Abstract

Children enter kindergarten with many experiences and thoughts. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of preschool children concerning their entrance into kindergarten. A comparison of what children perceived and what parents and teachers have done to facilitate the children’s perception of kindergarten was completed. A treatment group of 31 students from a Head Start which provided a visit to the kindergarten classroom that their preschool children would be attending was compared to 29 students from a Title 1 early education program, the control group. The parents and teachers of these students were compared to determine what they had done to prepare these students for kindergarten.

The quantitative aspect of the study compared the treatment student pre- and post- responses on the 'What I Think about Kindergarten -R' questionnaire to the control group, a Title 1 early education program. This questionnaire was adapted from the 'What I Think about School’ (1998) used by Ramey, Lanzi, Phillips, & Ramey for the Head Start Public School Early Transition Demonstration Project in 1998. This study was not able to determine any difference in what the students perceived about kindergarten between and within groups.

While there was no significant difference in what teachers had done to prepare their students for kindergarten, three
individual questions had some difference in what the teachers from Head Start had done when compared to the Title 1 early education program. There was no significant difference in what parents did to prepare their children but differences within three questions on the parent surveys were found.

A qualitative methodology was used to investigate what the students’ perceptions of kindergarten were. These perceptions included findings that most children were excited about attending kindergarten but a few anticipated kindergarten with negative feelings. Children also anticipated needing a backpack or lunchbox to attend kindergarten and looked forward to playing in the new school. Because this study was only done between Head Start and a Title 1 early education program, future research is needed to further understand what children think about going to kindergarten.