). Understanding how to support the development of school readiness as children enter kindergarten is critical (Ferretti & Bub, 2017). Firmin et al. (2019) mentioned that not all parents have the same understanding of what school readiness means. Firmin et al. (2019) noted that parents who viewed their children as performing well academically did so because of their involvement, which was tailored to their child's education.

Preparing children for the transition to a kindergarten classroom setting is challenging because of the emphasis on academic preparedness for the elementary school setting (Hustedt et al., 2018). Transitioning to kindergarten has created a variety of assumptions regarding what a child needs to be ready (Hustedt et al., 2018). Some parents may choose not to enroll their children in early childhood education programs. Often, parents do not have the proper age-appropriate materials for their young children to help them make the transition (Hover, 2015). Making the decision not to enroll a child in an early childhood program can result in academic deficiencies and behavioral problems (Hover, 2015). However, kindergarten teachers' beliefs on school readiness have changed regarding the importance of assessing students, but these have not have changed to fully reflect the increasing emphasis on the academic skills students need in kindergarten (Hustedt et al., 2018).

An important concept of school readiness is to focus on the implications of children's academic routes (Razza et al., 2015). Approaches to learning should include an emphasis on the child's attentiveness, persistence, flexibility, organization skills, and compliance (Razza et al., 2015). Pilarz (2018) suggested that attending multiple childcare programs may have a direct impact on the child's socioemotional health and their stability regarding school readiness (Pilarz, 2018). The lack of a stable school environment can cause a break in education and behavioral problems (Pilarz, 2018).

Influence of Economics on Family Functioning

Researchers have suggested that neighborhoods characterized by poverty may also have a direct effect on children's school readiness due to the lack of household

resources (Morrissey & Vinopal, 2018). Morrissey and Vinopal (2018) noted that an effective intervention in low income areas is to have high quality early childcare and education with a center-based childcare focus. Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds tend to struggle more with academics than their peers (Martin, 2015).

Families and their home environment are key factors in a child's development and an important part of early intervention in a child's life (Garbacz et al., 2019). When families support and collaborate with teachers, it is considered family-school engagement. Family school engagement should consist of family support at school and in collaboration with the child's teacher. This is a time for caregivers and educators to join together to assist students by sharing information that helps support their behavior and learning. There is a need for family-school engagement during a child's early elementary school years.

Early Education

Early education is when students have their first experience learning a curriculum-based program. Children's school readiness when entering kindergarten predicts their long-term academic success (Morrissey & Vinopal, 2018). However, the effects of family income on children can create a barrier for students. Teachers and researchers have stressed that early education is an opportunity for students' positive cognitive development (Weikart, 1966/2016). Preschool teachers are required to ensure that young children go to school and are prepared to learn and be successful (Wake & Benson, 2016). Researchers have shown that in early education, teachers should work on oral literacy and language (Wake & Benson, 2016). Oral literacy and language are the

building blocks that support students' abilities to be successful, which are then transferred to a child's kindergarten experience (Wake & Benson, 2016). How a child's brain functions during their preschool years lays the foundation for their academic future, as during the preschool years, their brain is significantly changing (Long et al., 2017).

Pre-K early education is critical to closing achievement gaps and may be more difficult to obtain for minority students who may not have access to it or whose parents do not have the desire for their child to attend (Reardon & Portilla, 2016). Achievement gaps exist across racial, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds from the beginning of a child's education in pre-K (Valentino, 2017). Reardon and Portilla (2016) noted there is a deviation between the achievement gap of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds by two-thirds of a standard at the beginning of a child's educational career. Valentino (2017) referred to this large deviation in achievement as "quality gaps" (p. 79), which are based on the student's background. Sullivan et al. (2019) suggested that parental depression and socioeconomic status are key influences in the early education of children.

Students have already established some of their basic learning skills before they enter the school environment (Ahmad et al., 2015). The level of the basic skills learned is largely determined by the child's environment (Ahmad et al., 2015). Teachers are the most important individuals to create high-quality early education classrooms. Teachers' instructional practices have the potential to directly affect a young child's school readiness and success (Koutsoftas et al., 2017). Classroom quality, preparation, and the

teacher's professional development are contributing factors to a quality preschool classroom (Koutsoftas et al., 2017).

There has been extensive research on the quality of many young children's experiences and opportunities in a classroom setting. Many of these are dependent on the child's skills and their teacher's understanding of early childhood practices (Melhuish et al., 2016). Preschool teachers have a significant impact on a child's academic outcome. Teacher misperceptions of children's academic skills could also have negative consequences on low income preschoolers (Baker et al., 2015). Preschool teachers are responsible for the early learning standards, which determine the skills children should learn and be able to perform (De Bruin-Parecki & Slutzky, 2016). This allows parents and teachers to have an expectation of what students should know when leaving pre-K.

Synthesis

Garbacz et al. (2016) noted parental involvement has been directly associated with positive outcomes for children. This includes higher levels of academic achievement, family educational involvement/partnership, along with parent-teacher relationships, which are important when supporting student outcomes throughout their educational journey. Family involvement and parent-teacher relationships are particularly important when a child transitions from early childhood education to kindergarten.

Kurtulmus (2016) noted that the first years of a child's life are crucial to their social development and that parental involvement plays an important part in this as well as their academic development. Parental involvement in school plays a significant role in a child's academic, social, and psychological outcomes and can have a lasting positive benefit in a

child's life (Berryhill, 2017). Having parental involvement can help ensure children are ready for kindergarten (Jarrett & Coba-Rodriguez, 2019). If parents are involved, it can help promote school readiness for preschoolers considered at risk of not being academically ready for kindergarten (Jarrett & Coba-Rodriguez, 2019).

Transitioning to kindergarten is a critical time in the child's and parent's life (Cook & Coley, 2017). Kang et al. (2017) found it was important for schools to have outreach efforts established for students transitioning to kindergarten because this could have a long-term impact on a child's school performance. There is a direct connection between parents and educators when students are transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten, which can help ensure the educational success of the child (Benner & Yan, 2015). When students transition from one grade to the next, it can have a lasting impact on their school performance (Kang et al., 2017). Transitioning can be difficult for young children and their families (Griebing & Gilbert, 2020). When outreach efforts are present, these can help parents and students to become more engaged and increase their ability to understand what is happening in the classroom (Velasquez, 2019). Not only will outreach efforts support parents, but they will also assist teachers with understanding the needs of the students they serve, which also helps increase parental involvement (Velasquez, 2019).

I worked with the librarian at Walden University to identify articles that aligned with outreach efforts and parental involvement in early childhood education and found little research exists in this area within the past 5 years. However, Puccioni (2018) examined the transition to kindergarten and focused on three White female teachers'

beliefs and how these influenced their transition practices. Puccioni found that these had a direct impact on the outreach efforts they used to communicate with parents and recommended that researchers should consider parents and children as experts who should be included in future studies.

Kang et al. (2017) and Cook and Coley (2017) conducted mixed method studies that focused on school transition and parental involvement. Kang et al. examined parents' participation and family perceptions during kindergarten transition and found that family involvement in kindergarten had a positive impact on children's transition and parents' increased abilities in supporting their child. Cook and Coley examined transitioning to kindergarten and focused on kindergarten teachers and early childhood providers. Cook and Coley's survey responses were based on cognitive and behavioral aspects of children in kindergarten. Cook and Coley found that specific outreach to parents through orientations was a key transition practice for supporting children's academic success. Kang et al. conducted their study in a large city/metropolitan area with a population of 200,000. Cook and Coley also located their study in an urban area. My study is different from these in terms of location, as I focused on a small, rural middle-class school in the southeastern United States.

Jarrett and Coba-Rodriguez (2019) interviewed low income African American women (parents) between the ages of 24-52 and found that at-risk student preparedness for kindergarten was dependent on both parents and the school. Outside the United States, Kurtulmus (2016) explored parental involvement in early childhood and focused on 10 Turkish mothers with children in kindergarten. A parental involvement survey was

given to the participants, and the results showed that parents were moderately involved in their child's education during the early years.

The problem examined in my study is the gap in research regarding outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators and the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement. My study included teachers, parents, and administrators to obtain perspectives from all stakeholders.

Summary and Conclusions

The problem addressed in this study was the gap in research on practice regarding the outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators and the influence of the outreach efforts on parental involvement. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers, ' parents, ' and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. I listed the search terms and the Walden University Library resource databases used to explore the research literature related to this study. I reviewed Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory used as the conceptual framework of this study. In the literature review, I discussed research related to parental involvement outreach, benefits of parental involvement, school transition practices, the parent-child relationship, school readiness, family-school engagement, and early education. The research showed that family engagement is an important part of a child's early school years.

There are factors currently identified as relevant to this research topic and others that have not been studied in detail. Research has shown that parental involvement plays

an important role in a child's academic, social, and psychological outcomes (Berryhill, 2017). Research has also shown that the transition to kindergarten is a critical period, not just for the students but for their families; however, when the transition is successful, there is short and long-term social and academic success for students (Cook & Coley, 2017). Therefore, stakeholders should focus on the best practices used by kindergarten teachers when assisting students and their families in a kindergarten classroom setting (Cook & Coley, 2017).

Berryhill (2017) explained how parental school involvement played a role in a child's life. Few studies have addressed the various outreach efforts that have been successful with transitioning students. In this study, I examined the outreach between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. I explored the participants' perspectives to achieve a better understanding of what methods are in place for all stakeholders to ensure that students who transition from one pre-K to kindergarten are provided with what is necessary for success.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory was used as the conceptual framework to understand the participants' experiences. I asked the participants how they described their outreach efforts when students transition from pre-K to kindergarten and their perspectives on their influence on outreach efforts regarding parental involvement. The analysis of the data included the participants' experiences related to various outreach efforts.

In Chapter 3, I describe the research methodology and design. This chapter also includes the research rationale and my role as the researcher. Next, I address participant selection, instrumentation, and recruitment of the participants, as well as their participation, data collection, and the data analysis plan. Finally, I will discuss the trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The problem addressed in this study is the gap in research on practice regarding outreach efforts between teachers, parents, and administrators. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. This research was necessary to determine outreach strategies between stakeholders, provide suggestions to improve practice, and gain an understanding of the importance of reaching out to parents early and engaging them in school.

In this chapter, I present the RQs, central concept of the study, research tradition, and role of the researcher. The methodology section includes the criteria for participant selection, as well as instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. The data analysis plan details the procedures I followed and includes a description of axial and open coding used to analyze the data. Using thematic analysis, I identified, analyzed, and interpreted patterns and themes that emerged from the data. I also explain the appropriate strategies to determine credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish trustworthiness. Finally, I provide the ethical procedures required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University before data collection began.

Research Design and Rationale

The RQs for this basic qualitative study are the following:

RQ 1: How do teachers, parents, and administrators describe their outreach efforts when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten?

RQ 2: What are teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement?

This was a basic qualitative study with open-ended interview questions. A basic qualitative research design is used to examine the meaning of different experiences of those who lived through them (Burroughs, 2017). A semistructured interview approach allows the researcher to capture important details and stories involving various life experiences of individuals (Clandinin et al., 2017). In the interviews, I explored outreach strategies between teachers, parents, and administrators as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. The basic qualitative design was the most appropriate for this study as the participants described outreach efforts and their influence on parental involvement.

I considered other qualitative research approaches for the study prior to the selection of a basic qualitative design. A grounded theory approach was not selected as the purpose of my research was not to create a new theory. In a case study, the researcher asks how or why questions and conducts an exploration of a subject (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). I did not gather data in the form of artifacts or other applicable documents but strictly focused on the participants' responses to interview questions. A case study design was not chosen because it requires data from more than one source to ensure validity. Phenomenological research is the focus on the descriptions of what people experience, this design was not appropriate for this study.

I selected a basic qualitative design with semistructured interviews for this research, as this allowed me to collect detailed information from the study participants. Collecting qualitative data using virtual technology was most appropriate for this study because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other designs would not have allowed me to collect the most appropriate data.

I did not consider a quantitative or mixed methods research approach for this study. Quantitative studies involve numeric data, which would not have fulfilled the study's purpose of examining the participants' perceptions. A mixed methods study is conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, I used interview questions, which were the most appropriate for a qualitative study regarding participants' perspectives.

Role of the Researcher

My goal as the researcher was to be objective and gather information that provided an understanding of the research problem. It is important to consider conflicts of interest and biases when completing research. I have been a kindergarten teacher for 7 years and experienced a lack of parental involvement with many of my students. Although I am a teacher, I did not interview any administrators, colleagues, or parents of students I have taught. The study was not conducted in the district where I work. I addressed personal bias by using only prewritten, open-ended interview questions and recording my thoughts in a reflective journal. The policies and guidelines regarding research set forth by Walden University were followed. Before the data collection process, approval was obtained through Walden University's IRB (#04-02-21-0720750).

My role as the researcher was to ensure that the participants reflected on their experiences and answered the questions in a truthful manner throughout the interviews. As the researcher, I served as the interviewer and analyzed the data. Through email communication, I provided the participants with a copy of the consent form. I ensured that the interviews were set up through Zoom conferencing technology after the participants responded to emails with the language “I consent.” This indicated that the participants were interested in being a part of the study. Using email or phone communication allowed for participant follow-up questions.

My thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the study were addressed through journaling during and after the interviews as well as when analyzing the data. This ensured that bias did not affect the data collection or analysis process. My goal was to maintain the fidelity of the interview process and carefully manage my role as the researcher when collecting the participants’ responses and experiences. I had an expert reviewer with a doctorate in early childhood education examine my data analysis to check for bias.

Methodology

In this section, I explain the methodology for my study. This includes participant selection, instrumentation, and techniques for recruitment, participation, and data collection. I discuss how data were collected, coded, and analyzed as well as strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the study.

Participant Selection

The school district where I conducted my study has a database that is available to the public. The database includes a list of teachers and their grade levels as well as teachers' district email addresses. I recruited four teachers and two administrators through this public database. For parent recruitment, I posted an email invitation to the school's Facebook page and also used snowball sampling. Parents who met the criteria and were interested in participating in the study sent me a private Facebook message. I sent the potential participants an email describing the study.

I used purposeful snowball sampling to assist with recruiting parent participants for the study, which relies on referrals from current participants. Creswell (2004) explained that when using purposeful sampling, the researcher needs to select participants who are able to provide information concerning the central concept. A sample size of six to 12 participants is recommended for saturation in a study based on individual perspectives (Guest et al., 2006). The purpose of this study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement.

The criteria for participation were 3 or more years of experience with the school for school personnel; parents must have had a child who transitioned from a pre-K to a kindergarten classroom within the past school year. I did not give preference to any gender, ethnicity, race, or age for the teachers, parents, or administrators. Criteria were verified during the first phone call with the potential participants.

The district's requirement for conducting research was to notify the superintendent. There was no formal application or partnership needed. After receiving Walden University's IRB approval to conduct the study, I emailed the superintendent, explaining the topic of the study and its purpose. After I notified the superintendent, I began the recruitment process. I began by using the school's database available to the public, which includes a list of teachers and their grade levels. The database provides the teachers' district email addresses. I recruited the four kindergarten teachers by sending an email invitation and consent form. I used the same database to recruit the two administrators.

Parent recruitment was done by posting an email invitation to the school's Facebook page. The invitation included my contact information. Before posting, I asked the Facebook administrator for permission. Parents who were interested in participating in the study sent me a private message through Facebook. Once I received their message, I asked for their email address and sent them an email that included the consent form. I accepted the first four parent participants that met the study's criteria. However, I kept a list of other participants who were interested in participating in the study in case any decided to drop out; however, none decided to do so. I used snowball sampling to assist with parent recruitment.

Those who were interested responded to the email stating, "I consent" after they read the consent form and agreed to be a part of the study. I called those interested to schedule their interview appointment at a mutually agreeable time. The participants were notified of their right to drop from the study at any time.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument for this basic qualitative research was the interview protocol (see Appendix A). The document listed the topic of study; date, time, and information for the Zoom interview; the name of the interviewee; participant specification (teachers, parents, administrators); and the interview questions. The open-ended interview questions and probes were prewritten and drafted based on the RQs and guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. The conceptual framework helped guide the RQs. I used the interview questions I created to conduct Zoom interview sessions. The interview protocol and questions were reviewed by my dissertation chair and a professional colleague who has been in the field of education for more than 15 years.

I scheduled three interviews a week for 3 weeks. One week, I only interviewed one participant. The interviews were 45 minutes to 1 hour. All participants had an opportunity to respond to the interview questions and include any additional comments that they felt were relevant to the study.

Using open-ended questions allowed the participants to express their thoughts and provide full and meaningful answers. I created the questions specifically for this study and structured them to keep the participants focused in their responses. The format I used prompted the participants to discuss and reply to questions fully and offer their perspectives pertaining to the topic. I designed the interview questions to prompt thoughtful and detailed responses rather than yes or no answers. The questions were reviewed by a colleague who has been a kindergarten teacher for over 15 years. They

reviewed the questions' structure, wording, and content. They also reviewed the sufficiency of the interview questions to answer the RQs and found that all were able to do so.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The district required me to notify the superintendent that a study was to be done in the district. The school district where I conducted my study has a database available to the public, which includes a list of teachers and their grade levels. The database also lists teachers' district email addresses. To recruit the four kindergarten teachers, I sent them an email invitation and the consent form. I used the same database to recruit the two administrators.

Parent recruitment was done by posting an email invitation to the school's Facebook page. The invitation included my contact information. Before posting to the page, I asked the Facebook administrator for permission. If parents were interested in participating in the study, they sent me a private Facebook message. When I received the message, I asked for their email address. Once this was received, I sent an email to the parents, including the consent form. I recruited the first four parent participants that met the study's criteria. However, I kept a list of other interested participants in case any decided to drop out of the study. I did not have any participants to drop from the study. I used snowball sampling to assist with parent recruitment.

I conducted the interviews through Zoom but gave the participants the option to interview via phone. I asked the questions and followed up with probes to draw out more complete responses from the participants using the interview protocol. Interview

questions and probes for parents are contained in Appendix B; questions and probes for teachers and administrators are found in Appendix C. All interviews were kept private and confidential. I conducted three interviews a week for 3 weeks; one week, I had only a single interview. I spent 4 weeks total conducting interviews.

Before beginning the interview, I asked each participant if they had any questions and reminded them that they could exit the study at any time. I recorded the interviews via Zoom and took notes in a reflective journal. I checked the recorder prior to the interviews to make sure it was working properly and that it could pick up my voice and that of the participants. Before beginning the interview, I provided a brief review of the topic, purpose, and importance of the study. I then proceeded to ask the interview questions. After asking all questions, I informed the participant that the interview was complete. The participants were allowed to ask any questions or provide comments about the study. I addressed each question from the participant and reacted to each comment appropriately. Then, I thanked each participant for their time. To ensure confidentiality, I used alphanumeric identifiers for each participant in the study. The participants received a summary of the study's findings for member checking. The participants were told that they had 48 hours to respond by email regarding any discrepancies.

Data Analysis Plan

I used the thematic inductive model of data analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2013) in this study, which helped generate themes from interview data. The thematic inductive model is appropriate for novice and expert researchers as the steps are easy to explain and follow. The data analysis process included data collected from the

participants' Zoom interviews. According to Braun and Clarke, there are six phases of thematic analysis: (a) familiarization, (b) generating the initial codes, (c) create the initial themes, (d) review the initial themes, (e) name and define the themes, (f) and write the final report.

Familiarization is the process where researchers become acquainted with the data. This can be done through reading and rereading the interview transcripts. Once I was familiar with the data, I began coding. After I carefully coded the transcripts, I took the list of the codes and put those that were similar together to create an initial theme. The next step was to review the initial themes against the data, group similar initial themes, and then generate a comprehensive name that described the relationship or meaning shown in the themes. Five main themes were found. By using thematic analysis, novice researchers are able to generate themes from the data with little to no experience (Braun & Clarke, 2013). There were no discrepancies that appeared with the patterns and themes derived from the data analysis.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is established in basic qualitative research through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Credibility can be improved by allowing participants an opportunity to check for accuracy in their data. A typed summary of the study's findings was emailed to the participants to read and check. All participants were asked to review to ensure the information was accurate. There was adequate time allotted for data collection and review of all content. I informed the participants they had 48 hours to respond by email regarding any discrepancies. I also

had an expert reviewer with a doctorate in early childhood education examine the data analysis to check for bias. I created credibility by ensuring that participants met the study's criteria by self-reporting when contacted to set up an interview day and time.

Transferability in qualitative research is the ability of the study and its data to apply or be usable in other contexts, settings, or situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I accomplished this through a detailed account of the research process. I provided thick, rich descriptions of the study and resulting data (see Lincoln & Guba, 1986). This will provide future researchers an opportunity to reproduce the study. To ensure transferability, I included detailed descriptions of the data so readers can make a comparison with other contexts to determine if the study is transferable to their situation.

Dependability is the reliability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I provided an audit trail to help improve the dependability and support the transparency and reliability of the study. This included when and how the data were collected and analyzed. The detailed descriptions helped to ensure the study was logical, traceable, and accurately documented. Providing clear and detailed steps in the research process supports the dependability of the findings. Member checking also contributed to dependability, which allowed me to send my preliminary analysis to the participants and ask them whether my interpretations were accurate.

Confirmability of the study was established through reflexivity. A confirmable study is one that includes objective data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I used the scripted interview questions and prompts as needed for clarification or to extend the participants' responses. I addressed my thoughts, feelings, and opinions regarding the study through

journaling during and after the interviews and when analyzing the data. As the sole researcher in this study, I had the interview questions I drafted reviewed by a colleague who has been a kindergarten teacher for over 15 years. This individual reviewed the questions to verify they were adequate to answer the RQs.

Ethical Procedures

The ethical treatment of participants for this study began by obtaining approval from Walden University. Next, I completed the IRB application and received approval before I conducted the research or contacted the superintendent to request permission to proceed with the study. The IRB approval number for this study is 04-02-21-0720750. I emailed the superintendent to explain the purpose and details of my basic qualitative study. When recruiting participants, I used the school's public database for the school and the school's Facebook page parents. I used snowball sampling to assist with parent recruitment. I recruited four teachers, four parents, and two administrators. I made initial contact with the participants through email. The study was not conducted at the school or district where I currently teach.

I purposely selected the 10 participants who provided data to answer the RQs. I sent an email and consent form to all potential participants. I informed each of their right to withdraw at any time during the process and that they would not be pressed to answer any question during the interview. I conducted interviews through Zoom at an agreed upon day and time.

I adhered to Walden University's code of ethics set forth by the IRB. I kept the participants' identities and responses confidential. I did not share or use the participants'

answers for personal gain. Walden University's code of ethics requires the data to be stored in two separate places for 5 years beyond the completion of the study. All paper data, such as interview protocol documents as well as digitally taped responses collected from each participant, were locked in my personal filing cabinet at my home and on the hard drive on my personal computer with password protected access. I am the only person with a key to the cabinet and password to retrieve data from my computer. At the end of the 5 years, all physical data will be destroyed using a shredder. The data stored on my personal computer will be purged.

Summary

In this study, I used a basic qualitative design. I interviewed four teachers, four parents, and two administrators who had direct contact with pre-K students transitioning to kindergarten. I collected the interview data, reviewed the transcripts, and analyzed the data by coding from which themes emerged, and then stored all information in a locked cabinet and hard drive. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. I collected data for this study was one-on-one semistructured interviews using open-ended questions.

I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB, the district, and the school where the research took place before beginning the recruitment process. I followed Walden University's ethical procedures as outlined by its IRB to recruit participants and collect and analyze data. I used thematic inductive data analysis based on

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The participants were informed that their responses were confidential, that data would be secured and stored for 5 years, and that it will then be destroyed in agreement with Walden University's ethical policies.

In Chapter 4, I review the purpose of the study and the RQs. I discuss the setting for the research, data collection procedures, and data analysis process. I present the results of the study and evidence of their trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. The school district's public database site was used to recruit participants. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory guided the analysis process. Bronfenbrenner's theory provided the conceptual framework for promoting systems that lead to more substantial parental involvement in early childhood education. I used Bronfenbrenner's theory because it helps define how effective relationships between parents and teachers can work to impact children's development directly within the school system.

I conducted thematic analysis using Microsoft Word to highlight and code data and Excel to identify codes, patterns, and themes to address the two RQs that guided the study:

RQ 1: How do teachers, parents, and administrators describe their outreach efforts when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten?

RQ 2: What are teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement?

This chapter contains the study setting, data collection process, data analysis, results of the study, including the themes that emerged, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Setting

I conducted this study in a rural primary/elementary school in the state of Georgia. There were four teachers, four parents, and two administrators who participated

in the study. During the data collection phase, many of the participants expressed the challenges they faced throughout the year 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, the teachers and administrators were often required to teach virtually. However, this did not affect my data collection.

I emailed invitations to the teachers' and administrators' work email addresses in April 2021 to explain the study. I posted a message on the school's Facebook page for parent recruitment. Four teachers and two administrators consented to participate in the study. Parents sent me direct messages via Facebook stating their interest in being a part of the study. Teachers and administrators received consent forms that indicated study criteria. They were asked to reply with the language "I consent" if interested in participating in the study. I verified with participants that they met the study criteria.

Teacher 1 (T1) was a kindergarten teacher for 3 years. T2 was a kindergarten teacher currently working on a master's degree with 13 years of experience. T3 has a bachelor's degree and spent several years as a pre-K teacher and 4 years as a kindergarten teacher. T4 has a bachelor's degree with over 20 years' experience working with kindergartners. Administrator 1 (A1) worked in several different grade levels across the district and has been an administrator for 6 years. A2 worked in the primary/elementary setting for 10 years. Parents 1-4 (P1, P2, P3, and P4) were all parents of kindergarten students who recently transitioned from pre-K to kindergarten.

Data Collection

After receiving consent from each participant, I assigned each a letter and number to preserve confidentiality and privacy. I ensured that data collection procedures

corresponded with the data collection plan. There were no unusual or unplanned circumstances encountered during the data collection process. The data collection instrument for this basic qualitative research was the interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview protocol listed the topic of the study; date, time, and information for the Zoom interview; name of the interviewee; participant role (teacher, parent, administrator); and interview questions. The semistructured interviews contained prewritten open-ended questions and probes based on the RQs and guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory (see Appendices B and C). The conceptual framework helped to guide the RQs.

Each participant participated in a Zoom interview that lasted at least 45 minutes. I encouraged each participant to schedule the interview to allow for privacy and comfort, ensuring confidentiality of the individuals involved. The participants and I were the only ones who knew when the interviews were being conducted, with locations selected by participants.

Before beginning each interview, I made sure that the Zoom audio features were properly recording. I checked the computer audio to ensure it was working and loud enough so Zoom could accurately transcribe the interview. At the start of each interview, I reviewed the interview protocol and expressed my appreciation for the participant's willingness to be a part of the study. The interview protocol explained the purpose of the study. The participants were reminded that the interviews would be audio recorded, and I explained the interview format. During the interviews, I followed the interview protocol and used follow-up questions to ensure I obtained sufficient information from each

interview. After I completed each interview, I documented my observations using a reflective journal. Finally, I read each transcript and listened to the audio recordings to correct grammatical errors in the transcripts that Zoom autogenerated. There were no variations during the data collection process from the plan presented in Chapter 3 and no unusual circumstances during data collection.

Data Analysis

In this basic qualitative study, I used semistructured interviews to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. I asked teachers and administrators the same open-ended questions; parents were asked their own set of questions. The questions were asked in the same order. The audio-recorded interviews from the 10 participants were transcribed using Zoom. I began the analysis process by reading each transcript and listening to the audio recordings several times. I familiarized myself with the data.

Interview Analysis

I used Braun and Clarke's (2013) six-phase thematic analysis approach, which involved (a) familiarization, (b) generating the initial codes, (c) creating the initial themes, (d) reviewing the initial themes, (e) naming and defining the themes, (f) and writing the final report. Interviews and data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which could have had an effect on the data. However, there were no unusual situations that affected the data analysis process.

Phase 1: Familiarization

When confirming the accuracy of the data, I compared the audio recordings with the written transcripts. I printed the interview transcripts for the 10 participants and organized them based on the order of interviews. I gave the participants alphanumeric codes to ensure their privacy. For example, Parent 1 was P1 and Administrator 1 was A1. I began reading and rereading the transcripts with an awareness of words and phrases repeated in the data. The fourth time I read each transcript, I began making notes.

Phase 2: Generating the Initial Codes

During Phase 2, I used open and axial coding. During the coding process, I read the 10 transcripts and made notes in the margins applying Braun and Clarke's (2013) six-phase thematic analysis. I began to analyze each line of the transcripts and identify key and repeated concepts that aligned with the conceptual framework and RQs. I highlighted the initial codes in multiple colors to identify key concepts that represented each code. I used green, yellow, blue, red, orange, and light blue to help me to continue to code. Using different colors allowed me to arrange the data into codes that shared features. Appendix D shows examples of 10 of the initial open codes, participant identifiers, and examples of excerpts from the transcript data that fit each code.

I created a chart in Microsoft Word as a visual format when reviewing the codes. Using axial coding, I identified additional codes related to my RQs. I used the charts to help recognize common associations and links between the codes to create categories. I organized categories by using a different color for each, and I was able to combine those that were similar (see Appendix D).

Phase 3: Creating Initial Themes

Braun and Clarke's (2013) six-phase thematic analysis approach was used when identifying patterns and themes. I used thematic data analysis to evaluate the data and arranged the coded data into categories. I examined and reexamined categories several times, merging related information from codes/categories. The five initial themes that emerged were (a) outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID; (b) due to COVID, teachers, parents, and administrators had to reach out in innovative ways; (c) felt outreach established a relationship with parents to inform them and engage; (d) open-door policy pre-COVID; and (e) due to COVID, there was limited parental involvement and/or engagement with the school. Table 1 gives an example of the themes and their corresponding categories.

Table 1

Categories and Themes

Category	Themes:
Outreach before COVID	Theme 1: Participants believed that traditional methods of outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID.
Effective outreach tools	
Communication	
Challenges to PI-COVID	Theme 5: Due to COVID, there was limited parental involvement and/or engagement with the school
Challenges	

Phase 4: Reviewing the Initial Themes

During phase four, I evaluated the data several more times. I created another visual chart with the newly created themes. To ensure trustworthiness and credibility with the study, I had an expert reviewer who has a doctorate in early childhood education examine the data analysis to check for any biases in my study. During phase four, there were minor revisions made to the themes created during Phase 3. The revisions only included minor re-wording of the themes to ensure clarity.

Phase 5: Naming and Defining the Themes

The themes were developed and analyzed by comparing and combining the categories. The categories and the codes appeared from the semistructured interviews. Examples of the themes and the corresponding categories are outlined in Table 1.

The final step in Braun and Clarke's (2013) six phases of thematic analysis is to write the final report. The researcher completes a concluding review of the themes and writes about the results. Once the in-depth analysis of the data was completed, I confirmed that the five themes answered the RQs.

Results

The RQs in the study were answered through the examination of the participants' responses and through the coding of the data. I analyzed the codes to establish themes for each.

RQ 1: How do teachers, parents, and administrators describe their outreach efforts when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten?

RQ 2: What are teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement?

The themes for RQ1 were:

- Theme 1: Participants believed that traditional methods of outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID.
- Theme 2: Due to COVID, teachers, parents, and administrators had to reach out in innovative ways.

The themes for RQ2 were:

- Theme 1: Participants believed outreach efforts pre-COVID allowed the school to establish a relationship with parents to inform them and engage in their child's education.
- Theme 2: Pre-COVID, parents felt there was an open-door policy and that they could drop in at any time.
- Theme 3: Due to COVID, there were limited parental involvement and engagement with the school.

RQ 1: Theme 1

The participants believed that traditional outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID. The theme reflects an understanding and focuses on how teachers, parents, and administrators described transition communication pre-COVID. The participants shared various ways the school reached out to parents pre-pandemic and during COVID.

- Big shuffle (i.e., when pre-K students go to a kindergarten classroom for a few hours to observe) allowed pre-K students and parents to spend a few hours in

kindergarten to visit the classrooms and meet the teachers (this happens in March before the students transitioned to kindergarten)

- Newsletters and daily folders were placed in pre-K students' backpacks to communicate the transition process (newsletters were sent in daily folders in March before the students transitioned to kindergarten).
- Letters and postcards were mailed from the teacher and school and were sent to families to communicate details about the pre-K to kindergarten transition (sent the summer before the students transitioned to kindergarten).
- Emails were sent out where transition process information was exchanged between the school and guardians (sent during the summer before students transitioned to kindergarten).
- Teachers mentioned phone calls were made during the transition process, but parents did not mention this.

The participants stated that pre-COVID, their transition practices were effective and that parents were informed of the transition through multiple forms of communication. A2 stated that pre-COVID,

We do a pretty good job there [with outreach] because we do have a counselor. So, even if our teachers have a hard time contacting parents, the counselor will help. The front office workers [help] a lot of times. If we don't know how to get in touch with a parent, one of them will know how.

The counselor served as support staff. A1 said, "I think it's [outreach] pretty effective; everybody always looks forward to big shuffle." T3 expressed that when students were

transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten, they used multiple forms of communication when reaching out to parents, such as newsletters, daily folders, and written communication [sending letters home], and noted, “I think this is effective.” Every participant mentioned how useful they believed their communication was during pre-COVID.

Each parent stated that the school did an excellent job with communication. When describing pre-COVID communication, P3 said, "It's very effective." P4 stated that teachers pre-COVID, "They just stay in touch . . . they reached out while she [their daughter] was in pre-K and through the summer . . . they reached out about three or four times.”

RQ 1: Theme 2

Due to COVID, teachers, parents, and administrators had to reach out in innovative ways. Although teachers and administrators mentioned they wanted to keep outreach efforts as normal as possible, they still had to make some immediate changes to the way they communicated with parents. Some changes in communication mentioned were:

- School website used to post important information and dates for parents during the transition process.
- Teacher cell phone numbers and text messaging used as a way to remind parents about the transition process/enrollment paperwork needed.
- Google Classroom used to post school and class-wide messages that notified parents of the various steps during the transition process.

- Facebook live events used for parent meetings to explain the transition process (held during the summer for parents who had a child transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten).

T3 mentioned, "In the past, we have kindergarten teachers go over to pre-K and talk to parents, and we have the parents visit kindergarten during the night. This year they were only able to send the information to the parents." In the past, administrators would take the registration packets to the pre-K classrooms; however, due to COVID, the teachers had to post the registration forms on the website and mail them to the parents. A1 stated that although the communication connected to transition changed during COVID, "we found out with Facebook Live, you can communicate with somebody on social media, and a lot of people will watch social media posts or videos if you post on the website or Facebook."

The parents who participated in the study felt that there was less communication due to COVID. P1 mentioned, "With this COVID going on, they really didn't do as much like they usually do [transitioning open house]." P2 felt that during COVID, the school only "reached out once a month [using the school calling post]." They further stated, "I think COVID has caused this delay." P3 noted, "I got it [transition information] through Facebook again just because of how last year ended [with sending students home due to COVID]." P4 stated, "Well, COVID has changed some stuff; everything is virtual and on computers now."

The parents liked the use of technology. P4 said,

When it's on the computer or Facebook or something like that, you can always go back and reference. Yeah, before you know, if you could look at the mail or a phone call, then it will be out of sight out of mind.

One teacher preferred personal interaction with the parents. T3 stated, "I really like the one-on-ones with the parents or just the parents coming in. That's my favorite."

RQ 2: Theme 1

This theme focused on the importance of the school-parent partnership to support the child's educational process. Participants were asked questions regarding school outreach efforts and how these influenced their involvement when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten and why they believe outreach is essential. The teachers, parents, and administrators all mentioned that outreach was a partnership. A 2 stated,

Trying to bring the parents into the educational process, you know, the more that we're working with parents, the more that child is going to learn. And that's why it's so important, you know, where we have parents that know what we're doing. And [when] we know what they're doing, we're better able to reach that child, and that child's going to learn more and achieve more. So, it begins with that outreach into [*sic*] parents and letting them know that "hey, we want you as a part of this process of educating your child."

T3 pointed out, "School outreach efforts help parents, teachers and administrators to be more in tune to how each other feel and feel [*sic*] and what's going on in the classroom, and just everybody understands each other a little bit better."

The parents who participated in the study felt that outreach was an essential part of the educational process. P2 stated,

That's how you build a relationship between the school and parents to make sure the child is ready for the next grade. When I am involved, I know more about my child's education. It will help me know where he is supposed to be and what he is supposed to learn.

P1 mentioned that outreach allowed her to be aware of what her child was learning in the classroom. This was also an opportunity for her, as the parent, to receive resources that could be used to help her child during the transition process. The resources included worksheets, flashcards, and strategies for parents to help their children. P1 stated that it was beneficial to know

what things [regarding outreach] can be helpful so your child can be successful in that class, and [also learn about] different outside material, such as websites that you use to get prepared for your child to help them to be successful.

The responses demonstrated the importance of a partnership between teachers, parents, and administrators and that this is needed to ensure student success. The participants felt that as the child moves from pre-K to kindergarten, that a partnership must be present for a successful transition. The participants also felt that outreach efforts could keep all stakeholders a part of the child's communication process and provide assistance if they are in need.

RQ 2: Theme 2

Pre-COVID, teachers, parents, and administrators felt there was an open-door policy at the school and that they could drop in at any time. This theme reflected the participants' perspectives on how outreach efforts make parents feel and the importance of having a partnership with all stakeholders. Creating a classroom culture where parents feel there is an open-door policy and are allowed to stop by to check on their child is essential. Parents who did not feel that the school culture was inviting resulted in feelings of not being welcomed (see Martin, 2015).

The perspectives shared by the teachers, parents, and administrators provided opportunities to understand how welcome parents feel in their child's school. T 4 believed,

Communication between the teacher and the parent is very important. It lets the parents know where the student stands in the classroom academically. And as far as the behavior, different things like that in the classroom, so we can reach out to the parents and let them know. The key is that it's very important also that the school reach out to families to provide information when their child is transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten.

A2 shared their perspectives on how to make parents feel welcome:

I would say, you know it's more when they're invited in [and] they are feeling more welcome in [the school] . . . I think the parents feel welcome in here. I think that this [the outreach effort] was a good way of getting the parents in and letting

them see that we take every year seriously. Every year is an accomplishment for that child, and we're proud of them.

T3 mentioned the open-door policy that the school had in place before COVID: Parents could come in and drop in at any time. I mean, they were just going to the grocery store, and if they wanted to come in and read to the class or just play with the children during work time. But they would come into parties, they would, you know, come to PTA meetings; they just were welcomed all the time.

P3 shared their perspective on how the school makes them feel welcome:

I feel welcome, you know if you feel like, okay, well, I'm over here [visiting the school] for this, but I used to go eat lunch with my children at least once a month, and if I got to where, you know, I felt like I wasn't welcome or, you know, I wouldn't want to do it.

P5 felt that a partnership is necessary when transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten.

They mentioned,

I think it [a partnership] is important because you can stay on top of the schoolwork and grades. I feel like I can stay on top of my child's grades and know what is going on in the school. I believe it is important because that's how you build a relationship between the school and parents to make sure the child is ready for the next grade.

Three teachers indicated they wanted parents to feel welcome. One administrator stated that there is an open-door policy at the school, and they try to keep this in place for parents. Three parents said that they felt welcome to stop by the school at any time. All

participants believed that parental involvement plays an essential role in a child's life when transitioning from one grade to the next.

RQ 2: Theme 3

Due to the COVID pandemic, there was limited parental involvement and/or engagement with the school. Participants felt that due to this, there were limited outreach efforts regarding parental involvement. This theme reflected how parents had limited their involvement and engagement due to COVID. P2 stated, "I don't feel that the school has really reached out about activities or events this year. I think COVID has caused this delay." T1 mentioned, "With COVID, we haven't been able to do anything with the parents. But since COVID happened, we haven't had parent participation. This year it is zero because we're not allowing parents into the school." P4 commented, "With prior years, the parents were able to come in and be a part of the school year, but they couldn't come in this year." P4 noted, "This year, because of COVID, we did not get to participate. We can watch the PTG meetings on Facebook." P2 felt, "This year, I haven't been able to participate. I guess they are not having events because of COVID." All participants believed that COVID had an impact on parental involvement. T3 summed up, "We haven't had a lot of parent involvement."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I followed the guidelines provided by Walden University's IRB and the research procedures in Chapter 3. This helped to maintain the participants' rights and welfare throughout the study. In addition, I followed established practices for credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study to ensure that my research was rigorous and trustworthy.

Credibility

I used two strategies to establish credibility: member checking and searching for discrepant data. During the member checking process, I shared a 1-page summary of my findings and a copy of supporting data gathered from the interviews. Each participant had the opportunity to review the study's findings to ensure the accuracy of my interpretations. Credibility ensures the accuracy and consistency of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I was not asked to revise any of the results, and all of the participants confirmed them; they did not submit any corrections or challenges. I also looked for discrepant data; however, while analyzing the data, I did not find any discrepancies.

Transferability

Transferability refers to if the research can be generalized to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The researcher must provide thick, rich descriptions of the study and resulting data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I established transferability by giving a detailed description of the data so readers can make a comparison with other contexts to determine if the study is transferable to their situation or not. I created detailed descriptions of the participants by accurately capturing the participants' voices, thoughts, and emotions in the data and the data analysis. I also used direct quotes from the participants to demonstrate that their experiences applied to the context and setting. This ensured their experiences were portrayed in a meaningful way and therefore potentially transferable to other contexts determined by the reader.

Dependability

Dependability is the reliability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I demonstrated dependability in my research by ensuring the data were credible, keeping good records, including the audio recordings, transcripts, and journal entries. Detailed descriptions helped to ensure that the study was logical, traceable, and accurately documented. I provided clear and detailed steps in the research process that supported the dependability of the findings. Member checking also contributed to dependability. This allowed me to share my preliminary analysis with the participants and ask them whether my interpretations were accurate. I provided a detailed description of each step of the process: data collection, data analysis, and the study's findings.

Confirmability

A confirmable study is one that includes objective data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I created interview questions so the participants could share their perspectives to ensure confirmability. I designed the open-ended questions used in the study to probe the aspects of the participants' thoughts and experiences. I addressed my thoughts, feelings, and opinions during and after the interviews and when analyzing the data through journaling. As the sole researcher in this study, the interview questions I drafted were reviewed by a colleague who has been a kindergarten teacher for over 15 years. They reviewed the questions to make sure they were adequate to answer the RQs. I established confirmability of the study's findings by the continuous process of self-reflection and awareness throughout the process. I viewed the study process through my professional background, personal experiences, and socioeconomic background. However, reflexivity

ensured that the study findings were based on the participants' responses and not on my bias.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the themes that answered the two RQs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. I followed Braun and Clarke (2013), six phases of thematic analysis: (a) familiarization, (b) generating the initial codes, (c) create the initial themes, (d) review the initial themes, (e) name and define the themes, and (f) write the final report. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory also helped guide the data analysis process. When I generated codes from which themes emerged, I reflected on how the participants' responses fit this theory.

In response to the first RQ, the participants believed that traditional methods of outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID; however, due to COVID, teachers, parents, and administrators had to reach out to one another in innovative ways. The themes that aligned with the second RQ indicated that the participants felt the outreach efforts pre-COVID gave the school an opportunity to establish a relationship with the parents. This allowed the parents to be informed and engage in their child's education. Pre-COVID parents felt the school had an open-door policy and that they could drop in at any time. Due to COVID, the school experienced limited parental involvement and engagement with the school.

In Chapter 5, I reiterate the purpose and nature of the study. I will discuss and interpret the findings, which will be compared to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework. I will also outline the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. I collected data from 10 participants using Zoom interviews. Using a basic qualitative design allowed me to obtain an understanding of the perspectives of teachers, parents, and administrators regarding outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and what influence these efforts have on parental involvement.

I identified two themes when answering RQ 1:

- Theme 1: Participants believed that traditional methods of outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID.
- Theme 2: Due to COVID, teachers, parents, and administrators had to reach out in innovative ways.

Three themes aligned with RQ 2:

- Theme 1: Participants believed outreach efforts pre-COVID allowed the school to establish a relationship with parents to inform them and engage in their child's education.
- Theme 2: Pre-COVID, parents felt there was an open-door policy and that they could drop in at any time.
- Theme 3: Due to COVID, there was limited parental involvement and/or engagement with the school.

In this chapter, I provide an interpretation of the findings and examine how the results provide a better understanding of the research topic. Chapter 5 includes the research findings and their relationship with the current literature and conceptual framework. In addition, I address the study's implications, limitations, and future recommendations.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretations and findings for this basic qualitative study were based on 10 semistructured interviews, the literature review in Chapter 2, and the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. This study centered around two RQs:

RQ 1: How do teachers, parents, and administrators describe their outreach efforts when transitioning children from pre-K to kindergarten?

RQ 2: What are teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives regarding the influence of outreach efforts on parental involvement?

Five themes emerged and were evaluated based on the data and established codes. The results from this study were guided by and aligned with the conceptual framework and an understanding of the research literature. The findings of this study helped to extend and confirm information regarding perspectives concerning outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement.

Research Question 1: Theme 1

In comparison to outreach efforts during the pandemic, participants believed that the school system's traditional methods of outreach efforts were effectively used pre-COVID. Participants shared that at the beginning of the pandemic, they were required to use technology for all forms of communication and had to learn along with their children how to navigate computers in virtual situations. Teachers and administrators mentioned that during COVID, they had to rethink how they could communicate with parents during the transition process. In some cases, communication outreach efforts led parents and students to become more engaged and increase their ability to understand information (see Velasquez, 2019). Stenhoff et al. (2020) stated that technology and distance delivery had to evolve into many learning management systems during COVID; these instructional delivery systems included Canvas, Google Classroom, Schoology, Webex, and Zoom.

Velasquez (2019) suggested that outreach should include all stakeholders' input and sometimes requires a specialist to help increase outreach attempts. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, a child's development can be affected by everything in their surrounding environment, including communication.

RQ 1: Theme 2

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers, parents, and administrators were required to reach out to one another in innovative ways. Firestien (2020) noted that 20 or 30 years ago, researchers would not have been aware of innovative and creative ways of communicating. The pandemic has forced educators to be creative in their thinking,

changing their basic concepts and experimental practices. The teachers and administrators in this study felt it was still essential to reach out to parents and give them information about the transition process.

Kang et al. (2017) suggested that schools establish strategies to ensure family connections and understand the role of family involvement in the school setting. Although the teachers and administrators wanted to keep the transition process as normal as possible, they still had to make immediate changes to how they reached out to parents. Some of the methods included the school website, having the teachers' personal cell phone numbers, text messaging, Google Classroom, and hosting Facebook Live events. In the past, administrators would take registration packets to pre-K classrooms; however, due to COVID, teachers had to post registration forms on the website and mail them to parents.

Benner and Yan (2015) examined how home-to-school connections have been purposeful during student transition. The study showed that classrooms that are close in proximity to children and their families, and where daily interactions occur, are most likely to be those where parents come into direct contact with educators. Crosnoe and Ansari (2016) noted that transition to school should not be limited to children doing the transitioning but also include adults, such as parents, teachers, and caregivers. The participants believed outreach efforts prior to COVID allowed the school to establish relationships with parents to inform and help them engage in their children's education.

The participants felt that outreach efforts before the pandemic allowed for relationships with parents to keep them informed and engaged. The participants in this

study emphasized the importance of school and family partnerships. They also believed that because of COVID, they could not adequately establish school and parent relationships.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem is a significant part of the child's development. This development consists of guardians and any other supportive family members. In the research done by Choe et al. (2021), findings showed that students have been successful when transitioning when there is involvement from the parents and their home environment

RQ 2: Theme 1

The participants believed outreach efforts pre-COVID allowed the school to establish a relationship with parents to inform them and engage in their child's education. Teachers and administrators spoke of the importance of establishing relationships with parents. All participants mentioned that in the past, the school included parents in their outreach efforts. Avendano and Cho (2020) noted that it is necessary for schools to involve families in their children's education. Therefore, there needs to be open communication between schools and families. Parents should have an active role in planning and decision making regarding their child's educational experiences and should be provided services that will have a positive impact on their child and family (Avendano & Cho, 2020). When parents are informed and engaged, they are able better assist their child.

RQ 2: Theme 2

Pre-COVID, parents felt that the school doors were open to them and that they could drop in at any time. According to Frost and Goldberg (2019), early childhood education is a time for children and their parents to learn about their unique roles in a school. The participants stated that prior to the pandemic, they were allowed to come to the school and be a part of their child's education process; however, with the outbreak of COVID, parents were not allowed to go to the school. Frost and Goldberg mentioned that all should feel welcome in an environment where they spend time. It is vital that parents and families feel welcome when entering an early childhood classroom and their presence appreciated to create enthusiasm about supporting the child and their needs (Frost & Goldberg, 2019).

Although there was an open-door policy at the school prior to COVID, the teachers mentioned they still wanted to provide parents with an opportunity to participate in the school experience. However, teachers did not know how to do this during the pandemic without allowing the parents into the building. Their goal was to create a learning space that was secure and healthy. When students are provided with a safe environment, it helps to promote a healthy learning space (Soskil, 2021).

RQ 2: Theme 3

Due to COVID, there was limited parental involvement and/or engagement with the school. Parental involvement is essential in a child's early education career. Because of restrictions, there has been a rise in virtual learning; therefore, students were required to learn from home during this time. Gustafson and Haque (2020) noted research had

shown that parent and family involvement was a challenge when virtual school was implemented because of interactions with families during this time are minimal. The participants felt that the school did not offer many opportunities for them to be involved. The participants felt that the lack of involvement came from COVID restrictions.

Limitations of the Study

During the early stage of the study, I outlined various limitations with the design and methodology of the study. One limitation was the small sample size of four teachers, four parents, and two administrators who participated in the study. Although the participants came from diverse backgrounds and experiences, there was only a minimal number of participant input, which was limited to one geographic area. The participants that participated in the study were volunteers that met the study's criteria. I was able to collect data from the 10 participants regarding their perspectives related to the RQs. However, I was challenged with participant availability. Often, the participants were available during the day when I was working or late at night.

Another potential limitation for this study was that participants might not respond to the questions honestly and accurately. Because the study was conducted in a small school, this could have prohibited the participants from being completely open and honest when answering the interview questions. Many of the participants mentioned that due to COVID, this was not an ordinary year, and the ways in which the school communicated changed from person to person. As a result, there were many perspectives. Throughout the interviews, I asked the participants to explain their answers. They seemed to have been comfortable and answered the questions honestly and accurately to the best

of their knowledge; the participants' responses were similar throughout the interview process.

Due to COVID-19, teachers and administrators were required to teach in person and virtually as well as manage their normal duties. When answering the interview questions, the participants would often respond by describing how things were done before COVID and fail to note the processes used during COVID. This made it difficult to align the responses to the RQs.

The last limitation previously noted was the potential for personal bias. My bias did not affect the outcome of the study. I worked hard not to allow my thoughts and perspectives interfere with the research and analysis processes. One way I addressed bias was by not having relationships with the participants. I excluded any teachers from the study that were friends or whom I knew. My bias as a kindergarten teacher was considered throughout the study by using a reflective journal during and after the interviews and when analyzing data. I had an expert reviewer with a doctorate in early childhood education examine the final data analysis to check for bias.

Recommendations

I recommend that this study be replicated at other elementary school settings in various parts of the United States to further examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. Expanding the study to various parts of the United States would allow for more perspectives regarding outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these

perspectives may differ among teachers, parents, and administrators in various regions. The perspectives may be different in schools that are not in rural areas. The study could also be replicated in an elementary school that serves and focuses on the diverse demographic or economic backgrounds of the students. This will help to determine whether the perspectives of teachers, parents, and administrators would be similar or vary.

I recommend a follow-up study that includes a larger population of teachers from both rural and urban elementary schools. I also suggest that this be done when the COVID-19 pandemic is over. A comparison of rural and urban elementary schools could possibly provide similar results or additional information that could help determine the perspectives regarding outreach efforts of teachers, parents, and administrators during the transition process from pre-K to kindergarten.

The last recommendation is that all stakeholders come together to develop an outreach plan that allows for all to be reached. This plan could include virtual and technology options as well as the traditional methods of sending items home in the child's folder. Teachers and administrators need to acknowledge the impact that communication has on building a firm foundation for students. This may prevent communication gaps if unforeseen events occur.

Implications

This study contributes to early childhood education by examining teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. This study

may promote positive social change by providing information that could improve outreach efforts between these groups when children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and positively influence parental involvement. This study may lead stakeholders to develop a communication plan that covers all forms of communication. School administrators may also develop a model to address communication strategies that should be used if they are placed in various situations, such as a pandemic.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and how these efforts influence parental involvement. Limited research exists on practice regarding the outreach efforts between these stakeholders. Much of the research is focused on parental involvement. I interviewed 10 participants and explored their perspectives regarding outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and what influence these efforts have on parental involvement.

The findings of this study fill the gap in practice by contributing to an increased understanding of teachers', parents', and administrators' perspectives of outreach efforts as children transition from pre-K to kindergarten and what influence these efforts have on parental involvement. The information gained from this study can be used to better prepare and support this transition and how this positively influences parental involvement. As children transition from pre-K to kindergarten, it is imperative that all stakeholders work together to ensure a successful transition for these students.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol Document

Topic: Outreach Efforts Between Teachers, Parents, and Administrators as Children
Transition from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten

Time of Interview:

Date of Interview:

Interviewee: Administrator _____ Teacher _____ Parent _____

Total years of experience (Administrator/Teacher) _____

Welcome and thank you for your participation today in this interview. My name is Mariah C. McCoy, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting a study: Outreach Efforts Between Teachers, Parents, and Administrators as Children Transition from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten. This interview will take no longer than 45–60 minutes and include several questions regarding your experiences as a (teacher, parent, administrator). I would like your permission to record this interview to document the information you share with me. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used to understand the research topic better.

During the interview, you may feel minor discomforts, such as fatigue and restlessness. To minimize this feeling, you are allowed to have something to drink throughout the interview. You may refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. If, at any time, you need to stop, take a break, or return to a question, please let me know. Please be honest. You may also withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? If not, we will start the interview.

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Parents

Research Question 1: Reasons for Outreach

1. As a parent, what do school outreach efforts mean to you? Why do you believe outreach is important?
2. How did the school administration reach out to you to provide information when your child was transitioning? Can you give me an example? What other way have they reached out during the transition process?
3. When did the school administration reach out to you, and how did they contact you? Where was this in the transition process?
4. How often do/did your child's school reach out to you when transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten? How do/did they contact you? Was there any other time before or after the transition that they reached out or a different way they contacted you?
5. In your opinion, how effective is this way with reaching out? What are your thoughts about this mode of communication? Why was this effective? Or, why was this not effective?
6. What do you think the school could do to consistently reach out to parents during the transition from pre-K to kindergarten? What other forms of communication could they use? What is your preference?

Research Question 2: Perspective on the influence of the outreach efforts on parental involvement

1. What is your perspective on the influence of the outreach efforts on parental involvement? What outreach efforts did the school make to encourage you to get involved? Were there any other ways you were encouraged to be involved with the school?
2. How does the school ask you to be involved? How does this work for your family? Is there any other mode of communication that you would like to see them use or that you would prefer?
3. Why is parental involvement important when students transition from pre-K to kindergarten? How did you participate in the transition process? What did you see as your role in the process?
4. What are some ways you can participate in your child's school?
5. Are there any situations that prevent you from participating in your child's school events?
6. What could the school do to help you be more involved? How would you like to be involved?
7. How did the outreach efforts of the school encourage you to become engaged in the school and in the classroom? Did you feel encouraged or discouraged by their outreach efforts? Please give me an example.
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about this topic?

As needed, follow up questions may include:

- Can you tell me more about. . .
- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- What do you mean by . . .

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Teachers and Administrators

Research Question 1: Reasons for Outreach

1. As a teacher or administrator, what do school outreach efforts mean to you?
Why do you believe outreach is important?
2. How does the school reach out to families to provide information when their child is transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten? Can you give me an example? How has the school reached out during the process?
3. When does the school reach out to parents, and how do they contact families?
When did this occur, and how often during transition?
4. How often does the school reach out to families when transitioning from pre-K to kindergarten? How do they contact families? Was there any other time before or after the transition that the school reached out, or did the school contact parents in another way?
5. In your opinion, how effective is this way with reaching out? Why was this effective, in your opinion?
6. What are your thoughts about this mode of communication? What other forms of communication could the school use? What is your preference?
7. What do you think the school could do to consistently reach out to parents during the transition from pre-K to kindergarten?

Research Question 2: Perspective on the influence of the outreach efforts on parental involvement

1. What is your perspective on the influence of the outreach efforts on parental involvement? What do you think is the most efficient way to encourage parents to get involved?
2. How does the school ask parents to be involved? How well does this work for families? Is there any other mode of communication that you would like to see the school use or that you would prefer?
3. Why is parental involvement important when students transition from pre-K to kindergarten? What do you see as your role in the transition process? What are parent's roles?
4. What are some ways parents are given the opportunity to participate at their child's school? How is this communicated? In your opinion, how effective is this?
5. Are there any situations that you are aware of that prevent families from participating in their child's school events?
6. What could the school do to help families be more involved?
7. How did the outreach efforts of the school encourage families to become engaged in the school and in the classroom? Give an example, please.
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about this topic?

Potential probes may include:

- Can you tell me more about....
- I there anything else you would like to add?
- What do you mean by . . .

Appendix D: Examples of Open Codes

Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Welcome	P3	I feel welcome. You know if you feel like, okay, well, I'm over here for this, but like I used to go eat lunch with my children at least once a month, and if I got to where, you know, I felt like I wasn't welcome or, you know, I wouldn't want to do it. And so, but they've always made me feel welcome, and then even with the outreach, it's like, you know, they're a clue to me and every, you know, like they want us to be involved.
	T1	Usually, the doors are always open. My parents used to just come to the school and say, let me stop by to see how my child is doing, or let me kind of spy on them through a window. Sometimes, parents use [<i>sic</i>]to just [come] by to visit to see how the teacher is doing and how the student is doing. The doors are usually just open for parents to come.
Barriers parental involvement	T2	Before COVID, parents were able to come when they wanted and participate in the class by helping with class parties, reading to the students, and just helping the teachers. This was communicated through newsletters and phone calls. Now parents cannot come in the building.
	A2	Since we're in the middle of COVID right now, I mean they're not allowed in the school, so it's very difficult.
Communication tools outreach	A1	Number one, teachers send a postcard to welcome the students to their class, so everybody in the school gets a postcard that says, "Welcome to Ms. Class," and "We can't wait to see you." That kind of thing.
	A2	In the packet, it explains a lot about our school. It goes ahead and talks about kindergarten and all the things that, you know, we're looking forward to the next year. Along with things like, you know, just filling out an information sheet and making sure that we have all our shots and records and stuff like that and included in it. And then, the process goes from there.

Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Effective communication tools	A2	I think our modes of communication have gotten a lot better. Like I said, we were kind of slow on this, and you know, we've even talked about, you know, putting videos online for parents to watch, and I did do some of that actually during COVID, and I thought that was more effective than things I've been doing before.
	P3	It's very effective. I do often, you know, say about the people, you know, who either don't have Facebook or parents who work in the afternoon, and I mean who really may not get to check their child's stuff. But as for me, it is very effective. It's like I have no complaints about communication with the school this year at all.
Impact COVID	T4	This year parents are not able to come to the school because of COVID.
	P3	So that's how I was before COVID. Now, of course, if you need anything, yeah, let me know if you need supply cleaning supplies. I just try to be as involved as I can without actually being in there.
Outreach efforts	A1	We also have in the past, but we had [a] big shuffle where we will usually have pre-K come and visits [<i>sic</i>] kindergarten for today. It's just kind of a big shuffle because everybody gets to rotate
	T1	But pretty much [we] just to have that open door policy where parents can come and are encouraged to come and "sit with your child," you know, and "stay with your child" for a little while. It is usually the beginning of the year [when] we have orientation. And so, the school plan this: the school allow [<i>sic</i>] the parents to come to our classroom and speak with the teachers. So, this way of communication is pretty [much] how we reach the parent. You know, as a whole and [to] be integrated when they come into the classroom.

Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Perceptions outreach efforts	T3	The school outreach efforts mean to me that it helps for parents and teachers and administrators to be more in tune to how each other feel and feel [<i>sic</i>] and what's going on in the classroom, and just everybody understand each other a little bit better.
	A2	And you know we have to not get [<i>sic</i>] into all our educational talk. I think that as administrators and teachers, sometimes we can come across, as you know, we know more, or you know we're the authorities on something. And when it comes to your child, you're the authority, and we need to empower parents more.
Preferred communication tools	P3	I was able to get my child's teacher's personal cell phone, which I've never had in the past. I've always just been able to write notes or email, so this year I've been able to call her and text her, which is awesome because you get an immediate response.
	A2	I also think the social media pages are so much better than the paper forms or sending a paper home with a kid because that is really the way that people get their information nowadays. You know, I mean people aren't really picking up the newspaper anymore, you know. Even though we'll still put something in there, they're scrolling through their feed and see, and you know, what's on this Facebook page or this website, so I really have [to] think it is a great forum.
Transition process	T1	The letters for kindergarten registration usually happens [<i>sic</i>] in March.
	A1	And we list all the things we do: a lot of our grades [and] send home newsletters and folders every day to stay in touch. I guess really internally, the overall biggest thing, so the big shuffle, [is] staying in touch with the parents [with] our welcome back letters and then open house. Those are the main ways that we communicate with parents when they transition from pre-K to kindergarten.

Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Transportation	T3	I don't know how it would be done, but we could, like, offer some sort of transportation for the parents to come. You know, rent a van and pick up the ones in town, and I don't know about the ones out in the county but the ones, you know, in town. That would be helpful to them. Or just ask any of your parents and your class, "Hey, can [<i>sic</i>] do you need a ride? Can I help you get here?" And see if you could find somebody willing to help them out.
	T4	I think some families do not have transportation.

Appendix E: Examples of Categories, Codes, Participants, and Transcript Excerpts

Category	Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Welcoming	Welcome, open door	P3	I feel welcome, you know if you feel like, okay well, I'm over here for this. But, like, I used to go eat lunch with my children at least once a month, and if I got to where, you know, I felt like I wasn't welcome or, you know, I wouldn't want to do it. And so, but they've always made me feel welcome, and then even with the outreach, it's like, you know, they're a clue to me and every, you know, like they want us to be involved.
		T1	Usually, the doors are always open. My parents used to just come to the school and say, "Let me stop by to see how my child is doing," or "Let me kind of spy on them through a window." Sometimes parents use [<i>sic</i>] to just [stop] by to visit to see how the teacher is doing and how the student is doing. The doors are usually just open for parents to come.
Challenges to PI-Covid	Barriers to parental involvement	T2	Before COVID, parents were able to come when they wanted and participate in the class by helping with class parties, reading to the students, and just helping the teachers. This was communicated through newsletters and phone calls. Now parents cannot come in the building.
		A2	Since we're in the middle of COVID right now, I mean, they're not allowed in the school, so it's very difficult.
		P4	Covid would be the only thing to prevent me from participating in an event.
		T4	This year parents are not able to come to the school because of COVID.

Category	Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
		P3	So that's how I was before COVID. Now, of course, if you need anything, yeah, let me know if you need supply [sic] cleaning supplies. I just try to be as involved as I can without actually being in there.
		P2	I don't feel that the school has really reached out about activities or events this year. I think COVID has caused this delay.
		T1	With COVID, we haven't been able to do anything with the parents. But since COVID happened, we haven't had parent participation. This year it is zero because we're not allowing parents into the school.
		P4	With prior years, the parents were able to come in and be a part of the school year, but they couldn't come in this year.
Communication	Communication tools outreach	A1	Number one: teachers send a postcard to welcome the students to their class, so everybody in the school gets a postcard that says, "Welcome to Ms. Class" and, "We can't wait to see you, that kind of thing.
		A2	In the packet, it explains a lot about our school. It goes ahead and talks about kindergarten and all the things that, you know, we're looking forward to the next year. Along with things like, you know, just filling out an information sheet and making sure that we have all our shots and records and stuff like that and included in it. And then the process goes from there.

Category	Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Effective outreach tools	Effective communication tools	A2	I think our modes of communication have gotten a lot better. Like I said, we were kind of slow on this, and you know, we've even talked about, you know, putting videos online for parents to watch. And I did do some of that, actually, during COVID, and I thought that was more effective than things I've been doing before.
		P3	It's very effective. I do often, you know, say about the people, you know, who either don't have Facebook or parents who work in the afternoon, and I mean who really may not get to check their child's stuff. But, as for me, it is very effective; it's like I have no complaints about communication with the school this year at all.
		T3	I think this is effective.
Importance of outreach efforts	Outreach efforts	A1	We also have, in the past, but we had [a] big shuffle where we will usually have pre-K come and visits [<i>sic</i>] kindergarten for today. It's just kind of a big shuffle because everybody gets to rotate.
		T1	But pretty much [we] just to have that open door policy where parents can come and are encouraged to come and "sit with your child," you know, and "stay with your child for a little while." It is usually the beginning of the year [when] we have orientation. And so, the school plan this: the school allow [<i>sic</i>] the parents to come to our classroom and speak with the teachers. So, this way of communication is pretty [much] how we reach the parent. You know, as a whole and [to] be integrated, when they come into the classroom.

Category	Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Teachers' parents' and administrators' perceptions of outreach efforts	Perceptions outreach efforts	T3	The school outreach efforts mean to me that it helps for parents and teachers and administrators to be more in tune to how each other feel [<i>sic</i>] and feel and what's going on in the classroom and just everybody understand each other a little bit better.
		A2	And you know, we have to not get [<i>sic</i>] into all our educational talk. I think that as administrators and teachers, sometimes we can come across as, you know, we know more, or you know we're the authorities on something, and when it comes to your child, you're the authority, and we need to empower parents more.
Communication	Preferred communication tools	P3	I was able to get my child's teacher's personal cell phone, which I've never had. In the past, I've always just been able to write notes or email, so this year I've been able to call her and text her, which is awesome because you get immediate response.
		A2	I also think the social media pages are so much better than the paper forms or sending a paper home with a kid because that is really the way that people get their information nowadays. You know, I mean people aren't really picking up the newspaper anymore, you know. Even though we'll still put something in there, they're scrolling through their feed and see, and you know, what's on this Facebook page or this website, so I really have [to] think it is a great forum.

Category	Code	Participant	Transcript Excerpt
Outreach before COVID	Transition process	T1	The letters for kindergarten registration usually happens [<i>sic</i>] in March.
		A1	And we list all the things we do: a lot of our grades [and] send home newsletters and folders every day to stay in touch. I guess really internally, the overall biggest thing, so the big shuffle, [is] staying in touch with the parents [with] our welcome back letters and then open house. Those are the main ways that we communicate with parents when they transition from pre-K to kindergarten.
		A2	We do a pretty good job there [with outreach] because we do have a counselor. So, even if our teachers have a hard time contacting parents, the counselor will help. The front office workers [help] a lot of times. If we don't know how to get in touch with a parent, one of them will know how.
Challenges not COVID related	Transportation/access	T3	I don't know how it would be done, but we could, like, offer some sort of transportation for the parents to come. You know, rent a van and pick up the ones in town, and I don't know about the ones out in the county but the ones, you know, in town. That would be helpful to them. Or just ask any of your parents and your class, "Hey, can [<i>sic</i>] do you need a ride? Can I help you get here?" And see if you could find somebody willing to help them out.
		T4	I think some families do not have transportation.