

## ABSTRACT

**DISSERTATION PROJECT:** Identifying and Overcoming Perceived Barriers to Family Engagement in Early Childhood Education

**STUDENT:** Sarah Haisley

**DEGREE:** Doctor of Education in Adult, Higher, and Community Education

**COLLEGE:** Teachers College

**DATE:** December 2020

**PAGES:** 145

*Keywords:* Early Childhood, barriers, family involvement, engagement, narrative inquiry

*Early Childhood Education.* As defined by Early Childhood Education Report 2014, Early childhood education (ECE) refers to programs for young children based on an explicit curriculum delivered by qualified staff and designed to support children's development and learning. Settings may include childcare centers, nursery schools, preschools, pre- or junior kindergarten and kindergarten (Akbari & McCuaig, 2014, para. 1). Millions of children every year are a part of these programs. But what is missing? Families. As the child's first teacher, parents and families provide the foundation for this development and learning, and their engagement, participation, and involvement are crucial for their current and future success.

The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions about family involvement/engagement and barriers in early childhood education from administrators, teachers, and parents/caregivers. This study sought to develop a better understanding of these individuals' perspectives on this topic. By engaging in collective dialogues about each person's role, they explore how each relates to participation in their child's early childhood educational experiences. Through the findings and analysis of this study, specific guidelines and suggestions emerge for

early childhood education programs related to family engagement to break down barriers in the future. As part of this study, I met with and interviewed ten individuals (four administrators, three teachers, and three parents) to understand barriers to family engagement. As a community that cares for young children, this study serves as an opportunity to understand better and overcome these barriers so that ALL can realize benefits.