2020

Teacher and Parent Perspectives of Including Preschool Children with Disabilities in General Education

Charissa Palazzo
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Charissa Palazzo

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Tammy Hoffman, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Billie Andersson, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Karen Hunt, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Teacher and Parent Perspectives of Including Preschool Children with Disabilities in

General Education

by

Charissa Palazzo

MA, EdL, Thomas Edison University, 2014

MAT, St. Peter's College, 1996

BA, Rutgers University, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2020

Abstract

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act brought about initiatives to educate students with disabilities in mainstream settings as frequently as possible. Although the policy trend is moving toward inclusive education, preschool children with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in mainstream early childhood classes. This study was conducted to explore the perspectives of parents and teachers about the inclusion of preschool students with disabilities in general education classes. This qualitative case study was grounded in the social model of disability, which asserts that individuals with disabilities are hindered more by their environment than by their disability. The research questions were designed to gain an understanding of parent and teacher perspectives as they relate to providing equal opportunities in education for young children with disabilities. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 10 parents and 10 teachers, as well as observations of preschool inclusive classrooms. Data were coded and analyzed for common themes. Based on the data analysis, major themes emerged that included parents and teachers. Parents and teachers generally looked favorably on including preschool children with disabilities into general education. Among parents, the theme of meeting the needs of diverse learners was apparent throughout the study. The recurring theme among teachers was the need for support when including children with behavioral disabilities. This study has the potential to affect positive social change by shedding light on the importance of the perspectives of crucial stakeholders when designing inclusive preschool programs to enhance learning for all students.

Teacher and Parent Perspectives of Including Preschool Children with Disabilities in

General Education

by

Charissa Palazzo

MA, EdL, Thomas Edison University, 2014

MAT, St. Peter's College, 1996

BA, Rutgers University, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2020

Dedication

My mother, my rock and my fighter of a brutal and courageous battle, this dissertation is dedicated to you.

Thank you to my mother in-law, Anna. Your prayers, sense of humor, and wisdom have made a huge impact on me throughout this process. Being with you reminds me to keep praying, stay right-sized, and never take myself too seriously. To Cathy, my classmate and sounding board. I am grateful to now call you friend. To Denise and Debbie, you girls brought a brightness into our lives that helped keep my spirit positive through this past year. To my friends Kat, Joann and Annemarie, your friendship has meant so much to me over many years. You always cheered me on while reminding me to set time aside for my own sanity. I have been blessed by God with an innumerable number of loved ones who have been with me on this journey. If I didn't acknowledge you, I promise you were not forgotten. Please know that I appreciate you and that you truly matter to me. Thanks to each one of you all and may you all be blessed.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The right to a free, appropriate public education was nonexistent for students with disabilities until 1975. The *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954 ensured the educational rights of minority students, and as the civil rights movement in schools ensued, students with disabilities began to reap the benefits (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). Twenty years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the United States Supreme Court passed PL-94-142 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), which mandated a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998). In 1997, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which evolved into an initiative to educating students with disabilities in the same setting as their typical peers in what was deemed the *least restrictive environment*. Prior to the reauthorization, all students with disabilities were typically educated in self-contained, segregated classrooms, where they depended on one another for social interactions and academic discourse.

Today, students with disabilities have a continuum of educational placement options available to them, ranging from fully segregated to partially segregated to fully included in general education settings. Preschool children with disabilities are entitled to the same continuum of services (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). According to the Division of Early Childhood Education (2015), a preschool child who is found eligible for special education will be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum, as much as possible, yet the majority spend their school day segregated from their typical peers.

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education reiterated IDEA's (2004) goal that all preschool children with disabilities should have the same opportunities for high-quality early childhood programs with high expectations for learning outcomes. According to the National Council on Disabilities (2018), "the driving force behind a student's educational experience might be an understanding of roles and the attitudes that educators have about adult responsibilities and expectations for student outcomes" (p. 34). Gaining a better understanding of the perspectives of teachers may provide school leaders with new ideas for promoting a positive view of inclusion to be shared schoolwide.

In this study, I investigated the perspectives that two major stakeholders, parents and teachers, have about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education settings. While there are many reasons for preschool children with disabilities being underrepresented in general education, the perspectives of parents and teachers may serve to provide a piece of the puzzle as to why the underrepresentation is occurring (Lawrence, Smith, & Banerjee, 2016). This study has the potential to affect positive social change by shedding light on the importance of the perspectives of crucial stakeholders when designing inclusive preschool programs. Stakeholders who may benefit from this study include preschool students with disabilities, parents, teachers, and school administrators.

The research took place in New Jersey, in a school district that receives federal funding to provide high-quality preschool services to all children ages 3 and 4. This state has been identified by the Department of Education as one of the lowest in the nation for the inclusion of students with disabilities. While the national average is 62%, only 44%

of students with disabilities in this state spend most of their school day with typical peers (New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education, 2016).

For this qualitative research, I conducted interviews with five regular education preschool teachers and five special education preschool teachers to gain an understanding of what proficiencies and supports are required to effectively implement inclusion on the preschool level. Using purposive sampling, I recruited 10 parent participants who were identified as having children with and without disabilities who attend the preschool inclusion program in the district. The parent participants consisted of five parents or guardians of preschool children with disabilities and five parents or guardians of typically developing preschool children. Interviews were conducted with the parents to gain an understanding of their beliefs about including preschool children into general education settings and what supports they believe are required for teachers and schools to effectively implement inclusion on the preschool level and what barriers prevent inclusion.

This study has the potential to affect positive social change by shedding light on the importance of the perspectives of crucial stakeholders when designing inclusive preschool programs. An understanding of parent perspectives may serve to assist educators with the creation of high-quality, successful inclusive preschool programs, while addressing any potential barriers to the success of inclusive preschool programs. Similarly, the teacher perspective can serve as a planning tool for building successful inclusion programs on the preschool level. Teacher perspectives may provide school officials with an inside view of how inclusion is implemented in the classroom, what

aspects make the implementation of inclusion successful, and what tools and supports

teachers feel they are lacking in the implementation of inclusion on the preschool level.

This research may also be a basis for future researchers who are seeking to identify what

is needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general

education settings.

Background

Prior to the reauthorization of IDEA, children with disabilities were often placed

into segregated settings away from their typically developing peers (Lee, Yeung, Tracey,

& Barker, 2015). Today, the United States Department of Education is calling for

schools to educate all children, including preschool children with disabilities, in the same

setting as their typically developing peers (U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services, U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The Least Restrictive Environment

(LRE) movement has affirmed the assertions from the National Association for the

Education of Young Children that preschool children with disabilities need to be exposed

to peer models to build their social/emotional development, language skills, and to foster

a sense of belonging (Lawrence et al., 2016).

Teacher buy-in is one of the most important aspects of inclusion (Bialka, 2017).

Teacher buy-in is influenced by many factors (Muccio, Kidd, White, & Burns, 2014).

Danner and Fowler (2015) found that preschool teachers charged with including children

with disabilities felt unprepared and that they lacked the knowledge needed. Muccio et

al. (2014) also identified professional development and administrative support as

influential to teacher perspectives. Exploring the perspectives teachers have about

including preschool children with disabilities into general education will help to identify what teachers feel are the needed supports and proficiencies to effectively implement a successful inclusion experience for children.

Another major factor in the successful implementation of inclusion is parental support. Parents need to feel like important contributors in their children's education (Sira, Maine, & McNeil, 2018). The research of Goldman and Burke (2017) showed that parents believe the decision has already been made in matters of placement of their children with disabilities. If parents are not part of the process of selecting the most appropriate educational placement for their children, it is close to impossible for them share the ownership and responsibility involved with their children's education (Banerjee, Sundeen, Hutchinson, & Jackson, 2017). Sira et al. (2018) found that because parental support is a key factor in a successful inclusion program, parents should be provided with educational opportunities, parent-school partnerships, and a positive portrayal of inclusion from the classroom teachers and school staff. Understanding parent perspectives may serve to identify strengths and weaknesses as to parental involvement with class placement and implementation of inclusive practices.

The movement toward full inclusion for all preschool children and the limited research of parent and teacher perspectives are the gaps in literature that this study was designed to address. This study is important to education because parent and teacher perspectives affect the implementation of inclusion and their attitudes affect the student's beliefs about themselves and their abilities (Bernatzky & Cid, 2018). Schools must understand how to address parent and teacher perspectives and misconceptions before

moving forward with designing an inclusion program in which children feel they belong (Sheppard, 2017).

Problem Statement

The problem that compelled this study is that there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings, with nearly one-fourth of preschool children with disabilities being placed in self-contained classes separate from their typically developing peers (Lawrence et al., 2016). The National Association for the Education of Young Children asserts that inclusion in the general education classroom is the best practice for educating preschool children with disabilities (Hilbert, 2014). Additionally, in a joint statement, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2015) called for all preschool children with disabilities to be provided access to high-quality inclusive educational programs so that they may be afforded the same opportunities as their peers without disabilities. Despite the recommendations of early childhood experts and advocates, fewer than half of preschool children with disabilities in the United States are educated in fully inclusive classes with their typical peers, as opposed to separate self-contained classes or partial inclusion classes (Barton & Smith, 2015).

Lalvani (2015) identified parent support and teacher buy-in as key factors in successfully implementing inclusive education on the preschool level. While teacher buy-in is crucial to the implementation of preschool inclusion, there is limited research that explores the beliefs of preschool teachers regarding the perceived competencies and supports needed to successfully include children with disabilities into the mainstream

(Muccio et al., 2014). While the support of all parents involved in inclusive preschool classes is essential, there is limited research that explores how parents of preschool children with and without disabilities perceive the implementation of inclusive preschool practices (Sira et al., 2018).

This study took place within a Pre-K- Grade 6 school district in New Jersey. In August 2018, the district was granted $2 million dollars in federal funding to offer free, full-day preschool to every 3- and 4-year-old child living in the municipality (New Jersey Department of Education, 2017). Expanding the population of typically developing preschool children should provide the school district with more opportunities to offer fully inclusive educational settings for preschool children with disabilities. Currently, when a preschool child is found eligible for special education and related services, the Child Study Team (CST) considers the continuum of services and evaluation results to determine whether the child should be educated in a self-contained setting, a partial inclusion setting, or a fully inclusive setting (New Jersey Department of Education, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to an understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (Lawrence, Smith, & Banerjee, 2016).

I interviewed parents to gain an understanding of what they believe inclusion means and whether they are in support of inclusion on the preschool level. I presented more in-depth interview questions to determine the factors that influence their support or lack of support of including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings. I used interviews to obtain the perspectives of regular education and special education preschool teachers about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings. Ultimately, I conducted this qualitative case study research to contribute to the understanding of what factors may be involved in the underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (see Lawrence et al., 2016).

Research Questions

With the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind and LRE, educating children with disabilities in the mainstream setting is becoming a priority among school districts across the country (La Placa, Corlyon, Axford, & Axford, 2014). Parents and teachers are two of the greatest influential factors in the successful implementation of inclusive practices (Lalvani, 2015). My study was steered by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of parents of preschool children with disabilities about educating their children in a general education preschool setting?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of parents of nondisabled preschool children about educating children with disabilities in a general education preschool setting?

RQ3: What are special education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

RQ4: What are regular education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

Conceptual Framework

The qualitative inquiry in this dissertation study was explored through the framework of the social model of disability (Oliver, 1990), which asserts that individuals with disabilities are hindered by their environment. The social model of disability first emerged in 1990, with Oliver bringing the model to the forefront of research (Oliver, 1990). Oliver (1990) contended that disabilities were being studied from a medical standpoint instead of from a sociological perspective. This phenomenon was noted to be a hindrance to the population of individuals with disabilities, because all the research was focused on the etiology of the disability rather than how individuals with disabilities can function in a world made for able-bodied people (Oliver, 1990).

One of the barriers to children with disabilities being educated in inclusive settings is often the perspective of teachers who believe children with disabilities are unable to function in the mainstream because they are unable to do what typically developing children can do (Olson & Ruppar, 2017). Oliver (1990) found that the limitations faced by individuals with disabilities are rooted solely in the limitations placed on them by society, such as physical accommodations and limited expectations

that society has on individuals with disabilities. The social model of disability outlines the problem that students with disabilities are often placed in self-contained educational settings because the supports and accommodations are not readily available in general education classes (Rees, 2017).

Lalvani (2015) suggested that a teacher's perspective of disabilities can profoundly influence the way they approach their students and the expectations they have for the students. Similarly, if parents view their child's disability as a stigma, their willingness to participate in their children's education may be compromised (Lalvani, 2015). I designed the research questions in this study to examine the issue of preschool inclusion through the lens of the social model of disability. Interviews with teachers and follow-up teacher observations may help to identify how general education and special education teachers perceive inclusion and what factors may contribute to their expectations of students with disabilities and to the implementation of inclusive practices. Interviews with parents of preschool children with and without disabilities may provide information as to how parents perceive the practice of educating children with disabilities in fully inclusive settings. An understanding of teacher and parent perspectives may inform the school leadership's approach to fostering the universal belief of inclusion policies that any child can learn alongside their peers if given the tools they need (U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).

Nature of the Study

In August 2018, a school district in a New Jersey, the research site, obtained $2 million dollars in federal funding to provide high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-

old children who reside in the community at no cost to the families. The preschool expansion grant presented the district with more opportunities for including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings, as class numbers rose from six classes to 16 classes. Historically, the research site has offered self-contained special education preschool classes in addition to fully inclusive preschool classes taught by dually certified teachers. Within the research site, there are dissenting opinions among stakeholders on the practice of educating children with disabilities in fully inclusive settings. Some stakeholders believe that children with disabilities should remain self-contained in special education classes, while others believe that every child should be included in the regular education setting (director of special services, director of curriculum, supervisor of preschool programs, personal communication, September 7, 2018). The mandates of the new preschool expansion grant do not require teachers to be dually certified, and many of the teachers hired for the new classes are certified in P-3 only (personal communication, August 30, 2018).

The U.S. Department of Education (2016) recommends that, to every extent possible, children should be educated with their typical peers. Research suggests that two critical components of implementing successful inclusion are teacher buy-in and parental support (Lalvani, 2015). The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to the understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (see Lawrence et al., 2016).

To answer the research questions, I used a qualitative case study approach. Qualitative research investigates people in their natural environment and how they experience the phenomenon being studied (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I interviewed parents of children with and without disabilities, with the stipulation that their child is currently enrolled in a preschool inclusion class. I obtained data through semi structured interviews. Information obtained in a qualitative interview can answer research questions if the questions are formulated in alignment with the inquiry (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I analyzed the data from interviews and teacher observations using open and thematic coding. To obtain teacher perspectives, I conducted semi structured interviews with five regular education preschool teachers and five special education preschool teachers who are currently teaching preschool at the research site. The special education teachers work in self-contained preschool classes and the regular education teachers work in regular education classes, where a small portion of their students have individualized education programs (IEPs).

In addition to semi structured interviews, I conducted formal observations of the teachers during structured times (circle time, small group lesson) to obtain a better picture of how the teachers' responses to interview questions are reflected in their approach to the students. The focus of the observations was solely on teachers and the way they interact with their students. No individual or identifiable behaviors of students were documented or reported. I collected data as an external observer, using field notes and Creswell's observation protocol (Appendix C). I used my field notes to code the data with open and thematic coding. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that field notes

provide researchers with data to provide richer data analysis. I will fully detail the methodology of this study in Chapter 3.

Definitions

I used the terms defined below in this study. Some terms are specific to the state of New Jersey, where I conducted the study, and are indicated as such.

Child Study Team/IEP Team: The Child Study Team (CST), or IEP team, is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of school employees who participate in the location, identification, evaluation, and placement of students with potential disabilities (Weaver & Ouye, 2015).

Inclusion/Inclusive: Inclusion refers to the practice of educating students with disabilities in the same setting as their typically developing peers for the entire school day or at least 80% of the school day (Jenson, 2018).

Individualized Education Program (IEP): Any student who is found eligible for special education and related services will receive an IEP, which is a legally binding document that outlines results from evaluations, placement recommendations, and related services recommendations (Weaver & Ouye, 2015).

Least Restrictive Environment: The least restrictive environment refers to the practice of educating students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers (Brock, 2018).

Preschool Child with a Disability: A child between the ages of three and five who experience developmental delay (33rd percentile delay in one area or 25th percentile delay in two or more areas) in the following areas: (a) physical, (b) cognitive, (c)

communication, (d) social/emotional, and (e) adaptive (New Jersey Department of Education, 2016).

Preschool Expansion Grant:

In December 2014, the New Jersey Department of Education announced that New Jersey was selected to receive a federal grant to provide quality preschool to more than 2,300 children in 17 communities. New Jersey was one of 18 states selected to receive a Preschool Development Grant of up to $17.5 million a year, to be renewed annually for up to four years. The grants are being awarded jointly by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (New Jersey Department of Education, 2017)

Self-Contained: A self-contained class is an educational setting in which students with disabilities are educated in a separate class, removed from their nondisabled peers (Brock, 2018).

Typically Developing Children: This term is used to categorize children who are nondisabled (Morgan, White, Bullmore, & Vertes, 2018).

Assumptions

The first assumption of this study was that all participants provided honest responses to interview questions. This assumption was necessary in the context of this study because I designed the interview questions to inform the research questions. The second assumption of this study was that the participants selected were representative of the population of parents and teachers at the research location. This assumption was necessary in the context of this study because the entire population of teachers and

parents was too large to participate in this case study. Lastly, I assumed that the participants were aware of the purpose of the study and offered accurate information relative to the research questions.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope and delimitations of this study were limited to parent and teacher perspectives of including preschool children with disabilities into general education classes. I delimited this study to only include preschool teachers who work with preschool children with disabilities and parents of preschool children who are enrolled in inclusive preschool classes. I limited this study to one school district in a suburban town in the state of New Jersey. I engaged with participating parents in individual formal interviews regarding their perspectives of including preschool children with disabilities into general education classes. I engaged with participating teachers in individual formal interviews regarding their perspectives of including preschool children with disabilities into general education classes. Additionally, I asked the participating teachers to agree to be observed interacting with the students in their classrooms.

I viewed the research problem of the underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education through the lens of teachers and parents. The research questions and interview questions were designed to address the aspect of how two major sets of stakeholders perceive inclusion on the preschool level. I chose this specific focus because research shows that parent and teacher buy-in and expectations play significant roles in the successful implementation of educating individuals with disabilities alongside their typical peers (see Lalvani, 2015). The research location was

one school district in the state of New Jersey that is unique because it is one of 17 districts in one state that is receiving funding for preschool expansion. Therefore, this study may not be easily generalized to other schools in New Jersey or the United States.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that the findings may be difficult to generalize because the participants were limited to 10 teachers and 10 parents within a New Jersey school district. What minimizes this challenge is that IDEA requires the provision of inclusive education for all students with disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate (see United States Department of Education, 2004). Therefore, a study that investigates the perspectives that parents and teachers have about educating preschool children with disabilities in general education settings could be conducted in any part of the United States public education system.

Another limitation is my role as the researcher. For the past 15 years, I have been working at the research location as a CST member who is in daily contact with the director of special education. Though I do not hold a supervisory role, my frequent contact with supervisors and administrators may have the potential to influence the way participants respond to my questions, as they may provide responses that they believe I want to hear instead of stating their truth. I addressed this limitation by reminding the participants that their identities are confidential and that their responses were only be used for the purpose of this research.

Significance

I conducted this study to help fill the gap in research by exploring what parents and teachers think about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes. While teacher buy-in is crucial to the implementation of preschool inclusion, there is limited research that explores the beliefs of preschool teachers regarding the perceived competencies and supports needed to successfully include children with disabilities into the mainstream (Muccio et al., 2014). While the support of all parents involved in inclusive preschool classes is essential, there is limited research that explores how parents of preschool children with and without disabilities perceive the implementation of inclusive preschool practices (Sira et al., 2018). I asked teachers to share what they believe to be the proficiencies and supports needed to implement inclusion on the preschool level and parents of children attending preschool to share their feelings and conceptions about including children with special needs. This research has the potential to contribute to informed decision making, which may allow for more preschool children with disabilities to have greater access to an inclusive education (Sira et al., 2018).

This research may support professional education practice by using qualitative data to identify the supports needed for preschool children with disabilities to be included into general education settings (Muccio et al., 2014). In response to the federal mandates to educate students in the LRE (IDEA, 2004), this study has the potential to affect positive social change by contributing to an increase in the number of preschool children with disabilities who are educated with their typical peers.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to the understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (Lawrence et al., 2016). The problem to be addressed is that despite federal legislation calling for inclusive education and the support of organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, preschool children with disabilities are underrepresented in general education classes. A large percentage of preschool children with disabilities are segregated into self-contained educational settings where they are denied access to their typically developing peers (Lawrence et al., 2016).

Parent support and teacher buy-in have been identified as key factors in successfully implementing inclusive education on the preschool level (Lalvani, 2015). I designed the research questions to obtain parents' perspectives of inclusion on the preschool level and teachers' perspectives of the supports and proficiencies needed to implement inclusive education on the preschool level. A better understanding of parent and teacher perspectives may help guide school leaders to improve their inclusive practices and promote a shared philosophy that supports educating young children with disabilities in the same setting as their typically developing peers.

Chapter 1 consisted of the presentation of the problem statement, the significance of the problem, a brief history of inclusive education, the nature of the study, and the conceptual background on which I based my study. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the

literature that includes the history of inclusive education, the social model of disability, teacher perspectives of inclusive education, and parent perspectives of inclusive education. Chapter 3 is an outline of my qualitative methodology, including research design and rationale, the setting for the study, participant selection, and data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter 4 will consist of a presentation of the results, including my reflections and conclusions, as well as evidence of trustworthiness. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will present the interpretations of my findings, limitations of my study, recommendations and implications for future research, as well as the influence that my study may have on social change.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem that compels this study is that there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings, with nearly one-fourth of preschool children with disabilities being placed in self-contained classes separate from their typically developing peers (see Lawrence et al., 2016). Lalvani (2015) identified parent support and teacher buy-in as key factors in successfully implementing inclusive education on the preschool level. While teacher buy-in is crucial to the implementation of preschool inclusion, there is limited research that explores the beliefs of preschool teachers regarding the perceived competencies and supports needed to successfully include children with disabilities into the mainstream (Muccio et al., 2014). While the support of all parents involved in inclusive preschool classes is essential, there is limited research that explores how parents of preschool children with and without disabilities perceive the implementation of inclusive preschool practices (Sira et al., 2018).

The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to the understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (Lawrence et al., 2016). I interviewed parents to gain an understanding of what they believe inclusion means and whether they are in support of inclusion on the preschool level. I presented more in-depth interview questions to determine the factors that influence their support or lack of support of including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings. I

used interviews to obtain the perspectives of regular education and special education preschool teachers about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into mainstream settings. Ultimately, I conducted this qualitative case study research to provide a partial understanding into why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (see Lawrence et al., 2016).

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the literature search strategy, research related to the social model of disability, and a literature review of the key concepts and variables related to the topic of preschool inclusion. In alignment with the research questions, subchapters of the literature review will include research regarding the history of inclusion in the United States, the importance of preschool education, factors related to parent and teacher perspectives of inclusion, the benefits of preschool inclusion, the barriers to preschool inclusion, and the implementation of preschool inclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

To obtain scholarly literature for this study, I used search engines within the Walden library as well as Google, ERIC, and YouTube. The Walden library was my most frequently utilized source of information, where I searched for peer-reviewed articles through Education Source, Sage Journals, and Taylor and Francis online. Using my search terms, I narrowed the search to include articles written within the last 5 years of 2019, which is my anticipated completion year. Search terms that I used include but are not limited to (a) *preschool inclusion*, (b) *parent perspectives of preschool inclusion*, (c) *teacher perspectives of preschool inclusion*, (d) *disabled preschool children in*

mainstream settings, and (e) *inclusive education for young children*. I also omitted the

preschool descriptor to yield broader results. I later began to peruse the references of

current articles related to my study and was able to glean additional literature. I used

Google to visit the United States Department of Education and the New Jersey

Department of Education websites to obtain critical information pertaining to laws,

policies, initiatives, and best practices.

Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation

The conceptual framework of this research study is the social model of disability

(Oliver, 1990). The social model of disability informs the importance of how disabilities

are perceived and how society formulates its expectations of individuals with disabilities.

Oliver (1990) suggested that society's perspective of individuals with disabilities is more

of a limitation than the disability itself. In 2013, Oliver reaffirmed the position that

individuals with disabilities are hindered by the barriers in their environment, and he

called for reform in the way society views disabilities and provides equal access to

education and employment. Levitt (2017) argued that the social model of disability

leaves questions unanswered that can impact the way individuals with disabilities are

perceived and barriers are eradicated. Three questions should be asked before promoting

the social model of disability:

(1) Which aspects of the negative influence of society on disability (other than barriers to

inclusion) are particularly worth focusing on and how can these be effectively addressed?

(2) What ways of using the model (apart from a practical tool) seem promising and how

can these ways be fruitfully implemented? (3) To which groups of people (other than

disability professionals in developed countries) is it important to disseminate the model

and how can it be conveyed effectively? (Levitt, 2017, p.592)

Levitt (2016) called for the social model of disability to be refined so that the concept of

accommodation for individuals with disabilities is not simply a fruitless concept. I

designed the research questions for this study to address some of the key points of

Levitt's outcry to substantiate the practices of those who support the social model of

disability.

Rees (2017) examined the social model of disability as a perspective to be taken

into account by medical professionals. In medicine, a disability is viewed as an

impairment of the body or intellect, and treatment is prescribed based on the impairment

of the individual. The approach to viewing the disability as the primary focus is

considered the medical model of disability (Rees, 2017). Supporters of the social model

of disability believe that the disability or impairment of the individual is only a fraction

of what prevents them from accessing the world as non-disabled people do. In the social

model of disability, environmental factors and society's perception are the keys to a

successful, fulfilling life for the individual with a disability. In education, stakeholders

who view disabilities through the social model believe that with the right individualized

accommodations, students with disabilities can be successful in any educational setting

(Haegele & Hodge, 2016).

In research, not all teachers believe in the social model of disability. However,

most parents of children with disabilities strongly support the social model of disability.

In a qualitative study, Lalvani (2015) found that teachers were more oriented towards the

view that disabilities are permanent conditions that hinder an individual's life. In stark contrast, parents aligned their views with the social model of disability, asserting that their children's primary limitations were the lack of environmental supports needed for equal access to education (Lalvani, 2015). Parents of children with disabilities often employ the social model of disability when their children are faced with stigma and exclusion from the norm, asserting the belief that children with disabilities should be entitled to the same opportunities as non-disabled children (Manago, Davis, & Goar, 2017). Haegele and Hodge (2016) found that teachers who are oriented to the social model of disability interact with their students with disabilities in a positive, holistic manner, ensuring that each student has what they need to be successful. When designing inclusive educational programs, it is important for school leadership to acknowledge and understand the philosophical variation among the essential groups of stakeholders so that a shared philosophy can be created.

The social model of disability is centered in the constructivist view that what is learned about the world is learned through human experiences, values, and our personal interactions (Gallagher, Connor, & Fierri, 2014). Disabilities, as viewed by the constructivist, are individual characteristics, as opposed to conditions that prevent individuals from sharing the same experiences as their non-disabled peers (Gallagher, Connor, & Fierri et al., 2014). In the social model of disability, it is posited that non-disabled individuals can learn from individuals with disabilities by learning how they view the world and navigate through challenges (Kattari, Lavery, & Hasche, 2017). In a classroom, the social model of disability inspires schools to create an environment in

which different types of learners can flourish, as opposed to modifying the norm for students with disabilities (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017). Examining the perspectives of parents and teachers is a first step in understanding what external factors may be influencing the way students with disabilities are viewed and how we may be able to eradicate some of the external impairments faced by those who learn differently.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

The Importance of Early Childhood Education

Research indicates that the ages between birth and 5 years old are critical developmental points for children (Wertlieb, 2018). During those years, children are learning to talk, walk, and interact with the world around them. Theorists such as Piaget and Bandura highlighted key influences in childhood development, such as methods by which they are taught, interpersonal relationships, and peer modeling (Fink, 2014). In 1965, the first federally funded early childhood Head Start program was created to provide educational opportunities to impoverished young children at risk of academic failure (Vinovskis, 2005). This initiative resulted from the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which called for a closure in the achievement gap among students from low income households. Scores of research highlighting preschool outcomes in the following years strengthened the U.S. Department of Education's commitment to early childhood education (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.).

Decades of research have shown that preschool education can improve individual outcomes in every domain of development throughout a child's life (Bierman & Torres,

2016). Ansari's (2018) research revealed that children who attended preschool programs at age 4 consistently showed higher achievement testing outcomes through elementary school. Results of a research conducted between 1960 and 2016 indicated that youngsters who participated in early childhood programs showed lower incidences of special education referrals and retention as well as increased graduation rates (McCoy et al., 2017). The early years of a child's life are meant for the development of creativity, relationship building, and love of learning. The preschool experience can have a lasting effect on the experiences children have in kindergarten and beyond.

Intervention in early childhood is a highly preventative tool for children with early signs of cognitive and linguistic delays. "As skill begets skill, so does disability beget disability" (Muschkin, Ladd, Dodge, & National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, 2015, p. 4). Early identification and intervention are a benefit to society, as children who receive early intervention were found to need fewer medical and therapeutic services over the course of their life as those who did not receive early intervention (Cloet, Leys, & De Meirleir, 2017). Environmental factors also play an important role in the importance of early childhood education, as children enter school from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Pelatti, Dynia, Logan, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2016). The preschool experience allows for children from all walks of life and all developmental levels to be exposed to the school experience before entering kindergarten (Pelatti et al., 2016).

Another benefit of early childhood education has been found to be in the area of social emotional learning (SEL). Preschool through kindergarten are the grade levels in

which more focus is placed on SEL than in any other grade (McClelland, Tominey, Schmitt, & Duncan, 2017). For most children, the preschool class is the first formalized setting where children begin to learn about friendships, empathy, and cooperation (Wertlieb, 2018). Positive preschool experiences have been instrumental in preventing children from engaging in antisocial behavior through their early teen years (Schindler et al., 2015). Behavior and socialization are essential skills that cannot be taught from a textbook. The nature of early childhood education is that the setting allows for children to learn social skills through trial and error, preparing them for their future years in school.

Since 1965, when the first federally funded Head Start center was opened in the United States, scores of educators and researchers have supported the movement for early childhood education (Bierman & Torres, 2016). As a preventative measure, early childhood education has yielded higher graduation rates, fewer special education referrals, and reduced disciplinary incidents (McCoy et al., 2017). In addition, children who attend early childhood programs can be exposed to high-quality education before entering kindergarten (Pelatti, Dynia, Logan, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2016). Researchers and lawmakers agree that early childhood education is a vital experience that has the potential to impact a child's development for years to come.

History of Inclusion and Successful Implementation of Inclusion

Since its inception in 1975, the mission of IDEA has shifted from the acceptance of students with disabilities in schools to the meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities in schools. Since 1990, the number of students receiving special education

services has increased from 2 million to by 4.6 million (Bialka, 2017). The

reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 brought about specific guidelines and requirements for

educating students with disabilities in the LRE (Yell et al., 1998). Preschool children are

entitled to the same inclusion opportunities as school-aged students. The US Department

of Education Office Of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services clarified that when

a preschool child becomes eligible for special education and related services, they should

be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate

(U.S.Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services,

2012). Beginning the inclusion process as early as possible provides students the

opportunity to interact with their non-disabled peers from the onset of their schooling.

The idea of including children with disabilities into mainstream settings takes

more than training and funding. Educating young children with disabilities in

mainstream settings requires commitment and support on the part of all stakeholders

(National Council on Disability, 2018). Warren, Martinez, and Sortino (2016) strongly

suggested that successful inclusion is more of a shared philosophy than an educational

placement. Inclusion programs with successful outcomes are led by those who ensure

that the voices of all participants are heard (Weiland, 2016). School leadership is charged

with building a school climate that celebrates learning differences. To share the vision of

inclusion, the leader must examine his or her beliefs and understand when a shift is

needed (Gupta & Rous, 2016). High-quality inclusion is achieved in an environment that

promotes education, collaboration, and open communication (Gupta & Rous, 2016).

The practice of inclusion is not simply the act of educating students with special needs into a regular education classroom. To implement an inclusion program means to create an environment in which all students and their families belong to a classroom and school community (Rakap, Cig, Parlak, & Rakap, 2017). Educating students with disabilities in regular classroom settings also requires a teacher who is knowledgeable of learning differences as well as accommodations to help all learners access the educational setting (Danner & Fowler, 2015). The perspectives of teachers charged with implementing inclusive programs play a defining role in how inclusion programs are implemented (Kwon, Hong, & Jeon, 2017). Research shows that teachers with more positive attitudes about individuals with disabilities will provide a more positive experience for their students with and without disabilities (Bialka, 2017). In an optimal inclusive setting, teachers are trained in differentiated instruction and the understanding that each of their students interacts with the world differently (Hebbler & Spiker, 2016). If meaningful, sustained change is to occur, the school leader must act to ensure that the teachers have the skills that they need to implement and refine their practices (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Teachers and school leaders must work together to create an inclusive environment in which students and parents are valued members of the school community.

National statistics suggest that the amount of time that children with disabilities spend in regular education settings is directly linked to parental participation (Banerjee et al., 2017). Increased parental participation has been linked with lower rates of disciplinary referrals, increased academic and social adjustment, and stronger student-teacher relationships (Gwernan et al., 2015). One way to strengthen parental

involvement and communication is to prepare preservice teachers by teaching effective ways to collaborate with families. Collier, Keefe, and Hirrel (2015) investigated a preservice teacher curriculum and found that teachers who participated in this curriculum reported that they continue to use these practices and have ongoing success with their family collaboration efforts. The research of Kerry-Henkel and Ecklund (2015) suggested that schools can increase parental participation in educational decision making by utilizing documentation that is more user-friendly and devoid of jargon and unnecessary acronyms.

The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 has changed the face of special education. While separating children with disabilities from their same-age peers was once the gold standard in educational practice, the U.S. Department of Education brought about a major shift in practice by mandating that students with disabilities be educated in the LRE (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The essential aspects of implementing inclusive education have been highlighted in research worldwide for decades (Gavish, 2017). School leaders must create a shared philosophy of inclusive education that includes efficacy building for teachers and family partnerships (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Inclusive education is a multi-faceted practice and philosophy that involves all stakeholders as creators of a successful inclusive environment.

Early Childhood Inclusion: Benefits and Barriers

A vast body of research shows that children with disabilities receive the most benefit from being educated in the same setting as their typically developing peers. Lawrence, Smith, and Banjeree (2016) posited that preschool children with disabilities

who are educated in regular education settings develop stronger peer interactions as they grow older, resulting in decreased feelings of being outcast and isolated because of their disability. Similar positive prosocial outcomes were also found for typically developing children who are educated with children with special needs, as they show higher levels of emotional understanding than their peers who are strictly educated with other typical peers (Barton & Smith, 2015). Oh-Young and Filler's (2015) research revealed that preschool children with disabilities who were educated in more integrated settings significantly outperformed preschool children with disabilities who were educated in self-contained settings among the academic and social domains. For young children with more significant disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, the inclusive preschool setting was linked with students who had stronger cognitive outcomes entering kindergarten than students who were educated in specialized self-contained programs (Lawrence, Smith, & Banjeree, 2016).

Green, Terry, and Gallagher's (2014) research of early literacy skills in children with disabilities in inclusive settings revealed that while children with disabilities made equal progress in letter identification and vocabulary to their typical peers, they lagged behind their typical peers in phonological awareness. Green et al. (2014) concluded that while the mainstream setting may be optimal for preschool students with disabilities, more academic success may be elicited with specialized, direct instruction in target areas of weakness only. The research of Justice, Logan, Lin, and Kaderavek (2014) found that preschool children with disabilities made significantly stronger gains in language abilities when educated alongside peers with strong language skills. Conversely, children who

were educated with peers of lower language abilities showed lower progress rates (Justice et al., 2014). Young children who are educated alongside their typical peers show further development in their executive functioning skills than those who are educated in self-contained settings (Weiland, 2016). With stronger executive functioning and school adjustment, young children with disabilities show an increase in self-confidence, and this contributes to an increase in their willingness to participate in more challenging activities and higher-level thinking (Barton & Smith, 2015).

It is evident that there is disparity between the research and the actions taken by schools to plan detailed, comprehensive plans for successful inclusion programs on the early childhood level (Joseph, Rausch, & Strain, 2018).   One of the potential barriers to inclusion can be teacher support, because teachers tend to look at the concept of inclusion as a whole instead of focusing on the individual strengths of their students with disabilities (Lee & Recchia, 2016).   If teachers do not support their students with disabilities in their mainstream classes, it becomes more difficult to create a shared vision for a preschool inclusion initiative (Lee, Yeung, Tracey, & Barker, 2015). To effectively buy-in to initiatives such as inclusive education, teachers need the support of school leadership (Barton & Smith, 2016). School districts report that they do not have enough financial resources to provide comprehensive training and staffing for inclusive programs (Baker, 2019). For example, school districts tend to hire paraprofessionals on the entry level to save money, which presents the teachers with the issue of charging inexperienced staff members with implementing supports mandated by a child's IEP (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017). Limited training and professional development for teachers has been

identified countless times in research as a major barrier to implementing inclusion

(Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). School districts are not promoting the collaborative

model to implementing inclusion, which is preventing schools from adopting shared

philosophy and accountability (Messiou, 2016).

　　　While IDEA emphasizes the importance of parental participation, school districts

are lacking in formal training in how to elicit parental participation and enhance school-

family partnerships (Cummings, Sills-Busio, Barker, & Dobbins, 2015). Where inclusive

practices are concerned, parent perspectives are based on the knowledge they have

acquired through their own experiences or the experiences of other parents (Hilbert,

2014). Some of the barriers to parental involvement include staff biases, school

resistance to building relationships, and parents feeling isolated from the group

(Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014). In particular, parents of diverse backgrounds who

speak another language have expressed that they feel day-to-day communication is

lacking (Sheppard, 2017). Messiou (2016) stated that if parents are not part of the

process, they have the potential to become a barrier to implementing a high-quality

inclusion experience.

　　　Young children with disabilities are not unlike non-disabled children in their

desires to be accepted by their peers, be successful in their endeavors, and be a part of a

community (Hebbler & Spiker, 2016). In a joint statement, the U.S. Department of

Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services called for all

preschool children with disabilities to be provided access to high-quality inclusive

educational programs so that they may be afforded the same opportunities as their

typically developing peers (U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). Inclusive education has been found to provide benefits to children with disabilities as well as non-disabled children (Barton & Smith, 2016). The benefits of further developed social skills, advanced academic skills, and self-confidence have proven to yield more positive outcomes for children as they progress through elementary school and beyond (Lawrence, Smith, & Banjeree, 2016). School districts need to be mindful of the potential barriers to inclusion when creating programs to integrate young children with disabilities into general education. Successful inclusion can be hindered by such barriers as poor financial planning, lack of teacher buy-in, and lack of parental support.

Parent Perspectives of Inclusion

It is important for school districts to understand the perspectives of parents of children with and without disabilities when designing inclusive programs for a variety of reasons. First, parents of children without disabilities may be hesitant to enroll their children in inclusive programs because of misconceptions about the negative effects that such a placement may have on their children (Hilbert, 2014). Parents of nondisabled children have reported that they are not informed about the inclusion model and are left to make their own assumptions (Vlachou, Karadimou, & Koutsogeorgou, 2016). Secondly, parents of children with disabilities may not be aware that the inclusive setting is an effective environment for providing their children the services and supports that they need (La Placa, Corlyon, Axford, & Axford, 2014). When a parent first learns that their child has a disability, they go through various thought processes. Some parents

experience guilt over the disability, while others may remain in denial (Minnes, Perry, & Weiss, 2015). Typical parent expectations for their children are optimistic and positive, yet when learning that their child is disabled, parents have difficulty understanding what their child is capable of or may be capable of in the future (Barak, Elad, Silberg, & Brezner, 2017). While the concerns of parents with and without disabilities may vary greatly, all parents require a strong communication system with schools to ensure that their concerns do not manifest themselves as misconceptions (Sira, Maine, & McNeil, 2018).

The decision to enroll children in preschool brings about many questions and concerns for the parents of any child. Parents of children with disabilities have the additional concerns involving their child's unique needs and a school's ability to accommodate them (Glenn-Applegate, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2016). In a study of 407 caregivers, the highest-level of priority among all parents was placed on the teacher's interpersonal disposition and the safety of the class; however, caregivers of children with disabilities placed a high-level of priority on the structural layout of the class, more than parents of children without disabilities (Glenn-Applegate et al., 2016). Parents of children with disabilities have also reported that they feel teachers are unprepared to meet the needs of their children, with some parents electing to keep their children at home until kindergarten (Hilbert, 2014).

Although research showed that almost all parents want their children to have successful school careers, there are mixed feelings among parents about the effectiveness of early childhood education, particularly for children with special needs (Manigo &

Rinyka, 2017). Common themes found in research indicate that parents are concerned that schools are not financially equipped to provide services to their children or to provide the necessary training to the educators (Roberts & Simpson, 2016). Some parents have also reported that they worry that their children may be at a higher risk of being bullied and that schools will not have the resources to protect their children physically or emotionally (Yell, Katsiyannis, Rose, & Houchins, 2016). School districts can play an influential role in how parent's view and support inclusion by ensuring that parents are informed and involved (Sira, Maine & McNeil, 2018).

IDEA mandates that parents of students with disabilities must be included in the process of determining class placements for their children (United States Department of Education, 2007). The research of Goldman and Burke (2017) showed that parents believed that decisions regarding their children's educational placement had already been made by the school's IEP team with little regard for their questions and concerns. Weaver and Ouye (2015) found that parents' perspectives of decision-making can be improved through diligent efforts to collaborate, parent-friendly communication style, and a "relationship-focused approach" (Weaver et al., 2015, p. 22).

Additionally, parents of children with disabilities report that, on a day-to-day basis, they feel less involved in the school community than parents of typically developing children (Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014). Parents, not unlike their children, want to feel accepted and valued in the school community and not pitied by educators and other parents (Cooc & Bui, 2017). Ensuring that parents of children with disabilities are involved in all aspects of the school community addresses the emotional

needs of the parents through socialization and interpersonal relationships (Murray, Munger, Colwell, & Claussen, 2018).

Parents of children with and without disabilities vary greatly, but the need to keep an open communication between schools and parents is universal among all parents (La Placa, Corlyon, Axford, & Axford, 2014). Misconceptions that parents have can be dispelled by informing and involving parents. It is prudent for educators to be aware that parents of children with special needs may feel isolated and stigmatized by their child's disability (Barak, Elad, Silberg, & Brezner, 2017). Welcoming parents into the school community as individuals with unique contributions will contribute to a decrease in their stress level, thus enabling them to advocate for their children (Cooc & Bui, 2017).

Regular Education and Special Education Teacher Perspectives of Inclusion

Researching the perspectives of special education teachers and regular education teachers may provide insight as to the potential barriers of inclusion, the competencies needed to implement inclusion, and the components of support needed for a teacher to successfully implement inclusive practices. Many regular education teachers feel that they do not have the training or preparation to work with children with varying special needs, which influences their willingness to have with children with special needs in their classrooms (Pit-ten Cate, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). The lack of preparation is notably increased in the private sector of preschools and daycares (Danner & Fowler, 2015). Special education inclusion teachers feel that the supports needed to implement inclusion far exceed the resources available to make the inclusion setting successful (Muccio, Kidd, White, & Burns, 2014). In a 2018 study, 679 early childhood

teachers who were surveyed reported that their primary difficulties with teaching in inclusive settings included lack of school resources, the appropriateness of placement of the students, and the workload (Park, Dimitrov, & Park, 2018). The level of these concerns was associated with the amount of training and experience, as well as personal involvement with children with disabilities.

Another notable theme found in the research is balancing the needs of all stakeholders. Teachers reported feeling as though they owe a more challenging experience to advanced learners while making the curriculum reachable for students with disabilities (Alexander et al., 2016). Woodcock and Wilson (2019) asserted the need for school leadership to adopt collaborative practices and learning communities to provide ongoing peer support in implementing differentiated instruction.

Two additional themes emerged in literature as influential factors in teacher perspective: expectations of students and self-efficacy (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). Decreased self-efficacy in teachers is an indicator for school leadership to provide confidence-building opportunities (Park et al., 2018). Early childhood teachers have often been perceived as babysitters, which may impact how much training they receive on the job. If teachers do not have a definitive understanding of their role for a child with disabilities included in their class, they cannot effectively implement supports (Bryant, 2018). One of the barriers to children with disabilities being educated in inclusive settings is often the perspective of teachers who believe children with disabilities are incapable of functioning in the mainstream (Olson & Ruppar, 2017). In particular, the nature of the disability often determines how a teacher will perceive including students

into mainstream classes. For example, teachers felt more comfortable working with children with communication disabilities, as compared to children with emotional and behavioral disabilities (Vaz et al., 2015). Similarly, in a study conducted of teacher's reactions to behaviors, teachers felt much more favorably toward shyness and introverted behaviors and had negative reactions to aggression and externalized behaviors (Coplan, Bullock, Archbell, & Bosacki, 2015). Additional factors in teacher perspectives of inclusion were gender and age. One research study indicated that male teachers and teachers over age 55 had more negative attitudes about including children with disabilities in the general education setting (Vaz et al., 2015). School leaders must take all these factors into consideration when staffing inclusive classrooms with teachers charged with implementing supports for students with disabilities (Vaz et al., 2015).

Research of the perspectives of teachers about including students with disabilities into mainstream classes yields recurring trends. First, teachers report that they feel a lack of support from their school leaders (Park, Dimitrov, & Park, 2018). Next, teachers feel that it is too difficult to balance the needs of challenging more advanced students while making the curriculum available for students with disabilities (Alexander et al., 2016). Teachers need to be supported with meaningful training and collaboration to build self-efficacy so they can create a meaningful and successful inclusion experience for students with a variety of learning differences (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Summary and Conclusions

My review of the research surrounding parent and teacher perspectives of including preschool children with disabilities in the general education setting yielded

major themes associated with teacher support and parental involvement. Most general

education preschool teachers feel that they do not have the proper training to include

children with varying special needs in their classrooms. The research is also indicative of

disposition playing a role in a teacher successfully creating an inclusive classroom

community. Parents of children with disabilities reveal that they feel alienated from

making placement decisions for their children, despite mandates set forth by IDEA.

Parents of children with and without disabilities vary in their support of preschool

education and inclusive education on the preschool level, partly due to a belief that

teachers are not trained, and schools are not equipped to meet the needs of their children.

A review of the literature shows that it is known that quality early childhood education

can have positive lifelong effects on children and on society. For children with

disabilities, being educated in an inclusive preschool setting can yield greater progress in

social-emotional skills, communication, and academic skills.

This study will contribute to filling the gap in research by exploring parent and

teacher perspectives of inclusion at the preschool level, what teachers believe are the

proficiencies and supports needed, and how parents of children attending preschool feel

about including children with special needs. This research has the potential to inform

decision making so that a shift in thinking may allow for preschool children with

disabilities to have greater access to an inclusive education (Sira, Maine, & McNeil,

2018). This research may support professional education practice by using qualitative

data to identify the supports needed for preschool children with disabilities to be included

into general education settings (Muccio, Kidd, White, & Burns, 2014). In response to the

federal mandates to educate students in the LRE (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004), this study has the potential to affect positive social change by shedding light on the importance of the perspectives of crucial stakeholders when designing inclusive preschool programs. To address the gap in literature, I conducted a qualitative inquiry. The following chapter will outline my qualitative methodology, including research design and rationale, the setting for the study, participant selection, and data collection and analysis procedures. To address ethical procedures, I outlined my role as the researcher in this study, potential ethical issues and how they were addressed, and procedures followed to maintain the confidentiality and rights of all participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to an understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (Lawrence et al., 2016). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) recommended that to every extent possible, children should be educated with their typical peers. Research has suggested that two critical components of implementing successful inclusion programs are teacher buy-in and parental support (Lalvani, 2015).

The remainder of this chapter will illustrate the research methodology I used to employ this research. I will discuss the rationale for the research design chosen, my role as the researcher, the methodologies used for participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. I will conclude this section by discussing ethical procedures and trustworthiness of my research.

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative case study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of parents of preschool children with disabilities about educating their children in a general education setting?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of parents of typically developing preschool children about educating children with disabilities in a general education setting?

RQ 3: What are special education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

RQ4: What are regular education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

The New Jersey Administrative Code for Special Education mandates that preschool children with disabilities must be provided with 10 hours of weekly instruction (N.J. Department of Education, 2016). The research site of my study provides 12 hours of weekly instruction and placement decisions are made by the CST. A child may be placed in either a self-contained setting or a fully inclusive setting, based on results from formal evaluations, parent input, and functional data. While the stakeholders at the research site hold dissenting opinions regarding the placement of preschool children with disabilities, research supports that being educated alongside typically developing peers is optimal for development and progress in children with disabilities (see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, 2015). To implement a high-quality early childhood inclusion initiative, parent support and teacher buy-in have been identified as key factors (Lalvani, 2015).

I implemented qualitative methods for the case study exploration of parent and teacher perspectives about educating preschool children with disabilities in mainstream preschool settings. Qualitative research is conducted to investigate people in their natural environment and how they experience the phenomenon being studied (Ravitch & Carl,

2016). A case study design, according to Rumrill, Cook, and Wiley (2011), serves to understand an event through a narrower viewpoint of individuals who have experienced the event. Other qualitative methods that were considered and rejected are phenomenology and grounded theory. Grounded theory methodology is used when the researcher seeks to formulate a theory from the data collected (Rumrill et al., 2011). Because I sought to understand the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with special needs into general education classes, I was not looking to create a theory or affirm a preconceived theory. I did not use phenomenological research methods because the purpose of phenomenology is to examine how people experience the same event or phenomenon (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Quantitative methods and mixed methods were rejected because the research questions were not designed to determine relationships, causality, or impact (see Rumrill et. al, 2011).

Role of the Researcher

The qualitative researcher uses personal experiences and interactions to discover a question worth asking and determines the methods based on the best way to answer the question (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As the primary instrument of a qualitative study, the researcher considers his or her own positionality by engaging with the participants in a naturalistic setting, rather than a simulated or experimental setting, to help to understand why something is occurring at that time and in that place (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). My role in this study was strictly observational and I did not participate in any activities related to the research site. My role was to interview, observe, and record data, with no personal bias. In September 2004, I began working at the research location as a CST

member who is in daily contact with the director of special education. I am neither a teacher nor an administrator, yet CST members are often viewed as members of the administrative team. My position may have had the potential to influence the way teacher participants respond to my questions, as they may have provided responses that they believed the school leadership wanted to hear instead of stating their truth as they perceived it. Because conducting research at one's own work location has the potential to be a conflict of interest, I employed the recommendations of the Walden University Institutional Review Board by assuring participants that my primary purpose was to inform the topic of educating preschool children with disabilities in inclusive settings, with no personal agenda or opinion. I also included a caveat in the informed consent that states if the participant wished to withdraw from the study that it will have no bearing on my perception of them. Most importantly, I reminded the participants that their identities and all identifying information would be kept strictly confidential and that any information they provide would not be associated with their identities.

The parent participants were aware of my role as a member of the CST, which may have had the potential to influence the ways in which they responded. Parent participants may have felt hesitant to be honest because they may have feared that I could influence the class placement of their children, or they may provide artificial responses in hopes that their children would be placed in the class of their choice. Similar to the steps I took take with teacher participants, I followed the guidelines of the Walden University Institutional Review Board by assuring parent participants that they should in no way feel

coerced into participating, as I did not have a personal agenda, nor would I associate my research as a graduate student with my work as a school employee.

It is important for the researcher to establish rapport and engage in discussions with participants to understand dynamics, power imbalances, and the researcher's own potential biases and lack of knowledge (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To ensure quality and accuracy, I established a relationship of collaboration and reciprocity with the participants while being aware of boundaries (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To balance the power between myself and the participants of this study, I thoroughly explained the purpose of the study to the participants and asked them to engage in a collaborative effort with me to explore their perspectives about inclusion on the preschool level. I ensured the collaborative tone by reviewing their responses with them and giving them the opportunity to change or add to their responses. I gave informed consent documentation to provide the participants with reassurance that their identities would be kept confidential throughout the research and after the research is complete and that their responses would be used only for the purpose of this research study. Because I work at the research site, I was vigilant in my reflexivity practices to ensure that I did not allow my personal feelings about participants to influence my expectations of them or my personal feelings about their responses, so as not to interfere in data analysis. One of the manners in which I practiced reflexivity was through dialogic engagement with my dissertation chair members. To ensure that my themes and findings were logically reported using the data obtained, I worked with a peer reviewer who completed a qualitative project study and obtained his Ed.D. in 2012. Throughout the data collection

and analyses phases of my research, I maintained an audit trail that documents the steps I took to synthesize my findings.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The teacher participants consisted of five regular education preschool teachers who currently teach in inclusive preschool settings and five special education preschool teachers who currently teach in a self-contained preschool setting. Purposive sampling and recruitment were used for participant selection, ensuring that that the potential participants met the criteria of having taught in a special education preschool class or an inclusive preschool class for 2 years or more. I confirmed the participants' years of service with the personnel department at the research site.

The parent participants consisted of five parents or guardians of preschool children with disabilities and five parents or guardians of typically developing preschool children. Purposive sampling and recruitment were used for participation, ensuring that the potential participants meet the criteria of having preschool children who are currently enrolled in inclusive preschool classes. Confirmation of parent participation criteria was made with the classroom teachers at the research site.

Purposive sampling occurs when the researcher deliberately selects specific participants (Rumrill, Cook, &Wiley, 2011). This method of sampling is effective for the researcher to gain a perspective or information that would not be obtained by working with random participants (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). For example, if a study is being

conducted to explore preschool practices, a purposive sampling technique would be effective so that the researcher's sample is not primarily made up of high school teachers.

I selected a sample size of 20 participants because the study is limited to one local school district in New Jersey. Research suggests that quantitative inquiries are best addressed with 50 or more participants, (Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2015). In qualitative inquiries using face-to-face interviews, it is important to select a manageable sample size, allowing for the researcher to develop rapport and trust with their participants and to obtain rich, full responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To identify potential participants, I determined which preschool teachers and parents fit the criteria I set forth for this study. I contacted the potential participants via confidential email with a letter inviting them to participate in the study. In the letter, I explained the purpose of the study and exactly what the participants' role in the study would be. The conclusion of the letter contains my contact information, should the potential participant have further questions. After I selected all participants, I sent them a confidential email confirming their participation. Within the confirmation email, I included an informed consent document, which I asked the participants to sign, print, and return to me in person. In addition, I advised the participants that they had 24-48 hours to review the document before signing and returning.

Instrumentation

The primary data sources were semi structured interviews and formal observations. To address RQ1 and RQ2, I conducted semi structured interviews with follow-up probes with parent participants. The main interview questions were geared

toward the research questions. As the interviewees became oriented and rapport was established, I presented follow-up questions and probing questions to obtain richer, more detailed information, with a focus on each participant's individual experience with having a child who is educated in an inclusive setting.

To address RQ3 and RQ4, I conducted semi structured interviews with follow-up probes with the teacher participants. The main interview questions were geared toward the research questions. As the interviewees became oriented and rapport was established, I presented follow-up questions and probing questions to obtain richer, more detailed information, with a focus on the perceived proficiencies and supports needed to implement inclusive preschool education.

I developed protocols for interview questions with teacher participants and parent participants so that all participants are asked the same questions. The researcher-developed questions were reviewed by my dissertation committee and a peer reviewer to ensure that they addressed the research questions. The research questions guided the open-ended interview questions. Open-ended questions are recommended for investigating topics in detail and finding recurring themes (Weller et al., 2018). I collected interview data with an audio recorder and a notepad to record evidence of non-verbal data such as body language, eye contact, and gestures.

In addition to semi structured interviews, I conducted formal observations of the teacher participants during instruction, to obtain a better picture of how the teachers' responses to interview questions are reflected in their approach to the students. The focus of the observations was solely on teachers and the way they interacted with their students.

No individual or identifiable behaviors of students was documented or reported. Each observation was 60 minutes long. I recorded observations as an external observer, utilizing field notes and Creswell's Observation Protocol (Appendix C). The interview questions were reviewed by my Walden dissertation committee members and a peer reviewer to verify that the data collection tools address the research questions and aligned with the interview questions. The teacher interview questions are presented in Appendix B. The parent interview questions are presented in Appendix C.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

To recruit participants for this study, I utilized a purposive selection process based on set criteria. The potential teacher participants met the criteria of having taught in a special education preschool class or an inclusive preschool class for two years or more. Parent participants consisted of five parents or guardians of preschool children with disabilities and five parents or guardians of typically developing preschool children. Parent participants met the criteria of having preschool children who are currently enrolled in inclusive preschool classes.

I sent a confidential email to approach all individuals who met the criteria for participation. In the email, I attached a letter stating the purpose of the study, an invitation to participate in the study, and an outline of the activities associated with being a participant. After the participants were selected, I followed up with a phone call to schedule a mutually agreed upon time to conduct interviews. The interview location was a private office at the research site that is typically used to evaluate children. If any of the participants expressed feeling uncomfortable about meeting in a school setting, we

would have arranged to meet at a mutually agreed upon location. Teacher observations were conducted in the classroom of each teacher and did not exceed 60 minutes. I asked the teachers to provide me with the best times to observe, and we scheduled a mutually agreed upon time and date. The observations and interviews took place over the course of four weeks.

After I selected all participants, I sent them a confidential email confirming their participation. Within the confirmation email, I included an informed consent document, which I asked the participants to sign, print, and return to me in person. In addition, I advised the participants that they have 24-48 hours to review the document before signing and returning. Under the Respect for Persons ethical principle of the Walden University Research Ethics Planning Worksheet (2015), the researcher must ensure that informed consent procedures are followed. These procedures include providing participants with the research purpose, estimated time of participation, and potential risks of participating in the study. Failure to obtain informed consent by these principles will result in an ethical violation.

Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Each observation lasted 60 minutes. Each participant engaged in one interview, totaling 20 interviews. I also observed each teacher participant for a total of 10 observations. I collect interview data with an audio recorder, and I used a notepad to record evidence of non-verbal data such as body language, eye contact, and gestures, enabling me to engage with the data immediately. I conducted observations as an external observer, utilizing field notes and Creswell's Observation Protocol (Appendix C). The focus of the observations was solely

on teachers and the way they interact with their students. No individual or identifiable behaviors of students were documented or reported.

Upon completion of coding and thematic analysis, I sent each teacher and parent participant a copy of the draft findings to check for the accuracy of my interpretations of their data used and for viability of the findings in the setting. Member checking helped to ensure that I did not cater to my own potential biases or expectations. I also gave the participants the opportunity to ask me questions about their participation and provide feedback about their experience as a participant.

Data Analysis Plan

To analyze the interview data, I first transcribed each interview from the audio recorder to text. I established a priori codes based on the constructs of the framework and the research questions. I conducted research to explore the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with special needs into general education classes. The conceptual framework that grounds this study is the social model of disability, which asserts that an individual with a disability is more limited by his or her environment than he or she is by their disability (Oliver, 1990). Therefore, I was looking for themes including accessibility, accommodations, equal access to education, and expectations of individuals with disabilities.

After I verified the data, I conducted an unstructured read of the transcripts. Taking anecdotal records of notable phrases, recurring phrases, or specific events allowed me to immediately engage in precoding. Before the data was analyzed, I established

a prioi codes grounded in the literature review and conceptual framework. I then utilized open coding so that my preset codes did not limit the analysis of my data. Open coding involves pairing the data with codes as the data is being analyzed (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Combining a prioi codes with open codes helped me to analyze my data within the constructs of my framework. Subsequently, my coding progressed to axial and thematic coding for further categorization of data to identify the major themes and concepts.

Field notes and Creswell's Observation Protocol (Appendix C) were utilized as the data collection method for the teacher observations. The field notes and observation protocol were analyzed utilizing the methods of unstructured open coding, and axial coding. I constructed a table to present the alignment of teacher interview data to teacher observation data to obtain a better picture of how the teachers' responses to interview questions are reflected in their approach to the students (Table 9).

The conceptual framework for this study and the literature review were used to generate categories and then to further narrow down themes. I designed the research questions in this study to examine the issue of preschool inclusion through the lens of the social model of disability, which asserts that society's perception of individuals with disabilities is more of a limitation than the disability itself (Oliver, 1990). While analyzing my data, I was looking for themes involving expectations of individuals with disabilities, how individuals with disabilities are viewed by others, and environmental barriers faced by individuals with disabilities.

I transcribed the data myself utilizing Microsoft Word, in which I was able to create visual charts depicting repetition of codes, categorization of codes, and major

themes. As themes and categories emerged, I used Microsoft Word to create charts, which allowed me to constantly view and interact with parts of the data as well as with the whole data set. Upon completion of coding and thematic analysis, I sent each participant a copy of the draft findings to check for the accuracy of my interpretations of their data used and for viability of the findings in the setting.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research seeks to investigate events as they occur naturally, without manipulating numerically valued figures and statistics (Golafshani, 2003). Because qualitative research is conducted on a more personal level, issues such as trustworthiness, credibility, and ethics can impact the findings of qualitative studies. Trustworthiness in quantitative studies is measured by the alignment of study methods, participants, and data collection to the research questions (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016). Ultimately, the results should reflect the truth as it is and not how the researcher expects or wants it to be.

Recommendations for establishing credibility in qualitative research include triangulation of data using multiple sources, debriefing with colleagues, and member checks (Shenton, 2004). Member checking, defined as the researcher sharing a summary of the findings with participants, is considered the gold standard in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015). Upon completion of coding and thematic analysis, I sent each parent and teacher participant a copy of the draft findings to check for the accuracy of my interpretations of their data used and for viability of the

findings in the setting. Checking in with participants also helped ensure that I did not cater to my own potential biases or expectations.

Transferability can be established through robust descriptions of participants, data collection methods, and time periods (Shenton, 2004). Rich information about research design and methods can serve as a roadmap for researchers who wish to conduct the same study in another setting (Shenton, 2004). My comprehensive description of the participants and methods of participant recruitment, as well as the multiple data collection points in this study, should contribute to the feasibility of conducting this research in other research settings. Dependability was established by working with a peer reviewer and maintaining an audit trail that documents the steps I took to synthesize my findings. I also took measures to ensure dependability by triangulating my interview data with observations of teacher participants who engaged in semi structured interviews. I conducted formal observations of the teacher participants to obtain a better picture of how the teachers' responses to interview questions are reflected in their approach to the students.

Confirmability establishes that the results of the study are based on the data and not the personal interpretation of the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Throughout the process of writing this research study, I continuously communicated with my committee chair to stay accountable for my personal thoughts and any biases that may have arisen. By engaging in reflexivity with another member of the scholarly community, I continued to examine and confirm my commitment to the data and pure interpretation of data.

Ethical Procedures

I began my study by obtaining permission from the Board of Education at the research setting, utilizing the Walden University IRB consent form. Obtaining permission from individual participants included permission from parent and teacher participants. I obtained the permission forms designated by the Walden University Institutional Review Board. Every participant was provided with informed consent documentation, which I retained copies of.

I recruited participants through confidential email, and I am the only individual who has access to the password-protected email account. After the study concluded, I deleted all email communications involving the participants. Additionally, I was the only individual collecting data, which also was destroyed upon conclusion of the study. Data was stored on my home computer, which is also protected by password. At the conclusion of the study, this data will be saved on my home computer for five years.

One possible ethical concern that was considered would be a participant unexpectedly withdrawing from the study. In this case, I would have consulted with my dissertation chair committee, and anticipate planning for the recruitment of a new participant. I would have followed the same process if one of the participants relocates to another town or if a teacher participant resigns, is reassigned, or is terminated from employment. I work at the research site, which can create an ethical situation in which participants may not be fully honest or may not wish to participate. I spoke openly with potential recruits to assure them of the confidential nature of the study and handling of all data. It was crucial to this study that I imparted to the participants that this study was not

being conducted on behalf of the school district and personal information would not be shared with anyone affiliated with the school district.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an outline of the methodology that I used for the qualitative case study to explore the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education class placements. I discussed the rationale for my chosen methodology and how I designed this study to address the research questions. I detailed the participant selection process, the instrumentation used for data collection, and the methods I used for data analysis. Within this chapter, I addressed issues of ethics including my role as the researcher, trustworthiness of the study, and the ethical procedures that will be followed throughout this inquiry. Chapter 4 will outline the results of the research and detailed analysis of the data findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to an understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (Lawrence et al., 2016). This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of parents of preschool children with disabilities about educating their children in a general education preschool setting?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of parents of nondisabled preschool children about educating children with disabilities in a general education preschool setting?

RQ3: What are special education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

RQ4: What are regular education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

This chapter will continue with a discussion of the organizational conditions of the study setting and participant demographics. To follow, I will describe how the data were collected, recorded, and analyzed, as well as a discussion of any discrepant data that may have occurred. At the conclusion of this chapter, I will present the results of the study as well as evidence of trustworthiness within the findings.

Setting

The research for this study was conducted in a school district in New Jersey. In August 2018, a federally funded $2 million dollar grant was awarded to the research site to provide free, high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year old children who reside in the community. Historically, the research site offers self-contained special education preschool classes in addition to fully inclusive preschool classes taught by dually certified teachers. Within the research site, there are dissenting opinions among stakeholders on the practice of educating children with disabilities in fully inclusive settings. Some stakeholders believe that children with disabilities should remain self-contained in special education classes, while others believe that every child should be included in the regular education setting (Director of special services, director of curriculum, supervisor of preschool programs, personal communication, September 7, 2018).

Data Collection

The research participants consisted of 10 teachers and 10 parents. Five of the teacher participants were certified special education teachers. Two of the special education teachers had been teaching in a self-contained preschool class for 2 years, one of the special education teachers had been teaching in a self-contained preschool class for 5 years, and two of the special education teachers had been teaching in inclusive preschool classes for 3 years. The additional five teacher participants were certified as N-3, which certifies a teacher to teach in regular education settings in grades Preschool through Grade 3 (see New Jersey Department of Education, 2019). The regular education teachers had all been teaching in inclusive preschool settings at the time of the

study. Four of the regular education teachers had been in their positions for 3-6 years, and one of the regular education teachers had been in their position for 2 years. Five parent participants identified themselves as having had a child with a disability who was educated in an inclusive preschool setting, and five parent participants identified themselves as having had a child who was nondisabled who was educated in an inclusive preschool setting.

I conducted semi structured interviews with each participant. The interview location was a private office at the research site. Though I gave each participant the option to interview outside of the school setting, all participants were agreeable to meeting in the private office. Observations of teachers were conducted in their classrooms during instructional time. It was agreed upon that the most appropriate time to observe was during morning circle and part of free play time. Each interview ranged from 36-54 minutes in duration, and each observation was 60 minutes in duration. I noted that some of the less experienced teacher participants needed to be presented with more probing questions to obtain richer data, while other participants independently responded to my initial questions in detail. I collected interview data with an audio recorder and used a notepad to record evidence of nonverbal data. I conducted observations as an external observer, using field notes and Creswell's observation protocol (Appendix C). Data collection was completed as set forth in Chapter 3. There were no variations or unusual circumstances encountered while collecting data, except for one interview that lasted for less than the 45-minute minimum time frame.

Data Analysis

To analyze the interview data, I listened each recording and manually transcribed them verbatim into a Microsoft Word document. Using Microsoft Word, I was able to create visual charts depicting each level of coding, which allowed me to take note of emerging and recurring themes. I did an unstructured read of each document to ensure that my transcriptions were accurately written. Subsequently, I began the coding process. I began my first cycle of coding by establishing a priori codes based on the constructs of the framework, the research questions, and the review of literature. The conceptual framework that grounds this study is the social model of disability, which asserts that an individual with a disability is more limited by his or her environment than he or she is by their disability (Oliver, 1990). The conceptual framework for this study was used to generate categories and then to further narrow down themes. While analyzing the data, I looked for themes involving expectations of individuals with disabilities and environmental barriers faced by individuals with disabilities.

In alignment with the conceptual framework, I established the following a priori codes for parent interviews: "expectations of my child", "IEP option for children with disabilities", "parents being informed about inclusion", "being challenged/not challenged" and "teacher dispositions/skills" (Table 3). Of these codes, several themes emerged from the parent interviews. The most prominent themes were *knowledge of inclusion, role modeling, friendship, alternative to special education, pride/confidence, getting enough attention,* and *behavior problems*.

Parent participants shared that their general *knowledge of inclusion* is that it is an educational model in which children can learn from one another. In response to the question "what do you know about including children with disabilities into regular education settings", responses included "children are integrated with higher-level learners", "it's a great idea", and "it allows students on different levels to interact". Most of the knowledge parents have about inclusion comes from how they feel about it or what they have heard from others.

Parents of children with disabilities viewed the inclusive setting as an opportunity for their children to have *role models*, while parents of nondisabled children viewed the inclusive setting as an opportunity for their children to act as *role models* for their peers who have developmental delays. Parents had mutual feelings about the aspect of *friendship*. A parent of a nondisabled child reported that her child built a strong friendship with a boy who had a facial abnormality and that her child did not even seem to notice any differences in his appearance. A parent of a child with autism reported that her child is now able to engage in pretend play. One parent participant noted that because her child was educated in a more challenging environment, he is now willing to try new things and speak for himself. Another parent participant expressed that his child had no self-confidence prior to her experience in the inclusive setting and now is in a general education Kindergarten class talking with her teachers and peers regularly.

In response to the question "what do you feel are the disadvantages of including preschool children with disabilities into general education", one of the central themes that emerged was *getting enough attention*. All parent participants were concerned with how

children with major *behavior issues* were included into general education classes. Some of the parents expressed concern that students with behavior issues may take the teacher's attention away from their children. Another sentiment was that the average, rule-following students may get lost in the shuffle. One parent of a child with a disability reported that her child would come home often and speak of a classmate who was always getting in trouble. One participant noted the need for balance, stating that the teacher needs to differentiate instruction while making sure that the students are copying negative behaviors. The themes of *attention* and *behavior issues* tie into the parent perception of the importance of safety and accommodation in the inclusive environment (see Yell et al., 2016).

Using the literature review of teacher perspectives and the conceptual framework, I established the following a priori codes for teacher interviews: "support/do not support inclusion", "I don't have the skills", "students improperly placed", "it depends on the disability", "paperwork", "disservice to higher-level students" and "school leadership support" (Table 7). Of these codes, several themes emerged from the teacher interviews. The most prominent themes were *skill development, challenging behavior, cultural shift, differentiated instruction, paperwork, student placement, school leadership,* and *funding*.

In response to the question, "What do you feel are the benefits of including preschool children with disabilities into the general education setting?", the themes of *social/emotional skills*, *language skills*, and *empathy* emerged. Responses were often centered on the benefits for children with disabilities, more so than for nondisabled children. All the teacher participants noted the primary benefit to be the opportunity for

children with disabilities to be educated with role models for language skills and social/emotional skills. One teacher reported that one of her students with a speech delay used to hide under the table when he first entered the class, but he is now enthusiastic to talk with peers and teachers. Regular education teachers and special education teachers both expressed the importance of teaching empathy and compassion to children at an early age.

In response to the question "What do you feel are the disadvantages of including preschool children with disabilities into the general education setting?", the themes of *challenging behavior*, *training*, and *cultural shift* emerged. The primary theme among all participants, as with parent participants, was challenging behavior. Each teacher participant's first response when asked about the disadvantages of inclusion was related to behavior. One teacher emphatically expressed that children with behavior issues should not be educated in inclusive settings. Another teacher expressed frustration that her instruction is constantly interrupted by issues involving behavior. A scaffolding concern among regular education teachers was that they were not properly trained to implement a quality inclusive program, especially with children who have significant behavioral needs. The special education teacher participants were more concerned that the class aides were not adequately trained to work with youngsters with varied types of disabilities. One teacher stated that she sometimes feels as if she is the only person who knows how to work with her student. A regular education teacher participant expressed her nonsupport of the inclusive model in preschool. Conversely, two special education

teacher participants noted that the inclusive model should be a part of a schoolwide culture of acceptance.

In response to the question "What are your expectations for preschool children with disabilities in general education classes?", responses varied and yielded themes of *differentiated instruction*, *paperwork,* and *student placement*. Some regular education teachers reported that is commonplace for some children to be misplaced into mainstream settings because of parental request or lack of space in self-contained classes. One regular education teacher said that each year she expects at least one of her students to be placed in her class who should be in a self-contained setting. Most teacher participants made some reference to the expectation of having to differentiate instruction. One regular education teacher reported that at the beginning of the school year, she has the same expectations for all of her students as she gets to know them, she differentiates as needed. Two teachers talked about how they take time to view the students' IEPs to get a sense of what to expect and how to make modifications.

When asked to identify the supports needed to implement inclusion, the themes of *needing more hands*, *school leadership*, *training*, and *funding* emerged. Most of the teachers related their needs to students with behavioral challenges. One teacher responded the need for an emergency plan, should a student's behavior escalate to the point of no control. Several other teachers pointed out the need for students with behavioral issues to be assigned an individual aide for the entire school day. School leadership was discussed by one teacher who expressed that she needs to be able to access an administrator immediately if a child's behavior becomes unsafe. Most of the

teachers identified behavioral training for themselves and the class aides as a needed major support.

In response to the question "What do you think are the barriers to implementing inclusion for preschool children with disabilities?", the recurring themes of *cultural shift*, *student placement*, and *more staff* emerged. A regular education teacher noted that family involvement can be a barrier if the parent has different expectations of their child and what their school placement should be. Some regular education teachers also reported that they feel that children with severe cognitive deficiencies, physical disabilities, and behavioral issues should never be placed in inclusive classrooms. One special education teacher suspected that the school does not fully accept the inclusive model because the self-contained class serves as a safety net for students who are deemed unable to handle the inclusive class setting.

Field notes and Creswell's observation protocol (Appendix C) were used as the data collection methods for the teacher observations. Teacher observations were conducted to triangulate the data that each teacher participant provided during the interviews, as well as to inform Research Questions 3 and 4. The field notes were analyzed using the methods of unstructured open coding, and axial coding. The observation protocol allowed me to record each teacher action as it took place, as well as record reflective notes indicating how the teachers' actions aligned with their perspective of teaching in inclusive classes and their perceived proficiencies and supports needed to implement the program. I reported the observations by creating a table with data from each teacher interview, whether the data was observed in the classroom, and examples of

how the teachers' actions observed correlated to the interview data (Table 9). The focus

of the observations was solely on teachers and the way they interact with their students.

No individual or identifiable behaviors of students were documented or reported. Each

teacher was assigned codes based on their interviews. The codes included *differentiation,*

modification, collaboration, creating a culture of acceptance, and positive attitude. One

regular education participant was given the codes *low expectations* and *misplaced*

students because in the interview, the participant did not have a favorable outlook on

including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings. Upon

analysis of the observations, it was discovered that the data obtained from the interviews

were in alignment with what was observed in their classrooms. Teachers who cited the

ability to modify as a need for successful inclusion were observed modifying in their

classrooms. Teachers who presented with positive, upbeat attitudes in the classroom

were typically those who felt that a positive, easy-going affect was an important quality

in a successful teacher of inclusion. Teachers who expressed nonsupport of the inclusive

setting were observed to be less engaged with their students in an individualized manner.

Upon completion of coding and thematic analysis, I completed member checks,

by sending each participant a copy of the draft findings to check for the accuracy of my

interpretations of their data used and for viability of the findings in the setting. Member

checks were conducted with the parent participants and teacher participants. Each of the

10 parent participants and 10 teacher participants expressed that my draft findings and

interpretation of their data were accurate.

Results

Research Question 1

Semi structured interviews were conducted to address RQ1, "What are the perspectives of parents of preschool children with disabilities about educating their children in a general education preschool setting"? Based on the responses given, parents do not have a sense of the clear definition of inclusion, but they do feel that it is a beneficial educational setting for children with disabilities. When asked what they know about inclusion, the typical responses were "it's great" or "it's a wonderful idea". One parent participant was able to define it as a classroom where children are in preschool and integrated with other children who might have similar disabilities and children that are higher level thinkers. A theme that emerged from what parents of children with disabilities know about the inclusive setting was *lack of information*. While parents may perceive inclusion as a positive setting for their children, they do not have the full picture of what inclusion is. School districts can play an influential role in how parent's view and support inclusion by ensuring that parents are informed and involved (Sira et al., 2018).

Parents of children with disabilities expressed that the benefits of the inclusive setting outweigh the disadvantages. When the participants talked about the benefits of the inclusive setting, the theme of *cooperative learning* emerged, as all the parent participants from this group made mention of the students learning from one another. The participants believe that the inclusive setting allows for their children to be educated with age-appropriate role models for social skills, speech/language, and play skills.

Conversely, the participants also believe that the non-disabled children benefit from early exposure to children with learning differences so that they can begin to view differences as a normal part of life, as opposed to viewing them as disabilities or problems. The social model of disability posits that non-disabled individuals can learn from individuals with disabilities by learning how they view the world and navigate through challenges (Kattari, Lavery, & Hasche, 2017). In a classroom, the social model of disability inspires schools to create an environment in which different types of learners can flourish, as opposed to modifying the norm for students with disabilities (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017).

When discussing the disadvantages of the inclusive setting, the major theme of *behavior issues* emerged. Parents expressed concern that their children may be at risk of losing out on IEP instruction because of the attention that students with severe behavior issues require. Another parent expressed worry that their child may be at risk of being injured if they became the target of a child with behavioral issues (Table 1). The issue of imitating negative behaviors was raised by one parent who was concerned that her child might exhibit behaviors never exhibited before. Other disadvantages noted include age and funding. One parent noted that age is of concern because the inclusive setting may not be optimal if 3-year olds are educated in the same class as 5-year olds. Another parent expressed concern over funding, making note that historically, federal and state funds tend to get cut from early childhood programs.

Table 1

Special Education Parent Responses

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4
SP1	-I think inclusion is great. It gives the kids the advantage that they're not lost in a big group -They pick up on their weaknesses so much quicker and they know where they need to focus to help the kids.	-The fact that kids are taught everybody's different -Don't make fun of a kid help them -These kids hopefully all get up to speed because it could scar them for life if they feel like they were special. -I like that when they're all mixed in the kids are just normal kids.	-I think children who are average, just doing what they're supposed to do may get lost a little. They're overlooked because they're fine. -Like for example my son follows the rules, but he needs help not being so shy. He may not get the extra effort from the teacher if she's busy with other kids.	I think my son realized he can't do things the way other kids can. But everybody in the inclusion class were all just different areas but all needed help with something. So, they had that in common.
SP2	-I think it's a wonderful idea. -It gives the regular and special ed kids the chance to get the attention they need.	-The teachers learn about the kids with and without disabilities right from the beginning, so they know how and how much to differentiate. -The special ed kids and regular ed kids get to learn from one another.	-I think if you have a child with behaviors, terrible, terrible behavioral issues then other kids will pick up. -I think most behavioral issues with the right teacher can be fixed but not at the expense of 14 other kids.	My kids thrive on structure and my daughter falls back a little bit when she's out of it. She came into the program with no confidence and now she's in regular kindergarten.
SP3	-From my experiences with my own children, -I think they would have been put at a disadvantage to have been thrown into general population and I think they would have been at a disadvantage to have been excluded from general population.	-The balance is important when the student needs specialized attention from a behavioral and maturity standpoint It just seems like a very very natural entry point into the kindergarten and first grade experience.	-Drawbacks are just guaranteed and out of our control because of the political climate. – -I just don't think the funding is going to be there for long because another politician may not think that preschool is important enough to allocate funding.	My daughter came in here loaded with needs and those needs are getting better and it's because of the inclusion and the differentiation that they were exposed to the balance of curriculum and social skills.

(table continues)

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4
SP4	-A classroom where children are in pre-school and integrated with other children who might have similar disabilities and children that are higher level thinkers.	-I believe that there's a huge success because children that do not have disabilities are now encouraged to help others. -They gain knowledge of that not everyone is the same, not everyone thinks alike.	-The preschool could be from three to five, so a 5-year-old without a disability and a 3-year-old with a disability is a lot for one teacher to work with. -If the ages were broken up, I think that everyone could get the attention.	-She's listening so much better -She's excited about socializing - she's so vocal and she's more sociable than she's ever been before. -she'll actually go over and play and pretend
SP5	-I think that is amazing not only because my son has a disability. -He started out in a special ed class and by the end of his first inclusion class he was proud of himself and he learned a lot from the other kids.	-Some kids have disabilities that you can't see -When you include those into regular ed those kids that don't have disabilities learn to be so much more welcoming and much more accepting of people that are different	I think that there are only positives. -You have the acceptance of kids with disabilities, but it also teaches your child to challenge themselves during a class where they might not be the smartest.	-I think that he got a more in-depth education and because everything was not taught one way. -Just because you don't have a disability doesn't mean that you learn the same way that every other child without a disability learns.

Research Question 2

Semi structured interviews were conducted to address Research Question 2, "What are the perspectives of parents of preschool children without disabilities about educating their children in a general education preschool setting?" When parents of non-disabled children were asked what they know about the inclusive setting, one of the five participants defined the inclusion model, where the other four participants outlined what the benefits of inclusion are. A major theme that emerged from parents of non-disabled children was *learning experience*. Most of the benefits identified involve children

learning from one another and being exposed to children of diverse abilities and learning styles. One parent noted that they felt the inclusion setting might help to prevent non-disabled children from becoming bullies (Table 2).

When discussing the benefits of the inclusive setting, the major theme that emerged was *helping*. One parent felt that the inclusive setting gave non-disabled children the chance to help their peers with disabilities. Another parent pointed out that all children can help each other in all different ways. A notable parent statement was "the students have the opportunity to assist on a child-friendly level". When asked about the disadvantages of the inclusive setting, the recurring theme of *challenge* emerged. Participants were mostly concerned with their children spending their day in a classroom with children who may need more attention from the teacher. One parent expressed concern that the non-disabled students may not be challenged, and another parent noted that inclusive teachers are likely to instruct at a slower pace. One parent expressed concern that the non-disabled students may be hesitant to interact with students with disabilities for lack of understanding, which may cause the students with disabilities to feel alienated.

Overall, parents of non-disabled children have expressed that their children have benefited greatly from being educated with children with disabilities. One parent reported that the inclusive class allowed for their child to be amongst children with different abilities and to embrace those differences. One notable parent response was, "I like that if my child is in an inclusive class again, he may not even realize who gets special education because it's so normal for him".

Table 2

Non-Disabled Parent Responses

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4
RP6	-students on different levels to interact and learn from one another .	-learn from one another -understand differences	-general education students may not be challenged -teacher burnout	-embrace differences
RP7	-I understand that inclusion is an educational model in which students with special needs spend a majority, if not all, of their time with general education peers.	. -I do believe there are benefits of including children with disabilities into the general education setting. - increases positive social interactions, friendships, and increase achievement of IEP goals.	-Disadvantages of inclusion may include difficulty in meeting all students needs -I could see the class having a lot of distractions if the disabilities include behavior.	-My child has benefited from inclusion. -He has been exposed to diversity at a young age. -He has been given the opportunity to embrace differences with others
RP8	-I think that it makes kids learn how each kid is different. -They can kind of see. strengths and weaknesses. -It helps kids look for help in a student rather than a grownup.	-I hate to use that word but the higher child might feel like they're helping, and the lower child feels like they're getting it on a child level rather than from an adult. -Kids are the best role models for each other.	-The teacher has to go a little slower so the kids that are a little more advanced may be losing out a little or not getting as much. -but I feel like in preschool till they're not focused on academics so there might not be much to miss out on	-I feel like it makes them. feel stronger about themselves. -My son has become more helpful and confident. -There was one little autistic girl who loved my son so much that when they see each other they both get so happy
RP9	-I know it's good for kids to be together when they're young. -Preschool might be the only chance a kid gets to be out of special ed. preschooler.	-I think it's good for him to be in the inclusion class. - I feel they are learning at the pace that they are more confident with.	-I could see somebody saying that the teacher is going to focus on one or two kids more closely than the others, but I don't really think about an issue. inclusion myself.	-we don't want anybody to be able to tell the difference so that's great -I like that if my son is in an inclusion class again, he may not even realize who gets special ed because it's so normal for him

(table continues)

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4
RP10	-I know that the inclusion class is good for all kids so they can learn from each other. -Inclusion allows regular education kids to be maybe not become bullies.	-What's good about inclusion is that kids can have role models for typical behavior. my son's favorite students is a boy with a facial deformity.	-Kids may shy away from kids with disabilities at first and that could be discouraging -It could be harder for the child with a disability to fit in.	-Starting to initiate with kids -I see an improvement in his behavior at home -He's not afraid to speak up for himself and as the youngest that's not easy

Table 3

Parent Interview A Priori Codes

A Priori Codes	Participant Responses
Parents being informed of inclusion	"great idea" "classroom where children are integrated with higher level thinkers and similar levels" "allows students on different levels to interact"
IEP option for children with disabilities	"should be on a kid by kid basis"
Expectation of my child	"my child can be a role model" "my child can learn from different children" "my child can have role models" "I want my child to be happy and included"
Teacher disposition/skills	"teacher has to differentiate" "follow the IEP" "teacher may focus on 1 or 2 students mostly" "nobody should be able to tell the difference"
Challenged/not challenged	"general education students may not be challenged enough" "kid falling in the middle may be lost" "older children may lose out on attention"

Table 4

Parent Interview Open Coding

Codes	Examples
Role Models, Examples	"Allows students to learn from one another" "kids get to be role models for kids who are less advantaged"
Getting Enough Attention	"difficulty meeting all students' needs" "average kid may get lost" "students with behavior problems may get more attention"
Need for Balance	"Teacher has to go a little slower for kids who need it while challenging the higher kids" "Teacher needs to differentiate" "Teacher has to worry about kids picking up negative behavior"
Alternative to Special Education	"My child would have been put at a disadvantage in special education" "Natural entry point into kindergarten"
Building Friendships	"My daughter made friends with a little boy with physical deformities and she didn't even notice" "my child now loves to pretend play with her friends"
Pride and Confidence	"My daughter had no confidence and now she's in regular kindergarten talking to everyone" "my son now goes up to kids at the playground and initiates play"
Multiple Learning Styles	"my child has learned to embrace differences" "kids learn in all different ways" "my child got to be taught in different ways"

Research Question 3

Semi structured interviews and semi structured observations were conducted to address Research Question 3, "What are special education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?" Participants were asked to identify the benefits of the inclusive model as well as the drawbacks. Based on their responses, the major themes of *role model* and *behavior issues* emerged. All the participants expressed that the inclusive setting allows for children with disabilities to be educated with role models for behavior, speech, and social skills. The primary concern

identified by every participant is having students with severe behaviors in the class. One teacher reported that she could spend all day working through a behavior problem, and another teacher expressed concern about other children getting hurt.

When participants were asked to identify the specific supports and proficiencies needed to implement inclusion successfully, the major themes that emerged were *staff, attitude,* and *culture.* All of the participants in this group made reference to either having enough staff members working in the classrooms, staff being properly trained, and having extra staff available in case of emergencies. One teacher said that flexibility is an important proficiency that a teacher must have in order to run a successful inclusion classroom. She explained that teachers must be prepared to teach different types of learners and to understand that young children may not be intrinsically motivated to learn yet. When asked what supports were needed to implement inclusion, a recurring response was "a culture of acceptance". Two teachers reported that they felt that the attitude of the school administration can greatly impact the rest of the school community. One of the teachers said the participation of school administration is important because teachers would be more willing to ask for help if they trusted their administrators.

When asked to identify barriers, a variety of themes emerged including *philosophy, hands, family involvement,* and *funding.* Two teachers reported that a barrier is teacher philosophy. One of the teacher participants who had been teaching in an inclusive preschool class at the time of the interview stated that she feels that young children with disabilities should only be educated in self-contained special education classes. Three teachers reported that there are not enough staff members available to

assist should an emergency arise. One teacher identified lack of funding and supplies as a barrier, while three teachers identified misplaced students as a barrier. One single teacher identified family involvement as a barrier, stating that it is difficult if the parent's expectations for their children differ from the teacher's expectations.

Teacher participants were asked to describe their expectations for preschool children with disabilities in general education classes. The most common response was that teachers start out with the same expectations for all their students, but they expect that they will have to modify and accommodate for their students with disabilities. One participant expressed the notable sentiment that "ideally if a child is in inclusion, they should be able to do everything that the other kids do, but that's not the reality". Another participant said that she starts each year off with the same expectations for all of her students and she accommodates according to the individual needs of her students.

Upon analysis of the observations, it was discovered that the data obtained from the interviews were in alignment with what was observed in their classrooms. Teachers who cited the ability to modify as a need for successful inclusion were observed modifying in their classrooms. For example, one teacher was observed during morning circle presenting a weather lesson, and while some students were talking about the weather, she included the non-verbal students by having them dress the weather bear in the appropriate clothing for the day's weather. Teachers who presented with positive, upbeat attitudes in the classroom were typically those who felt that a positive, easy-going affect was an important quality in a successful teacher of inclusion. For example, three of the students were observed using exaggerated, silly movements as a method for

helping students who had difficulty understanding her directions. Teachers who expressed non-support of the inclusive setting were observed to be less engaged with their students in an individualized manner. For example, one teacher was observed often correcting the children's actions and behaviors in a critical, authoritative manner.

Table 5

Special Education Teacher Responses

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4	Interview Question 5
SE1	-Better social emotional skills -expressive and receptive language -access to more materials -empathy and understanding	-students with challenging behaviors take up a lot of time and energy. a child with a behavior takes all day	-expect to have very high students and very low students -expect to differentiate -possible autism -all my students will follow the rules	-solid partnership with class aides -substitutes who are trained -administrative support -administration on the same page with	-false perception that the kids are not "ready". We need to be ready for them, not the other way around -inexperienced aide
SE2	-role models for behavior and language -enriching experience for a newer teacher -"normalcy for kids who get a lot of therapies	-overall, it's a positive -exception is students with behaviors change the dynamic of the room -have to interrupt instruction for behaviors often	-same expectations -changes depending on the child and their individual needs	-more staff -someone to bounce things off of -support in case of emergency	-having such a wide gap of abilities and ages.
SE3	-positive peer role models -inclusive kindergarten outcomes -kids with behavior don't get all placed in one separate room -being part of the preschool community	-students with severe behavioral needs take away from the others. -support staff not readily available in case of "emergency" issue	-the kids will be coming in needing modifications and I expect to learn that as I go along. -expectations not different but methods used may be different -same expectations	-trained staff -coaching -collaboration with regular and special ed -it's important for teachers to know the history because there may be students who come from abuse, homeless, etc.	-being the only one who can handle behavior problems -teachers who are exclusive of lower students -self-contained is considered a "safety net"

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4	Interview Question 5
SE4	-regular ed students learn to accept differences young -special ed students have role models for language and cognitive and physical skills	-regular ed students don't get all the attention they need -especially students with severe behavior problems -sometimes I spend all day managing behaviors -behavioral support is time consuming	-it depends on the child -differentiate -ideally if they are in inclusion, they should be able to do everything the other kids could do but that's not reality	-behavior plans -plan B in case of emergency issue -more aides -kids don't always have intrinsic motivation so teachers need to be ready to motivate -training is ok but a piece of paper is meaningless without experience. My years of experience is my resource -more training in behavioral support	-just not having enough hands for all the assistance needed with the everyday activities. Some kids still in diapers -it's challenging to educate 3-year olds with delays along with typical 5-year olds.
SE5	-peer models for friendships -social interactions -behavior -coping skills	-severe behavior problems -at risk of hurting other students -other kids getting hurt	the children follow the same routine and rules put forth by the teacher with whatever modifications they may need	-Having an experienced teacher that knows how to teach all children with and without disabilities. -district support	-A poor preschool program -not enough funding from school district - lack of proper facilities.

Research Question 4

Semi structured interviews and formal observations were conducted to address

Research Question 4, "What are general education preschool teachers' perspectives about

the supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with

disabilities into general education settings? Participants were asked to identify the

benefits of the inclusive model as well as the drawbacks. Based on their responses,

findings from the special education teacher interviews, the major themes of *role model*

and *behavior issues* emerged. All the participants expressed that the inclusive setting

allows for children with disabilities to be educated with role models for behavior, speech,

and social skills. One teacher felt that the non-disabled students raised the bar for the students with disabilities. Another teacher felt that for the non-disabled students, being educated with students with disabilities helps them to learn compassion and empathy, as well normalizing learning differences. Teachers identified the primary drawback of including preschool children with disabilities into general education as having students with severe behaviors in the class. One teacher expressed that children with behavioral disabilities should not be in inclusive settings. Another teacher reported frustration that some children with behavioral disabilities are placed into her inclusive class when they should be in a self-contained class. Overall, the sentiment of the participants was that if children with behavioral issues were included into general education, there should be extensive supports put into place. Two teachers discussed having more available staff, while one teacher suggested that children with behavioral issues have the assistance of a one-to-one aide.

When participants were asked to identify the specific supports and proficiencies needed to implement inclusion successfully, the major themes that emerged were *staff,* and *behavior training.* Three teachers suggested that while they were well trained in curriculum implementation, they felt unprepared for dealing with children who have behavioral issues. In tandem with the responses of special education teachers, the regular education teacher participants shared the need for more staff in the classrooms and access to staff or administrative personnel in the event of an emergency. Additionally, the need for trained class aides was brought to light by some of the regular education participants.

One teacher highlighted the importance of being able to "go with the flow" and maintain a positive attitude.

When asked to identify barriers, the two major themes that emerged were *staffing* and *students in the wrong placement.* Two teachers made specific reference to students in their classes who were placed in the inclusion setting because of parental demand or limited space in the self-contained class. The topic of misplaced students was a controversial subject for some teachers because they expressed that children with more severe delays, particularly in the behavior domain, were placed into their classes without the appropriate supports for the student or for the teacher. When asked if they had any say in the matter, teachers expressed the feeling that their voices are not heard regarding placement decisions that have already been made. Not having enough trained staff was another recurring theme for the regular education teachers. Three teachers made note of the fact that they have been faced with understaffed classrooms with too many children of various levels of functioning, making it difficult to effectively teach any of the students. In addition, they were faced with the barrier of having to train classroom aides during classroom time because of their lack of experience and training.

Teacher participants were asked to describe their expectations for preschool children with disabilities in general education classes. One of the participants said that they read the IEPs before the children get to their class to determine where to set their expectations. Conversely, another participant said, "A child is so much more than what his IEP says". Regular education teachers expressed a common sentiment that they expected their students with disabilities to need a great deal of modification and attention.

The data obtained from the interviews were in alignment with what was observed in their classrooms. Teachers who cited the ability to modify as a need for successful inclusion were observed modifying in their classrooms. Teachers who presented with positive, upbeat attitudes in the classroom were typically those who felt that a positive, easy-going affect was an important quality in a successful teacher of inclusion.

Table 6

Regular Education Teacher Responses

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4	Interview Question 5
RE6	-peer role models -self confidence -one of my students used to hide under the table -now he is loud and proud to talk -surrounded by other kids who didn't need help	-the kids being in danger with severe behavior problems -never know if behavior will be violent -worried that other kids might regress with behavior problems	-may sound negative but I aim low at first with all of my kids with and without disabilities I don't expect much from at the beginning. -build from the beginning -blank slate for all	-visual supports in the room -positive attitude -opportunity for small group teaching -exceptional training in curriculum and data collection -go with the flow	-students who are severely brain damaged shouldn't be in inclusion if they have more significant needs (table continues)
RE7	-regular ed students are role models -students learn that differences are the norm early -we can't teach that soon enough	-sometimes we don't have the manpower -hard to meet everyone's needs when they are different ages and levels.	-I expect to present things in different ways. -I expect that they are so much more than what the IEP says.	-support staff -putting the right staff with kids who need one on ones -we have curriculum training, but we definitely need behavior training	-not having enough staff when there are behavior issues -we don't have all the resources we need in our toolbox for preventing behaviors
RE8	-benefits for both groups of students -empathy and compassion -role modeling for language	-sometimes the kids don't get the 1-1 they need -have to stop what you're doing with behaviors, whether disabled or not	-I expect that not every child is going to be able to know the same things. -some kids may be able to do things verbally and some might show what they know	-modifications, like the little things that you put on the chairs or special equipment they may need -behavior training	-having staff without preschool or inclusion experience -sometimes family involvement can be a barrier -not on the same page (table continues)

	Interview Question 1	Interview Question 2	Interview Question 3	Interview Question 4	Interview Question 5
RE9	-role models -raise the bar for special ed students -increase in play skills for "socially delayed"	-kids with behavior issues should not be in inclusion and they end up there -at least they should have a 1-1 aide. -I've had parents complain.	-I read the IEPs and use that information to start with. -As I get to know the kids, I figure out what modifications they need.	-behavior training -staff that is trained -if students with behaviors come into the class, they need to have 1-1 aides	-when students are placed in inclusion who are not ready -when parents get to decide the student's placement
RE10	-higher functioning preschool kids have better role models -preschool kids with less severe delays won't copy from students who are more delayed	-kids with behavior issues take away from the other kids and cause a danger to themselves and others. -The Child Study Team doesn't know the kids' behaviors well enough to place them in inclusion.	-I expect that a lot of the kids coming in are going to come in knowing nothing. -I expect that there will be at least 1 student who should have been placed in the self-contained class.	-aides who have experience -aides who do not have physical limitations -immediate access to help if a behavior escalates	-not having enough staff -when students are misplaced to make parents happy -when students are placed in inclusion because there is no room anywhere else

Table 7

Teacher Interview A Priori Codes

A Priori Codes	Participant Responses
Training/resources	"I would like behavior training" "we have plenty of curriculum training" "teachers need to know history of students"
Support/don't support inclusion	"I believe in stopping the cycle of different being bad" "inclusion is not for everybody"
Paperwork	"I have to create visual supports in the room" "I review IEPs" "Behavior Intervention Plans"
Students improperly placed	"parents should not influence" "team should have final say" "students with severe behaviors should not be in inclusion without a 1-1"
Disservice to higher-level students	"regular ed students don't get the attention they need" "parents complain that their child is coming home with new behaviors" "have to interrupt instruction for behavior issues"
I don't have the skills	"I don't know enough about behaviors" "Difficult to teach a wide gap of skill levels" "Teachers used to self-contained have to shift thinking"

A Priori Codes	Participant Responses
It depends on the disability	"Behavior problems need smaller groups" "Brain damage and medical needs need to be in special education" "Behavior problems need 1-1" Ideally if they are in inclusion, they should be able to do everything that a typical peer can do"
School leadership support	"just not enough hands" "funding could be taken away" "district-wide attitude that self-contained is a safety net"

Table 8

Teacher Interview Open Coding

Cycle II Coding	Participant Response
Social/emotional skills	"children can learn appropriate social skills" "one of my students stared out under the table and now he is playing with his friends"
Language skills	"kids learn more from one another than from me" "peers can have age-appropriate language role models"
Empathy	"the kids learn to be empathetic and compassionate of others' needs" "we can't teach compassion soon enough"
Challenging behavior	"worried that other kids would get hurt" "I have to interrupt instruction to deal with behavior problem" "kids with behavior issues should not be in inclusion" "other kids might regress or imitate"
Trained Class aides	"support staff should have behavior training" "I have to put certain aides with certain students" "sometimes I feel like the only one who knows what to do"
Cultural change/shift	"we are on the cusp of a cultural change" "some teachers still don't believe in inclusion"
Acceptance	"we need to create a culture of acceptance and normalcy"
Funding	"some students are placed in inclusion because we don't have any other placement" "we need more staff and more hands on deck"
Differentiated instruction	"I expect to differentiate" "it is important to be able to teach to various levels of ability" "aides should be trained in differentiated instruction"
Need more hands	"all hands on deck" "we need an extra set of hands sometimes if we are going to deal with behaviors in general education" "administration needs to be hands on"

Table 9

Teacher Observations Alignment with Interview Data

Teacher	Interview Data	Observed	Examples
SP1	Solid partnership with class aides Create a culture of acceptance and normalcy in the classroom Expect to differentiate	Working collaboratively with aide Fostered friendship among all students Differentiated instructions and activities	Teacher assigned aide to work with a small group During center time, teacher helped a boy join a group of other boys playing with sand. During circle time, teacher had some students reading name tags and some other students pointing to the student when she read the names aloud.
SP2	Same expectations for both groups of students	All materials and activities were available to all students.	During center time, there was a project set up for the students to do. One

Teacher	Interview Data	Observed	Examples
	Make changes as needed for individual students	Teacher made changes as needed for individual students.	student was unable to arrange the letters in their name, so the teacher brought the student a card with their name written on it.
SP3	Modify as you see needed Use of different methods according to child's needs Collaboration with regular education teachers	Teacher was observed modifying on 3 separate occasions No collaboration with regular education teacher observed	During circle time, teacher asked a non-verbal student to point to pictures of animals instead of naming them.
SP4	Differentiate Motivate students	Teacher was observed differentiating Teacher was motivating	During circle time, teacher had a non-verbal student dress the weather bear as the other students verbalized what the bear should be wearing. Teacher offered generous praise and high-fives to all students throughout the observation.
SP5	Able to modify when needed Able to teach to all levels	Teacher was observed modifying for all levels	During transition, teacher asked a higher-level student to state the rules to the group. Student with limited language points to the pictures

(table continues)

Teacher	Interview Data	Observed	Examples
RE6	Blank slate for all kids at first Provide visual supports Provide small group Go with the flow Positive attitude	Visual supports observed Teacher was observed working in small groups Positive, easy-going attitude was observed	Visual cues with words and pictures for "wh" questions at eye level in classroom. Toy shelves labeled with words and pictures. Teacher smiled and laughed often while working with them, using humor. Teacher went from group to group during center time to incorporate the "study for the day" into their play.
RE7	Present in different ways Child is more than their IEP Assign aides with students as they fit together	Teacher presented information in different ways Teacher utilized class aide for students who needed help	Teacher utilized music during circle time so that students who were unable to sing or state days of the week could dance along to the song.
RE8	Expect students to show what they know in different ways Modify environment – manipulatives, visuals, furniture accommodations	Teacher allowed students to express their knowledge through strongest modalities Teacher utilized visual aids and flexible seating options	During fine motor time, teacher had some students writing their names, while some students were using Wiki Sticks to form letters from a model. During circle time, one student was sitting in a cube chair and another student was on a cushion on the floor.
RE9	Be familiar with IEPs Modify as you get to know the student	Teacher reported that she had a grid for each student's IEP that outlines services and modifications Teacher was observed modifying on one occasion	Teacher was not observed looking at the IEP outlines. Teacher overall affect was flat. Teacher assigned a non-verbal student the job of choosing students for jobs by pointing to them when their name was called.
RE10	Low expectations Be ready for misplaced students	Teacher was observed to be mostly directive with all students Teacher did not appear to be flexible with time or procedures	During circle time and center time, teacher was observed to be giving directions and correcting the students. Teacher utilized a timer for each activity, with little flexibility

Table 10

Teacher Observations Thematic Coding

Categories	Themes
Collaboration	
Teachers collaborated with their class aides. Teachers were not observed collaborating with other teachers during observation times. Teachers reported that the only time they collaborate with other preschool teachers is before or after school or during in-service days. Class aides played crucial roles in keeping the students safe and on task.	Within the classroom, collaboration between the teacher and the class aide are essential in ensuring that the needs of all students are being met. Special education and regular education preschool teachers need time to collaborate in a more formalized way and more consistently. Collaboration will allow for teachers to exchange ideas for promoting strong inclusive classrooms.
Modification/Accommodation	
Teachers were observed modifying activities Some teachers utilized flexible seating Visual aids were utilized in all classrooms Visual aids were at eye level for students Visual aids combined words with pictures for readers and non-readers	Teachers should be reviewing student IEPs so that they can plan for necessary modifications and accommodations. Teachers need to be ready to modify activities and instructions further as they become more familiar with their students. Visual aids and environmental modifications should be included and updated for all students according to their individual needs.
Differentiation	
Most teachers asked questions and gave directions in different ways for students of different abilities Most teachers used differentiation naturally Most teachers had activities set up for all levels of learners Most teachers provided more support to students who needed assistance	Differentiated instruction comes more naturally for some teachers than others. Level of mastery of differentiated instruction does not necessarily coincide with teacher specialization (regular/special education). Differentiating instruction allows for all students to be involved in every activity.
Attitude/Affect	
Most teachers displayed an upbeat, animated demeanor Most teachers were generous with verbal praise One regular education teacher displayed a flat affect and was mostly concerned with timelines	Teachers who have positive views of the inclusive environment presented with more positive effects. Teachers who had more positive affects fostered environments in which students could feel confident to ask questions and share ideas.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Recommendations for establishing credibility in qualitative research include triangulation of data using multiple sources, debriefing with colleagues, and member checks (Shenton, 2004). Member checks are considered the gold standard in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015). Upon completion of coding and thematic analysis, I sent every teacher and parent participant a copy of the draft findings to check for the accuracy of my interpretations of their data used and for viability of the findings in the setting. Member checking helped me to ensure that I did not cater to my own potential biases or expectations. As an additional means of establishing credibility, I conducted semi structured observations of teachers to determine if what they said in their interview was reflected in their actions in the classroom.

Transferability

Transferability is established through robust descriptions of participants, data collection methods, and time periods (Shenton, 2004). My comprehensive description of the participants and methods of participant recruitment, as well as the multiple data collection points in this study, serve to contribute to the feasibility of conducting this research in other research settings. In this study, transferability was limited to special education teachers and regular education preschool teachers who teach in inclusive preschool settings as well as parents of preschool children with and without disabilities.

Dependability

To ensure that my themes and findings were logically reported using the data obtained, I worked with a peer reviewer who completed a qualitative project study and obtained his Ed.D. in 2012. Throughout the data collection and analyses phases of my research, I maintained an audit trail that documents the steps I took to synthesize my findings. Within this chapter, I presented a clear description of the steps I took to collect and analyze the data, as well as synthesize my findings into major themes.

Confirmability

Confirmability establishes that the results of the study are based on the data and not the personal interpretation of the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Throughout the process of writing this research study, I communicated frequently with my committee chair and colleagues to stay accountable for my personal thoughts and any biases that may have arisen. By engaging in reflexivity with several of my Walden University peers and mentors, I was able to examine and confirm my commitment to the data and pure interpretation of data.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

There were four research questions that this qualitative study sought to address. The first research question was "What are the perspectives of parents of preschool children with disabilities about educating their children in a general education preschool setting". The results of the data indicate that parents of preschool children with disabilities look favorably on the inclusive preschool classroom for their children. They have positive perspectives about their children's exposure to non-disabled peers as role

models, yet they express concerns that their child's individual needs may not be met in a

large group. Research Question 2 was "What are the perspectives of parents of non-

disabled preschool children about educating children with disabilities in a general

education preschool setting". Parents of non-disabled children also looked favorably

upon the inclusive setting, particularly for the opportunity it presents for their children to

be exposed to learning differences at such an early age. However, parents of non-

disabled children face the concerns that their children may not be challenged enough in

an environment of children diverse needs. Research Question 3 was "What are special

education preschool teachers' perspectives about the supports and proficiencies needed to

successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education settings".

The data indicates that special education teachers look inward when considering supports

and proficiencies. Special education teachers often noted that it is necessary to be

flexible, maintain a positive attitude, and hold all students to the same standards, with the

expectation that all students will not learn in the same way. As far as supports, special

education teacher participants feel that a successful preschool inclusion needs to be

adequately staffed with teachers and aides trained in behavioral disabilities. Research

Question 4 was "What are regular education preschool teachers' perspectives about the

supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with

disabilities into general education settings". The data indicate that general education

teachers are looking for support from outside of their classrooms. The primary concern

of regular education teachers is working with children with behavioral disorders. Should

a behavioral emergency arise, regular education teachers need the assurance that immediate assistance is available.

In Chapter 5, the results of the study will be examined in the context of the social model of disability (Oliver, 1990), which asserts that individuals with disabilities are hindered by their environment more so than by their disability. Additionally, the results of this study will be discussed in the context of previous research studies outlined in the literature review. Chapter 5 will also include recommendations for future research and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to obtain the perspectives of parents and teachers about including preschool children with disabilities into regular education classes to contribute to an understanding of why there is an underrepresentation of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings (Lawrence et al., 2016). In August 2018, in the research site in New Jersey obtained $2 million dollars in federal funding to provide free, high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year old children who reside in the community. The preschool expansion grant presents the district with more opportunities for including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings, as class numbers rose from six classes to 16 classes. The U.S. Department of Education (2016) recommends that, to every extent possible, children should be educated with their typical peers. Research suggests that two critical components of implementing successful inclusion are teacher buy-in and parental support (Lalvani, 2015).

The results of this study indicated that parents of preschool children with disabilities look favorably on the inclusive preschool classroom for their children. They have positive perspectives about their children's exposure to nondisabled peers as role models, yet they express concerns that their child's individual needs may not be met in a large group. Parents of nondisabled children also looked favorably upon the inclusive setting, particularly for the opportunity it presents for their children to be exposed to learning differences at such an early age. However, parents of nondisabled children faced the concerns that their children may not be challenged enough in an environment with children diverse needs. The results of this study indicated that special education

teachers look inward when considering supports and proficiencies needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into general education. Special education teachers often noted that it is necessary to be flexible, maintain a positive attitude, and hold all students to the same standards, with the expectation that all students will not learn in the same way. As far as supports, special education teacher participants felt that a successful preschool inclusion needs to be adequately staffed with teachers and aides trained in behavioral disabilities. The primary concern of regular education teachers was working with children with behavioral disorders. Should a behavioral emergency arise, regular education teachers need the assurance that immediate assistance is available.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

Based on the data obtained from semi structured interviews with parents of preschool children with disabilities, the participants believe that the inclusive setting allows for their children to be educated with age-appropriate role models for social skills, speech/language, and play skills. Conversely, the participants also believe that nondisabled children benefit from early exposure to children with learning differences so that they can begin to view differences as a normal part of life, as opposed to viewing them as disabilities or problems. The social model of disability confirms the belief that nondisabled individuals can learn from individuals with disabilities by learning how they view the world and navigate through challenges (Kattari et al., 2017). Regarding the inclusive classroom, participants in this study expressed concern that their children may be at risk of losing out on IEP instruction because of the attention that students with

severe behavior issues require. Research confirmed that parents of children with disabilities have concerns involving their child's unique needs and a school's ability to accommodate them (Glenn-Applegate et al., 2016).

Research Question 2

Based on the data obtained from semi structured interviews with parents of non-disabled preschool children, the major themes of *helping,* and *learning experience* were evident. Participants felt that being educated with peers with disabilities provides their children with the opportunity to help their peers on a child-level, while providing them with exposure to diverse learners at an early age. A major theme in identifying the disadvantages of the inclusive setting was *challenge*. Participants worried that their children may not be challenged enough in an inclusive setting. The research shows that inclusive education has been found to provide benefits to children with disabilities as well as nondisabled children (Barton & Smith, 2016). The benefits of further developed social skills, advanced academic skills, and self-confidence have proven to yield more positive outcomes for children as they progress through elementary school and beyond (Lawrence et al., 2016). Another theme that emerged from interviews with parents was *lack of information.* When parents were asked what they know about inclusion, they had positive ideas about the benefits, but they were not able to define what the inclusion model actually was, confirming information from the literature that parents of nondisabled children have reported that they are not informed about the inclusion model and are left to make their own assumptions (Vlachou et al., 2016).

Research Question 3

Based on the data obtained from semi structured interviews with and observations of special education preschool teachers, the themes of *role model, behavior issues, staff, attitude,* and *culture* emerged. The participants agreed that the inclusive classroom provides children with disabilities the opportunity to learn alongside age-appropriate role models for social and communication skills. This theme is aligned with the research that affirms that positive preschool experiences have been instrumental in preventing children from engaging in antisocial behavior through their early teen years (Schindler et al., 2015). The question of whether to include students with severe behavioral disorders became the focus of participants' concerns. Special education teachers felt that having a student with a behavioral disorder in an inclusive class was a game changer because of the amount of time and energy it takes to work through behaviors that have the potential to be dangerous. Through the lens of the social disability theory, children with any disability should have the right supports to access an inclusive environment. Teachers felt that the supports of extra hands, trained staffing, and administrative participation were missing from the equation. The same needs have been identified in the research of Baker (2019) and Barton and Smith (2016), who highlight the importance of staff training and administrative support. Of the identified supports and proficiencies, participants note that teaching in an inclusive class requires a positive attitude, flexibility, and the ability to go with the flow. Research shows that teachers with more positive attitudes about individuals with disabilities will provide a more positive experience for their students with and without disabilities (Bialka, 2017), which informs the question of what

proficiencies are needed to successfully include preschool children with disabilities into regular education settings.

Research Question 4

Based on the data obtained from semi structured interviews with and observations of regular education preschool teachers, the themes of *role model, behavior, wrong placement*, and *staff* emerged. Regular education teachers, like their special education teacher cohorts expressed agreement that including preschool children with disabilities provides opportunities for the children to learn from one another through role-modeling and exposure to diverse learners. Theorists such as Piaget and Bandura highlighted key influences in childhood development, such as methods by which they are taught, interpersonal relationships, and peer modeling (Fink, 2014). The primary identified perceived barrier was identified as students with severe behavioral issues who are placed in inclusive classes who should be in self-contained classes. This perception is in alignment with the research of Olson and Ruppar (2017), who found that one of the barriers to children with disabilities being educated in inclusive settings is often the perspective of teachers who believe children with disabilities are incapable of functioning in the mainstream. In particular, the nature of the disability often determines how a teacher will perceive including students into mainstream classes. For example, teachers felt more comfortable working with children with communication disabilities as compared to children with emotional and behavioral disabilities (Vaz et al., 2015). The regular education teacher participants also expressed that their expectations of students with disabilities is that they will require individualized modifications, which seems to

equate with added work without the added support. Within the framework of the social model of disability, this would be identified as an environmental barrier for individuals with disabilities.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the findings may be difficult to generalize because the participants are limited to 10 teachers and 10 parents within a New Jersey school district. What minimizes this limitation is that IDEA requires the provision of inclusive education for all students with disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate (United States Department of Education, 2004). Therefore, a study that investigates the perspectives that parents and teachers have about educating preschool children with disabilities in general education settings could be conducted in any part of the United States public education system.

In Chapter 1, I anticipated the possibility that my dual role as researcher and employee at the research site had the potential to limit the trustworthiness of the results. I was able to successfully address this potential limitation by taking purposeful steps. First, when recruiting potential participants, I immediately stated that I would be working in the capacity of a graduate researcher and not a school employee. I told each participant that I would share the results of my study with the board of education, but no identifying information would be revealed about them. As I began conducting interviews and observations, I often reminded each participant that their identities would be kept confidential and that their responses would only be used for the purpose of this research.

Recommendations

From this study, which focused on parents and teacher perspectives of including preschool children with disabilities into general education, arose the potential for further research. One of the most frequently occurring themes that emerged from the data was that children with behavioral disabilities create anxiety for both parents and teachers. Parents feel that children with behavioral disabilities have the potential to put their children in harm's way, while preventing the teacher from giving their children the attention they need. Teachers feel that children with behavioral disabilities should be in self-contained settings unless they have significant supports put into place such as a one-to-one aide, staff training, and administrative support. Future research should focus on what steps schools can take so that children with behavioral disabilities are not excluded from general education.   Future research should explore specific professional development recommendations, strategies for preventing behavior escalation, and contingency plans to address significant behavioral events, should they unexpectedly occur.

Another area of study could be to extend the inquiry beyond preschool to elementary school students. Gaining the perspectives of teachers who work with students in grades K-6 may contribute to the understanding of what supports and proficiencies are needed to successfully include students with disabilities into regular education. Elementary school teachers may have different experiences and insight given that they work with older students who are developmentally more advanced than preschool children.

At the initial phase of developing this case study, I considered conducting mixed methods research to include empirical data. For future studies, it would be intriguing to compare the rates of progress in social skills and communication skills between preschool children who have been educated in regular education settings and preschool children who have been educated in self-contained settings. A comparison of progress rates may help to confirm or deny whether or not inclusive education results in better student outcomes.

Implications

This research has the potential to contribute to informed decision making, which may allow for more preschool children with disabilities to have greater access to an inclusive education (Sira et al., 2018). This research may support professional education practice by using qualitative data to identify the supports needed for preschool children with disabilities to be included into general education settings (see Muccio et al., 2014). In response to the federal mandates to educate students in the LRE (IDEA, 2004), this study has the potential to affect positive social change by contributing to an increase in the number of preschool children with disabilities who are educated with their typical peers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of teachers and parents about including of preschoolers with disabilities into general education. In 2017, the US Department of Education reiterated IDEA's (2004) goal that all preschool children with disabilities should have access to high-quality early childhood

programs with high expectations for learning outcomes. An understanding of teacher attitudes and adult expectations for student outcomes is a critical factor of ensuring a positive educational experience for students with disabilities (National Council on Disabilities, 2018).

Through the results of this study, I found that parents of children with and without disabilities, as well as teachers of general education and special education, look favorably on including preschool children with disabilities into general education. What concerns parents about the inclusive environment is that children with disabilities may not have all of their needs met in a group of diverse learners, and conversely, parents of children without disabilities wonder if the inclusive classroom is challenging enough for them. Teachers are primarily concerned with not having enough support to service children with all types of disabilities, especially behavioral disabilities.

This study is important to education because parent and teacher perspectives affect the implementation of inclusion and their attitudes affect the student's beliefs about themselves and their abilities (Bernatzky & Cid, 2018). Schools must understand how to address parent and teacher perspectives and misconceptions before moving forward with designing an inclusion program in which children feel they belong (Sheppard, 2017).

References

Alexander, S. T., Brody, D. L., Muller, M., Ziv, H. G., Achituv, S., Gorsetman, C. R.,

Miller, L. (2016). Voices of American and Israeli early childhood educators on

inclusion. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, *8*(1), 16–

38. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/13158

Anderson, E. M., & Lindeman, K. W. (2017). Inclusive prekindergarten classrooms in a

new era: Exploring the perspectives of teachers in the United States. *School*

Community Journal, *27*(2), 121–143. Retrieved from

http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Baker, B. D. (n.d.). School finance & the distribution of equal educational opportunity in

the postrecession US. *Journal of Social Issues*, *72*(4), 629–655. Retrieved from

https://spssi.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/15404560

Banerjee, R., Sundeen, T., Hutchinson, S. R., & Jackson, L. (2017). Factors that explain

placement decisions for students with multiple disabilities: Findings from national

data. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 17*(2), 110–122.

Barak, S., Elad, D., Silberg, T., & Brezner, A. (2017). Mothers and fathers of children

with cerebral palsy: Differences in future expectations. *Journal of Developmental*

and Physical Disabilities, *29*(2), 223–240. Retrieved from

https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=14315&tip=sid

Barton, E. E., & Smith, B. J. (2015). Advancing high-quality preschool inclusion. *Topics*

in Early Childhood Special Education, 35(2), 69-78.

doi:10.1177/0271121415583048

Bernatzky, M., & Cid, A. (2018). Parents' aspirations and commitment with education.

   Lessons from a randomized control trial in a shantytown. *Studies in Educational

   Evaluation*, *56*, 85–93. Retrieved from

   https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/studies-in-educational-evaluation

Bialka, C. (2017). Understanding the factors that shape dispositions toward students with

   disabilities: a case study of three general education pre-service teachers.

   International Journal of Inclusive Education,*21*(6), 616-

   636. doi:10.1080/13603116.2016.1223183

Bierman, K. L., & Torres, M. (2016). Promoting the development of executive functions

   through early education and prevention programs. In J. A. Griffin, P. McCardle,

   & L. S. Freund (Eds.), *Executive function in preschool-age children: Integrating

   measurement, neurodevelopment, and translational research.* (pp. 299–326).

   Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from

   sites.psu.edu/redi/wp-content/uploads/sites/29653/2015/08/Bierman-and-Torres-

   Edited-Chapter-final-draft-1-15-15.pdf

Brock, M. E. (2018). Trends in the educational placement of students with intellectual

   disability in the United States over the Past 40 years. *American Journal on

   Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, *123*(4), 305–314. Retrieved from

   https://aaiddjournals.org/

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Bryant, J.P. (2018). A phenomenological study of preschool teachers' experiences and

 perspectives on inclusion practices. *Cogent Education*, *5*(1), 1-12. Retrieved from

 www.cogenteducation.com

Cloet, E., Leys, M., & De Meirleir, L. (2017). Access to early diagnostics, intervention,

 and support for children with a neurobiological developmental delay or disorder.

 Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology, (12), 1215. Retrieved from

 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28944462

Collier, M., Keefe, E. B., & Hirrel, L. A. (2015). Listening to parents' narratives: The

 value of authentic experiences with children with disabilities and their families.

 School Community Journal, *25*(2), 221–242. Retrieved from

 https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1085720.pdf

Cooc, N., & Bui, O. T. (2017). Characteristics of parent center assistance from the

 federation for children with special needs. *Journal of Special Education*, *51*(3),

 138–149. doi 10.1177/0022466917696285

Coplan, R. J., Bullock, A., Archbell, K. A., & Bosacki, S. (2015). Preschool teachers'

 attitudes, beliefs, and emotional reactions to young children's peer group

 behaviors. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *30*(Part A), 117–127.

 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2014.09.005

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method*

 approaches. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Cummings, K. P., Sills-Busio, D., Barker, A. F., & Dobbins, N. (2015). Parent–

 professional partnerships in early education: Relationships for effective inclusion

of students with disabilities. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, *36*(4), 309–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2015.1105329

Danner, N., & Fowler, S. A. (2015). Montessori and non-Montessori early childhood teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and access. *Journal of Montessori Research*, *1*(1), 28-41.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Public Law No. 94-142, 20 U.S. C. § 1400 et seq.

Fink, D. B. (2014). Provocation in the halls of academe: Bringing Piaget and Vygotsky into the university classroom. *Thought & Action*, 63–74. Retrieved from https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/Fink1.pdf

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., & Leon-Guerrero, A. (2015). *Social statistics for a diverse society* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Gallagher, D. J., Connor, D. J., & Ferri, B. A. (2014). Beyond the far too incessant schism: special education and the social model of disability. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *18*(11), 1120–1142. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.875599

Glenn-Applegate, K., Justice, L. M., & Kaderavek, J. (2016). How do caregivers select preschools? A study of children with and without disabilities. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 45*(1), 123–153. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10566-015-9322-1

Goldman, S. E., & Burke, M. M. (2017). The effectiveness of interventions to increase parent involvement in special education: A systematic literature review and meta-analysis. *Exceptionality*, *25*(2), 97–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/09362835.2016.1196444

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Report*, *8*(4), 597-606. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6/

Green, K. B., Terry, N. P., & Gallagher, P. A. (2014). Progress in language and literacy skills among children with disabilities in inclusive Early Reading First classrooms. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *33*, 249–259.

Gupta, S. S., & Rous, B. S. (2016). Understanding change and implementation: How leaders can support inclusion. *YC: Young Children*, *71*(2), 82–91. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc

Gwernan, J. R., Moore, D. A., Garside, R., Richardson, M., Thompson, C. J., Rogers, M., . . . Ford, T. (2015). ADHD, parent perspectives and parent-teacher relationships: grounds for conflict. *British Journal of Special Education, 42*(3), 279–300. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12087

Haegele, J. A., & Hodge, S. (2016). Disability discourse: Overview and critiques of the medical and social models. *Quest* (00336297), *68*(2), 193–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2016.1143849

Hebbeler, K., & Spiker, D. (2016). Supporting young children with disabilities. *Future of Children* (2), 185.

Hilbert, D. (2014). Perspectives of parents of young children with and without disabilities

    attending inclusive preschool programs. *Journal of Education and Learning*, *3*(4),

    49-59.

Jenson, K. (2018). A global perspective on teacher attitudes towards inclusion: Literature

    review. *Online Submission*. Retrieved from

    https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED585094.pdf

Joseph, J. D., Rausch, A., & Strain, P. S. (2018). Social competence and young children

    with special needs: Debunking "mythconceptions". *Young Exceptional Children*,

    21(1), 48-60.

Justice, L. M., Logan, J. A., Lin, T. J., & Kaderavek, J. N. (2014). Peer effects in early

    childhood education: Testing the assumptions of special education inclusion.

    Psychological Science, *25*, 1722–1729.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797614538978

Kattari, S. K., Lavery, A., & Hasche, L. (2017). Applying a social model of disability

    across the life span. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *27*(8),

    865–880. Retrieved from

    https://www.researchgate.net/deref/http%3A%2F%2Fdx.doi.org%2F10.1080%2F

    10911359.2017.1344175

Kendall, R. M., & DeMoulin, D. F. (1993). Mainstreaming students with disabilities

    using self-efficacy. *Education*, *(2)*, 201.

Kornbluh, M. (2015). Combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *12*(4), 397-414. doi:10.1080/14780887.2015.1021941

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 120–124. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kwon, K., Hong, S., & Jeon, H. (2017). Classroom readiness for successful inclusion: Teacher factors and preschool children's experience with and attitudes toward peers with disabilities. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *31*(3), 360-378. doi:10.1080/02568543.2017.1309480

Lalvani, P. (2015). Disability, stigma and otherness: Perspectives of parents and teachers. *International Journal of Disability Development and Education*, *62*(4), 379-393

La Placa Vincent Dr., S. L., Corlyon Judy, M., Axford Nick Dr., S. R., & Axford Nick Dr., S. R. (2014). Barriers to inclusion and successful engagement of parents in mainstream services: Evidence and research. *Journal of Children's Services*, (3), doi:10.1108/JCS-05-2014-0027

Lawrence, S., Smith, S., Banerjee, R. (2016). Preschool inclusion: Key findings from research and implications for policy. *Child Care and Early Education Research Connections*.

Lee, Y.-J., & Recchia, S. L. (2016). Early childhood inclusion. *YC: Young Children*, *71*(5), 79–84. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc =site

Lee, F. L. M., Yeung, A. S., Tracey, D., & Barker, K. (2015). Inclusion of children with

    special needs in early childhood education: What teacher characteristics matter.

    Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, *35*(2), 79–88.

    https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0271121414566014

Levitt, J. M. (2017). Exploring how the social model of disability can be re-invigorated:

    in response to Mike Oliver. *Disability & Society*, *32*(4), 589–594.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1300390

Manago, B., Davis, J. L., & Goar, C. (2017). Discourse in action: Parents' use of medical

    and social models to resist disability stigma. *Social Science & Medicine*, *184*,

    169–177. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.05.015

Manigo, C., & Rinyka, A. (2017). Does pre-school education matter? Understanding the

    lived experiences of parents and their perspectives of preschool education.

    Teacher Educators' Journal, *10*, 5–42. Retrieved from

    https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1138778

McClelland, M. M. ., Tominey, S. L. ., Schmitt, S. A. ., & Duncan, R. (2017). SEL

    interventions in early childhood. *Future of Children*, *27*(1), 33–47. Retrieved

    from

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319481814_SEL_Interventions_in_Earl

    y_Childhood

McCoy, D. C., Yoshikawa, H., Ziol-Guest, K. M., Duncan, G. J., Schindler, H. S.,

    Magnuson, K., Shonkoff, J. P. (2017). Impacts of early childhood education on

medium and long-term educational outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, *46*(8), 474–487. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X17737739

Montgomery, A., & Mirenda, P. (2014). Teachers' self-efficacy, sentiments, attitudes, and concerns about the inclusion of students with developmental disabilities. *Exceptionality Education International*, 24(1), 18–32.

Morgan, S. E., White, S. R., Bullmore, E. T., & Vértes, P. E. (2018). A Network Neuroscience Approach to Typical and Atypical Brain Development. Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging, 3(9), 754–766. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2018.03.003

Muccio, L. S., Kidd, J. K., White, C. S., & Burns, M. S. (2014). Head Start instructional professionals' inclusion perspectives and practices. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 34*(1), 40-48. doi:10.1177/0271121413502398

Murray, M., Munger, M. H., Colwell, W. B., & Claussen, A. J. (2018). Building capacity in special education: A statewide initiative to improve student outcomes through parent–teacher partnerships. *The School Community Journal*, *28*(1), 91–105. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1184770.pdf

Muschkin, C. G., Ladd, H. F., Dodge, K. A., & National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) at American Institutes for Research. (2015). Impact of North Carolina's early childhood initiatives on special education placements in third grade. working paper 121. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER). Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED560672.pdf

Naraian, S., & Schlessinger, S. (2017). When theory meets the "reality of reality":

    Reviewing the sufficiency of the social model of disability as a foundation for

    teacher preparation for inclusive education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *44*(1),

    81–100. Retrieved from

    https://www.thefreelibrary.com/When+theory+meets+the+%22reality+of+reality

    %22%3a+reviewing+the+sufficiency...-a0491909730

National Council on Disability (2018). The segregation of students with disabilities.

    Retrieved from *https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Segregation-SWD_508.pdf*

New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education (2016). LRE & inclusion: Utilizing a

    tiered system of supports (TSS) to support students with disabilities in general

    education settings. Retrieved from

    https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/idea/lre/LREWebinar.pdf

New Jersey Department of Education (2016). Special Education Regulations. Retrieved

    from *https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/reg/*

New Jersey Department of Education (2017). Retrieved from

    https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/report.aspx?type=summaryschool&lang=english&county

    =29&district=0320&school=020&SY=1617&schoolyear=2016-2017

New Jersey Department of Education (2017). Preschool Expansion Grant. Retrieved

    from *https://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psexpansion/*

Oh-Young, C., & Filler, J. (2015). A meta-analysis of the effects of placement on

    academic and social skill outcome measures of students with disabilities.

    Research in Developmental Disabilities, 4780-92. doi:10.1016/j.ridd.2015.08.014

Oliver, M. (1990). The politics of disablement. London: MacMillan

Oliver, M. (2013). The social model of disability: thirty years on. *Disability & Society*, *28*(7), 1024–1026. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2013.818773

Olson, A. a., & Ruppar, A. L. (2017). Resolving barriers to access to the general curriculum: Lessons from an exemplary inclusive district. *Inclusion*, *5*(2), 121-135. doi:10.1352/2326-6988-5.2.121

Park, M.-H., Dimitrov, D. M., & Park, D.-Y. (2018). Effects of background variables of early childhood teachers on their concerns about inclusion: The mediation role of confidence in teaching. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *32*(2), 165–180. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ujrc20/current

Pelatti, C., Dynia, J., Logan, J., Justice, L., & Kaderavek, J. (2016). Examining Quality in Two Preschool Settings: Publicly Funded Early Childhood Education and Inclusive Early Childhood Education Classrooms. Child & Youth Care Forum, *45*(6), 829–849. Retrieved from http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Preschool-quality-1.pdf

Rakap, S. s., Cig, O. o., Parlak & Rakap, A. a. (2017). Preparing preschool teacher candidates for inclusion: impact of two special education courses on their perspectives. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 17*(2), 98-109. doi:10.1111/1471-3802.12116

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rees, K. k. (2017). Models of disability and the categorisation of children with severe

and profound learning difficulties: Informing educational approaches based on an

understanding of individual needs. *Educational & Child Psychology*, *34*(4), 30-

39.

Roberts, J., & Simpson, K. (2016). A review of research into stakeholder perspectives on

inclusion of students with autism in mainstream schools. *International Journal of

Inclusive Education*, *20*(10), 1084–1096.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2016.1145267

Rodriguez, R. J., Blatz, E. T., & Elbaum, B. (2014). Parents' views of schools'

involvement efforts. *Exceptional Children*, *81*(1), 79–95.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402914532232

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data (3rd

ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rumrill, P. D., Cook, B. G., & Wiley, A. L. (2011). Research in special education:

Designs, methods, and applications. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Schindler, H. S., Kholoptseva, J., Oh, S. S., Yoshikawa, H., Duncan, G. J., Magnuson, K.

A., & Shonkoff, J. P. (2015). Maximizing the potential of early childhood

education to prevent externalizing behavior problems: A meta-analysis. *Journal of

School Psychology*, *53*, 243–263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2015.04.001

Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research

projects. *Education for Information*, *22*, 63-75. 10.3233/EFI-2004-22201.

Sheppard, M. E. (2017). Frequency and form of team communication from the

    perspective of parents of preschool children with disabilities: Implications for

    diverse families. *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners*,

    17(1), 39–54. Retrieved from

    https://multiplevoicesjournal.org/doi/abs/10.5555/1547-1888.17.1.39

Sira, N., Maine, E., & McNeil, S. (2018). Building alliance for preschool inclusion:

    Parents of typically developing children, attitudes and perspectives. *Journal of*

    Early Childhood Teacher Education, *39*(1), 32-49.

    doi:10.1080/10901027.2017.1415238

Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples.

    Journal of Mixed Methods Research, *1*(1), 77–100. doi:

    10.1177/2345678906292430

U.S. Department of Education (2004). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

    Retrieved from *https://sites.ed.gov/idea/building-the-legacy-idea-2004/*

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

    (2017). Dear colleague memo. Retrieved from

    https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-

    10-17.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education (2015).

    Policy statement on inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood

    program. Retrieved from

    https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf

Vaz, S., Wilson, N., Falkmer, M., Sim, A., Scott, M., Cordier, R., & Falkmer, T. (2015).

    Factors associated with primary school teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of

    students with disabilities. *PLOS ONE*, 10(8).

    https://dx.doi.org/10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0137002

Vinovskis, M. A. (2005). The birth of head start: preschool education policies in the

    Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Retrieved from

    https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Walden University: Center for Research Quality. (2015b). Research ethics planning

    worksheet. Retrieved from

    http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec/application

Warren, S. R., Martinez, R. S., & Sortino, L. A. (2016). Exploring the quality indicators

    of a successful full-inclusion preschool program. *Journal of Research in*

    Childhood Education, *30*(4), 540-553. doi:10.1080/02568543.2016.1214651

Weiland, C. w. (2016). Impacts of the Boston prekindergarten program on the school

    readiness of young children with special needs. *Developmental Psychology*,

    52(11), 1763-1776. doi:10.1037/dev0000168

Weaver, A. D., & Ouye, J. C. (2015). A Practical and Research-Based Guide for

    Improving IEP Team Meetings. *Communique*, *44*(3), 1.

Weller, S. C., Vickers, B., Bernard, H. R., Blackburn, A. M., Borgatti, S., Gravlee, C. C.,

    & Johnson, J. C. (n.d.). Open-ended interview questions and saturation. *PLOS*

    ONE, 13(6). Retrieved from https://journals.plos.org/plosone/

Wertlieb, D. (2018). Inclusive early childhood development (IECD): A twin-tracking approach to advancing behavioral health and social justice. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. Retrieved from https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/ort/

Yell, M. L., Katsiyannis, A., Rose, C. A., & Houchins, D. E. (2016). Bullying and harassment of students with disabilities in schools: Legal considerations and policy formation. Remedial and Special Education, *37*(5), 274–284. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0741932515614967

Yell, M.L., Rogers, D., Lodge Rogers, E., & Rogers, E.L. (1998). The legal history of special education: What a long strange trip it's been! *Remedial and Special Education 19*(4), 219-228.

Appendix A: Semi structured Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What do you think are the benefits of including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

2. What do you think are the disadvantages of including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

3. What are your expectations for preschool children with disabilities in general education classes?

4. What supports do you feel are needed for teachers to implement inclusion for preschool children with disabilities?

5. What do you think are the barriers to implementing inclusion for preschool children with disabilities?

Appendix B: Semi structured Interview Questions

Parent Interview Questions

1. What do you know about including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

2. What do you believe are the benefits of including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

3. What do you believe are the disadvantages of including preschool children with disabilities into general education settings?

4. How do you feel the inclusive preschool setting has benefited your child? If you feel that your child has not benefited from the inclusive class, why not?

Appendix C: Creswell's Observation Protocol for Teacher Observation

Date:

Time:

Participants:

Observer:

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes