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# Does Daily Exposure through the Use of Nursery Rhymes Better Support Students' Phonological Awareness Skill Development?

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Does daily exposure through the use of nursery rhymes  
better support students' phonological awareness skill development?

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Education

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**Table of Contents**

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
Review of the Literature	5
Methods	17
Participants	17
Data Collection	17
Results	20
Data Analysis	20
Discussion	31
Summary of Major Findings	31
Limitation of the Study	32
Further Study	33
Conclusion	33
References	35
Appendix	38

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the best way to help students develop phonological awareness skills. It seeks to answer these questions: Can the use of nursery rhymes help to develop phonological awareness skills in preschool? Will the use of nursery rhymes help students learn to listen and hear the play with words, and therefore understand the concepts of phonological awareness with ease? If there is phonological awareness practice that is routinely embedded daily into the classroom schedule, will student notice the key skills quicker and develop the concept deeper than students' develop in the past who have not been exposed to as intense phonological awareness activities daily?

Does Daily Exposure Through the Use of Nursery Rhymes  
Better Support Students' Phonological Awareness Skill Development?

With the shift of every decade, there is something new and exciting that increases with popularity. In the twenty-first century, we are seeing high increase for technology advancement and more busy families than in previous decades. It is becoming more and more evident as night time stories are now iPad shows in some families, nursery rhyme play in the morning has been taken over by iPad games, and car ride conversations and I spy is less frequent with DVDs. With the replacement of screen time students are receiving fewer amounts of vocalized words being spoken back and forth, leading to fewer conversations, less make believe storytelling, and playing with silly rhymes to pass the time. This is particularly concerning with the increase in academic skills being required within a child's kindergarten year.

Another shift with the decade is the academic push down of grade level expectations. Many factors play a big role in a child's educational experience and one that many teachers may or may not agree on is the increased curriculum that they are having to use. Kindergarten students when they begin the year are already expected to know a majority of both uppercase and lowercase letter names and begin to know their sounds. Within the first week, they are already working to write sentences, while some children may not even know how to write their names. For those children who were not able to receive a highly credited preschool education prior to kindergarten they may feel behind before they even get started.

Children not receiving early literacy experiences leads to considerable challenges in students acquiring reading skills (Terrell, 2018). Without helping students play with words and sounds at a young age, they are at risk of developing a deficit in phonological awareness and related processing skills. There has been a great amount of studies showing students exposure to

phonological skills during early years hits the child's zone of proximal development period (Rohde, 2015; Terrell, 2018; Piasta, 2016). Students who are able to develop adequate phonological skills prior to kindergarten tend to be a strong predictor of later achievement in literacy. Alphabetic knowledge is another high predictor of later reading success.

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **The Importance of Emergent Literacy**

Many parts of language and literacy skill development is natural and spontaneous in its nature. However, phonological awareness skills are not that easy and take more work and planning to learn. These skills are not naturally developing. With that, there is the need for children to receive some form of valuable early literacy education prior to entering kindergarten. As many children spend time in daycares or preschools, most any traditional preschool curriculum hit on a single skill for the week and have a rotating cycle of phonological awareness skills they are working on. What research is showing now is that effective instruction needs to be brief, explicit lessons, and taught through multiple distributed instructional cycles (Jones et al., 2012). "Recent research studies indicate that phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are highly correlated with later reading accuracy and fluency" (Brand, 2006, p. 133).

The authors Frey and Fisher (2010) did a study looking at the physical changes of the brain while children received instruction in language building activities. Putting the major neuroscience aside for now, Frey and Fisher (2010) state how

Neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to physically change, is an important consideration given that our actions can permanently alter the learner's brain. Neuroplasticity is an important concept in early childhood education because of the role of background knowledge...is built through direct and indirect experiences and...these new neural

pathways are used in later reading-related task, such as making connections and visualizing. (Frey & Fisher, 2010, p. 105)

With this in mind, it is important to have engaging instruction that makes new knowledge to be acquired, learned, and recalled, build off those pathways already started. In this research the importance of repetition in its ability to lead to automaticity, which is key to helping children increase their fluency and understanding was noted. The importance of visuals in learning and how allowing for children to imitate that of adults are key items to building a foundational learning skill set (Frey & Fisher, 2010). Through these key items, Frey and Fisher discuss how developmentally appropriate practice for children in preschool settings is most certainly needing to take place for making the most of what is stored in children's brains.

**Early Literacy in Context.** We all know that reading and learning to read is a predominant skill for not only school success but also leading a successful life in the future. In the Teaching Strategies GOLD standards there are clear objectives for each age appropriate development and learning milestones for children that build off of the previous benchmark level. Learning to read starts with the basic idea of a child showing interest in a book. Moving on to a child being able to correctly orient a book and turn the pages left to right starting at the front of the book and moving towards the back. Children then learn various features and gain an understanding that text carries a message and can be meaningful when it is read. Children may also begin to indicate where to start reading and which direction to read the text, as well as, some awareness of various letters, words, and or punctuation in books. The basic beginning concepts of early literacy also includes children's interactions during reading experiences, book conversations, and text reflections as they ask and answer questions about the book, refer to pictures and contribute particular language from the book at an appropriate time. As children

begin to identify story related problems and events, through retelling while talking with the adult that is reading to them, children are establishing the function and process of reading. This is a key skill to have well before children begin to try to decode text and begin to read the words themselves.

Leigh Rohde (2015) furthers this concept in her scholarly study looking at the way that emergent literacy can be viewed. She discusses how “these early skills, include the knowledge and abilities related to the alphabet, phonological awareness, symbolic representation, and communication” and extends the idea that if early literacy was viewed more as an interactive process of skills and context rather than a linear series of individual components children would gain more from their daily experiences (Rohde, 2015, p. 1). It is not new knowledge that children develop oral language skills by using consistent patterns and sequences, many researchers have further inquired on this topic. Phonological awareness is similar in this skill development pattern for we know that children typically begin with rhyming and alliteration and then move onto segmenting and blending of phonemes (Rohde, 2015). However, what is not as clear is the path at which children’s “series of associated and concurrent experiences that result in the building of knowledge and skill related to the literacy process” (Rohde, 2015, p. 3).

Research has stated how early literacy evolves given a rich literacy experience and knowledgeable adults that of which the child can learn from. What is occurring though is not all children have knowledgeable adults to help them further along in their literacy development. Knowing the stages of development of emergent literacy and the interrelationships between each component is key to being able to scaffold and differentiate the teaching you do to better the learning your students achieve (Rhode, 2015). Rohde’s research looks further into determining the basic components that emergent readers must learn and understand before they can read a



sentence, passage, or book and then how to get this knowledge available to those whom are in the children's environments (parent, grandparents, caregivers, daycare providers, early childhood educators). Rohde determined the building blocks for early literacy are these three components (a) Print Awareness, (b) Phonological Awareness, and (c) Oral Language (Rohde, 2015). Print awareness is not only the knowledge of and ability to recognize and name letters, but also identify the sounds of the letters, produce the letter sounds, and match text letters with their sounds. Print awareness also encompasses the concept of print: book handling, knowledge that print carries a message, the difference between a word and a letter, etc. Phonological awareness as defined by Rohde's is "the ability to detect, identify, and manipulate the sound structure of language" through rhyming and segmenting activities (Rohde, 2015, p. 5). Children depend on oral language as they engage with others, communicate their needs and wants, demonstrate their knowledge skill set and acquire new concepts. Children's oral language skills goes from understanding and using vocabulary, to background knowledge, and semantics, into how they are making connections with literacy. Rohde's makes it clear how "rhyming, for many children, is the first time they shift their focus from the meaning of words to the sounds of language" (Rohde, 2015, p. 5). Therefore, Rhode's stresses how the need for providing teachers with clear understanding of what early literacy is and what learning opportunities can take place for children to engage in is critical for children to gain that emergent knowledge of letters, words, and sounds (Rohde, 2015, p. 7).

**Phonological Awareness.** "Phonological awareness is the ability to detect and manipulate the sound structure of words independent of their meaning. It is an increasingly sophisticated capability that is highly predictive of and causally related to, children's later ability to read" (Phillips, 2008, p. 3). Phonological awareness is developed by listening where children

can discriminate rhyme, alliteration, and syllables. Further, children can join in on rhyming games and songs, fill in missing rhyming words, decide whether two words rhyme, and generate a group of rhyming words when given a word. Students can sing songs and refrain with repeating initial sounds, show that some words begin the same way, and matching beginning sounds of some words. Students who show phonological awareness skills also have the ability to separate words in sentences and show awareness of separate syllables in words. Initial sound matching, omissions of sounds, and blending within a person's phonological awareness abilities is what Majsterek, Shorr, and Erison (2000) note as "a person's ability to tune in to individual sounds of words" (p. 143).

***Phonemic Awareness.*** As noted by Zeece (2006), phonemic awareness is defined as "the ability to notice, think about and work with the individual sounds in spoken words" (p. 170). Phonemic awareness is where students' are blending and segmenting words into smaller units of sound. Students are able to separate onset and rhyme in one syllable words (/c/ake, /j/ill). Student's move on then to blending, separating, adding or substituting individual sounds in simple, consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. For example, student would be able to clap out each phoneme of hat, /h/ /a/ /t/, or after hearing the word /h/ /a/ /t/ could change the middle sound to make /h/ /o/ /t/. Taking the larger units of phonological awareness skills and then braking them down into the smaller units of sounds is what is known as phonemic awareness.

***Phonics.*** Phonics is related to phonological awareness but phonics is the instruction of connecting letters with sounds and breaking words into sounds in order to learn how to read and write. Children's understanding that written letters and those letter together make up a word represent sound parts is one part of a student's ability to employ letter-sound associations when attempting to read or write unknown words. At the phonics level, students are moving towards

reading, writing multisyllabic words by employing their use of digraph knowledge, prefix, and suffix understanding, and deciphering contractions.

*Alphabetic Knowledge.* One of the more necessary skills to early literacy learning is letter knowledge. According to the academic journal written by Phillips (2008)

Like phonological awareness, strong letter knowledge skills facilitate the acquisition of decoding ability and can be taught effectively with preschool children. Children benefit from systematic opportunities to hear the letter names and sounds modeled, to practice discriminating between different letters, and to practice both receptive and expressive identification of letters. (Phillips, 2008, p. 12)

The concept behind this is students who have good alphabetic knowledge can associate phonemes with graphemes and are able to then use this prior knowledge to guide them to decode unknown words. However, if students do not have the knowledge of letter names, let alone the sounds they are associated with, the ability to decode is increasingly difficult.

### **The Current Issues**

It is becoming more and more evident that students entering their kindergarten year with limited to no prior pre-kindergarten education are often times delayed in their emergent literacy skills (Piasta, 2016). Students that begin with delays in kindergarten often times continue to struggle throughout their academic careers. With the focus of building collaborative early literacy intervention programs to focus on the development of the critical emergent literacy skills among children at risk there is a greater chance to level the playing field. “Emergent literacy skills include phonological awareness, vocabulary, lettering naming, and word manipulation” (Hilbert & Eis, 2014, p. 105). Zeece (2006) also added text comprehension, phonics, and fluency as other areas important for successful reading instruction. With effective emergent

literacy intervention models children beginning kindergarten are given greater opportunity to successfully learn to read.

### **The Power of Nursery Rhymes**

According to the research conducted by Danielson (2000), “research seems to suggest that one of the best indicators of how well children will learn to read is their ability to recite nursery rhymes when they walk into kindergarten” (p. 3). Nevertheless, many students leave preschool just having their first exposure to nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes help children develop “the rhythm of language, the compact structure of the narratives, and the engaging characters all combine to produce the perfect model for young children to develop an ear for the music of words, phrases, and sentences” (Danielson, 2000, p. 7). When one recites a nursery rhyme, they are involved in a series of language developmental skills such as learning about intonation, learning new words and concepts, and understanding and gaining appreciation of poetry at a young age.

**Nursery rhyme knowledge and phonological awareness.** According to the research conducted by Harper (2011), as mentioned in the article, nursery rhymes are a socially engaging, playful, and developmentally appropriate way for young children to hear, identify, manipulate, and experiment with the sounds of language. In addition, nursery rhymes allow for alliterative repetition, speech rhythms, and intonation patterns that as children are engaging in saying these chants they are also building their communication skills and memory of sound patterns. In Harper’s study, over a 15-month period with 20 preschool age students in the class, Harper put in place a variety of teaching approaches and strategies to use alongside teaching nursery rhymes. Through this research, students engaged in visual, tactile, and kinesthetic learning experiences with felt boards, prop boxes, rebus posters, crafts, storyboards, and dramatic play theaters.

Among the 15-month, study there was significant growth between the experimental group and control group. Discussion lead to the difference being the increased exposure to language and literacy activities such as reading, singing, and word play through the focus of ten common nursery rhymes (Harper, 2011). Prior research shared the link between preschool children's nursery rhyme knowledge and their success in formal schooling of reading, writing, and spelling. The results of Harper's (2011) research suggest that intervention of explicitly teaching nursery rhymes in turn enhances children's phonological awareness and sensitivity to individual phonemes and rhyme, and stimulates phonemic skill development. "This study makes it clear that early knowledge of nursery rhymes helps children to build awareness of sound patterns of language and plays an important role in a child's linguistic and early literacy development" (Harper, 2011, p. 75). The research behind the importance of phonological awareness in early childhood development is abundant.

### **What Does All This Mean for Educators**

According to the research conducted by Hilbert and Eis (2013) early exposure and intervention is key. "The opportunity to successfully develop emergent literacy skills is vital for young children's future academic success" (Hilbert & Eis, 2013, p. 105). Hilbert and Eis (2013) mention how hitting each student's zone of proximal development and identifying effective emergent literacy intervention models is imperative so a child can be influenced prior to beginning kindergarten to allow them the opportunity to become a good reader (Hilbert & Eis, 2013, p. 105). Though assessment and screening tools are important, what is more important is how the information from screeners are being used and the curriculum you are working from. As an educator, it is important to remember though one's cognitive abilities may be above average; this does not related to phonological processing abilities. Therefore, what is being done

to further that development based on assessment and curriculum. It is also known that student's best learn through well-structured, systematic, multi-sensory opportunities. As the lead educator, you must consider how you are meeting these criteria through your daily classroom environment.

In a research article done by Jones, Clark, and Reutzel (2012), they brought light on how enhancing alphabet knowledge instruction through brief explicit lessons done daily can improve students' ability to break the alphabetic code in learning letter names and sounds more quickly. Jones et al. (2012), say long gone are the days of learning one letter a week. Instead, students need frequent exposure and repetition of the letters.

Research on mastery of item sets such as alphabet knowledge has shown that instructional review cycles should take place between 10-20% of the total time period of which an item is to be remembered. At a letter-a-day pace, it would take approximately 5 weeks to present 26 letter names and sounds allowing for up to seven possible distributed alphabet knowledge instructional review cycles during a school year. (Jones et al., 2012, p. 4)

Jones et al., (2012) suggest explicit lessons should include identifying the letter name and sound, recognize the letter in text, and produce/write the letterform. These lessons should include the teaching of both uppercase and lowercase letters simultaneously to build on students' prior experiences and expand their knowledge of letters. "Instruction that includes visual and verbal modeling of letter writing effectively improves students' letter formation automaticity and word reading ability" (Jones et al., 2012, p. 2).

Flett and Conderman (2002) provide twenty formal and informal activities that can be done with children to emphasize oral language each day as a result of their research. Some of the suggested activities to incorporate that emphasize oral language daily were teaching of

nursery rhymes, teaching simple poems and finger plays, draw attention to rhyming words as they occur in normal classroom interactions, read stories that contain many rhymes, and create a sound box in your classroom. For further developing skills suggestions were play “I spy” using sounds as clues, play “change a name” and other phoneme deletion games by omitting a sound in a word. Though there are a number of great ideas, it all comes down to planning this successfully within the day and presenting various activities in ways that are exciting and engaging to children.

**Michael Heggerty.** The lessons within Michael Heggerty’s pre-kindergarten edition use nursery rhymes to introduce three and four-year-old students to language play. These lessons include the same ten daily phonemic awareness skills as the kindergarten version but leveled to meet the developmental skill set of the students it is intended for and works from the basic concepts and builds its way up as the lessons progress. These ten skill areas are letter naming, rhyming, onset fluency, blending, final or medial sounds, segmenting, adding, deleting, substituting, and language awareness.

With this 35-week curriculum of daily phonemic awareness lesson plans students build a repertoire of classic nursery rhymes as they learn to enjoy language along the way (Appendix E). This curriculum is developed with a systematic scope and sequence of skills with explicit modeling. With clearly laid out daily plans that are easy to follow, the use of this curriculum within a routine portion of every day is how it is intended to be taught. The lesson’s themselves take between five to ten minutes a day and are engaging and quickly move from one skill to another keeping students attention and involvement in the lesson.

***Benefits of daily incorporation.*** Frey and Fisher (2010) also talked about how reading is not innate and how reading must be taught. This is where early childhood education is powerful

and the daily repetition of phonological skills and teacher modeling is key to students reading, vocabulary, writing, and oral language development. These emergent literacy concepts when done with developmentally appropriate practices and intentional focus can help foster students learning and bridge the learning gap in young students before entering primary education. However, it needs to occur often, include frequent repetition, and be done with fidelity that is encompassed within the classroom schedule and routine.

According to the academic journal written by Majsterek, Shorr, and Erion (2000), it notes that at-risk students show growth in phonological awareness when provided with early intervention. It is suggested that these early interventions foster listening comprehension skills, provide literacy-rich environments, and promote sensitivity to the sounds of language. This particular study found growth in preschool age students' ability to detect rhyme (one of the earlier skills of the phonological-awareness continuum) with the use of daily five-minute activity focus during circle time. During this circle time students were shown picture cards of various items that may or may not have rhymed, had a rhyme box with a variety of 25 objects within it to rhyme with, and ended each session with a song. Each teaching session was also preceded by a review of previous circle-time activity (Majsterek et al., 2000).

***Methods of engagement.*** When children are more engaged and motivated in the learning experience they are more driven to remember and make connections. The research behind Susan Brand's (2006) study focused on getting meaningful literacy skills incorporated into Gardner's eight areas of multiple intelligences by focusing on alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness phonics, nonsense word competence, and language usage skills. With the integrations of phonics and literature based approach when text was paired with meaningful activities, children had higher participation rate and were able to tackle more abstract task of successful emergent



literacy skills. Students were more emotionally connected to the task at hand for they were bringing in more powerful meaning allowing for children to extend their attention span, memory, processing skills, and comprehension of that work they were doing. With the multiple intelligence theory and thoughtful curriculum planning and implementation, teachers can ensure to meet the diverse needs of their students and intern help students to develop the emergent literacy knowledge bases needed for students to have good accuracy and fluency in their reading ability.

In the study done by Neumann, Hood, and Ford (2012), they found that drawing children's attention to letters within environmental print could foster and sustain gains in a broad range of emergent literacy skills. This study labeled environmental print to include labels and logos on food, toy packaging, clothing, road signs, and billboards (Neumann et al., 2012). Due to the engaging colors and familiarity of environmental print and the factor that it is virtually everywhere given its nature, children in this study recognized more words than those not instructed in having these environmental print words pointed out. Students in the control group also shared their experiences of where they found various words, in addition to pointing out more targeted letters within an environmental print label. With this it leads to providing the important concept that if children are excited and motivated to read they will enjoy their literacy time more fully and pursue reading and writing as a pleasurable activity, which can in turn lead to increasing their learning opportunities (Neumann et al., 2012).

Often times, it is seen in classroom students when engaged in these fun play on words and silly nonsense poems have additional actions, movements, or short skits to go along with them. Other times, when walking down a school hallway, you may see various artwork displays or activities within in the classroom that are building on the repetition of the nursery rhymes

being practiced. For example, students maybe are crafting a clock and adding a mouse to a string so as they are saying Hickory Dickory Dock, they are working on the concepts of up and down as well, with the visual clock. Combining tactile-kinesthetic activities where language is intentional enhances children's phonological awareness development and stimulates the phonemic skill set. There is also a variety of great online resources for teachers, parents, and children that prompt the learning and development of nursery rhymes in many unique and enriching ways.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

This action research project was conducted within an inclusive preschool classroom with a co-teaching model. All 22 students in the classroom were selected for the experimental group who were assessed on week one, week four, and week eight by the neutral district data collection personal. The other 22 students were selected from other district inclusive preschool classrooms with similar demographics. These control group students were also assessed on week one, week four, and week eight by the same neutral district data collection personal. The ages of the students ranged from three to five years old. There was a wide range of demographics between high to low socio-economic status, as well as, wide range of race. Of the 22 experimental students in the class, two are on individual specialized education plans. Of the 22 control group students, there were four on special education services for speech and language delays. Each classroom also has a number of students who are English language learners (ELLs).

### **Data Collection**

The focus of the researcher is to change the method of deliver for literacy and language skills lessons. The researcher will go from using the Get Set for School curriculum, which

cycles the skills students work on, to the Heggerty curriculum that hits on all phonological awareness skills within each daily lesson. This curriculum is intended to be used as a quick paced, free of interruptions, fun filled lesson time where students experience the feeling of success. Each lesson should take about ten to fifteen minutes. The lessons each day include letter naming, rhyming, onset fluency, blending, identifying final sounds, segmenting, adding phonemes, deleting phonemes and increasing language awareness. Throughout the year in each of these sections, the curriculum works on each skill in order of easiest to most difficult subskills. For example, with blending, first students will work on blending individual words into compound words, then blending syllables into spoken words, next blending onset with rime into spoken words, finally blending phonemes (sounds) into spoken words.

With this curriculum, the researcher will look at students' improvement on their GOLD assessment and Get Set for School assessment in the areas of the dependent variables of segmenting, blending, onset fluency, rhyming, letter naming, and sound identification to see the rate of growth in student's phonological awareness skill ability. With the four-year-old students, the researcher will assess students using the districts required Get Set for School Language and Literacy assessment that is required to be administered four times a year (early fall, late fall, winter, spring). The researcher will look at the components titled 'name capital letters, name lowercase letters, nursery rhymes and rhyming, words parts.' With these assessment pieces, the researcher will have data collected to place into the students' GOLD profiles and see the levels they are currently at within the areas of focused on; 15a (notices and discriminates rhyme), 15c (notices and discriminates discrete units of sound, 16a (identifies and names letters), and 16b (identifies letter sound correspondence)(Teaching Strategies, 2016).

The researcher analyze the students' prior knowledge on week one of school to get a baseline of the students understanding of phonological awareness skills. From there the researcher will implement the Heggerty daily routine lessons to then take midline data on week four and final data collection for the research period on week eight. The dependent variables that data will be collected on are rhyme, alliteration, onset and rime, letter identification, letter sound correspondence. These variables will be assessed through quantitative test scores (Get Set for School & GOLD) but qualitative observational behavior and participation data will also be collected.

All data collection, with the exploratory group and the control group, will be done by a neutral district personal, who has been properly trained on giving the assessments being used during this research study. The experimental group and control students are in the students' classroom environment, during the typical school day. The experimental group will be students in this year's co-teacher classroom. The control group is made up of district students that are in similar age and demographics.

Get Set for School is based on developmentally appropriate practice and driven from the Learning without Tears curriculum (Olsen & Knapton, 2011). For the rhyme section on nursery rhymes and rhyming, students will be given four different sets of two words and asked if they rhyme or not. Students will then be shown four different pictures (dog, chair, cat, bear) and then asked which picture rhymes with five different words (hat, log, frog, hair, mat). For the onset and rime section of the GSS assessment, students will be given three different sets (compound (cup-cake), two syllabus (jack-et), and initial blends (s-it)) of three words each and asked to put the words together. The researcher added three more additional sections of their own and have students break the words apart. For the letter identification, students will be asked the upper and

lower case letters of the alphabet at random (based off the sheet provided by Get Set for School which as the Random letters in the same order each time). This assessment will stay the exact same all three data collection periods with data being collected on the GSS record sheet with an additional side sheet added for the teacher made assessment.

The second piece of quantitative data collection is GOLD. Teaching Strategies GOLD conducted extensive research over the 2012/2013 school year to assure that GOLD is both valid and reliable (Teaching Strategies, 2016). According to Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation (CEME) “The Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system continues to yield highly valid and reliable results” (Teaching Strategy, 2016, p. 7). The previous assessment (Get Set for School) data pieces in its completion will then be entered into the data collection piece of GOLD and students will be rated along the age color band continuum for objective 15a, 15c, 16a, and 16b. Additional observation data will be collected on the students’ attention span, behavior, class participation, and attendance during daily class activity (large or small group). Additional observation data will also be collected on the students’ participation on Word Wednesday activity time and daily participation in literacy centers. Through the research proposed, data collection will end in eight weeks due to time requirements for the researcher’s capstone project, the researcher will still plan to extend the study and data collection through the end of the school year period. Examples of data collection tools and observation charts in the appendices’.

## **Results**

### **Data Analysis**

There was minimal amount of research bias included during data collection and intervention period due to the natural party factors being the data collector and the co-teacher

who implemented alongside the researcher. However, in support to limiting bias, the researcher utilized mix method design. The research question asks, ‘does daily exposure through the use of nursery rhymes better support students’ phonological awareness skill development?’

Specifically looking at the use of Michael Heggerty curriculum model with daily frequent exposure to segmenting, blending, onset fluency, rhyming, letter naming, and sound identification. To gather information on students’ achievement and growth in these areas the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data.

The qualitative data being the observations of students’ behaviors, motivation, and attention span during daily whole group and small group activities as well as observations of students’ engagement during center time activities with language and literacy materials. The observations were documented on a data collection sheet, as well as, entered into the Teaching Strategies GOLD rating scale. The GOLD assessment is primarily observation based, where staff members take notes on different aspects of the children’s daily experiences. The teacher then reviews the notes and assigns it a value based on where the student is demonstrating proficiency along the age range expectation continuum.

The researcher used classroom-standardized assessments for quantitative data, such as, Get Set for School screener with the additional word part section. Get Set for School assessment is part of the Learning without Tears curriculum. It is in support of preparing four-year-old students for kindergarten through developmentally appropriate play based learning. The researcher used the language and literacy assessment piece to look at the areas of students’ upper and lowercase letter knowledge and sound correspondence, nursery rhyme and rhyming abilities, word parts of segmentation and onsets and blends.

Using mixed method data analysis, the researcher is able to see if the independent variable of doing daily phonemic awareness routine with nursery rhyme weekly focus made an effect on students’ different phonemic awareness skill development. The quantitative data collection through Get Set for School allows one to see if there was statistically significant growth in achievement on students’ abilities to segment, blend words, onset fluency, rhyming, letter naming, and sound identification by looking at their scores on the various assessment components. Most frequently natural growth in the areas being taught in the classroom will be seen from one data collection period to the other. The researcher is looking to see if there is greater growth than in past class data and with the control group during the eight week period.

The tables below shows the scores from the Get Set for School Screener. The first score number in each section is from week one data collection period, the second score is from week four, and the third score in each section is from the final eight week of this studies implementation.

Table 1

*Experimental Group Data Collection on Get Set for School Screener*

Student	Uppercase Letter (26 pts)	Lowercase Letter (26 pts)	Letter Sounds (26 pts)	Nursery Rhyme & Rhyming (12 pts)	Compound words and sentences (6 pts)	Syllables (7 pts)	Onset-Rime (6 pts)	% of growth from first to last data point
Am-A	24 24 25	15 16 17	0 0 1	3 3 4	0 1 2	0 3 5	0 0 0	11%
Br-N	4 9 12	4 5 6	2 5 10	4 9 12	3 4 5	3 3 7	2 3 4	31%
Ky-R	16 18 21	7 10 14	6 9 14	9 10 12	3 3 4	3 4 7	0 0 0	35%
La-A	2 8 14	0 4 6	0 0 1	0 0 1	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	18%
Lu-A	22 23 23	11 14 17	5 10 13	3 3 5	3 3 4	3 4 5	0 0 0	18%
Mo-E	6 6 11	3 6 6	2 3 7	5 7 11	2 3 4	3 4 6	1 0 0	21%
Mo-J	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0%
Pa-A	1 2 4	0 1 4	0 0 0	1 2 4	0 1 3	0 1 4	0 0 0	16%

Ph-G	11 13 17	9 9 9	0 0 1	1 5 8	3 3 3	1 2 5	0 0 0	17%
Ta-S	5 7 13	4 5 7	0 0 0	0 1 3	2 1 3	1 1 2	0 0 0	15%
Ya-M	6 9 13	4 5 7	0 0 0	0 3 6	2 2 2	0 0 2	0 0 0	17%
Am-S	26 26 26	26 26 26	20 21 24	2 2 4	1 1 3	0 2 7	0 0 0	14%
Ca-S	0 13 21	0 11 15	0 0 1	0 1 2	2 1 1	0 1 1	0 0 0	36%
Ce-D	3 5 10	4 5 7	0 0 0	0 1 3	1 1 3	0 2 5	0 0 0	18%
Cl-K	0 18 23	0 17 20	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	39%
El-C	26 25 23	13 13 12	0 0 1	1 4 6	3 3 4	1 4 7	0 0 0	8%
Em-B	0 0 1	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 1	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	2%
Ev-S	3 7 15	3 8 9	0 0 1	0 2 3	0 0 1	0 1 2	0 0 0	23%
Ha-B	24 24 26	21 21 21	13 17 20	7 8 11	3 3 3	2 3 6	0 0 0	16%
Hr-S	26 26 26	24 24 24	13 14 16	3 6 10	3 3 5	3 5 7	0 0 0	15%
Ll-C	25 25 25	19 20 22	0 2 6	9 5 7	0 1 3	0 2 6	0 0 0	15%
So-L	10 10 11	7 7 8	0 1 2	1 4 11	3 4 5	3 4 6	0 0 1	18%
Average point growth	5.45	3.77	2.59	3.4	1.1	3.0	.09	18.31%

The quantitative data from the experimental group shows that 95% of the students made some form of growth in the amount of points they gained from week one to week eight. There was not much improvement on students' skills in onset-rime, however greater growth in points when looking at syllables, nursery rhymes and rhyming, and letter identification. Student Ca-S and Cl-K showed the most improvement between the eight-week period. However, the qualitative data shows that these students were ones that at the beginning of the year were having a number of behavior issues within the classroom setting with compliance and teacher directed task. This leads the researcher to question if the students knew more on week one then they displayed, given such the increase in scores on week four and eight. Student Em-B and Mo-J, who both showed minimal to no growth receive individual specialized education and speech and





KY	1 1 3	0 1 3	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 1 3	0 0 1	0 0 0	8%
NS	2 4 5	0 3 4	0 1 2	5 5 6	0 2 3	0 0 0	0 0 0	12%
AW	4 7 11	2 4 8	0 1 4	8 9 9	0 1 3	0 1 3	0 0 0	22%
PB	26 26 26	19 19 21	10 12 16	6 8 12	3 4 5	3 4 6	3 3 4	18%
CF	0 2 4	0 1 4	0 0 0	4 6 11	0 1 3	0 1 3	0 0 0	19%
TW	21 22 24	23 23 23	16 18 21	7 9 12	2 3 3	2 2 4	0 0 1	16%
Average point growth	4.13	3.9	2.54	2.86	1.54	1.81	.54	15.95%

The quantitative data from the control group shows that 100% of the students made some form of growth in the amount of points they gained from week one to week eight. The researcher must remember the natural development of the children given the provided literacy rich environment and learning experiences for both the control and experimental group. The control group had a little more improvement with students' skills in onset-rime comparative to the experimental group. Of the control group ten of the students were meeting end of the year preschool benchmarks for letter identification on week one of screening by knowing 20+ uppercase letters and by end of week eight those same five showed they were meeting lowercase end of year expectations too. In the control group there are a seven students who showed no knowledge in compound words and sentences, syllables, and onset-rime comprehension, with two other additional students scoring with minimal points in these areas. By reviewing students' qualitative data it shows that of these nine students, four are on individualized education plans for speech and language delays, while the other five students are English Language Learners. The researcher developmentally knows that with language delays these skills will take longer time to understand, learn, and master.

Table 3

*Experimental Group Data Collection from Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment*

Student	15a	15c	16a	16b
Am-A	3 3 3	0 2 4	6 6 6	0 0 1
Br-N	3 6 8	4 4 5	2 4 5	2 3 4
Ky-R	6 7 8	3 3 4	5 5 6	3 3 4
La-A	1 1 2	0 0 0	2 4 5	0 0 1
Lu-A	3 3 4	3 3 3	6 6 6	3 4 4
Mo-E	4 5 7	3 3 4	3 4 5	2 2 3
Mo-J	1 1 1	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
Pa-A	2 2 3	0 1 4	1 1 2	0 0 0
Ph-G	2 4 6	2 3 4	5 5 5	0 0 1
Ta-S	1 1 2	1 1 2	3 4 4	0 0 0
Ya-M	1 2 3	2 2 2	4 4 5	0 0 0
Am-S	2 2 3	1 1 4	8 8 8	4 5 5
Ca-S	1 1 2	0 1 1	0 4 6	0 0 1
Ce-D	1 1 2	0 2 4	2 4 5	0 0 0
Cl-K	1 1 1	0 0 0	0 5 7	0 0 0
El-C	1 3 5	2 3 4	6 6 6	0 0 1
Em-B	1 1 1	0 0 0	0 0 1	0 0 0
Ev-S	1 1 2	0 1 2	3 4 5	0 0 1
Ha-B	4 6 7	2 3 4	7 7 7	4 4 5
Hr-S	2 4 6	3 4 5	7 7 7	4 4 4
Ll-C	4 4 6	0 1 4	6 7 7	0 2 3
So-L	1 3 7	3 3 4	5 5 5	0 1 2
Average point Growth	1.95	1.59	1.45	.82

The GOLD data is based on a continuum of skills and knowledge base. With the child having to master the previous skills prior to advancing to the next step. With this, some levels are quick to jump from one to another and others have a wider sub skill set to master before moving on.

Therefore, you can tell if students are making substantial growth when they are moving from say a level two to a level six as student Ph-G did in content standard 15a. However, student Am-S who showed the same level for content area 16a is actually meeting the top range for her age group. In appendix C, the GOLD continuum for each objective area is shown making the numbers represented by the experimental group more clear and reliable to use.

Table 4

*Control Group Data Collection from Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment*

Student	15a	15c	16a	16b
IA	7 8 8	2 3 5	8 8 8	3 3 3
AB	3 4 4	0 0 0	4 5 5	0 0 0
EB	5 6 7	1 1 2	6 7 7	2 2 3
MB	3 4 5	2 2 3	6 6 6	2 3 3
SD	7 7 8	3 3 4	7 7 8	2 2 3
HH	4 4 4	0 0 0	3 4 5	0 0 0
SK	1 1 3	0 0 0	0 0 1	0 0 0
SN	3 4 5	0 1 3	8 8 8	3 4 4
LO	3 5 6	0 1 2	5 6 6	0 1 2
JS	3 4 5	1 2 2	5 6 6	0 0 1
LS	7 8 8	2 4 5	8 8 8	3 4 4
RY	5 5 7	0 1 3	5 6 7	1 1 2
CC	2 2 4	0 0 0	6 6 6	2 3 3
GM	1 2 4	0 0 0	7 7 7	2 2 3

SS	1 2 3	0 0 0	2 5 6	0 0 1
IS	1 1 1	0 0 0	1 4 6	0 0 0
KY	1 1 1	0 1 2	1 1 2	0 0 0
NS	4 4 5	0 1 2	2 3 3	0 1 2
AW	5 6 6	2 4 3	2 4 5	1 2 3
PB	4 5 7	4 5 5	7 7 7	4 4 4
CF	4 5 7	2 3 4	0 2 3	1 1 1
TW	5 6 7	3 3 4	7 7 7	4 4 5
Average Point Growth	1.59	1.14	1.41	.77

Similar as with the experimental group, students overall have made growth in excelling on the state required standard based assessment by looking at appendix C grid. The trend of growth for each area is slightly below the average of the experimental group.

Table 5

*Experimental Group Data Collection from Classroom Observations*

Student	Attendance	Behavior	Attention Span	Class Participation/ Other information
Am-A	√	Good	Average	
Br-N	√	Good	Average	
Ky-R	√	Good	Average	
La-A	√	Problematic	Low	ELL
Lu-A	√	Good	Average	
Mo-E	√	Decent	Average	ELL
Mo-J	√	Not at age level	No joint attention	IEP
Pa-A	√	Good	Average	
Ph-G	√	Off Task	Low	

Ta-S	√	Problematic	Average	
Ya-M	√	Problematic	Average	ELL
Am-S	√	Good	Average	
Ca-S	50% time attends	Non-compliance	Low	
Ce-D	√	Good	Average	ELL
Cl-K	√	Aggression	Low	ELL
El-C	√	Good	Easily Distracted	
Em-B	√	Good	With support	IEP
Ev-S	√	Good	Average	
Ha-B	√	Problematic	Redirected	
Hr-S	√	Good	Average	
Ll-C	√	So-so	Average	
So-L	√	Good	Average	

Table 6

*Control Group Data Collection from Classroom Observations*

Student	Attendance	Behavior	Attention Span	Class Participation/ other information
IA	√	Good	Average	ELL
AB	√	Good	Redirected	IEP
EB	√	Problematic	Average	
MB	√	Good	Average	ELL
SD	√	Good	Average	ELL
HH	√	Silly	Un attentive	ELL
SK	missed 25% day	Good	Low	ELL
SN	√	Good	High	ELL
LO	√	Good	Average	

JS	√	Talkative	Average	
LS	√	Good	Average	
RY	√	Good	Average	ELL
CC	Misses once a week	Problematic	Low	IEP
GM	√	Problematic	Average	IEP
SS	√	Good	So-so	ELL
IS	√	Good	Average	ELL
KY	√	Problematic	Low	IEP
NS	√	Good	Average	ELL
AW	√	Good	Average	
PB	√	Good	Average	
CF	Frequently absent	Good	Tired/Sleep	
TW	√	Good	Focused	

The qualitative data was ongoing through the eight weeks and noted general observations taken weekly. The qualitative data was taken by the same neutral staff member who was in the control and experimental classrooms weekly.

Overall, the experimental group and the control group had very similar data results. Those students whom scored higher overall where students who came in already having good knowledge set in the field of phonological awareness skills. Each group (control and experimental) had students that made great gains and others that did not see as quick of growth. The mean score for the experimental group on week one was 26/109 points with the median score being 22 points. For the control group on week one the mean score was 33/109 points with the median score being 23 points. By week eight, the mean score was 46/109 for the experimental group with the median score being 43 and for the control group the mean score

week eight was 50/109 points with the median score being 49 points. Overall, the average point gain for the experimental group was 19.9. Whereas the control group only saw a 17.36 average point gain. This resulted in the mean percentage of growth from the first to the last data collection period to be 18.31% for the experimental group and 15.95% for the control group. There were a few outliers in the experimental group as discussed above that may have skewed the data to show increased growth rate for that class average. Data could also have been skewed due to students being randomly selected from additional classes within the district to use as the control group.

## **Discussion**

### **Summary of Major Findings**

The findings here in this study suggest that students who had daily phonological awareness lessons in brief and explicit instruction did not show statistically or educationally significant increased outcomes than those students who were not receiving this more direct literacy approach. Throughout the study, data shows that interventions put in place by the controlled classroom teacher were showing similar gains in students' improvement as the more daily routine focused implementation of the experimental group. Both the control and experimental group students were provided with a literacy rich environment with daily exposure in one way or another to phonological awareness skills. This study goes to show that students whom experience this type environment are more likely to be engaged in learning experiences and further develop their phonological awareness skills early in their educational careers. Though other studies have shown one instructional method is more appropriate than other in this study the researcher could not conclude that one way of teaching is better than other cohort's instructional strategies. Instead the researcher does show though how allowing for child-led



literacy experiences that are playful, spontaneous, hands-on, and within the child's daily routine providing those embedded literacy learning opportunities daily are allowing to show growth in children's development and help to bridge the gap of reading exposure and literacy experiences that children come into kindergarten having been exposed to.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A number of limitations in the research occurred. Within the first three weeks of the study, the researcher was able to implement the action research herself within the co-teacher's classroom. On week three, the researcher's schedule was changed due to students' needs elsewhere in her own school role. With this, the researcher provided the co-teacher the materials each day and discussed the lesson plan prior to the day. The co-teacher used the SWIVL camera system to record the lessons for the researcher to review. The co-teacher did her best with each lesson, the classroom student caseload, and the various feedback recommendations from the researcher. Another change was made around week four, when one of the associates in the classroom had to take a leave of absence. With this, the classroom received a substitute associate for the next two weeks before a new associate was hired. The substitute was not the same one each day for that two week period.

With the research happening in a blended preschool classroom, throughout the eight-week period this research took place, three student additions to the class. Two of these students carried with them significant language delays. Another had severe problem behaviors, whom was very demanding of classroom co-teacher and researcher during lesson periods where the explicit teaching and instruction was occurring. This lead to other students' attention not directed fully on the learning activity but on the commotion happening elsewhere in the classroom. With all the above listed, the researcher must also consider the natural growth and

maturity of students that took place during the study as students developmentally grow in their knowledge and understanding of skills as a natural part of attending preschool and engaging in games and activities.

### **Further Study**

The researcher would like to continue to follow the students' through the remainder of this school year and review their progress in comparison to other previous years data to determine if overall there was a more profound growth rate than what was shown in the eight week period. The researcher would also like to proceed with doing this experiment again in the following year with the control of her own classroom setting where she controlled the learning environment and proceeded with the prosed curriculum materials with higher fidelity. As a result, in future study, the researcher would like to lead a professional development within the district he/she works for to discuss the findings and potential other learning opportunity options the other preschool teachers can take back to their classroom to implement if they wish.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, the researcher examined the effectiveness of nursery rhyme daily exposure benefiting students' phonological awareness skill sets. The research had 22 students in the experimental group receiving nursery rhyme exposure daily within a routine and 22 students in the control group whom where receiving the district core curriculum of phonological awareness activities. After examining the data results over an eight-week period, the statistical analysis concluded that the incorporation of nursery rhymes does indeed improve students phonemic awareness skills but that data did not show educational significant gains in comparison to those students in the control group whom did not receive nursery rhyme exposure daily. Although previous study findings from other researchers indicate that explicit daily, instruction and

exposure to nursery rhymes improved students phonological awareness knowledge at an increased rate, this short-term study did not result in those outcomes. It is possible that the outcomes would vary if measured over a longer period of time and with less changes that occurred in the study that were causes of various limitations. Future research should consider investigating the instruction of the Michael Haggerty curriculum in its completion over a longer duration of time (one full school year), and in a more controlled and structured setting put in place for the students of the experimental group. Regardless, our results point to the need for educators to continue considering the placement of early literacy exposure activities and instruction in place within the children's time within their care to allow children to have equally as positive outcomes in their later educational experiences. As noted in the literature review, the importance of phonological awareness instruction in the early childhood developmental timeframe is key in building a student's foundational reading skills for to later become a successful reader.

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Appendix A

Get Set for School: Language and Literacy Screener Whole Class Data Collection Tool

	<b>Capital Letters (26 pts)</b>	<b>Lower Case Letters (26 pts)</b>	<b>Letter Sounds (26 pts)</b>	<b>Nursery Rhymes &amp; Rhyming (12 pts)</b>	<b>Compound words and sentences (6 pts)</b>	<b>Syllables (7 pts)</b>	<b>Onset-Rime (6 pts)</b>
Student A							
Student B							

Appendix B

Get Set for School Individual Student Data Collection Sheet

Get Set for School®

Language & Literacy: 1:1 Assessment Record

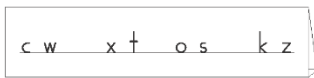
Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**1. Name Capitals**

EA RI OT NS      LUC DMP HGK      YFW BQV XJZ

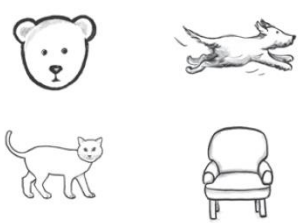
Notes \_\_\_\_\_



**2. Name Lowercase Letters**

cw xt os kz      uba yhg vjr      mde ipn fql

Notes \_\_\_\_\_



**4. Nursery Rhymes & Rhyming**

**Repeat**     One, two, tie my shoe     Jack and Jill     Humpty Dumpty

**Rhyme or not**     bear/ dog     bear/chair     chair/cat     chair/bear

**Rhyme find**     hat     frog     log     hair     mat

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Word Parts**

**Compound words**     hot + dog     back + pack     cup + cake

**Syllables**     ap + ple     car + toon     jack + et

**Onset – Rime**     /s/ + it     /r/ + un     /k/ + ar

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Word Manipulation Addition**

**Separate words in sentences**

▫ I like cake.    ▫ She can ride a bike.    ▫ His shirt is yellow and blue stripes

**Separates syllables in words**

▫ Sandwich    ▫ Computer    ▫ Ball    ▫ Turtle

**Separates onset and rime in one-syllable words**

▫ Bat    ▫ Tom    ▫ Fan

Notes \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix C

Teaching Strategies GOLD Student Profile

**Objective 15** Demonstrates phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition

**a. Notices and discriminates rhyme**

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		<p><b>Joins in rhyming songs and games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hums along and joins in random words in rhyme</li> <li>Sings with a group, "One, two, buckle my shoe..."</li> </ul>		<p><b>Fills in the missing rhyming word; generates rhyming words spontaneously</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completes the rhyme in the phrase, "The fat cat sat on the ___ (mat)."</li> <li>Chants spontaneously, "Me, fee, kee, tee, lee, bee."</li> </ul>		<p><b>Decides whether two words rhyme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Do bear and chair rhyme? What about bear and goat?"</li> <li>Matches rhyming picture cards</li> </ul>		<p><b>Generates a group of rhyming words when given a word</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says, "Bat, sat, lat," when asked, "What words rhyme with cat?"</li> </ul>		<p><b>Generates rhyming words without a prompt word; identifies rhyming words in written text; uses rhyme to decode text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes the word bat with the plastic alphabet letters and then changes the first letter to create the words cat, rat, mat; reads each one and says, "I made a lot of rhyming words."</li> <li>Identifies all the rhyming words after reading a simple story told in rhyme</li> </ul>	
	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Orange	Purple	Grey	Light Blue	Light Green	Light Yellow	Light Orange

**c. Notices and discriminates discrete units of sound**

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		<p><b>Shows awareness of separate words in sentences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joins in clapping each word while chanting, "I like ice cream."</li> <li>Jumps upon hearing a specified word in a story</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shows awareness of separate syllables in words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claps each syllable of name, <i>Tri-na</i> and <i>Chris-to-pher</i> and counts the syllables in each</li> <li>Puts together <i>pen</i> and <i>cil</i> to say <i>pencil</i></li> <li>Puts together <i>foot</i> and <i>ball</i> to say <i>football</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Verbally blends and separates onset and rime in one-syllable words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says, /c/ake, and /r/ake when the teacher says "cake" and "rake."</li> <li>Points to Mick and Jill when the teacher plays a game and asks, "Where is _ick? Where is _ill?"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Verbally blends, separates, and adds or substitutes individual sounds in simple, consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words; reads common high-frequency sight words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claps each phoneme of hat, /h/ /a/ /t/</li> <li>Says, "Hat," after hearing /h/ /a/ /t/; changes the middle sound to make /h/ /o/ /t/</li> <li>Accurately reads <i>you, here, my, are,</i> and <i>sad</i> in <i>My Friend is Sad</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Distinguishes short from long vowel sounds in one-syllable words; reads grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words; uses word families to read unknown words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While playing a "stand up, sit down" game, correctly stands for long vowel sounds in words and sits for short vowel sounds</li> <li>Recognizes <i>said, does, and were</i></li> <li>Breaks the word <i>her</i> into parts as he says, "/h/er/"; says /ch/es/s/t/ for the word <i>chest</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Reads grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words; uses word families and analogy of known sight words to read unknown words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reads words such as <i>great, eight, sound, and would</i> without pausing to sound them out</li> <li>Says, "I think this word is <i>brother</i> because it looks like <i>mother</i>."</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reads grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reads words such as <i>doesn't, young, and straight</i> without pausing to sound them out</li> <li>Recognizes <i>fountain</i> because it has a similar spelling to the known word <i>mountain</i></li> </ul>							
	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Orange	Purple	Grey	Light Blue	Light Green	Light Yellow	Light Orange	Light Purple	Light Grey	Light Light Blue	Light Light Green

**Objective 16** Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet

**a. Identifies and names letters**

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		<p><b>Recognizes and names a few letters in own name</b></p>	<p><b>Recognizes and names as many as 10 letters, especially those in own name</b></p>	<p><b>Identifies and names 11–20 upper- and 11–20 lowercase letters when presented in random order</b></p>	<p><b>Identifies and names all upper- and lowercase letters when presented in random order</b></p>				
	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Orange	Purple	Grey	Light Blue	Light Green

**b. Identifies letter-sound correspondences**

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		<p><b>Identifies the sounds of a few letters</b></p>	<p><b>Produces the correct sounds for 10–20 letters</b></p>	<p><b>Produces at least one correct sound for each letter in the alphabet</b></p>	<p><b>Produces short and long vowel sounds and most frequent sounds for each consonant</b></p>				
	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Orange	Purple	Grey	Light Blue	Light Green

Appendix D

Observational Data Collection Charts

Student	Attendance	Behavior	Attention Span	Class Participation/ other information

Appendix E

Michael Heggerty Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Scope and Sequence

**Pre-Kindergarten Phonemic Awareness Curriculum Plan**

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Letter Naming	Singing of the ABC's Use ABC cards every other day									Singing of the ABC's Use ABC cards every day						Introduce Letter Names & Sounds																			
Rhyming	Rhyme Repetition															Rhyme Recognition																			
Onset Fluency	Consonants																											Short Vowels							
Blending	Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Blending Two Phonemes						Blending Three Phonemes										
Final or Medial Sounds	Final Sound									Medial Sound									Final Sound						Mixed Skills										
Segmenting	Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Segmenting Two Phonemes						Segmenting Three Phonemes										
Adding	Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Adding Two Phonemes Together						Adding Onset to Rime										
Deleting	Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Compound Words			Syllables			Onset/Rime			Deleting Onset From Two Phoneme Words						Deleting Onset from Rime										
Substituting																Substituting Onset of Two Phoneme Words						Substituting Onset of Three Phoneme Words													
Language Awareness	Repeating sentences from nursery rhymes and separating into individual spoken words.																																		