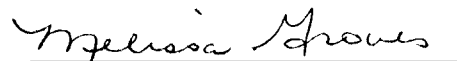
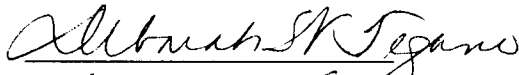


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Lesa Rodene Larson entitled "Child Care Teachers' and Directors' Perceptions of Work Environments: A Comparison of Accredited and Non-Accredited Centers." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Child and Family Studies.


Melissa Groves, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:




Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

**CHILD CARE TEACHERS' AND DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
WORK ENVIRONMENTS: A COMPARISON OF ACCREDITED
AND NON-ACCREDITED CENTERS**

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lesa Rodene Larson
August, 1997

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents,

LaVona and Waldo Rodene

who have always been an endless source of support and encouragement

and also to my husband,

Merle Larson

and

our three daughters,

Bailey, Hannah, and Chloe

who give me unconditional love and support every day.

I am deeply grateful.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to look at child care teachers' and directors' perceptions of their work environments. Aspects related to job satisfaction and leadership styles between accredited and non-accredited centers was examined as well. To achieve this purpose, mail-out questionnaires were used. In total, 301 teachers and 70 directors representing 91 state-licensed child care centers across the state of Tennessee (54 accredited centers, 37 non-accredited centers) responded to the survey. The overall findings were not significant but results of the data analysis ($p < .05$) for teachers showed statistically significant differences on the professional growth subscale of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES). Teachers also were found to be significantly different in only one facet of job satisfaction and work attitudes: co-worker relations. With respect to the directors, a significant difference was found on the collegiality subscale of the ECWES.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The importance of early childhood education has been well documented. The Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes report (Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Team, 1995), the National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989; 1992), and Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of our Youngest Children report (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1994) all address the critical problems in regard to quality care for children.

The most predominant issue today concerns the quality of care that young children experience in early childhood settings. More and more children are in full-time child care beginning at a very early age. More than half of all mothers return to the workforce within a year of their baby's birth (Carnegie Corporation of America, 1994). Children need to be cared for by nurturing, attentive adults in safe, predictable environments. However, child care teachers leave their jobs at an alarming rate of 41% per year (Hartman & Pearce, 1989; Manlove, 1994; Whitebook, Howes, and Phillips, 1990). This not only compromises a child's sense of security but it also establishes the child care facility as an unstable work environment for adults. It is important for teachers to form stable relationships among co-workers for support to help maintain quality teaching environments. If the teaching staff is frequently changing it is difficult to form positive working alliances.

Teachers who are well paid and respected are essential in early childhood but research shows that salaries of child care teachers are lower than many comparable

professions. This is a principal reason why early childhood teachers are not satisfied and often leave their jobs to find more lucrative positions (Lindsay & Lindsay, 1987; Whitebook, et al., 1990). A supportive work environment for teachers not only brings about job satisfaction but also ensures a positive environment for young children. Only recently has the child care center been thought of as an adult work environment. In the last fifteen years, research has begun to investigate the issues of staff development, training, and qualifications as well as how these factors interact to influence quality care for children.

Early childhood directors set the stage for establishing quality environments for children and teachers. Directors must strive to set staff goals and objectives, develop a team work approach, acknowledge achievements, and support the development of individual teachers. Directors must establish patterns of reward and feedback for staff that are crucial for positive work environments for teachers. Hence, effective leadership coupled with high expectations determines high quality service for children and families.

Accreditation of child care centers by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) also has become a significant development within the early childhood field. Accreditation is presumed to ensure high quality care. Important characteristics of high quality centers include promises of better pay for teachers (Phillips, Howes, & Whitebook, 1991), smaller group sizes and lower staff/child ratios (Manlove, 1994; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1991; & Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips,

1990) when compared to state licensing requirements. A primary focus of accreditation emphasizes quality interactions between staff and children. Based on the feedback model inherent in the accreditation process it is assumed that directors who value the accreditation process will work to establish a positive environment for all parties (children, families, and staff).

Accreditation has been shown to improve the quality of care for children (Bredekamp, 1993, Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989, Whitebook, et al., 1990). However, what has yet to be addressed is the impact of accreditation on the adult work environment. What is the relationship between center accreditation and job satisfaction of teaching staff? What are the characteristics of directors between accredited and non-accredited centers? These are critical questions that this study explored.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Adult work environments for child care teachers which are supportive and encouraging of the teachers who work in them are more likely to have positive outcomes in regard to the children in their care. According to Dreeben (1973), the structure of an organization is related to the nature, quantity, and quality of its output. The public schools would be indicative of such a premise in that the output, education of children, is directly related to its structural hierarchy, adults teaching children. The use of this assertion can be extended to child care settings. Although there are differences between schools and child care centers, a key similarity is the teaching role. Teachers in both organizations are required to establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment, promote physical and intellectual readiness, support social and emotional development, provide positive guidance, establish beneficial and productive relationships with families, ensure a well-run and purposeful program responsive to the children's needs and maintain a commitment to professionalism (Jorde-Bloom, Sheerer & Britz, 1991). How child care workers experience their workplace, that is, how they respond to structural components or conditions of their work (e.g. pay, benefits, status), has an effect on their teaching and ultimately the quality of the programs they provide (Kontos & Stremmel, 1988). Salaries of early childhood education teachers are approximately half that of public elementary school teachers and are one of the most important factors influencing the cost and quality of early childhood education (Powell, Eisenberg, Moy, & Vogel, 1994). Better quality

centers have higher wages, better adult work environments, lower teaching staff turnover, better educated and trained staff and lower child per staff ratios (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, & Pemberton, 1989).

There has been growing concern about the turnover in child care teachers and family day care providers. High staff turnover means that children have fewer opportunities to develop stable, affectionate relationships with caregivers (Scarr, Eisenberg, & Deater-Deckard, 1994). The turnover rate for staff in child care programs now averages 41% per year, three times the average of only a decade ago, and twice the average for all occupations (Hartman & Pearce, 1989; Manlove, 1994; Whitebook, et al., 1990). A noteworthy comparison is offered by public school teachers who left their jobs at a rate of 6.6% in 1994-1995 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). In 1988, forty-six percent of child care classroom teachers reported that they did not expect to remain in their present positions (Whitebook, et al., 1990). A primary reason for such high turnover rates is that staff simply cannot afford to remain in the child care field despite a strong commitment to and enjoyment of their work (Lindsay & Lindsay, 1987; Whitebook, et al., 1990).

Teachers are the key ingredient to establishing a nurturing and quality program for our young children today. Thus, adult work environments that support and uphold these teachers as important and worthy are critical. Quality work environments for adults equal quality programs for children.

Accreditation versus state licensing requirements

Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, and Pemberton (1989) have suggested that better quality centers are more likely to be operated on a nonprofit basis and be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accreditation is a voluntary process in which a program's administration, staff, and parents join with representatives of the NAEYC to determine whether that program meets nationally recognized criteria for high quality. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs is a division of NAEYC that administers the accreditation program. The purpose of the Academy is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs across the United States. In addition to the administration of the nationwide voluntary accreditation process, the Academy also develops training resources and provides public information about high quality early childhood programs (NAEYC, 1991).

The process of accreditation is comprehensive, time-consuming, and costly. It addresses all aspects of an early childhood program which include the following criterion: interactions among staff and children, curriculum, staff and parent interactions, administration, staff qualifications and development, staffing patterns, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service and program evaluation (Bredekamp, 1987). The process requires three steps. Step 1 involves a self-study where a

program's personnel and parents determine how well the program meets the Academy's criteria. Any areas needing improvement are identified and accounted for in a written program description submitted to the Academy. Step 2 involves on site visits by trained validators to verify the accuracy of the program description. One or more validators will visit each site depending on center size and multiple locations. Step 3 is the accreditation decision made by a three-person commission who consider the program description and the validator's report and make the decision based on professional judgment. For each case, the Commission has the choice of two decisions: grant accreditation or defer accreditation until improvements can be made (Bredekamp, 1987).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children celebrated its ten year anniversary of accreditation in 1995. As of January 1996, there were a total of 13,258 nationally accredited programs in the United States (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996). A brief profile showed that all types of programs are accredited including church-related programs; independent and national chain programs; nonprofit community-based programs; parent cooperatives and laboratory school/campus child care; public school programs; military child care centers; and employer-sponsored programs (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996). The profile revealed that the majority of accredited programs provided full-day care and served 61 to 120 children. Accreditation is valid for three years and regular cycles of re-accreditation are required. Today, almost 70% of the currently accredited programs have been re-accredited at least once (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996).

NAEYC-accredited centers have demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality programs for young children and their families. While the accreditation process examines the total program, greatest emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions among staff and children and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) refers to age-appropriate curriculum goals for children in all areas as well as the provision of opportunities for children to actively explore and interact with adults, peers, and materials (Bredekamp, 1993).

Accredited centers are commonly believed to be of greater quality in that it has been found that such centers had better trained staff, higher wages, lower staff turnover and provided higher quality caregiving than non-accredited centers (Bredekamp, 1993; Jorde-Bloom, 1989; Whitebook, et al, 1989; Whitebook, et al, 1990). Hence, it appeared the process of becoming accredited enhances center quality for staff. For example, the recently accredited centers in the National Child Care Staffing Study Revisited (Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 1992) had the lowest four year turnover rate and paid higher wages to teachers and assistants than all other centers in the sample. Programs that continued their accreditation also had lower four year turnover and higher wages than non-accredited centers (Whitebook, et al, 1992). These findings would support the belief that accreditation not only strengthens child care quality but it is also related to lower staff turnover which results in more stability for children in group care.

A 1993 study (Herr, Johnson, & Zimmerman) examined the impact of accreditation on child care program attributes. Specifically, the study investigated why programs went through the accreditation process and the effects of the process on the

program. One hundred and six directors from accredited programs were randomly selected to be surveyed via telephone. These directors indicated that their reasons for becoming accredited were to improve quality, promote awareness, prestige, and recognition, and increase visibility as well as to better market their programs. The top four improvements made according to those surveyed were in: curriculum; program policies, goals, and handbooks; health and safety issues; and the physical environment, especially the outdoor environment. The respondents rated the self study as even more beneficial than the on-site validation visit because of their increased awareness of the critical components of high quality care. They felt that children benefited from accreditation because there was higher staff morale and a better understanding of developmentally appropriate practices which in turn lead to children receiving improved care. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed planned to reapply for accreditation and felt this process was a seal of quality and reflected professionalism (Herr, et al, 1993).

Early childhood teachers play a vital role in the care and nurturing of young children. Quality centers not only affect the care that children receive but also heavily influence the way teachers are treated (i.e. meeting adult needs), and their perceptions about their workplace. Quality centers can positively influence the performance of child care teachers. Conclusions from the National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook, et al. 1990) were that accredited centers provided higher-than-average-quality services to children. These centers were more inclined to staff rooms with more than one adult at any given time and arrange for overlapping shifts of staff. They were likely to avoid accordion

staffing practices (when children are moved from classroom to classroom depending on attendance at different points of the day) that contribute to discontinuity for children (Whitebook, 1996). Such practices or services also enabled teachers to feel secure and positive about their environment. Key predictors of quality such as small group size and lower adult-child ratios (Manlove, 1994; NAEYC, 1991; Whitebook, et al. 1990) are critical elements of accreditation. These quality indicators are related to positive outcomes for children. These were positively related to teacher's work attitudes because lower ratios and group sizes are less stressful and more individualized attention toward children is attainable.

Unlike accreditation which is voluntary and nationwide, licensure stipulations for child care centers are required. These standards vary from state to state and define the baseline degree of quality at which child care centers must operate. For example, currently in Tennessee, if a program serves 13 or more children, it is considered a center and must meet state regulations regarding group care. In Tennessee, caregivers in centers must be at least 18 years of age and literate. At least one caregiver in each group/classroom must have a high school diploma or its equivalent and have two years of experience with young children. Caregivers also are required to have at least six hours of in-service training per year. Group sizes range from a maximum of ten infants per room to a maximum of 20 preschoolers per room. Ratios for state-licensed child care centers are as follows: 1:5 for infants, 1:7 for 12 months - 30 months, 1:8 for two year olds, 1:10 for three year olds, 1:20 for four and five year olds (Tennessee Department of Human Services, 1992).

Accreditation requirements regarding ratios are lower with 1:3 for infants, 1:5 for toddlers, 1:8 for three year olds, and 1:10 for 4 and 5 year olds (Bredekamp, 1993).

Licensing policies and basic requirements vary across the United States. Licensing gives official permission to operate a center and, without this permission, it is against the law to provide child care services. Adams (1990), in a comprehensive examination of state licensure standards for child care settings, reported that the majority of the states fell short of the recommended levels of child-staff ratios in one or more key areas or age groups. But by 1996 (Snow, Teleki, & Reguero-de-Atilas) 33 states met NAEYC's recommended ratio for infants, 28 states met the required ratios for toddlers but only 19 states had met NAEYC's requirement for four year olds. Compared with the 50 states, Tennessee has higher child-staff ratios for toddlers and four year olds and meets the NAEYC recommended ratio for infants which is 1:3. Concerning group size, Tennessee regulates group sizes but exceeds the recommended accreditation guidelines for the infant and toddler groups (Snow, Teleki, & Reguero-de-Atilas, 1996). As a result, Tennessee falls on the lower to middle end of the continuum regarding group size. At the extremes, Idaho has an alarming ratio of twelve infants to one caregiver and at the opposite end, Maryland, and Massachusetts can boast of meeting the national accreditation guidelines for ratios for all age groups (Snow, et al, 1996). A correlation appears in that states which have higher licensing standards also have larger numbers and higher proportions of programs which are accredited (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996).

State licensure standards for child care centers are required yet vary from state to state. These standards define the minimum degree of quality at which child care centers must operate. On the other hand, accreditation is a voluntary process to determine whether a program meets nationally recognized criteria for high quality. It is believed to not only strengthen child care quality but it is also related to lower staff turnover resulting in more stability for children in group care. Quality indicators such as small group size and lower adult-child ratios are related to positive outcomes for children as well as positive attitudes for teachers.

Work Environments

There are numerous differences between accredited and non-accredited centers. To restate, teachers play a vital role in quality care for children but because of the high turnover rates, children do not receive consistent and stable care.

In the context of child care, organizational climate can be thought of as a kind of global perception of the perceived quality of a center (Jorde-Bloom, 1991). Organizational climate refers to the unique atmosphere that characterizes each setting. It is made up of the collective perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values of the workers in that environment -- an aggregate of the personalities that come together and the leadership that guides them. Positive and healthy organizational climates are most often characterized by high energy, openness, trust, a collective sense of confidence, and a shared vision. In contrast, unhealthy, negative environments are characterized by poor communication, divisiveness,

conflict, and low staff morale (Jorde, 1985). When work roles are not well-defined conflicts may arise among staff. For example, the pace in child care programs is fast, and child care workers are “on” the entire time they are in the classroom with children. Often decisions must be made quickly with little time to confer with others. If procedures are unclear, child care workers may feel themselves making decisions and acting on them only to find out later that others disagree with the way situations were handled (Manlove, 1994).

While wages are important, issues related to the structure of work settings and the perceptions individuals have of such settings significantly impact how they feel about their work. How individuals feel about their work, in turn, is known to have an impact on the quality of care children receive and whether staff leave or remain on the job (Manlove, 1994). A good climate makes it possible to work effectively in meeting the needs of young children in child care centers, thus achieving program goals. It also makes the work environment a pleasant place to spend time and a satisfying and meaningful experience in itself. The hallmark of such work settings is that they are stimulating and conducive to both personal and professional growth (Jorde, 1985). Accreditation guidelines require that centers have written policies for staff and parents to follow. Accreditation also values staff development so that teachers may continue to learn effective ways to work with children and colleagues.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities that teachers have in terms of the children in their care, there are roles and responsibilities related to the other adults in the

classroom such as modeling appropriate teaching behaviors. It is highly unlikely that an early childhood program can be of high quality unless the staff relationships within it are also of good quality (Katz, 1993). Other responsibilities to adults in the classroom would include a team work approach, mutual respect and support, cooperation, clear communication, and a sense of humor. The emphasis a particular teacher may place on one of these roles over another may vary with the quality and goals of the program, the age of the children cared for, and the individual's education, personal teaching philosophy, and experience (Howes & Hamilton, 1993).

Components of a supportive work environment are complex and varied. A child care teacher has a medley of roles and responsibilities that contribute to a challenging job. Jorde Bloom (1988) developed a tool that measures organizational climate along ten dimensions: *collegiality, supervisor support, reward system, goal consensus, physical setting, professional growth, clarity, decision-making, task orientation, and innovativeness*. The development of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES) was based on the need for a standardized instrument that would evaluate and improve work environments of child care centers with a satisfactory level of reliability and validity. Recognizing and understanding the factors that influence organizational climate could help reduce turnover and improve program stability. Organizational health is the potential of a center to engage in ongoing self-examination aimed at identifying inconsistencies between components (Jorde-Bloom, 1991). Good quality environments cannot be created for children unless the environments are also good for the adults who

work in them. A quality program is one in which children and adults find the quality of their lives together satisfying (Katz, 1993).

In a recent study (Jorde-Bloom, 1996), 5,008 child care staff in 380 centers (320 non-accredited centers and 60 accredited centers) across 33 states were given the ECWES to assess the child care staff's perceptions of the 10 dimensions of organizational climate. Significant differences were found between accredited and non-accredited centers in four areas: innovativeness, goal consensus, opportunities for professional growth, and clarity. Staff from accredited centers were more likely to indicate that their programs were innovative with an emphasis on creativity, diverse opinions, and new approaches to education. Goal consensus which measured the extent to which there is a common vision for the program was also different in accredited and non-accredited centers. Staff from non-accredited centers reported more frequently that center goals were marked by disagreement and vagueness. Accredited centers also put more of an emphasis on professional growth of teachers. Clarity referred to well-defined policies and procedures and effective communication between staff and parents. Directors, teachers, and support staff in accredited programs had more favorable attitudes about policies and procedures at their centers and reported that such procedures and policies at the center were well-defined and clear. A significant difference between commitment and turnover was also found between accredited and non-accredited centers. Accredited centers had staff who expressed greater pride in their centers, felt more committed, and put a lot of extra effort into their work. At non-accredited centers, directors, teachers, and support staff indicated

that they frequently felt trapped and often thought of quitting their job. Relative to turnover, 22% of the accredited programs indicated they had had no staff turnover during the preceding twelve months. This compared with 14% of the non-accredited centers. It can be concluded from this study that accredited centers appear to share common goals for quality environments for children as well as for staff, and as a result, staff are happier and more content.

In a study assessing the relationship between measures of organizational climate and job satisfaction, Pope & Stremmel (1992) questioned 94 child care teachers from 27 licensed child care centers. The survey included questions about demographics, turnover rates, number of children enrolled and center type, job satisfaction, and organizational climate. Job satisfaction was measured using the Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (Jorde-Bloom, 1988c) and organizational climate was measured using the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (Jorde-Bloom, 1988d). Accredited centers rated considerably higher on the ECWES than those not accredited for the following dimensions: decision-making, goal consensus, physical setting, and clarity. More specifically, the highest source of satisfaction was the work itself and a slight source of dissatisfaction was found to be with promotion and pay. Supervisor support was rated highest and professional growth was rated lowest among the child care teachers in this sample.

In another investigation (Jorde-Bloom, 1988), 629 early childhood workers in 25 states were part of a study that looked at job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Five job clusters were identified as contributing sources of satisfaction and frustration: co-worker relations; supervisor relations; the nature of the work itself; pay and promotion

opportunities; and general working conditions. Statistically significant differences in work attitudes were found to exist between administrators and teachers in one area - the nature of the work itself. This could be attributed to the principle that those in higher occupational levels, such as administrators, typically have greater autonomy and control over the pace and quality of their work whereas classroom teachers generally do not.

On the whole, teachers' wages, their education and specialized training, as well as the adequacy of their working conditions are critical determinants of program quality. The accumulating research indicates that staff at high quality programs hold more positive perceptions about their work environment and they also have lower rates of staff turnover (Jorde-Bloom, 1996).

Job Satisfaction/Work Attitudes

The quality of the staff is an important determinant of the quality of an early childhood program (NAEYC, 1991). The education of child care teaching staff, the arrangement of their work environment, and a positive attitude are essential determinants of the quality of services children receive (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, & Pemberton, 1989). There is extensive evidence to verify that positive work attitudes are accurate predictors of several school effectiveness indicators in elementary school settings as well as early childhood settings (Jorde-Bloom, 1991). Goodlad (1983) points out that these "indicators" include trust between supervisor and teachers, trusting staff relations, teacher

support, encouragement of children's learning, and healthy community relations. These predictors or indicators contribute to a positive work environment. Work attitudes are important expressions of performance and can serve as a foundation for measuring personal and organizational effectiveness (Jorde-Bloom, 1991).

In 1991, 1307 center-based child care staff from 227 child care centers were interviewed and observed (Phillips, et al.). In order to assess working conditions, job satisfaction, turnover, and quality of care, participants were asked a variety of questions. Respondents indicated that job satisfaction was associated with wages, paid preparation time, reduced-fee child care for staff, and the provision by centers for adult needs. Staff wages showed both negative and positive associations. Staff wages were a negative predictor of social status and work-family relations. On the other hand, staff with higher wages felt challenged by the work and were more committed. It was found that centers that offered higher wages to staff also provided higher quality care as evidenced by the developmental appropriateness of the activities and the observed child/teacher ratios. The quality of attention to adult needs and centers that supported them with better wages, benefits, and work environment were also predictors of higher quality care.

The National Child Care Staffing Study Revisited (Whitebook, et al, 1992) found that teaching staff continue to earn exceptionally low wages compared to other, often less educated and trained members of the civilian labor force. Also, despite exposure to illness on the job, the overwhelming majority of centers offered their teaching staff no or limited health insurance. Turnover of teaching staff continues to be high (41%), threatening the ability of centers to offer consistent services to children.

Research has demonstrated that sensitive caregiving is important for optimal child development outcomes and that stressed caregivers are less likely to provide such care (Manlove, 1993). Stremmel, Benson, and Powell (1993) conducted a study of 544 child care staff in 123 Indiana state-licensed child care centers. Participants were asked to complete a survey inquiring about communication, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. Stremmel, et al (1993) found that these directors, teachers, and assistant teachers who were satisfied with working conditions and the work itself experienced lower emotional exhaustion. However, satisfactions with professional development and financial rewards did not influence emotional outcomes. A critical concern for child development is that teachers who are more emotionally exhausted or undergo a greater sense of depersonalization will have more difficulty providing children with quality care. An implication to be drawn from this study is that directors who provide frequent opportunities (i.e. staff meetings) for the discussion of children's needs and behaviors as well as the discussion of adult training needs may strengthen staff satisfaction and provide needed support to teachers.

Manlove (1993) conducted a study where 188 child care workers from 28 centers in Pennsylvania were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding burnout, personality, education/training, work experience, work role conflict, work role ambiguity, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. This investigation demonstrated that teachers who are highly reactive in emotional encounters were apt to find themselves frequently, if not constantly, emotionally stressed. Higher levels of work role conflict and

work role ambiguity were associated with greater levels of burnout. Additionally, teachers reported that they were frustrated and had to cope with confusing and conflicting demands common in the child care field. Clear policies can enhance a work environment by stating expectations and job responsibilities clearly.

Other studies have found that individuals in child care and other settings who are older, married, have children of their own, and have better social relationships have reported lower levels of burnout (Fuqua & Couture, 1986; Gold, 1985; Manlove, 1994). Research has also found that persons with higher levels of burnout have poorer social relations, less social support, experience more loneliness, have higher levels of education, longer job retention, and poorer relations with program parents. (Manlove, 1994; Townly, Thornburg, & Crompton, 1991). Teacher burnout compromises the human connection that is invaluable in the effective partnership between families and providers (Krahn, Thom, Hale, & Williams, 1995) and thus negatively impacts program quality.

It is interesting that Kontos & Stremmel (1988) found that role responsibilities among child care teachers were not hierarchically arranged. There is no "single role" performed by early childhood staff members but a medley of roles requiring various levels of skill and knowledge. This study involved 40 employees of 10 Pennsylvania child care centers. The subjects worked in a variety of staff roles: aides, assistant teachers, head teachers, and administrators. Each participant completed a questionnaire that included items related to job satisfaction, job responsibilities, salary and benefits, and center characteristics. Unlike other studies, job satisfaction was found to be unrelated to center quality. This research was done using the Harms & Clifford's (1980) Early Childhood

Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) which could have affected the results. This scale is specifically designed to help programs do self-evaluation that focus on the environment and curriculum. The use of the ECERS as an indication of center quality is typical in studies of child care quality, yet atypical in research of teachers' job satisfaction and work attitudes. In the Kontos & Stremmel (1988) study, it appeared that staff in general were more or less satisfied with their jobs. A majority of the caregivers in this study reported that what they liked most about their jobs was contact with the children. Work experiences in child care settings appeared to be more strongly determined by the general context of the setting than by the specifics of job title or type of center in this particular study.

Job satisfaction has been found to increase with staff at higher occupational levels since these people may have more control over the quality and pace of their work (Jorde-Bloom, 1988b). In most professions, individuals move into positions with greater control, status, and financial compensation as the level of education increases. In the field of early childhood, however, as level of education increases, there is often greater disparity between perceived expectations of job rewards and actual rewards. Thus, job satisfaction may actually decrease. It has been found that teachers with specialized child care training confront greater stress in coping with the inconsistencies that exist between their level of training and the organizational conditions they experience (Stremmel, et al, 1993). More educated early childhood workers may also perceive that they have better opportunities elsewhere and are making a sacrifice to remain in child care.

Attitudes of child care teachers are critical to efficiently and effectively run early childhood programs as evidenced by the preceding studies. Studies have found that factors related to positive work attitudes included higher wages and positive working conditions. Positive work attitudes help to ensure job satisfaction which in turn raises the level of quality care given to children.

Leadership

Effective leadership in the early childhood profession leads to the provision of high quality services to children, parents, and teachers. Effective leaders are able to balance the concern for work, quality, and productivity with concern for people, relationships, satisfaction, and morale. In a broad sense, the key elements of effective leaders are the abilities to: provide and communicate vision; develop a team work approach; set goals and objectives; monitor and communicate achievements; and facilitate and support the development of individuals (Rodd, 1994). The de-facto leader in most child care centers is the center director or administrator. Caruso (1991) found that child care directors and supervisors are typically young (under age 40), predominantly white, and female. The titles used to describe early childhood positions which typically require supervision responsibilities include executive director, program director, educational coordinator, and head teacher.

Directors with concentrated coursework in child care management and supervision are rare (Sheerer & Bauer, 1996). Frequently and specifically, early childhood administrators are promoted to their positions from the ranks of teachers (Caruso, 1989; Jorde-Bloom, 1989; Jorde-Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Norton & Abramowitz, 1981). Reasons for promotion may be because of model performance as classroom teachers or because of longevity in their center, but usually not because the individuals have specialized expertise in program leadership, supervision, and administration (Jorde-Bloom & Sheerer, 1992).

Early childhood directors understand that there is considerable complexity when working with parents, teachers, and children. Directors with various backgrounds in supervision often have staff members who differ greatly in competency level, age, and stage of professional development (Caruso, 1986). In addition, high teacher turnover also means that administrators often have an unstable organization to direct (Culkin, 1994). Directors may experience role ambiguity, conflicting expectations from their staff, overload, stress, and disenchantment with their position as they discover that they do not have the time or resources for all their jobs (Caruso, 1986). As a result, many new directors experience high levels of stress (Billman, 1995).

There are a variety of distinct, multi-faceted tasks involved in directing a child care center. The many tasks required include: budget analyst, building and grounds manager, staff supervisor, record keeper, receptionist, community liaison, public relations coordinator, curriculum developer, last-minute substitute, fund-raiser, nurse, nutritionist,

and child advocate (Axelrod, 1972; Decker & Decker, 1984; Jorde-Bloom, 1990; Neugebauer, 1984; Sciarra & Dorsey, 1979). According to Jorde-Bloom (1990), the multiple roles of a director are more specifically comprised by the following four categories:

1. Organizational theory and leadership -Responsibilities include assessing program needs, expressing a clear vision for the center, implementing goals, evaluating program effectiveness, understanding the dynamics of group behavior and supervising and training staff.
2. Child development and early childhood programming - Possessing a clear knowledge of child development, assessing children's needs, assisting the staff in planning and understanding developmentally appropriate practices, having organizational skills to maintain enrollment and anecdotal information on children, and a firm grounding in health, safety and nutrition issues as they relate to program implementation are included in this category.
3. Fiscal and legal issues - A solid understanding of federal, state, and local regulations overseeing center-based programs, knowledge of budget development and setting tuition rates, preparing financial reports, and maintaining appropriate insurance coverage, as well as a good understanding of fundraising and grants encompass this area.
4. Board, parent and community relations - This category includes public relations and interpreting child development to parents and community,

understanding the dynamics of family life, and a good knowledge base of community resources, as well as membership in professional organizations.

Most states do not require even a single course in the supervision of early childhood programs as a prerequisite for directing a center (Morgan, Azar, Costley, Genser, Goodman, Lombardi, & McGimsey, 1993). There is a distinction among the states in the pre-service requirements for directors (Kuykendall, 1990; Jorde-Bloom, 1988e). Using 1991 data, (Morgan, et al., 1993), findings indicated that only 18 states required directors to have both college coursework and experience; 12 had only pre-service educational requirements; 13 required on-going training; 2 mandated only an orientation; and 7 states had no requirements at all. Referring to the Tennessee Child Care Handbook (1992), the qualifications for a director of a child care center are as follows:

Child care directors must have a four year college degree and have one year of full-time work experience with a group of young children; OR they must have some formal college training in early childhood education or child development (or related field), or a CDA credential, and one year of full-time work experience with young children; OR directors must have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and two years of full-time work experience with young children. New directors in Tennessee must complete a child care orientation course sponsored by the Department of Human Services within three months of assuming their position and they are also required to have 12 clock hours of inservice annually (p.20).

NAEYC accreditation standards require more training/education than Tennessee standards. The director must have a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development and at least three years of full-time teaching experience with young children and/or a graduate degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development. NAEYC accreditation requires that directors or chief administrative officers have training in business administration. NAEYC accreditation guidelines also expect that the center will provide regular training opportunities for all staff to improve their skills in working with children and families and that they will participate in staff development opportunities (Bredekamp, 1989).

Any individual who has worked up the ranks from classroom assistant to teacher to director should realize that individuals who hold different positions tend to view organizational practices differently (Jorde-Bloom, 1997). There are notable differences in perceptions between teachers and administrators in a wide range of organizational practices, including decision-making influence, clarity of policies and procedures, equity of reward structure, and adequacy of the physical environment (Jorde-Bloom, 1988a). In most centers, those in administrative positions tend to view their programs more positively than their teachers (Jorde-Bloom, 1997; Spodek & Saracho, 1992).

In 1992, a 16-month Early Childhood Leadership Training Program (Jorde-Bloom & Sheerer) was introduced and implemented with 13 Head Start teachers and 9 Head Start directors. The content of the training covered: personal and professional self-knowledge; child development and early childhood programming; organizational theory, leadership style, legal and fiscal issues; parent and community relations/public policy and

advocacy; and research and technology. As a result of this training program, significant improvements were made in the interactions among adults and children, the classroom curriculum, the arrangement and use of the physical environment, and health, safety, and nutritional practices. It appeared that improving participants' knowledge, understanding, and confidence had a direct impact on many organizational practices.

Another study approached the issue of training differently and asked 217 experienced child care directors to prioritize the skills that would be essential for a beginning director to have (Billman, 1995). As a group, the directors emphasized the importance of meeting state licensing requirements and making sure that staff and parents adhere to them. Completing required record keeping, writing policies, and following a budget took precedence over other demands. Many directors felt that staff management was another major area of emphasis. Directors need to be aware that preparation for supervision varies greatly as do the competency levels, ages, and stages of professional development of the staff members they supervise (Caruso, 1986). The respondents also expressed that facilitating parent-center relationships was one of the most challenging and important roles of a director and that the children's program should be delegated to the teaching staff as much as possible.

Is there a link between director qualifications and program quality? There are many studies that support this notion (Almy, 1982; Decker & Decker, 1984; Greenman & Fugua, 1984; Jorde-Bloom, 1988 ; Montgomery & Seefeldt, 1986, Powell & Stremmel, 1988). The Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers (1995) found

evidence that the center administrator had an impact on the quality of child care especially in the areas of organization, problem solving, communication, fiscal matters, curriculum development, and work with families and community. NAEYC believes that the way in which a program is administered will affect all the interactions within the program. Effective program administration creates an environment which facilitates the provision of good quality care for children (Bredekamp, 1989).

Going through the self-study process of accreditation also improves the knowledge, understanding, and confidence of staff and administration and brings to the forefront the importance of working together to achieve a quality environment for children and staff. This process unequivocally addresses the critical components of high quality care. These include staff/child interactions, curriculum, administration, staff qualifications, staffing patterns, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service and program evaluation (Bredekamp, 1987). Parents, staff, and administration all play a vital role throughout the process of self-study.

It can be concluded that the more experienced and appropriately trained a director is, the more effective that individual and center will be. Due to the complexity of many of the responsibilities associated with directing a child care program the issues of training, experience, and effective leadership are even more critically linked. Directors who are effective communicators, who are team and goal oriented, who are able to provide appropriate and effective feedback and who support accreditation as well as the achievements and development of individuals will run a successful program. This will, at the same time, help to ensure a quality environment for the children enrolled in a program.

Quality environments for children

Work and dedication are required by staff in order to achieve quality in child care centers. Overall program quality positively affects children's language and cognitive development (Goelman & Pence, 1987; McCartney, 1984; Wasik, Ramey, Bryant, & Sparling, 1990), as well as their social competence, and social adjustment (Phillips, McCartney, & Scarr, 1987). Affective and informational verbal interactions among teachers and children in high quality programs appeared to accelerate verbal and cognitive skills in children (McCartney, Scarr, Phillips, & Grajek, 1985). Children were also rated as more considerate, sociable, intelligent, and task oriented when caregivers engaged in more positive verbal interactions with the children (Phillips, et al., 1987).

Quality affects not only children's development but also influences the performance of the child care teacher. As pointed out earlier, developmentally appropriate practice places an emphasis on interactions among teachers and children. Positive interactions include quick responses to children's needs, adapting to children's differing styles and abilities, and providing opportunities for children to communicate (Bredekamp, 1993). Centers that have smaller group sizes and lower ratios could conceivably lead to quality teacher performance because of less stress as opposed to working with large groups of children and higher ratios. Teachers in classes with fewer children per adult have many more opportunities to interact, especially positively, with each child (Cost, Quality,

and Child Outcomes Team, 1995). The nature of the work itself, particularly interactions with children, consistently surfaces as the leading source of satisfaction for child care staff. Teachers who facilitate children's successful completion of tasks by providing support, attention, physical closeness, and encouragement are more in tune with children's needs. Being alert to signs of stress in children's behavior and facilitating the development of self-esteem through mutual respect for children, as well as contributing to their development of self-control can be a rewarding experience for early childhood educators (Bredekamp, 1993).

Teachers of young children play a variety of roles, such as facilitating development, managing and guiding children, mediating peer contacts, and instructing. Kontos & Stremmel (1988) referred to this as a medley of roles. Another critical role of the teacher related to positive outcomes for children is that of providing emotional support. Howes and Hamilton (1993) pointed out that in infancy and toddlerhood, the primary role of the teacher is to provide sensitive, individualized care. As children get older, the role of the teacher as instructor increases and the role of the teacher as caregiver decreases but the role of providing positive emotional support is still critical. Howes and Hamilton (1992) found meaningful associations between quality of teacher attachments to children and teacher behaviors. Just as mothers who respond sensitively to their children, have children who form secure attachments to them, child care teachers also form secure attachment relationships with those children in their care. Additionally, children's security of attachment with teachers seems to have a strong influence on their social competence with peers (Howes, Galluzzo, Hamilton, Matheson, & Rodning, 1989). This research

suggests that it is advantageous for children to form secure attachments with their teachers. These attachment relationships may have important influences for children's interactions with peers and enhancement of parental attachments. As increasing numbers of children spend greater amounts of time in child care centers, the role of the teacher as a source for emotional support becomes even more important (Howes & Hamilton, 1993). Child care teachers have a tremendous position in the lives of young children in group care. As is apparent, the role of the teacher is critical to quality care for children and the role of the director is to assure a quality work environment for the teachers.

As a nation there has been reluctance to acknowledge child care settings as a work environment for adults or to commit the necessary resources to improving salaries and working conditions for teaching staff (Whitebook, et al. 1989). Teachers must be recognized for these many roles so that they are fulfilled and satisfied. If we examine the organizational climates of adults in the child care profession and look for ways to enhance their working conditions, the quality of care for children will only improve.

Summary

To summarize, teachers are the key ingredient to establishing a nurturing and quality program for our young children today. Adequacy of working conditions are deciding elements of program quality. Staff at high quality programs tend to hold more positive perceptions about their work environment and also have lower rates of staff

turnover. Positive work attitudes help to ensure job satisfaction which in turn raises the level of quality care given to children.

The literature also stated that all child care centers are required to be licensed by the state in order to be in compliance with legal regulations. There are a number of centers who choose to go through a voluntary procedure of accreditation in order to meet nationally recognized criteria for high quality. The process of accreditation is believed to enhance interactions among staff and children and emphasizes the importance of developmentally appropriate practice.

This review has demonstrated that many child care directors have started out in a teaching position. Many have moved into a leadership role due to a variety of reasons and typically find themselves involved in a mixture of multi-faceted tasks. Accredited centers require that directors have more education and experience than what is expected from state licenses. Thus, it can be assumed that accredited centers have better leadership because of higher standards.

Quality work environments for adults equal quality programs for children. Reluctance to acknowledge child care settings as a work environment for adults is detrimental to the attitudes and support of child care teachers. Teachers must be recognized for their importance to the early childhood field and directors must be adequately trained in order to secure quality for all program participants.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to provide information regarding staff perceptions of their work environments in a sample of nationally accredited and non-accredited, yet state-licensed child care centers. It was hypothesized that for teaching staff there would be significant differences in perceptions of organizational climate in accredited versus non-accredited centers. A second hypothesis was that the job satisfaction of teaching staff would be higher in accredited centers as opposed to non-accredited centers. Additionally, there were two hypotheses regarding directors' perceptions. It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences in directors' perceptions of organizational climate in accredited versus non-accredited centers. Finally, it was postulated that there would be a difference in self-evaluated leadership profiles of directors in accredited versus non-accredited centers.

Procedures

This study involved 172 group child care centers across the state of Tennessee. All 86 NAEYC accredited centers in Tennessee were sampled as well as an additional 86 state-licensed, non-accredited centers. The non-accredited centers were selected based on matching characteristics of center size and location with accredited centers. A list of accredited centers for Tennessee was obtained from the National Association for the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC) headquarters in Washington, DC. The sample of state-licensed centers was drawn from a state-wide list of licensed child care facilities received from the state Department of Human Services in Nashville. The number of teacher questionnaires sent to each center was based on total center licensing capacity and state requirements regarding teacher-child ratios. In total, 172 directors and 1607 full-time teachers (working 30 hours per week or more) were sent questionnaires. Specifically, 86 directors from each group and 828 teachers from accredited centers and 779 teachers from non-accredited centers received surveys in the mail.

All centers in this study were mailed questionnaires requesting participation of full-time teachers and directors. Each director was sent a packet containing one director questionnaire and multiple copies of teacher questionnaires. The questionnaires differed for the teachers and directors (Appendix A). Questions for full-time teaching staff included questions on work environment and work attitudes. The questionnaire was a composite of questions developed by Jorde-Bloom (1991) on work environment and job satisfaction. The questionnaire for directors included questions on work environment, a self-assessment of leadership style (Quinn, 1989), and additional questions regarding center size, fees, and staff benefits. Questions regarding center and individual demographics for both teachers and directors were drawn from Allen & Catron (1991). Each questionnaire had an identification number for mailing purposes only and was coded based on the number of questionnaires sent to each center. It was estimated that it would take 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. This information was included in the cover letters and the consent form (Appendix B). Directors were asked to distribute the questionnaires to the

full-time classroom teachers and allow them some time outside of the classroom to complete the survey. Postage-paid individual envelopes were attached to each questionnaire allowing for each respondent to mail the completed survey back independently. A survey questionnaire methodology recommended by Dillman (1978) that included reminder letters for those who had not returned the questionnaires at one week and three weeks following the initial survey mailing was used (Appendix C). Two different postcards were sent after one week dependent upon whether the director had returned the questionnaire. One postcard urged the director to complete and return his/her questionnaire. The other postcard asked the director to remind the staff to return their questionnaires. A three-week follow-up letter addressed to the director accompanied by another director questionnaire was also sent along with a postcard that could be filled out by the director requesting additional teacher surveys (Appendix C).

Participants were given two separate consent forms - one to sign and return with their questionnaire and the other to keep for their own records. The informed consent form included details regarding general information, confidentiality, and purpose of study (Appendix B). Upon return of the completed questionnaires, the consent form was separated from the survey itself to ensure confidentiality. Participants were informed that the return of the questionnaire would place their name in a drawing to win a \$20.00 gift certificate from Gryphon House, an educational teacher resource catalog. From all the people across the state who returned their questionnaires, there were two separate drawings -- one certificate awarded to a director and four certificates awarded to teachers.

Instrumentation

Work Environments

The short form of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (Jorde-Bloom, 1988d) was used to find out how teachers and directors felt about their work place. The ECWES (short form) included 20 statements. It provided a global assessment of organizational climate and was designed to measure perceptions along 10 dimensions: collegiality; opportunities for professional growth; supervisor support; clarity; reward system; decision-making; goal consensus; task orientation; physical setting; and innovativeness plus an overall score (Table 3-1). Collegiality was measured by the first two questions and professional growth was measured by the next two questions. Subsequent dimensions are measured following this method of two questions per dimension through question 20. The shortened version asked participants to indicate on a Likert-type scale from never (0) to always (5) the extent to which a statement described organizational practices at their center. The range of scores possible for each dimension subscale on the ECWES Short Form was 0 - 10. The overall organizational climate score on this survey ranged from 0 - 100 (Appendix A).

Job satisfaction and work attitudes

Teachers were also asked to complete a self-assessment on work attitudes and job satisfaction (Jorde-Bloom, 1988c), which covered different facets of their job (Appendix A). This section asked questions about co-worker relations, supervisor relations, the

Table 3-1

Ten Dimensions of Organizational Climate

Dimension	Definition
	The extent or degree to which
Collegiality	staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another — peer cohesion and esprit de corps of the group
Professional Growth	emphasis is placed on personal and professional growth and opportunities are available to increase professional competence
Supervisor Support	facilitative leadership provides encouragement, support, and clear expectations
Clarity	policies, procedures, and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated
Reward System	fairness and equity exist in the distribution of pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement
Decision-making	autonomy is given to staff and staff are involved in making centerwide decisions
Goal Consensus	staff agree on the goals and objectives of the center
Task Orientation	emphasis is placed on good planning, efficiency, and getting the job done
Physical Setting	spatial arrangement of the center helps or hinders staff in carrying out their responsibilities
Innovativeness	the center adapts to change and encourages staff to find creative ways to solve problems

Source: The Early Childhood Work Environment Survey, Jorde-Bloom, 1989.

nature of the work itself, working conditions, and pay and promotion opportunities.

Participants were asked to indicate on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree in the five different categories. Teachers also were asked additional questions about their present environment and ideal work environment. Open-ended questions about two satisfactions and two frustrations in their current jobs also were included in the survey.

Leadership

In addition to the questions on work environment and job satisfaction, directors were asked to complete a modified version of the leadership profile (Quinn, 1989) (Appendix A). This was a self-assessment asking them to indicate how often they engaged in management behaviors in their workplace. The Leadership Profile was modified to make it more congruent with the aims of the study. A 6-point scale instead of a 7-point scale was used to eliminate the tendency to select the mean position. The Leadership Profile was also modified to make it more in line with the ECWES Likert scale categories and easier for the respondents to follow. The wording on this leadership scale, originally used in the business field, was changed slightly to be more “user-friendly” and fit more appropriately with the early childhood field. Changes such as “center” instead of “unit” and “staff” instead of “subordinates” were implemented. Out of 32 questions on the Leadership Profile, 14 questions were slightly altered with the word modifications (Questions 5, 6, 12, 15, 19, 21, 23, 28, & 30 were adjusted with the word “center” instead of “unit” and questions 7, 8, 16, 24, & 29 were adjusted with the word “staff” instead of “subordinate”). Each criterion was rated on a scale from never to always. The modified version of the instrument used in this study indicated eight profiles: facilitator,

mentor, innovator, broker, producer, director, coordinator, and monitor (Table 3-2).

Questions 6, 11, 24, and 31 were used to establish the facilitator profile, while questions 8, 16, 20, and 29 indicated the mentor profile. The innovator style was revealed by questions 1, 10, 22, and 25 and the broker profile came from questions 3, 13, 18, and 27. Questions 5, 15, 23, and 30 were used to determine the producer profile, and questions 7, 12, 19, and 26 indicated the director style of leadership. The coordinator profile was designated by questions 2, 9, 21, and 28 and the monitor profile came from questions 4, 14, 17, and 32.

Description of Sample

Sample Characteristics of Teachers

In total, 301 teacher surveys were returned. The breakdown by center status consisted of 213 teachers from accredited centers and 88 teachers from non-accredited centers. The survey included questions about demographic characteristics, and membership in professional organizations as well as questions pertaining to perceptions of organizational climate and job satisfaction. The demographic information gathered included the gender, age, salary and educational level. From the accredited centers, 97% of the respondents were female and 3% were male. From the non-accredited centers, 98% of the subjects were female and 2% male. The ages of the teachers from accredited centers ranged from 19 to 76 years with the mean age of 38. The range for the teachers from the

Table 3-2

Brief Description of Eight Leadership Profiles

Profile	Expected Behavior
Producer	task-oriented and work-focused; has high interest, motivation, energy, and personal drive; encourages responsibility and maintains high productivity
Director	decisive initiator, defines problems, selects alternatives, establishes objectives, defines roles and tasks, generates rules and policies, evaluates performance and gives instruction
Broker	politically astute, persuasive, influential; image, appearance, and reputation is important; acts as a liaison and spokesperson; acquires resources
Innovator	conceptualizes and projects needed changes; a creative dreamer who sees the future; envisions innovations and packages them in inviting ways
Facilitator	builds cohesion and teamwork; manages interpersonal conflict; process-oriented; obtains input and participation; facilitates group problem-solving.
Mentor	listens, supports legitimate requests, conveys appreciation, gives compliments and credit, sees people as resources to be developed, helps with skill building, provides training opportunities, helps people develop plans for individual development
Monitor	determines compliance with rules; detail-oriented, good at technical analysis, deals with routine information, and logical problem solving
Coordinator	expected to maintain structure and flow; dependable and reliable, protects continuity, minimizes disruptions, reviews and evaluates reports, writes budgets, coordinates plans and proposals

Source: Leadership profile, R.E. Quinn, 1989

non-accredited centers was 18 to 65 with the mean age of 37. Table 3-3 shows other descriptive statistics about the sample.

The highest level of education for teachers is also described in Table 3-3. The majority of teachers from accredited centers reported having a Bachelor's degree (34%) or some college work (24%). The majority of teachers from non-accredited centers reported having some college work (33%) or a Bachelor's degree (23%). The majority of teachers from accredited and non-accredited centers reported having no state certification to teach. The majority of individuals who reported having certification to teach had licensure in Elementary Education (11%), Early Childhood Education (6%), and Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education (7%). The teachers from non-accredited centers who held certification did so in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education (13%). A large portion of teachers at accredited centers and non-accredited centers reported having no membership in professional organizations (48% and 60% respectively).

There were additional questions regarding commitment to the field of early childhood education. Teachers from accredited centers had been in early childhood as well as in their current positions slightly longer (6 years) than teachers from non-accredited centers (4 years). The majority of teachers from both groups planned to still work in the early childhood field in one year but the percentage steadily dropped when asked about a five year and a ten year commitment to the field (Table 3-4).

The teachers also responded to open-ended questions regarding satisfactions and frustrations related to their present job. Both groups overwhelmingly indicated that

Table 3-3

Characteristics of Teachers of Accredited and Non-Accredited Centers

	Accredited (n=42)	Non-Accredited (n=28)
Race (%)		
Caucasian	71	60
African-American	27	38
Hispanic	1	1
Highest Educational Level (%)		
High School Diploma	9	10
Some college	24	33
Child Development Associate Credential	13	13
Associate's Degree	2	3
Bachelor's Degree	34	23
Master's Degree	8	6
Other	10	12
Hours Per Week Worked (%)		
over 41 hours	23	28
31-40 hours	57	50
21-30 hours	12	11
10-20 hours	7	10
less than 10 hours	1	0
Months Per Year Employed (%)		
Year round (12 months)	71	60
School year (8-10 months)	27	38
Fewer than 8 months	1	1

continued

Table 3-3 continued

	Accredited (n=42)	Non-Accredited (n=28)
Salary Ranges (%)		
under \$5,000	8	18
\$5,000 - 7,499	7	10
\$7,500 - 9,999	12	15
\$10,000 - 12,499	19	24
\$12,500 - 14,999	15	13
\$15,000 - 17,499	15	3
\$17,500 - 19,999	15	1
\$20,000 - 24,999	6	6
\$25,000 - 29,999	1	5
\$30,000 - 34,999	1	5
Job Title (%)		
Lead teacher	70	74
Assistant teacher	16	18
Assistant director	1	1
Other	11	5
Age Group Responsible For (%)		
Infant	11	9
Toddler	22	7
Preschool	47	66
Kindergarten	3	5
School-age	3	0
Mixed-age	13	13

Table 3-4

Teacher Commitment to Early Childhood Field

	Accredited		Non-Accredited	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Plan to be working in field in one year (%)	88	10	83	13
Plan to be working in field in five years (%)	65	29	64	27
Plan to be working in field in ten years (%)	44	43	44	44

watching the children develop and knowing that they were making a difference in the lives of the children in their care was very satisfying. Both groups of teachers also mentioned creative freedom and co-worker relationships as gratifying. Teachers from accredited centers listed satisfaction with the center director and parents more often than the teachers from non-accredited centers. Frustrations for both groups included low pay, lack of supply money, no substitutes, and having cleaning responsibilities. Teachers from non-accredited centers mentioned more frequently the lack of clearly defined job roles and directors with no field-related training.

Sample Characteristics of Directors and Centers

In total, 70 director surveys were returned. The breakdown by center status consisted of 42 directors from accredited centers and 28 directors from non-accredited centers. The director survey included questions about center characteristics such as turnover rates and number of children enrolled as well as questions pertaining to organizational climate and self-perceptions of leadership styles. Additional demographic information gathered included gender, age, salary and educational level. All the directors from accredited centers were female. From the non-accredited centers, 3 directors were male and the rest were female. The mean age of directors from accredited centers was 47 with a range from 29 to 63. The mean age of directors from non-accredited centers was 43 with a range of 28 to 59.

Educational level and background were similar for directors regardless of accreditation status. The majority of directors from accredited centers reported having a Master's degree (38%) or a Bachelor's degree (27%). The majority of directors from non-

accredited centers also reported having a Master's degree (25%) or a Bachelor's degree (21%). Table 3-5 shows the complete breakdown of educational level for directors. The greater number of respondents from non-accredited centers having college degrees or higher indicated having "other" degrees. Some examples of degrees held by directors included Biology, Music Education, Business, Secondary Education, Sociology, Nursing, and English. Twenty directors of accredited centers reported they had state certification to teach ranging from Early Childhood Education to Secondary Education. Ten directors from non-accredited centers reported similar certifications. Regarding membership in professional organizations, 97% of directors at accredited centers and 82% of directors at non-accredited centers reported membership in organizations such as the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and its state and local affiliates as well as Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA). Twenty-one directors from accredited centers reported making \$30,000 or more in comparison to 7 directors from non-accredited centers making the same salary. Table 3-5 provides greater details about the directors.

The mean center size for accredited centers was 113 with a range of 20 to 547. Non-accredited centers ranged in size from 20 to 380 with a mean of 120. Accredited centers reported staff turnover in the past twelve months ranged from zero to twelve with an average of three persons who left the center. This compared with non-accredited centers who reported staff turnover to be an average of four with a range from zero to thirteen. Of those currently not accredited, 6 center directors indicated they are currently

Table 3-5

Characteristics of Directors of Accredited and Non-Accredited Centers

	Accredited (n=42)	Non-Accredited (n=28)
Race (%)		
Caucasian	83	68
African-American	17	25
Other	0	4
Highest Educational Level (%)		
Child Development Associate Credential	5	7
Associate's Degree	5	7
Bachelor's Degree	29	21
Master's Degree	38	25
Other	23	40
Hours Per Week Worked (%)		
41 hours or more	62	71
31-40 hours	33	18
21-30 hours	5	11
Months Per Year Employed (%)		
Year round (12 months)	83	89
School year (8-10 months)	17	11
Salary Ranges (%)		
under \$17,499	0	21
\$17,500 - 19,999	10	7
\$20,000 - 24,999	12	32
\$25,000 - 29,999	26	11
\$30,000 - 34,999	17	11
\$35,000 and over	33	15
Job Title (%)		
Director	74	68
Assistant Director	5	4
Teacher/Director	5	4
Other	14	25
Work Directly with Children (%)		
Yes	17	32
No	83	68

involved in the self-study to become accredited and 8 indicated that they planned to engage in the self-study process with the next twelve months.

Again, additional questions about commitment to early childhood were included in the questionnaire. Directors from accredited centers had shown more commitment to the field (16 years) than directors from non-accredited centers (9 years). Directors of accredited centers had also worked in their current position (8 years) longer than directors from non-accredited centers (5 years). Similar to the teacher survey results, the majority of directors from both groups planned to be in the early childhood field in one year but the percentages decreased when asked about staying in the field in five and ten years (Table 3-6).

The directors also reported frustrations and satisfactions related to their present job. Some themes that emerged among directors from accredited centers concerning satisfaction were with staff who are committed to the early childhood field and goal-oriented, their own opportunity to observe the children growing and developing, maintaining a developmentally appropriate curriculum, and parents who are supportive. Frustrations from this same group included issues of lack of respect for the early childhood field, lack of financial resources, lack of substitutes, and challenges maintaining high staff morale. Satisfactions of directors from non-accredited centers reported quality teachers, happy children, and satisfied parents. Frustrations reported by non-accredited directors were high staff turnover and low morale, low pay scale for teachers and limited resources, lack of substitutes, time management, and co-workers with little training in early childhood.

Table 3-6

Director Commitment to Early Childhood Field

	Accredited		Non-Accredited	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Plan to be working in field in one year (%)	98	2	97	7
Plan to be working in field in five years (%)	81	14	79	21
Plan to be working in field in ten years (%)	48	43	57	36

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The results will be presented and discussed by hypotheses. A significance level of .05 was chosen to run all tests. Means, standard deviations and ranges for each question are reported in Tables 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5 respectively.

Regarding viewpoints of teaching staff, it was first hypothesized that there would be significant differences in perceptions of organizational climate in accredited versus non-accredited centers. Organizational climate was measured using the short form of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (Jorde-Bloom, 1989a). Means, standard deviations, and range for the ECWES total score and category scores are reported in Table 4-1. The Mann Whitney U nonparametric test statistic was used to compare means between the two groups of teachers (accredited and non-accredited). The Mann Whitney U is a nonparametric equivalent of the independent sample t-test (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974) and was used due to the unequal sample size between respondents from accredited versus non-accredited centers. There were no significant differences on overall score for the ECWES between these groups ($U = 6950.00$, $p = .165$). However, the subscale, professional growth on the ECWES did reveal a significant difference ($U = 7832.5$, $p = .02$). This indicated that professional growth may be more important to the teaching staff in the accredited centers than in the non-accredited centers.

The second hypothesis stated that teacher's job satisfaction would be higher in accredited centers as opposed to non-accredited centers. Job satisfaction was assessed

Table 4-1

Means, Ranges, and Standard Deviations for the Early Childhood Work EnvironmentSurvey Total and Subscales - Teacher Sample

Dimension	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
ECWES Total			
Accredited	77.3	88 (12-100)	18.66
Non-Accredited	74.2	88 (12-100)	19.09
Physical Setting			
Accredited	7.9	10 (0-10)	2.35
Non-Accredited	7.7	10 (0-10)	2.43
Professional Growth			
Accredited	8.4	10 (0-10)	2.24
Non-Accredited	7.8	10 (0-10)	2.34
Reward			
Accredited	7.0	10 (0-10)	2.88
Non-Accredited	6.4	10 (0-10)	3.10
Supervisor Support			
Accredited	8.1	10 (0-10)	2.24
Non-Accredited	8.0	10 (0-10)	2.29
Task Orientation			
Accredited	7.5	10 (0-10)	2.40
Non-Accredited	6.9	10 (0-10)	2.68
Clarity			
Accredited	7.9	10 (0-10)	2.20
Non-Accredited	7.8	10 (0-10)	2.37
Collegiality			
Accredited	7.6	10 (0-10)	2.01
Non-Accredited	7.4	8 (2-10)	1.94

continued

Table 4-1 continued

Dimension	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
Decision-Making			
Accredited	7.1	10 (0-10)	2.66
Non-Accredited	6.6	10 (0-10)	2.94
Goal Consensus			
Accredited	7.7	10 (0-10)	2.11
Non-Accredited	7.4	8 (2-10)	2.24
Innovativeness			
Accredited	8.3	10 (0-10)	2.18
Non-Accredited	8.1	9 (1-10)	2.30

Table 4-2

Means, Ranges, and Standard Deviations for Job Satisfaction and Work Attitudes -Teacher Sample

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
Co-workers			
Accredited	30.9	41 (18-59)	4.34
Non-Accredited	30.7	24 (18-42)	3.69
Supervisor			
Accredited	33.6	24 (23-47)	3.95
Non-Accredited	33.6	16 (27-43)	3.55
Pay/Promotion			
Accredited	29.8	31 (15-46)	4.77
Non-Accredited	30.5	26 (14-40)	4.82
Work Conditions			
Accredited	30.4	19 (22-41)	3.46
Non-Accredited	31.2	19 (23-42)	4.46
Work			
Accredited	28.0	22 (19-41)	3.82
Non-Accredited	29.2	22 (19-41)	4.14

Table 4-3

Means and Standard Deviations for Ideal Work Environments - Teacher Sample

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Co-workers		
Accredited	3.8	1.14
Non-Accredited	3.5	1.29
Supervisor		
Accredited	3.7	1.26
Non-Accredited	3.8	1.30
Work Itself		
Accredited	3.8	1.12
Non-Accredited	3.8	1.10
Work Conditions		
Accredited	3.6	1.18
Non-Accredited	3.6	1.18
Pay/Promotion		
Accredited	2.4	1.33
Non-Accredited	2.3	1.36

Table 4-4

Means, Ranges, and Standard Deviations for the Early Childhood Work EnvironmentSurvey Total and Subscales - Director Sample

Dimension	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
Overall Score			
Accredited	85.3	46 (53-99)	8.83
Non-Accredited	83.5	29 (70-99)	7.92
Collegiality			
Accredited	8.2	6 (4-10)	1.46
Non-Accredited	7.5	6 (4-10)	1.59
Professional Growth			
Accredited	8.7	5 (5-10)	1.27
Non-Accredited	8.6	5 (5-10)	1.47
Supervisor Support			
Accredited	8.4	6 (4-10)	1.41
Non-Accredited	8.9	2 (8-10)	.85
Clarity			
Accredited	8.7	4 (6-10)	1.26
Non-Accredited	8.5	5 (5-10)	1.27
Reward System			
Accredited	8.7	4 (6-10)	1.26
Non-Accredited	8.5	6 (4-10)	1.84
Decision-Making			
Accredited	8.4	5 (5-10)	1.11
Non-Accredited	8.4	4 (6-10)	1.17
Goal Consensus			
Accredited	8.5	5 (5-10)	1.32
Non-Accredited	7.9	6 (4-10)	1.68

continued

Table 4-4 continued

Dimension	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
Task Orientation			
Accredited	8.0	6 (4-10)	1.31
Non-Accredited	8.0	6 (4-10)	1.37
Physical Setting			
Accredited	8.5	5 (5-10)	1.34
Non-Accredited	8.5	6 (4-10)	1.64
Innovativeness			
Accredited	9.1	4 (6-10)	1.15
Non-Accredited	8.8	5 (5-10)	1.24

Table 4-5

Means, Ranges, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Profile - Director Sample

Profile	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
Producer			
Accredited	16.8	10 (10-20)	2.37
Non-Accredited	16.0	9 (11-20)	2.39
Director			
Accredited	16.9	10 (10-20)	2.32
Non-Accredited	16.5	7 (13-20)	1.68
Broker			
Accredited	15.9	10 (10-20)	2.19
Non-Accredited	15.8	11 (9-20)	2.94
Innovator			
Accredited	15.5	11 (9-20)	2.34
Non-Accredited	16.0	8 (12-20)	2.08
Facilitator			
Accredited	16.8	11 (9-20)	2.03
Non-Accredited	16.8	9 (11-20)	2.29
Mentor			
Accredited	17.5	8 (12-20)	2.34
Non-Accredited	17.0	8 (12-20)	2.60
Monitor			
Accredited	15.4	14 (5-19)	2.55
Non-Accredited	16.3	8 (12-20)	2.19
Coordinator			
Accredited	17.0	9 (11-20)	2.27
Non-Accredited	16.5	8 (12-20)	1.97

using a self-assessment tool developed by Jorde-Bloom (1988). There were no significant differences found within the five categories of co-worker relations, supervisor relations, nature of the work itself, working conditions, and pay and promotion opportunities (Table 4-2). A significant difference was found however, in the last section comparing present environment to an ideal work environment in the area of relationships with co-workers ($U = 8017.5$, $p = .046$). This implied that teachers from accredited centers may have better working relationships with their co-workers than the teachers from non-accredited centers (Table 4-3).

The third hypothesis stated that there would be significant differences in director's perceptions of organizational climate in accredited versus non-accredited centers. Again, using the Mann Whitney U nonparametric test, no significance was found except on the subscale of collegiality ($U = 413.5$, $p = .032$). This implied that directors may be more satisfied in the area of collegiality (support) than directors in non-accredited centers (Table 4-4).

Finally, the last hypothesis stated that there would be a difference in self-evaluated leadership profiles of directors in accredited versus non-accredited centers. No significant differences were found between the two groups. However, of the eight leadership styles, the role of mentor, director, coordinator, and facilitator was more common with both groups as opposed to the profiles of broker, innovator, and monitor which were least likely to be found among the surveyed directors (Table 4-5).

Additionally it should be noted that the return rate for teachers from accredited centers was 26% while the return rate for teachers from non-accredited centers was 11%.

The return rate for directors was as follows: from accredited centers, 49% and from non-accredited centers, 33%.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to look at teachers' and directors' perceptions of their work environments as well as the aspects related to job satisfaction and leadership styles between accredited and non-accredited centers. Information on adult work environments, job satisfaction and work attitudes, and leadership styles were collected to determine the presence of any significant differences in these variables between persons at accredited and non-accredited centers.

Teachers and directors in early childhood programs across the state of Tennessee were selected by matching characteristics of center size and location between nationally accredited centers and non-accredited child care centers. All centers included in this study were licensed by the state of Tennessee. This final group selected consisted of 301 teachers (213 from accredited centers and 88 from non-accredited centers) and 70 directors (42 from accredited centers and 28 from non-accredited centers).

This study specifically examined four hypotheses. The first hypothesis, which emphasized teacher perceptions of organizational climate between accredited and non-accredited centers, did not appear to be supported in this study. However, the subscale, professional growth on the ECWES, did reveal significance which was higher among teachers in accredited centers than non-accredited centers. Striving for quality care for children is an overall goal of accreditation. If teachers are committed to that goal and are

aware of the components of quality care as well as the benefits of developmentally appropriate practice, valuing opportunities for professional growth becomes essential. A separate component for staff qualifications and growth in the accreditation guidelines suggests a strong priority given to professional development of teachers (Jorde-Bloom, 1996). By going through the self-study process of accreditation, teachers from accredited centers may value professional growth more so than teachers from non-accredited centers because of the increased awareness of quality care and its related components. The emphasis within accreditation on quality care and developmentally appropriate practice automatically sets greater standards for teachers. It may also spark interest to set personal goals of pursuing higher education. This study showed that more teachers from accredited centers had college degrees than teachers from non-accredited centers. Teachers from accredited centers may receive release time for attendance at workshops or conferences or they may be reimbursed for taking related college courses. Perhaps persons who seek employment at accredited centers, are those who value accreditation and the emphasis on quality care that this process provides. Nonetheless, teachers working in accredited centers appeared to place greater value on professional growth.

The second hypothesis concerning job satisfaction and work attitudes of teachers between the two groups was not supported as a whole but a difference was found in the area of co-worker relationships between teachers. Co-worker relationships were found to be higher among teachers in accredited centers than in non-accredited centers. This is an important finding because the physical environment of early childhood programs often necessitates a team approach to teaching and a sharing of space and resources (Jorde-

Bloom, 1988b). Positive work attitudes which include trust, support, and encouragement from co-workers and administration have been found to be accurate predictors of effectiveness in early childhood settings (Jorde-Bloom, 1991; Goodlad, 1983). Another contributing factor may be the guidelines set by NAEYC requiring lower group sizes and lower ratios between children and teachers. This alone may make the environment less hectic and more supportive of the development of co-worker relationships. Teachers who are not stressed can get along better with others and have more positive relationships with co-workers.

The third hypothesis focused on directors' perceptions of organizational climate between accredited and non-accredited centers. Again, no significant differences were found on the ECWES except on the subscale, collegiality. Collegiality refers to the extent or degree to which staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another. Directors often view their work environments more positively than teachers (Jorde-Bloom, 1997; Spodek & Saracho, 1992). This may be one reason why collegiality was found to be significant among directors but not among teachers. Directors who are effective communicators, who are team oriented, who are able to provide appropriate feedback, who support the achievements and development of individuals and who also support accreditation will have higher collegiality in their center. Differences between accredited and non-accredited centers may be connected to directors from non-accredited centers who had less education or unrelated degrees other than early childhood as compared to directors from accredited centers who had more training or experience in early childhood. The self-study process may also be a factor regarding the importance of guidelines

pertinent to caring for young children. Directors from accredited centers typically earned a higher salary than non-accredited centers and had also indicated a longer commitment to the early childhood field (16 years for accredited compared to 9 years for non-accredited). Higher salaries and longer commitment may be an indication of job satisfaction which would relate to a more supportive and positive environment.

The fourth hypothesis stated that there would be a difference in self-evaluated leadership profiles between accredited and non-accredited centers. This hypothesis was also not supported. In many ways, the accredited and non-accredited centers mirrored each other. For example, a trend was revealed indicating that mentor, coordinator, director, and facilitator were the predominant early childhood director leadership styles for both groups. A director who is a mentor listens, conveys appreciation, gives compliments and sees people as resources to be developed. A mentor also helps people develop plans for individual development. The facilitator strives to build cohesion and teamwork, manages interpersonal conflict, obtains input and participation and facilitates group problem-solving. The coordinator is one who maintains structure and flow, is dependable and reliable, minimizes disruptions and coordinates plans and proposals. The director style defines roles and tasks, generates rules and policies, evaluates performance and gives instruction. These leadership styles appear to fit appropriately with traits for effective leaders in early childhood.

The biggest difference was found between the leadership styles for innovator, monitor, and producer. The innovator and monitor styles were more dominant in the non-accredited centers than the accredited centers. The innovator style conceptualizes and

projects needed changes. This type of director is often a creative dreamer, envisions innovations, and packages them. The monitor style has a passion for details, is good at technical analysis, routine information, and logical problem-solving. A possible reason for this difference might be that directors in non-accredited centers were more likely to come from diverse backgrounds unrelated to education of young children. These two styles of directors seem to fit better in other arena of management such as retail or advertising. The producer style of leadership is expected to be task-oriented and have high interest, motivation, energy, personal drive, and able to stimulate employees. This style was found more often among directors in accredited centers. Directors who take on the time-consuming task of accreditation must be highly motivated and task-oriented. The broker style of leadership was not prevalent in the sample of directors from either accredited or non-accredited centers.

Overall, these finding suggest that directors of early childhood centers possess a variety of leadership styles. None of them is better than another except that a few of the profiles tend to be more frequent in early childhood education settings. While the leadership style of producer was more prevalent in accredited centers, differences in leadership based on accreditation status was not significant. Leadership in early childhood settings is not fully understood and further research is needed.

Limitations

There are several limitations within this study that may have an impact on the findings. These limitations are:

1. Accuracy of the data may have been compromised by depending on directors to distribute surveys to staff. This method promises anonymity but also presents the possibility for error, as directors may have completed the survey in lieu of staff.
2. In examining the return rate, teachers from accredited centers appear to be more committed to the field (26% versus 11% for teachers from non-accredited centers). Additionally, directors' return rate was higher for those individuals from accredited centers (49% for accredited versus 33% for non-accredited). This may have made the sample unbalanced and not fully representative of both groups. However, it could be argued that those individuals from non-accredited centers who returned the surveys are more committed to the profession, as they took time to complete the questionnaires. If these individuals are more committed to the field they may be more like their colleagues at accredited centers in attitudes. This could explain the lack of significance between these two groups.
3. Other studies have used personal interviews which offer a more in-depth source of data. However, the exploratory nature of this study was a factor in the decision to use mail surveys to minimize expense in dollars and time.
4. Another limitation was the use of the short form of the ECWES. The total range of this scale was 0 - 100 with a range of 0 - 10 on each of the ten dimensions. There were

only two questions per subscale which can not specifically get at the core issues of each dimension, hence there might not be enough depth per dimension. The long form of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey has ten questions per dimension thus enabling more detail into each subscale. However, the long scale costs significantly more to administer.

5. Overall, the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (Jorde-Bloom, 1988d) did not yield significant differences for teachers and directors at accredited versus non-accredited centers. This could be due to the fact that the accreditation procedure focuses more on quality care for children than adult work environments. The focus areas for accreditation include interactions among staff and children, curriculum, staff and parent interactions, administration, staff qualifications, physical environment, health and safety, food service, and program evaluation (Bredekamp, 1987). However, proposed revisions to the NAEYC accreditation criteria include more issues related to staff, such as turnover, qualifications, and relationships with administrators. If these revisions are adopted and implemented, there should be positive changes and improvements made for better environments for staff as well as for children in accredited centers. Research shows that teachers play an essential role in the care and nurturing of young children (Whitebook, et al., 1990) and with the proposed revisions adult work environments should improve.

Regardless of these limitations, this study investigated an area that is critical to improving quality for children and adults involved in child care. There is a continuing need for further investigation of adult work environments and the impact of accreditation.

Implications for Future Research

The recommendations for future research in this area are as follows:

1. Research has pointed out the benefits of positive adult work environments within the child care center which ultimately results in quality care for children. It is recommended that NAEYC consider adding mandatory reporting of work environments to the accreditation process with a focus on staff/director relationships and co-worker relationships.
2. Training and professional development of teaching staff needs to continue to be an important part of the experience related to working in early childhood education programs. The importance of professional growth was more salient for teachers in accredited centers than those in non-accredited settings. Research needs to examine why professional growth was related to accreditation status. Additionally, studies should be done regarding the effective interface between the personal needs of teachers regarding professional growth opportunities.
3. Overwhelmingly, the biggest frustrations for teachers and directors from accredited and non-accredited centers were in the areas of low pay, limited supplies and resources, inadequate substitutes, low staff morale, and high teacher turnover. Future research should explore these issues and look for creative solutions for solving some of these concerns. Goals for such a study would be to recognize and understand the factors that influence organizational climate which might help to reduce turnover and improve program stability.

4. Attention to leadership styles of child care center directors is an area that has not been fully explored. Examining the varying characteristics and backgrounds of early childhood teachers in general may help establish effective ways of supervising early childhood staff. Thus, a preparation course in supervision with an emphasis on leadership style is recommended as a requirement for directors.

Accreditation has been a process for over ten years and has made radical improvements in the quality of child care for children. The impact of the proposed changes to the accreditation criteria in regards to work environment needs to be researched relative to adult job satisfaction. Investigation and identification of successful leadership styles in early childhood settings also should be studied. The continued examination of these issues will only serve to improve the quality of child care, for both children and adults.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Teacher Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as best you can. Your participation is completely voluntary. However, we hope you will answer every question; this project's success depends upon receiving as complete information as possible from as many respondents as possible. Answers will be kept **strictly confidential**. Please do not put your name on this survey. Thank you.

	<u>N</u>	<u>Se</u>	<u>So</u>	<u>Sr</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>A</u>
13. Staff agree on center philosophy and educational objectives.	___	___	___	___	___	___
14. Staff share a common vision of what the center should be like.	___	___	___	___	___	___
15. The program is well planned and efficiently run.	___	___	___	___	___	___
16. Meetings are productive. Time is not wasted.	___	___	___	___	___	___
17. The work environment is attractive and well-organized.	___	___	___	___	___	___
18. There are sufficient supplies and equipment for staff to do their jobs.	___	___	___	___	___	___
19. Staff are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their work.	___	___	___	___	___	___
20. The center implements changes as needed.	___	___	___	___	___	___

Work Attitudes

This section is designed to find out how you feel about different facets of your job. Clearly, the success of this assessment depends on your candid and honest responses.

PART 1. Check (✓) the corresponding space (strongly disagree to strongly agree) to indicate how you feel about each of the statements in the categories below:

My Co-workers:

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
1. care about me.	___	___	___	___	___
2. encourage and support me.	___	___	___	___	___
3. share their personal concerns with me.	___	___	___	___	___
4. are hard to get to know.	___	___	___	___	___

		strongly disagree			strongly agree
5.	are critical of my performance.	—	—	—	—
6.	are competitive.	—	—	—	—
7.	are not very helpful.	—	—	—	—
8.	share ideas and resources with me.	—	—	—	—
9.	can't be trusted.	—	—	—	—
10.	are enjoyable to work with.	—	—	—	—

My Supervisor:

11.	respects my work.	—	—	—	—
12.	is too busy to know how I'm doing.	—	—	—	—
13.	supervises me too closely.	—	—	—	—
14.	gives me helpful feedback.	—	—	—	—
15.	asks for my opinion.	—	—	—	—
16.	is tactful.	—	—	—	—
17.	is not very dependable.	—	—	—	—
18.	encourages me to try new ideas.	—	—	—	—
19.	makes me feel inadequate.	—	—	—	—
20.	is unpredictable.	—	—	—	—
21.	is stimulating and challenging.	—	—	—	—

My Work:

22.	is respected by the parents of my students.	—	—	—	—
23.	involves too much paperwork and record keeping.	—	—	—	—
24.	does not have enough variety.	—	—	—	—
25.	is not very creative.	—	—	—	—

		strongly disagree			strongly agree
26.	makes an important difference in the children's lives.	—	—	—	—
27.	does not match my training and skills.	—	—	—	—
28.	gives me a sense of accomplishment.	—	—	—	—
29.	There is too little time to do all there is to do.	—	—	—	—
30.	I have control over most things that affect my satisfaction.	—	—	—	—

Working Conditions:

31.	My work schedule is flexible.	—	—	—	—
32.	The teacher/child ratio is adequate.	—	—	—	—
33.	I always know where to find the things I need.	—	—	—	—
34.	I feel too cramped.	—	—	—	—
35.	I need some new equipment/materials to do my job well.	—	—	—	—
36.	The decor of my center is drab.	—	—	—	—
37.	This center meets my standards of cleanliness.	—	—	—	—
38.	I can't find a place to carry on a conversation.	—	—	—	—
39.	This place is too noisy.	—	—	—	—
40.	The center's policies and procedures are clear.	—	—	—	—

Pay and Promotion Opportunities:

		strongly disagree			strongly agree
41.	My pay is adequate.	—	—	—	—
42.	My pay is fair considering my background and skills.	—	—	—	—
43.	My pay is fair considering what my co-workers make.	—	—	—	—
44.	I'm in a dead-end job.	—	—	—	—
45.	My fringe benefits are inadequate.	—	—	—	—
46.	I feel I could be replaced tomorrow.	—	—	—	—
47.	I have enough time off for holidays and vacations.	—	—	—	—
48.	I'm being paid less than I deserve.	—	—	—	—
49.	Opportunities for me to advance are limited.	—	—	—	—
50.	I expect to receive a raise during the next year.	—	—	—	—

PART II. If you could design your ideal job, how close would your present position resemble your ideal job with respect to the following:

	not like my ideal at all		somewhat resembles my ideal		is my ideal
relationship with co-workers	—	—	—	—	—
relationship with supervisor	—	—	—	—	—
the work itself	—	—	—	—	—
working conditions	—	—	—	—	—
pay and promotion opportunities	—	—	—	—	—

PART III. What are the two most satisfying things about your present job? What are the two most frustrating things about your present job?

Satisfactions

1. _____
2. _____

Frustrations

1. _____
2. _____

Information About Yourself and Your Center

Please respond to the following questions as completely as possible.

1. What is your gender?
☐ Male
☐ Female
2. What is your primary race?
☐ Caucasian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Oriental
☐ Other: _____
3. What is your age? _____
4. Which one item describes your highest educational level?

☐ Some high school	☐ High school diploma
☐ Some college work	☐ CDA credentials
☐ Associate of Arts degree	☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Some graduate work	☐ Masters degree
☐ Doctoral degree	
☐ Other: _____	

5. If you have a college degree, what is/are the area(s) of your study?
- ☐ Child Development
 - ☐ Early Childhood Development
 - ☐ Psychology
 - ☐ Elementary Education
 - ☐ Special Education
 - ☐ Other: _____
6. If you have state certification to teach, what is/are your area(s)?
- ☐ Early Childhood
 - ☐ Elementary Education
 - ☐ Secondary Education
 - ☐ Special Education
 - ☐ Other: _____
7. To what professional early childhood educational organizations do you currently belong?
8. How many years have you been employed in the early childhood education field?
- _____ years full-time and/or _____ years part-time
9. How many years have you been employed in your **current position**?
- _____ years full-time and/or _____ years part-time
10. How many hours per week do you work?
- ☐ 41 or more hours per week
 - ☐ 31 - 40 hours per week
 - ☐ 21 - 30 hours per week
 - ☐ 10 - 20 hours per week
 - ☐ Fewer than 10 hours per week
11. How many months of the year are you employed in your early childhood position?
- ☐ year-round (12 months)
 - ☐ school year (8-10 months)
 - ☐ fewer than 8 months per year

12. Which of the following salary ranges best describes your total yearly income from your child care job?

☐ under \$5,000	☐ \$17,500 - 19,999
☐ \$5,000 - 7,499	☐ \$20,000 - 24,999
☐ \$7,500 - 9,999	☐ \$25,000 - 29,999
☐ \$10,000 - 12,499	☐ \$30,000 - 34,999
☐ \$12,500 - 14,999	☐ \$35,000 or more
☐ \$15,000 - 17,499	

13. Which job title best describes your current position?

☐ classroom teacher or lead teacher
☐ teacher's aide or assistant teacher
☐ assistant director
☐ Other: _____

14. With what age group do you work?

☐ infant
☐ toddler
☐ preschool
☐ kindergarten
☐ school-age
☐ mixed age group

15. Do you plan to be working in the field of early childhood education in **one** year?

☐ yes
☐ no

16. Do you plan to be working in the field of early childhood education in **five** years?

☐ yes
☐ no

17. Do you plan to be working in the field of early childhood education in **10** years?

☐ yes
☐ no

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Director Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as best you can. Your participation is completely voluntary. However, we hope you will answer every question; this project's success depends upon receiving as complete information as possible from as many respondents as possible. Answers will be kept **strictly confidential**. Please do not put your name on this survey. Thank you.

		<u>N</u>	<u>Se</u>	<u>So</u>	<u>Sr</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>A</u>
11.	Teachers help make decisions about things that directly affect them.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	People feel free to express their opinions.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	Staff agree on center philosophy and educational objectives.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	Staff share a common vision of what the center should be like.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15.	The program is well planned and efficiently run.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16.	Meetings are productive. Time is not wasted.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17.	The work environment is attractive and well-organized.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18.	There are sufficient supplies and equipment for staff to do their jobs.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19.	Staff are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20.	The center implements changes as needed.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

		<u>N</u>	<u>Se</u>	<u>So</u>	<u>Sr</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>A</u>
13.	Influences decisions made at higher levels.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	Compares records, reports, and so on to detect discrepancies.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15.	Sees that the center delivers on stated goals.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16.	Shows empathy and concern in dealing with staff.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17.	Works with technical information.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18.	Gets access to people at higher levels.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19.	Sets clear objectives for the center.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20.	Treats each individual in a sensitive, caring way.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21.	Keeps track of what goes on inside the center.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22.	Does problem solving in creative, clever ways.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
23.	Pushes the center to meet objectives.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24.	Encourages staff to share ideas in the group.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
25.	Searches for innovations and potential improvements.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
26.	Clarifies priorities and direction.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
27.	Persuasively sells new ideas to board of directors/owners.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
28.	Brings a sense of order into the center.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
29.	Shows concern for the needs of staff.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	<u>N</u>	<u>Se</u>	<u>So</u>	<u>Sr</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>A</u>
30. Emphasizes center's achievement of stated purposes.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Builds teamwork among group members.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Analyzes written plans and schedules.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Information About Yourself and Your Center

- What is your gender?
☐ Male
☐ Female
- What is your primary race?
☐ Caucasian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Oriental
☐ Other: _____
- What is your age? _____
- Which one item describes your highest educational level?
☐ Some high school
☐ High school diploma
☐ Some college work
☐ CDA credentials
☐ Associate of Arts degree
☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Some graduate work
☐ Masters degree
☐ Doctoral degree
☐ Other: _____

5. If you have a college degree, what is/are the area(s) of your study?
- ☐ Child Development
 - ☐ Early Childhood Development
 - ☐ Psychology
 - ☐ Elementary Education
 - ☐ Special Education
 - ☐ Other: _____
6. If you have state certification to teach, what is/are your area(s)?
- ☐ Early Childhood
 - ☐ Elementary Education
 - ☐ Secondary Education
 - ☐ Special Education
 - ☐ Other: _____
7. To what professional early childhood educational organizations do you currently belong?
8. How many years have you been employed in the early childhood education field?
- ☐ years full-time and/or ☐ years part-time
9. How many years have you been employed in your **current position**?
- ☐ years full-time and/or ☐ years part-time
10. How many hours per week do you work?
- ☐ 41 or more hours per week
 - ☐ 31 - 40 hours per week
 - ☐ 21 - 30 hours per week
 - ☐ 10 - 20 hours per week
 - ☐ Fewer than 10 hours per week
11. How many months of the year are you employed in your early childhood position?
- ☐ year-round (12 months)
 - ☐ school year (8-10 months)
 - ☐ fewer than 8 months per year

12. Which of the following salary ranges best describes your total yearly income from your child care job?

☐ under \$5,000	☐ \$17,500 - 19,999
☐ \$5,000 - 7,499	☐ \$20,000 - 24,999
☐ \$7,500 - 9,999	☐ \$25,000 - 29,999
☐ \$10,000 - 12,499	☐ \$30,000 - 34,999
☐ \$12,500 - 14,999	☐ \$35,000 or more
☐ \$15,000 - 17,499	

13. Which job title best describes your current position?

☐ classroom teacher or lead teacher
☐ teacher's aide or assistant teacher
☐ director
☐ assistant director
☐ Other: _____

14. Do you work directly with children in the classroom on a regular basis?

☐ no
☐ yes

If yes, with what age group do you work?

☐ infant
☐ toddler
☐ preschool
☐ kindergarten
☐ school-age
☐ mixed age group: _____
☐ more than one age group: _____
☐ Other: _____

15. Does your program have computers for children to use?

☐ yes
☐ no

16. How many total children does your center presently serve? _____

17. What ages do you serve? _____

18. What are your hours of operation? _____

19. What is the **average monthly** child care tuition at your center?
- ☐ \$300 per month or below
 - ☐ \$301 - 350 per month
 - ☐ \$351 - 400 per month
 - ☐ \$401 - 450 per month
 - ☐ \$451 to 500 per month
 - ☐ \$500 per month or above
20. Are reduced child care fees a staff benefit?
- ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
21. What is the number of classroom staff who have left your employment during the past twelve months? _____
22. Are you currently accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?
- ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
23. Are you currently involved in the self-study process for NAEYC accreditation?
- ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
- If no, do you plan to be within the next twelve months?
- ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
24. Do you plan to be working in the field of early childhood education in **one** year?
- ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
25. Do you plan to be working in the field of early childhood education in **five** years?
- ☐ yes
 - ☐ no

26. Do you plan to be working in the field of early childhood education in 10 years?

_____ yes

_____ no

27. How many questionnaires did you distribute? _____

28. **Frustrations**

What are the two most frustrating things about your present job?

1. _____

2. _____

Satisfactions

What are the two most satisfying things about your present job?

1. _____

2. _____

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

APPENDIX B

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE



College of Human Ecology
Department of Child and Family Studies
1215 West Cumberland Avenue, Room 115
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1900
(423) 974-5316
Fax (423) 974-2742

Date letter is mailed

Dear child care teacher,

The need for quality child care is an ever-growing necessity in our country today and the role of the teacher is critical. Teachers facilitate children's development, guide them, and provide emotional support. The "work environments" of child care centers are also important for teachers because working with young children all day can be very tiring. However, no one really knows how child care teachers and directors across the state of Tennessee feel about their workplaces.

Your center is one in Tennessee in which people are being asked to give their opinion. In order that the results truly represent the thinking of the teachers of Tennessee, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned. It is also important that each full-time employee (*working 30 hrs. per week or more*) participate. I am suggesting to your director that you be given 15-20 minutes out of the room to complete the survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary, but if you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the consent form and return it with your questionnaire. Use the attached postage-paid, addressed envelope to mail your questionnaire directly to me.

The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so that I may check your center's name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Upon receiving your questionnaire, your name will be put in a drawing to receive a \$20.00 gift certificate from Gryphon House, a teacher resource catalog. The consent form will be used to enter your name in a drawing. From all the people across the state who return their questionnaires, there will be two separate drawings, one for directors and one for teachers. One certificate will be awarded to a director and four gift certificates awarded to teachers.

This information is being compiled for a master's thesis. You may receive a summary of the results by completing the enclosed card and sending it separately. Please **do not** put this information on the questionnaire itself. No names will be associated with reporting the data and the master list will be kept in a locked file in a locked office. All results will remain confidential in that no individual or center names will be used at any time.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to write or call me. My direct telephone number is (423) 974-0817.

Thank you for your assistance.

Lesa Rodene Larson
Project Coordinator

Melissa Groves
Assistant Professor

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE



College of Human Ecology
Department of Child and Family Studies
1215 West Cumberland Avenue, Room 115
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1900
(423) 974-5316
Fax (423) 974-2742

Date letter is mailed

Director's Name

Center Name

Address

Town, State, Zipcode

Dear Child Care Director,

The need for quality child care is an ever-growing necessity in our country today and the role of the teacher is critical. Teachers facilitate children's development, guide them, and provide emotional support. On the other hand, directors give continuous feedback and encouragement to the teachers but also manage all the complex details of a child care center. However, no one really knows how child care teachers and directors across the state of Tennessee feel about their workplaces.

Your center is one in Tennessee in which people are being asked to give their opinions. In order that the results truly represent the thinking of child care directors and teachers of Tennessee, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned. It is also important that you as the director as well as each full-time employee (*working 30 hrs. per week or more*) participate. I'd like to suggest that you distribute the questionnaires to your teachers and that you give them 15-20 minutes out of the room to complete the questionnaire. Your participation and that of your teachers is voluntary, but if you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the consent form and return it with your completed questionnaire. Use the attached postage-paid, addressed envelope to mail back your questionnaire.

The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so that I may check your center's name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Upon receiving your questionnaire, your name will be put in a drawing to receive a \$20.00 gift certificate from Gryphon House, a teacher resource catalog. The consent form will be used to enter your name in a drawing. From all the people across the state who return their questionnaires, there will be two separate drawings, one for directors and one for teachers. One certificate will be awarded to a director and four gift certificates awarded to teachers.

This information is being compiled for a master's thesis. You may receive a summary of the results by completing the enclosed card and sending it separately. Please **do not** put this information on the questionnaire itself. No names will be associated with reporting the data and the master list will be kept in a locked file in a locked office. All results will remain confidential in that no individual or center names will be used at any time. If you have any questions, I would be happy to talk with you. Please feel free to call me at (423) 974-0817 or send me a note at the address listed above.

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

Lesa Rodene Larson
Project Coordinator

Melissa Groves
Assistant Professor

Informed Consent Form

Please SIGN AND RETURN WITH YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY. Keep second copy for your records.

I have read the attached cover letter and understand the following:

- The purpose of this study is to learn more about how child care teachers and directors feel about their workplace.
- This is a master's thesis.
- My participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. Neither my decision about participation nor my responses if I decide to participate will be known to others at the center.
- All information will be confidential and no names will be associated with the results of the study.
- No names will be associated with reporting the data, and the master list of the names will be kept in a locked file, in a locked office.
- There are no foreseen risks to participants in the study and my participation may help researchers better understand how child care teachers and directors feel about their workplaces.
- It will take 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.
- Upon receipt of the questionnaire, my name will be placed in a drawing for a chance to receive a \$20 gift certificate from Gryphon House in order to expand my professional library of teacher resources.
- Questions about this study or the rights of research participants may be directed to Lesa Rodene Larson at (423) 974-0817 or Melissa Groves at (423) 974-3868.

I have read the above elements of informed consent and understand the purpose of this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

I am requesting a copy of the results of your study in which I was a participant.
Below is my address:

(on separate postcard that accompanied initial cover letter)

APPENDIX C

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinion about job satisfaction and your work environment was mailed to you along with questionnaires for your staff. Your center is one of 170 centers included in this study.

If you have already completed and returned it, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because it has been sent to only a small, but representative sample of Tennessee child care centers, it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent the perspectives of Tennessee child care teachers and directors.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire or it got misplaced, please call me at (423) 974-0817 and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Lesa Rodene Larson, Project Coordinator

(postcard urging director to complete questionnaire and return)

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinion about job satisfaction and your work environment was mailed to you along with questionnaires for your staff. Your center is one of 170 centers included in this study.

Please circulate this reminder to your staff urging them to complete their survey and return it as quickly as possible. Because it has been sent to only a small, but representative sample of Tennessee child care centers, it is extremely important that theirs also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent the perspectives of Tennessee child care teachers and directors.

They may call me at (423) 974-0817 if they need another questionnaire. I will get another one in the mail today.

Sincerely,

Lesa Rodene Larson, Project Coordinator

(postcard asking director to remind staff to complete and return questionnaires)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE



College of Human Ecology
Department of Child and Family Studies
1215 West Cumberland Avenue, Room 115
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1900
(423) 974-5316
Fax (423) 974-2742

November 29, 1996

Dear Director

Name

Address

Over three weeks ago I wrote to you and your teaching staff seeking your perspective of your work environment. As of today, I have not received all of your completed questionnaires.

I realize how busy and chaotic your job can be, but I have undertaken this study because of the belief that teachers and directors in the child care field are extremely important to the quality of child care today. I want to know about your work environment and get your opinion and that of each of your center's staff. It is my belief that those of you who have not yet sent in your questionnaire may hold quite different opinions regarding your work environment. Please urge your staff to complete the questionnaire and mail it in today.

I am writing again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. Your center was chosen from a long list of over 2,700 licensed centers across Tennessee. In order for the results of this study to be truly representative of the opinions of all Tennessee child care teachers and directors, it is essential that each person in the sample return her/his questionnaire.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed. If you need more questionnaires for your staff, please fill out the enclosed postcard and I will send more staff questionnaires. Five gift certificates from Gryphon House will be awarded and drawn from a list of returned questionnaires.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lesla Rodene Larson
Project Coordinator

(three week follow-up letter to director)

Please send _____ teacher questionnaire(s).

Please send _____ director questionnaire(s).

Please write your center's mailing address below.

(postcard requesting additional surveys to be sent)

VITA

Lesa Rodene Larson was born in Wakefield, Nebraska. She received her high school education from Pawnee City High School in Pawnee City, Nebraska. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education/Special Education from Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas in 1983.

Working experience has included special education teacher, recreation supervisor, program manager for adults with special needs, Christian education director, child care center director, and graduate assistant. These positions involved working with children with developmental delays, supervision, program development, and communicating with teachers and families.

Lesa is married to Merle Larson. They have three children, Bailey - age 10, Hannah - age 8, and Chloe - age 6.

Presently, Lesa is the assistant director and instructor at The University of Tennessee Child Development Lab on Cumberland Avenue.