A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND KOREA FOCUSING ON UNIVERSITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE CENTERS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study was to analyze the parental perceptions and interests of university early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea and to compare the parental perceptions between the two countries.

The subjects were preschool parents at the Child and Family Center at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, the United States, and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University, Daejeon, Korea, during the 2005-2006 school year. A total of 113 out of 180 surveys distributed were returned.

The survey consisted of nine sections to address parental perceptions of the importance of university child care program characteristics and utilized a nine point Likert scale. A *t*-test analysis was used to compare the two groups. The responses of the survey were analyzed by SPSS.

The results of this study showed the parents' perceptions of early childhood education and care centers both American and Korean parents thought that the most important aspects were 'Children's health and safety' and 'Teacher's educational competence.' Using a *t*-test, there were a number of significant differences based on nationality (American and Korean) regarding demographic characteristics, general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety, and parent communications and involvement opportunities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Through urbanization and industrialization, there has been an evolution of family systems towards nuclear families and fewer family members. Along with these changes, there has been an increase in working mothers. Because of the changes in family structure, the perceptions of childrearing have also changed. Conventionally, childrearing was a family issue in the past. With this scarcity of child care within the household, the responsibility of child care and education have shifted from the parents to early childhood education and care centers.

In the United States, the percentage of working mothers with children under 6 years old more than doubled from 30.8% in 1970 to 61.9% in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In 2001, 74% of children ages 3 to 6 participated in early childhood education and care programs (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2001). A similar rate is seen in Korea, where 73.2% of working mothers with children under 9 years old sent their children to child education and care programs in 2002 (Kim, 2005).

In discussing the importance of the early years for subsequent development, early childhood is commonly described in terms of critical periods. Intellectual development is dramatically growing before children reach age 8. Also, in these periods, children's potential capacities can develop through acquired environment and stimulation. Thus, children need opportunities to develop their potential capacities in an environment which provides appropriate stimulation for children (Bloom, 1964; Hunt, 1961; Piaget, 1952). The result of this type of research has had an affect on the perception of early childhood education. The emphasis on early child education has grown greater due to the amount of

time children spend in these settings. Over the past years, research has confirmed the importance of children's experiences in early childhood education and care (Denton, 2001). During the children's critical period, they develop cognitively, socially, and physically at an accelerated rate. And high-quality education and care programs promote children's healthy and successful growth (Children's Defense Fund, 2004).

In 1989, a former president of the United States, George H.W. Bush, and the state governors established national education goals for the year 2000. The first goal addressed early childhood education, "All children in America will start school ready to learn." Also, to meet this goal, the governors addressed the need for a high-quality child care programs, "All children will have access to high-quality appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school" (NEGP, 1999). Following the trends of early childhood and child care programs, there has been increasing interest in the quality of early childhood education and child care centers. Peisner-Feinberg et al. (1999) have tracked the influence of child care on development of children from age 3 to second grade between high-quality and poor-quality programs in the United States. Children who attended high-quality child care centers performed better on measures of both cognitive skills (math and language abilities) and social skills (interaction with peers and problem behaviors) in child care and through the time they entered the school. In addition, high-quality child care continued to positively affect children's performance at least through kindergarten and in many cases through the end of second grade. Therefore, parents need to take great consideration in selecting an early childhood education and child care center for their children.

Most parents prefer that their children participate in high-quality early childhood education and care programs (Cryer & Burchinal, 1997). There is much research to examine high-quality programs. The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI, 2000) established global guidelines to assess quality early childhood education and care through six dimensions: 1) provide high-quality environment and physical space of settings for children; 2) have sound curriculum content and pedagogy; 3) employ professionally prepared early childhood educators and caregivers; 4) respect for partnership with families and communities; 5) provide services for young children with special needs; and 6) implement accountability, supervision, and management of programs for children. Components of high-quality early childhood education and care centers can be determined by individuals. Browne-Miller (1990) found that parents considered several aspects when they decided on their children's school, such as staff warmth, a good center program, social activities, and physical activities. According to Cryer and Burchinal (1997), early childhood education and care center parents indicated that health, safety, and adult-child interactions were the most important aspects, and that school curriculum aspects were also very important.

In the United States, early childhood education advocates are concerned about promoting universal guidelines based upon professional expertise to ensure high quality and feel that parents will select this care if given appropriate education concerning its value to their young children. A family-oriented perspective advocates obtaining descriptive accounts of parents' goals, values, and practices and creating child care choices that reflect these considerations (Holloway & Fuller, 1999).

Although there are a substantial number of studies of young children that involve multiple types of early childhood education and care centers, there are fewer studies devoted to the parents of these children. Early childhood education emphasizing this importance accentuates the connection between child care programs and families as well as in parental involvement and parental education. However, current research is lacking in the topic of parental perceptions and satisfactions about their children's early childhood education and care centers. In particular, there is not sufficient information about the parental selection basis of an early childhood education and care program in that parents are the decision makers for their children who are the actual recipients of early childhood education. Therefore, this study focused on parental perceptions about university early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea regarding components of such programs. Furthermore, this study also analyzed the similarities and differences about parental perceptions of university early childhood education and care centers by nationality between the United States and Korea.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to compare parental perceptions about university early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea. The subjects in the study were parents of children (age 3-5 year olds) who enrolled in the preschool program at the Child and Family Study Center preschool program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the United States, as compared to those of parents of the Paichai University Kindergarten children at Paichai University in Daejeon, Korea. Data collection was done via an attitude questionnaire given during the 2005-2006 school year.

This study was conducted during January 2006 in Korea and March 2006 in the United States. The research addresses the various areas of center characteristics regarding demographic characteristics, general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety, and parent communications and involvement opportunities developed by the investigator.

Research Objectives

The objective of this research study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Describe the perceptions of parents toward the university early childhood education and care center characteristics in the United States and Korea.

2. Analyze parental perceptions and interests regarding general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety, and parent communications and involvement opportunities.

3. Compare parental perceptions and interests between the United States and Korea toward university early childhood education and care programs.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to compare and contrast the differences in the parents' perception of university child care centers based on nationality (United States and Korea):

1. Were there differences in parents' demographic characteristics between the United States and Korea?

2. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the general evaluations of the child care center between the United States and Korea?

3. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the center characteristics between the United States and Korea?

4. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the curriculums between the United States and Korea?

5. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the teacher characteristics between the United States and Korea?

6. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the director characteristics between the United States and Korea?

7. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the school events between the United States and Korea?

8. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the health and safety at the child care center between the United States and Korea?

9. Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the parent communications and involvement opportunities between the United States and Korea?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to clarify the context intended for the purpose of this study:

Child Care Center: A place that provides care and protection on a regular basis for children outside their home, for children ages birth through before they enroll in kindergarten in the United States, and for children from birth through 6 years of age when they begin elementary school in Korea.

Compulsory Education: Education mandated by law.

Curriculum: Planning for children's learning experiences at school which is developed appropriately to extend children's interest and meet their needs.

Director: The person employed in a child care center who serves as the administrator of the program who typically is responsible for staff maintenance and the budget.

Early Childhood Education: "Services for children from birth through age eight in part-day and full-day group programs in centers, homes, and institutions; kindergartens and primary schools; and recreational programs" (NAEYC, 1982, p. 1).

Inclusion Education: The practice of educating all or most children in the same classroom, including children with special needs, such as physical, mental, and developmental disabilities.

Kindergarten: Both half-day and full day programs serving children age 5, or the year before primary school classes begin in the United States, and children age 3 to before they enroll in elementary school (grades 1-6) in Korea. The program serves the twofold purpose of child care and educational preparation.

Parental Involvement: The partnership between school and home for the purpose of maximizing educational goals of the children. Parental involvement may physically occur at school, at home, or in both settings.

Parental Perception: The parental attitudes about the early childhood education and child care center characteristics.

Preschool: A nonprofit or for profit organization licensed by the state to serve children ages 3 to 5 years old in the United States. It consists of child care provided in more formal types of group care which contains an educational component.

Private Kindergarten/Child Care Center: This is run and supported by private individuals or a corporation, rather than by a government or public agency.

Public Kindergarten/Child Care Center: Public school is supported by public funds, such as a government or public agency. In the United States, public school provides free education for children of a community or district.

School Events: This part of an early childhood education curriculum is to develop substantial education contents with their own special purpose, such as field trips, holiday celebrations, and recitals.

Teacher: A person who is responsible for curriculum planning, providing supervision, and implementation of activities for a group of children.

Teacher/Child Ratio: A fraction which indicates the number of children present in a classroom in relation to the number of teaching staff present.

University Kindergarten/Child Care Center: An early childhood education and care center located on a university campus which cares for children from birth (6 weeks) through 6 years of age.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher has identified several limitations in this study. They are as follows:

1. Selections of participants for this study were limited to the parents whose children currently attend the Child and Family Study Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout in the United States and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University in Korea. This study cannot be considered representative of all university early childhood education and care centers or of all early childhood education and care centers in these two countries.

2. The results of this study were able to be generalized only to that particular population. More females (92.9%) than males (7.1%) responded. Although almost half of the parents were male, few of them participated.

3. The parental perceptions survey was specifically designed for this study by the investigator and was not a standard instrument. There are no validity or reliability measures.

This chapter has provided an introduction to this study. The following four chapters further describe how this study was conducted. In Chapter II, a review of the literature was conducted. Chapter III presents the methodology. The results and discussion are presented in Chapter IV. A summary, conclusion, and recommendations for future research are given in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a synopsis of early childhood education in the United States and Korea. Also, this review of the literature provides an overview of the United States and Korea's early childhood education, including child care center characteristics, and can be used to compare characteristics of each country's early childhood education programs and child care centers. This review includes the following: 1) early childhood education history, 2) early childhood education and care center characteristics, 3) curriculums, 4) staff characteristics, 5) school events, 6) health and safety, 7) parent communications and involvement, and 8) parent perception of early childhood education and care center.

Early Childhood Education History

The history of early childhood education in the United States begins with two different programs which are day nurseries (child care centers) and nursery schools (kindergartens). The day nurseries were established in the 1830s under voluntary auspices and designed to care for the 'unfortunate' children of working mothers. The first day nursery was established in 1838 in Boston for seamen's wives and widows. Nursery schools were first established in the 1930s developing from the early education programs in Massachusetts, and the later 'kindergarten' programs. The first kindergarten program in the United States was based on the work of Froebel and began in 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin. Margaretha Shurz established this German-speaking kindergarten. In 1860, Elizabeth Peabody established the first English-speaking kindergarten (Berger, 2004; Kamerman & Gatenio, 2003).

Day nurseries expanded subsequently in response to pressures created by rapid industrialization and massive immigration. These programs were custodial in nature, focusing primarily on basic care and supervision of the children. However, kindergartens and nursery schools expanded slowly during the 19th century and experienced an increase only during the 1920s for middle-class children. Both program types increased dramatically until the mid-1960s and early 1970s. In 1965, Head Start was established as part of the war on poverty for disadvantaged children. In 1971, Congress enacted the first national child care legislation. Although some movement transpired since the late 1990s toward integrating education and care, categorical funding, coupled with diverse societal values, continues to support the differences (Berger, 2004; Kamerman & Gatenio, 2003).

The history of early childhood education in Korea also begins with two different programs: early childhood education (kindergarten) and child care. Early childhood education in Korea was developed based on kindergarten which currently involves children from 3 year olds to before they enroll in elementary school. The first kindergarten program in Korea was established for Japanese children in 1897. In 1913, the first kindergarten was established for Korean children by Brown Lee, an American missionary, as a kindergarten affiliated to a university. Teacher training college was also established at the same time. In 1922, the first kindergarten provisions were enacted. In 1969, The Ministry of Education enacted the 'National Kindergarten Curriculum,' and in subsequent years, it regularly reedits a curriculum every 5 years, presently applying 'The 6th National Kindergarten Curriculum' (MOE, 1998a). In 1981, the Korea Private Kindergarten Association was established to strengthen the relationship between kindergartens and to research kindergarten operating and management for contributing

development of early childhood education. In 1996, the association integrated into the Korea Kindergarten Association (Na, Yu, & Moon, 2003).

In 1921, the first child care center was established by a Christian association. For the fifty ensuing years, the purpose of a child care program was to care for low income families, called a 'day nursery.' In 1991, child care developed to become child care and education under the Korea Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW, 2000). Child care centers were dramatically extended during 1995 to 1997 due to the need for child care center services for more than twelve hours per day where children are enrolled from birth to 6 years of age when they begin elementary school. In 1997, the Korea MOHW enacted infant and early child care laws and legislation of gratis education for one year right before children enroll in elementary school (MOHW, 2000). Also, early childhood education scholars and advocates tried to integrate these program types. However, only 59% of 3-5 year old Korean children are involved in a kindergarten or child care center. The other children are involved in other private centers, such as a seminary and educational institute. In conclusion, Korea early childhood education and care were developed based on kindergarten and child care centers. However, other types of educational institutes enter upon a new phase (Na, Yu, & Moon, 2003).

Early childhood education was developed by two different systems, child education and child care, in both the United States and Korea. However, there are differences about policies, such as school system, compulsory education, and gratis education.

Early Childhood Education and Care Center Characteristics

In the United States, early childhood education and care policies cover children from birth through state-designed compulsory school age. Compulsory school age varies, depending on the individual state, and ranges from age 5 to 8 years. Elementary school is compulsory for all children, but kindergarten (the year before elementary school begins) enrollment is mandated (Education Commission of the States, 2005). In Korea, early childhood education and care policies cover children from birth through compulsory school age which is 7 years old for elementary school. The ending age of compulsory education is 17 years old in the United States and 14 years old in Korea (OECD, 2005e). In the United States, the ending age of compulsory education is older than in Korea.

The administration and finance system of early childhood education differs between these two countries. In the United States, each state establishes a state board of education which creates education policies and involves budgets and a state department of education, such as the executive organ. Under that, a local board of education or local school board is consisted (Kim, Park, Sin, & Jung, 1999). In the United States, school finance for kindergarten through the 12th grade comes primarily from the state government, local school districts, and the federal government. In aggregate, the states provide 48% of all revenue, school districts provide 45%, and the federal government provides 7% of all revenue (ECS, 2004). The Korean government supports finance for elementary through middle school, which is equivalent to 9th grade in the United States. In 1999, the Korean government enforced gratuitous education for 5 year old children. However, less than 20% of children in low income families have benefited by the government (Na, Yu, & Moon, 2003).

The total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure in 2002 was 15.2% in the United States and 17.0% in Korea, and public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 5.6% in the United States and 4.2% in Korea (OECD, 2005d). Also, OECD (2005a) reported the distribution of expenditures on education institutions compared to the number of students enrolled at preprimary education for children 3 years and older. In the United States, 6.3% of all expenditures on educational institutions were allocated to preprimary education, whereas 8.6% of children are enrolled at this level of education. In Korea, 2.2% of all expenditures on educational institutions were allocated to preprimary education, whereas 4.8% of children are enrolled at this level of education. Korean expenditure on education of total public expenditures was higher than the United States. Nevertheless, expenditure on preprimary education was lower than the United States, which indicates that the Korean government shows less concern about early childhood education and care than the United States.

The United States expenditures on educational institutions as a percentage of GPD from public and private sources by source of fund were 5.3% from public funds and 1.9% from private funds, for a total of 7.2%. This was 4.2% from public funds and 2.9% from private funds, for a total of 7.1% in Korea. Although total funds rates were similar, the ratio of public funds and private funds differed between the two countries. And the expenditure on preprimary education for children 3 years and older as a percentage of GDP was 0.5% for early childhood education and care center funds compared to the total funds of 7.2% in the United States and 0.2% for early childhood education and care center funds of 7.1% total funds in Korea (OECD, 2005b). The United States spent more

money than Korea did for preprimary education. Moreover, relative proportions of public and private expenditures on educational institutions at preprimary education for children 3 years and older in 2002 were from 77.6% public funds and 22.4% from private funds in the United States and public funds were 31.8% and private funds were 68.2% in Korea. Most of the private funds were household expenditures (OECD, 2005c). These results indicated a lack of Korean public resources' support. Therefore, private schools are widespread in Korea. Until the 1980s, more than 90% of kindergartens were private due to a lack of government support. In 2005, the Korean kindergartens consisted of 53.5% public kindergartens, while 46.7% were private kindergartens. Although the numbers of public kindergartens were greater than private, 77.6% of teachers and 77.1% of children were enrolled in private kindergartens (Kang et al., 2005; MOE & KEDI, 2005). These results indicated that Korean parents had a heavy burden for their children's educational expenditure, which is one of the highest causes of the low birth rate in Korea (1.16 children in 2004), as compared to the United States (2.04 children in 2003) (Presidential Committee on Aging Society and Population Policy [PRECAP], Ministry of Health & Welfare [MOHW], & Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs [KIHASA], 2005).

Moreover, the United States had more children enrolled in early childhood education and care centers than Korean children. In 2003, over 90% of the population was enrolled in public and private institutions in both countries. The students' ages ranged from 6-16 year olds in the United States and 6-17 year old students in Korea. However, the enrollment rates for Korean children ages 3 to 4 years old were lower than that of United States children. Over half (51.5%) of 3 to 4 year old children were enrolled

in public and private institutions in the United States and only 19.9% of children ages 3-4 years old were enrolled in Korea (OECD, 2005e).

Another difference between the United States and Korea is in the area of special education, including inclusion education for children with special needs. The welfare program for children with special needs is highly developed in the United States. The United States' special education program also promotes inclusion for children with special needs. The definition of inclusion is the practice of educating all or most children in the same classroom, including children with special needs, such as physical, mental, and developmental disabilities (McBrien & Brandt, 1997). In the United States, in 1975, the enactment of PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, mandated that all states provide a free and appropriate public school education for all children with special needs. In 1986, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act extended the protections and services of special education to include all eligible children ages 3 to 5 years by the enactment of PL 99-457. In 1990, this law changed its name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), PL 101-476, and was expanded to require services for children under age 3. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97) provided several components of the law in 1997 (Cavallaro & Haney, 1999; Osgood, 2005; USDOE & NCES, 2006).

In 2001, 5.2 % of the total of the United States population of 3 through 5 year old children received IDEA Part B program, PL 105-17, which provides funds to states to assist them in providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services. In 2001-2002, 1.3 % of public school children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in early education programs received

services through IDEA. In 2000, 51% of preschoolers received special education services in either early childhood settings or part-time early childhood/part-time special education settings, 31.1% of preschoolers were served in early childhood special education settings, and 14.6% of preschoolers were served in other settings, including residential facilities, separate schools, itinerant services outside of the home, or reverse mainstream settings, which is an educational program designed primarily for children with special needs that includes 50% or more children without special needs. Only 3% of preschoolers were served primarily at home (USDOE, 2003; USDOE & NCES, 2006).

In Korea, the special education program is still developing. In 2005, 40% of the total populations of Korean students with special needs were served special education in special education institutions, 51% of students with special needs were served special education in special education classes in general institutions, and only 9% of students with special needs received inclusion education in general classes (MOE, 2005). Inclusion education was started in 1994 through the Special Education Act.

The Korean special education programs need to be supported by the government with funds, teaching staff, facilities, and an educational environment. In 2005, 37.3% of the total Korean special education institutions were public and 62.7% were private (MOE, 2005). Kim (2005) reported the percentage of funds for early childhood special education in Korea as follows: 34.3% of public early childhood special education institutions funds supported from government; 29.4% of welfare organizations early childhood special education institutions funds limited provided from government; and 36.3% of private early childhood special education institutions, including clinic center funds, served from households. Specifically, the Korean early childhood special education is not sufficiently

supported. In 2005, 19.6% of the total population of educational institutions had special education classes, of these only 1.2% of special education institutions served special education for early childhood. And 5% of Korean children with special needs were in an early childhood education program (MOE, 2005). Recently, the Korea Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE, 2006) presented the planning administration of special education. The government will expand additional special education programs for preschoolers and establish classrooms for 3 year old children with special needs in a special education institution and establish at least one classroom in each district. The Korean special education program will promote inclusion study for children with special needs to enroll in general classrooms and support with funds. In 2005, on average of 4.2 children were in one classroom in a special early childhood education center. The government will reduce the number of children to an average of 4 children per classroom in 2007. However, Korean inclusion education for children is still more like a mainstream education, although government enactment of special education intends inclusion education (Jung & Kim, 2005).

Early Childhood Education and Care Center Curriculums

Every early childhood education program has a certain curriculum. Curriculum is a conjecture concept. Therefore, the definition of curriculum can be interpreted in various ways and depends on what emphasis is placed on or who determines the curriculum. Many scholars have different definitions of curriculum based on their philosophies or points of view.

The common definition of curriculum is all the learning experiences for which the school takes responsibility. Traditional curriculum focuses on subject matter and implies

that what is worth knowing exists outside the child. However, a constructivist curriculum focuses on sense making and emphasizes that children are actively engaged in the process of deciding their own learning objectives (Branscombe et al., 2000). The curriculum reflects each element of the early childhood program, such as children's activities, teaching methods, and the indoor and outdoor physical environment. A good early childhood curriculum is based on how children develop and learn and consists of a wide range of concepts, experiences, and materials designed based upon the children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs (Herr, 2004).

In 1989, a former president of the United States, George H.W. Bush, and the state governors established six 'National Education Goals' which were later expanded to eight by Congress. These goals were to be achieved by the year 2000. Goal 1 relates directly to early childhood education: All children in America will start school ready to learn. The objectives for this goal are: 1) All children will have access to high-quality appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school; 2) Every parent in the United States will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping their child learn, and parents will have access to the training and support parents need; and 3) Children will receive the nutrition, physical activity experiences, and healthcare needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and to maintain the mental alertness necessary to be prepared to learn (NEGP, 1999, p. v). Subsequent to the governors' established educational goals, the curriculums and evaluation standards were established by American professional education organizations and associations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the National Research Council (NCR), the National Academy of Science (NAS), the National Council of Teachers of English

(NCTE), the National Association for Music Education (MENC), the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). These standards serve to bring clarity to the curriculum content, raise expectations for achievement of all children, and provide a basis for accountability for public education (Kendall & Marzano, 2004; Seefeldt, 2005).

In 1986, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) developed curriculum standards, Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), which dramatically effect early childhood education and care programs in the United States (Williams, 1999). The definition of curriculum through the NAEYC is an organized framework that delineates the content that children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve the identified curricular goals, what teachers do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur. The early childhood profession defines curriculum in its broadest sense, encompassing prevailing theories, approaches, and models (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 10).

In 2005, the NAEYC presented the standards and accreditation criteria for early childhood programs. The accredited program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: 'Social-Emotional Development,' 'Physical Development,' 'Language Development,' and 'Cognitive Development' which includes the following subject matter areas: 'Early Literacy,' 'Early Mathematics,' 'Science,' 'Technology,' 'Creative Expression and Appreciation for Arts,' 'Health and Safety,' and 'Social Studies.' The curriculum rationale draws on research and assists teachers in identifying important concepts, skills, and effective methods for fostering children's learning and development.

When informed by teachers' knowledge of individual children, a well-articulated curriculum guides teachers so they can provide children with the experiences that foster growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. Curriculum also helps ensure the teacher is intentional in planning a daily schedule that maximizes children's learning through effective use of time, materials used for play, self-initiated learning, and creative expression. It offers opportunities for children to learn individually and in groups, according to their developmental needs and interests (NAEYC, 2005, p. 9).

Implementing a curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, and comprehensive, likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children, is the aim. The indicators of curriculum effectiveness are the following:

1. Children are active and engaged. Children need to be cognitively, physically, socially, and artistically active.
2. Goals are clear and shared by all. Curriculum goals are clearly defined, shared, and understood by all "stakeholders," such as program administrators, teachers, and families.
3. Curriculum is evidence-based. The curriculum is based on evidence that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for the children who will experience the curriculum.
4. Valued content is learned though investigation, play, and focused, intentional teaching. Children learn by exploring, thinking about, and inquiring about all sorts of phenomena.

5. Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences. The content and implementation of the curriculum builds on children's prior individual, age-related, and cultural learning, is inclusive of children with disabilities, and is supportive of background knowledge gained at home and in the community.
6. Curriculum is comprehensive. The curriculum encompasses critical areas of development, including children's physical well-being and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language development; and cognition and general knowledge; and subject matter areas.
7. Professional standards validate the curriculum's subject-matter content. When subject-specific curricula are adopted, they meet the standards of relevant professional organizations.
8. The curriculum is likely to benefit children. Research and other evidence indicates that the curriculum, if implemented as intended, will likely have beneficial effects.

(NAEYC, 2003, p. 7)

The Ministry of Education of Korea enacted the 'National Kindergarten Curriculum,' and in subsequent years, regularly reedits a curriculum every 5 years since 1969. Currently, 'The 6th National Kindergarten Curriculum' is enforced in early childhood education, beginning in the year 2000, Notification No. 1998-10 of the Ministry of Education, June 30, 1998. The curriculum established the following basic directions: 1) diversity education, 2) child-centered-education, 3) working together

among teaching staff, children, and parents, 4) to focus on curriculum-centered-education, and 5) to manage and maintain quality of education (MOE, 1998a, 1999).

The curriculum provides a standard national framework within which all kindergartens should work to accomplish their educational aims, Education Legislation 146. The aim which this curriculum pursues is to cultivate the basic capability in young children which is required to be a democratic citizen. The curriculum has two levels and can be adapted to the different developmental stages of young children. The curriculum consists of five integrated areas: 'Physical Health Daily Life,' 'Social Relationship Daily Life,' 'Expression Daily Life,' 'Language Daily Life,' and 'Inquiry in Daily Life' (MOE, 1998b).

The Korean 'National Kindergarten Curriculum' focuses on developing basic abilities and attitudes in daily life for the whole development of the child. The objectives of the curriculum are as follows: 1) Children have experiences to develop physical and mental health wholesomely, 2) Children cultivate basic life habits and have attitudes to live together with others, 3) Children have experiences to express thinking and feeling creatively, 4) Children have experiences to use language soundly, and 5) Children have deliberate attitudes to solve the daily life problems by oneself (MOE, 1998b).

The Korean 'National Kindergarten Curriculum' contains five integrated areas which are as follows:

1. 'Physical Health in Daily Life' is a curriculum area designed to help children develop good harmony of body and spirit by exercising physical fitness for daily living and establishing healthy and safe habits through various physical activities.

2. 'Social Relationships in Daily Life' is characterized as the area in which children are given opportunities to learn social practice, to know how to live in harmony with others by regulating their own thoughts and behaviors, to cultivate the personal qualities of a citizen in a democratic society, and the basic capability to cope reasonably with a changing society.
3. 'Expression in Daily Life' is the component that helps young children to foster curiosity of arts, expressive ability, emotional comfort, and aesthetical appreciation, exploring and appreciating the elements of arts, of nature, and expressing their thoughts and feelings spontaneously and creatively through various activities.
4. 'Language in Daily Life' has the goals of helping young children to improve their ability to use language and to enjoy language activities.
5. 'Inquiry in Daily Life' is designed to help children acquire the basic abilities and attitudes necessary to investigate natural phenomena in their environment, exploiting their interest and natural curiosity.

(MOE, 1998b; see also Korea Early Childhood Education Association Curriculum Revision Research Commission, 1997, p. 195-199)

In Korea, specialty activities, such as art, music, and physical education, besides regular curriculum activities are widespread in private kindergarten. More than 88.4% of private kindergartens practice special activities. The most frequent activity was English (64.3%) as a foreign language, art (50.9%), physical education (48.1%), playing musical instruments (39.2%), paper work (22.5%), computer (18.7%), science (17.65%), practice book for learning (15.9%), story telling (12.7%), and swimming (9.1%) (Lee, Jang, Jung,

& Hong, 2001). Also, 74.6% of child care centers practice specialty activities and the most frequent activity was English (58.4%) (Seo, Lim, & Park, 2002). These specialty activities reflect parental concerns about their children's learning. This result shows that Korean parents are strongly concerned about early childhood English education.

Early Childhood Education and Care Center Staff Characteristics

Various terms are used to classify the teaching staffs that are directly in charge of a group of children in child care, preschool, and kindergarten programs. Teaching staffs are commonly classified by a position of varying responsibility, such as the terms teacher, lead teacher, master teacher, assistant teacher, teacher aide, caregiver, child care provider, and floater (NAEYC, 2005). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1996) provided the Occupational Employment Survey (OES) Report. There were two job classifications for teaching staff, 'child care worker' and 'preschool teacher.' 'Child care worker' is a classification of those who dress, bathe, feed, and supervise play, a description that would fit the role of assistant teacher. 'Preschool teacher' is classified among professional occupations and is defined as the person who instructs children in a preschool program or child care center.

The NAEYC Accreditation Standards (2005) defined teaching staff in an early childhood education and care program as two titles: 'teacher' and 'assistant teacher' or 'teacher aides.' 'Teachers' are defined as those adults with primary responsibility for a group of children. 'Assistant teachers' or 'teacher aides' are identified as adults who work under the direct supervision of a teacher. And the definition of the program administrator is the individual responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating a child care, preschool, or kindergarten program. The role of the administrator covers both

leadership and management functions. Leadership functions relate to the broad plan of helping an organization clarify and affirm values, set goals, articulate a vision, and chart a course of action to achieve that vision. Functions of the program administrator include pedagogy, organizational development and systems, human resources, collaboration, and advocacy. Na, Yu, and Moon (2003) also defined the role of teaching staff in an early childhood education program as 'administrator,' 'assistant administrator,' and 'teacher.' 'Administrator,' referred to as principal or director, takes charge of whole organization management, such as organization operating and guiding and supervising of teaching staffs and other organization staffs, such as a nutritionist, a cook, and a school bus driver. 'Administrator' also needs to educate children. In Korea, many programs have an 'assistant administrator,' referred to as vice-principal or vice-director. 'Assistant administrator' manages organization operating, children educating, assists the administrator, and substitutes for the administrator during the administrator's absence. The role of the 'teacher' is educating the children.

Children spend much time with teachers in an early childhood education and care program. The role of the teacher is significant to young children. Particularly, the relationship between the teacher and children is essential. Teachers need to use developmentally and individually appropriate strategies that take into consideration the children's diverse needs, interests, styles, and abilities. Research has suggested that teacher-child relationships play an important role in influencing children's social and emotional development (Ostrosky & Jung, 2003). Vaden-Kiernan and McManus (2005) surveyed parents of kindergarteners and first graders about whether they agreed or disagreed that most students and teachers in their school exhibited mutual respect for one

another in the United States during the 2002-2003 school year. Over half of the parents (53%) 'strongly agreed' with this statement and 43% of the parents 'agreed.'

The ratio of child to teacher is an essential component in early childhood education and care. In 2005, the NAEYC recommended the maximum ratio of children to teacher; this includes teachers, assistant teachers, or teacher aides that the NAEYC uses in its accreditation program. The recommendation of child-teacher ratios are as follows: 2.5 year olds to 3 year olds (1:6~1:9), 4 year olds (1:8~1:10), 5 year olds (1:8~1:10), and kindergarten ages (1:10~1:12) (NAEYC, 2005). Early childhood education and care programs must maintain child-staff ratios during all hours of operation, including transport and naptimes (AAP, APHA, NRC, & MCHB, 2002). The Korean regulation of the ratio of children to teacher in kindergarten depends upon the superintendent of education in each city or province. Seoul, the capitol city of Korea, has set the ratios of children to teacher as follows: 3 year old group is 1:20; 4 and 5 year old group is 1:30; and mixed group, 3, 4, and 5 year olds group, is 1:25. And ratios of children to teacher in child care programs are as follows: younger than 2 year olds group is 1:5; 2 year olds group is 1:7; 3 year olds and older group is 1:20 (Na et al., 2003). The United States recommendation of class sizes is smaller than the Korean regulation of class sizes.

In 2003, the OECD (2005f) reported that the ratio of students to teaching staff in educational institutions and care among OECD countries based on preprimary education, ranged from ages 3 to older. The ratio of children to one teacher was 15.5 children per one teacher in the United States, and 21 children per one teacher in Korea. The Korean public kindergarten teachers' perceptions about appropriate children group size in one classroom were as follows: 3 year olds group was 11.4 children, 4 year olds group was

18.4 children, and 5 year olds group was 22.8 children (Hangil Research Institute, 2001). And the Korean child care center principals' perceptions of child to teacher ratio were as follows: 3 year olds group was 12.3 children, 4 year olds group was 16 children, and 5 year olds group was 19.1 children (Seo, Lim, & Park, 2002). The teachers' and principals' perceptions of the ratio of children to teacher differ from government or each school district's regulation. Early childhood educators prefer a smaller sized class. However, some studies suggested that investment in teacher's teaching methods and improving teacher's quality was more useful, rather than reduction of class size, based on cost-effectiveness analysis (Harris, 2002; Harris & Plank, 2000).

In the United States, there is not a single system for setting qualifications of early childhood workers due to there not being a single system for delivering early childhood education and care to children. Namely, there are no requirements for those who teach American young children. As a substitute, there were three major systems, Head Start, the Purchase-of-Service, the public school system, and a few smaller systems. Each state writes its own licensing qualifications and teacher credentials. At a minimum, teachers must hold a baccalaureate degree to teach in a public elementary school, including kindergarten, but potentially, anyone can be hired to teach in private early childhood education and care centers. Some college or university programs may require a bachelor's or a master's degree. The NAEYC developed a recommended civil service test for licensors (Morgan, 2003a, 2003b; Seefeldt, 2005).

In 2005, the NAEYC Accreditation committee developed the 'NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria.' Standard 6 presented a teacher's standard which requires that the program employs and supports a teaching staff

that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests (NAEYC, 2005, p. 11). The rationale for this teacher standard is that children benefit most when their teachers have high levels of formal education and specialized early childhood professional preparation. Teachers who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create more high-quality learning environments. Opportunities for teaching staff to receive supportive supervision and to participate in ongoing professional development ensure that their knowledge and skills reflect the profession's ever changing knowledge base (NAEYC, 2005, p. 11).

The Korean teacher certifications for early childhood education and care centers are divided into two programs, kindergarten and child care. The kindergarten teacher certification is granted by the Minister of Education and child care teacher certification is approved by the Minister of Health and Welfare. The qualified educational degrees are a 2-year college diploma or higher for kindergarten teachers and a high school degree or higher for child care center teachers. The national appointment examination is required to enter public school teaching (Na et al., 2003). In 2002, in Korea, 99.8% of kindergarten teachers held a college diploma or higher. From this group, 70.1% graduated from 2-year colleges and 29.7% graduated from 4-year colleges. Although 65.7% of public kindergarten teachers held 4-year college degrees, 80.6% of private teachers held 2-year college degrees. Private school principals prefer teachers who graduated from 2-year colleges due to their lower wages, compared to teachers who had a bachelor's degree

(MOE & KEDI, 2002). Yang (2000) reported kindergarten parents preferred teachers with a higher educational degree. However, parents of child care centers and elementary aged students did not have as strict a teacher educational background preference.

In 2002, more than half percent of Korean kindergarten teachers had less than 5 years teaching experience (64.5%), 16.4% of teachers had 5-10 years teaching experience, and 19% of teachers had more than 10 years teaching experience. Private kindergarten principals preferred teachers who had less than 5 years teaching experience to reduce their operating fund expenditures. In Korea, 79.3% of private kindergarten teachers had less than 5 years teaching experience, 18% of teachers had 5-10 years teaching experience, and only 2.7% of teachers had more than 10 years teaching experience. However, 75.5% of public kindergarten teachers had more than 10 years teaching experience (MOE & KEDI, 2002).

The OECD (2005g) reported annual statutory teachers' salaries in public institutions in 2003. Ratio of salary after 15 years of experience to GDP per capita was 1.17% in the United States and 2.42% in Korea. Korean teacher salaries to GDP were higher than those of the United States teachers. In the United States, teachers who worked in the public school system in grades K-12 received better pay than teachers in Head Start or the Purchase-of-Service early childhood education and care system, qualified by college degrees (Morgan, 2003b). The Korean teacher's actual condition is also similar to that of the United States. Korean teachers' salaries in private institutes at early childhood education and care centers depend on center policies, but are generally lower than public school teachers' salaries. Moreover, the percentage of private school teachers in early childhood education centers was 77.6% in Korea (MOE & KEDI, 2005).

In 2003, the OECD reported the percentage of teachers in public and private institutions by age group. The ages of primary education teachers in the United States were: 30 years or younger (18.3%), 30-39 years (22.2%), 40-49 years (30.3%), 50-59 years (25.7%), and 60 or older (3.5%). The Korean teachers were 30 years or younger (27.1%), 30-39 years (29.2%), 40-49 years (24.5%), 50-59 years (18.0%), and 60 or older (1.2%). The United States teachers were older than Korean teachers in primary education (OECD, 2005h). And the OECD (2005h) reported the percentage of females among teaching staff in public and private institutions in preprimary institutes in 2003 were 90.9% in the United States and 99.4% in Korea. In 2005, the percentage of female teachers was 98.3% in Korea (MOE & KEDI, 2005). Most early childhood education and care teachers are female in both countries, even though most programs would prefer a more gender-mixed staff (Morgan, 2003b).

Early Childhood Education and Care Center School Events

Each early childhood education and care center has its own school calendar for the year. There are various big and small events in their school calendar by program characteristics. Early childhood education and care programs need elaborate planning to pursue whole child education. The whole child approach means providing a balanced curriculum, linking health needs with learning expectations, and ensuring fair and comprehensive assessments (Laitsch, Lewallen, & McCloskey, 2005). Occasionally, children need special programs that differ from the daily program routines. These special programs, namely, 'events,' provide diverse experiences which cannot be gained from daily life. Therefore, 'events' are an inseparable element for the development of young children (Lee, 2000).

Lee and Song (1998) defined 'events' in early childhood education and care. 'Events' are one portion of the kindergarten curriculum to develop substantial educational contents with their own special purpose of planning. The most common type of events are: field trips to institutions or governing bodies, such as fire stations and post offices; outdoor study for observation and investigation, such as excursions, visiting exhibitions, or puppet performances; group meetings, such as a school sports day or a festival; showing center program events, such as workshops and parent observations; and presentations of children's works, such as exhibitions or recitals. Oh and Kim (1999) classified school events by characteristics of the event:

1. Child-centered events: birthday celebration, school sports day, school excursion, recital, exhibition, field trips, and camp.
2. Collective events: entrance ceremony, graduation ceremony.
3. Societal events: Children's Day, Parent's Day, Teacher's Day, national holiday.
4. Parental events: visiting day, parental association meeting, parent lecture meeting, workshop, panel discussion.
5. Health and safety events: seasonal health examination, physical examination.
6. Religious events: Easter Day, Christmas Day, Thanksgiving Day, Buddha's Birthday.

Most early childhood education and care program events are scheduled based on the previous year's school calendar. Commonly center planned events consists of the content of the events, the day and time, and method of events focused on a season, a national holiday, an anniversary, a theme, etc...When teachers plan performance events,

they need to be concerned with these aspects: 1) every child needs to be collaborative, 2) planning the events in due consideration of children's opinions, such as a place for the performance, contents, select position, and planning of a stage, 3) focusing on an interesting and creative process, rather than on an excellent performance, 4) preventing obstruction of other activities, and 5) awarding a prize as a group or award to every child by each part (Lee & Song, 1998).

Most early childhood education and care centers lay out a schedule for field trips for children. The 'NAEYC Accreditation Criteria for Curriculum Standards' indicated field trips in areas of language development for children: Children have varied opportunities to develop vocabulary through conversations, experiences, field trips, and books (NAEYC, 2005). 'The 6th National Kindergarten Curriculum' also presented the importance of field trips in methodology of teaching and learning: Various teaching methodologies, such as discussions, observations, experiments, investigations, and field trips are applied for learning activities for children (MOE, 1998b). Herr (2004, p. 414) defined the importance of field trips which help children: 1) Build keener observation skills, 2) Build vocabularies, 3) Clarify concepts as new information is learned, 4) Learn about their community, 5) Take part in multi-sensory experiences, 6) Gain new insights for dramatic play, 7) Learn about their environment, and 8) Practice following directions in a group. Wilford (2005) suggested springtime celebrations and rituals in early childhood education and care centers. Spring is an important time for parents and teachers to meet to review children's progress. Therefore, springtime celebrations and rituals are appropriate ways to help children, families, and teachers move toward the school year's end. And it is a good time for principals and teaching staff to make plans

for spending more school hours exploring the outside environment, such as picnics, springtime celebrations, and informal family get-togethers.

School events are intimately related to family involvement, such as parents preparing snacks for their children's birthday celebration. Some events need collaboration with parents or family, such as parent-teacher conferences, parent education, and the day for parent observation and participation. Also, parents can help by volunteering, such as field trips. The center holds special events for families, such as father's pumpkin-carving party or class picnics (Kinch & Schweinhart, 2003). Yoon, Song, Choi, Jung, and Kim (2002) clarified the concept of school events in early childhood education and care centers with the role of parents. Climate, collaboration, and communication are essential components with which to plan and facilitate any school event and achieve desired outcome for involving families in an educational setting (Barrera & Warner, 2006).

Vaden-Kiernan and McManus (2005) reported the percentage of students in kindergarten to elementary school whose parents reported participation in school-related activities in the United States in 2002-2003 as follows: 93% of parents attended a general school meeting, 92% of parents attended a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, 71% of parents attended a school or class event, 54% of parents acted as a volunteer or served on a school committee, and 70% of parents participated in school fundraising. However, Na, Yu, and Park (2002) reported the percentage of Korea kindergarten parental participation in kindergarten-related activities as follows: 57% of parents fully participated in the activities and 43% of parents did not participate much in kindergarten activities. Also, the main parental participation method was informal conversations to suggest their opinions.

Early Childhood Education and Care Center Health and Safety

'Health' is a complex concept and is defined differently depending upon the researchers. Anspaugh and Ezell (1998) conceptualized 'health' based on several physicians' research as spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical. The World Health Organization (WHO, 1946) defined 'health' as follows: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

Health and safety are priorities in early childhood education. Careless mistakes in a child care center could directly cause harm to children. In these bustling times, children are spending more time in child care centers due to the trends towards the nuclear family in Korea and towards contributing to the family income in both the United States and Korea. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC, 1999) reported that about 31,000 children, 4 year olds and younger, were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for injuries at child care and school settings in 1997. Therefore, health and safety are not only family members' responsibility, but also child care center staffs have an immense responsibility.

In the United States, the importance of children's health management and health education was already made fully aware since the 1960s Head Start program was enforced. Recently, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law in 2002. Therefore, government and professional organizations, such as the NAEYC (National Association for Education of Young Children), the AHA (American Heart Association), etc., provide standards for the health and safety of children (Bae, Cho, & Jung, 2005).

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Public Health Association (APHA), the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRC), and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) (2002) published national health and safety standards guidelines for out-of-home child care. The standards are classified by nine chapters as follows: 1) staffing, 2) program: activities for healthy development, 3) health promotion and protection in child care, 4) nutrition and food service, 5) facilities, supplies, equipment, and transportation, 6) infectious diseases, 7) children who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 8) administration, and 9) licensing and community action. The nine chapters have 5 to 11 details, and each detail has several specific details. The following are the guiding principles for the standards:

1. Child care for infants, young children, and school-age children is anchored in a respect for the developmental needs, characteristics, and cultures of the children and their families.
2. To the extent possible, program activities should be geared to the needs of the individual child, as well as to the group as a whole.
3. The relationship between parent and child is of utmost importance for the child's current and future development and should be supported by caregivers.
4. The nurturing of a child's development is based on knowledge of general health and growth and on the unique characteristics of the individual child.
5. Programs and care should be based on a child's functional status, and the child's needs should be described in behavioral or functional terms. Rigid categorical labeling of children should be avoided as much as possible.

6. Written policies and procedures should identify facility requirements and persons and/or entities responsible for implementing such requirements.
7. Confidentiality of records and shared verbal information must be maintained to protect the child, family, and staff. The information obtained in the course of child care should be used to plan for a child's safe and appropriate participation.
8. Health education for the toddler and for the preschool and school-age child is an investment in a lifetime of good health practices and contributes to a healthier childhood and adult life. The child care setting offers many opportunities for incorporating health and safety education into everyday activities.
9. The facility's nutritional activities complement and supplement those of home and community. Food provided in a child care setting should help to meet the child's daily nutritional needs, while reflecting individual, cultural, and philosophical differences and providing an opportunity for learning.
10. No child with special needs should be denied access to child care because of his/her disabilities, unless the child's extreme special needs make it unsafe for the child to be cared for in a community child care setting.
11. The facility chosen for each child should be one that is geared to meet the developmental needs of that child. Whenever possible, children with special needs should be cared for and provided services in settings including children without disabilities.

12. The expression of, and exposure to, cultural and ethnic diversity enriches the experience of all children, parents, and staff. Planning for cultural diversity and working with language differences should be encouraged.
13. Community resources should be identified and utilized as much as possible to provide consultation and related services as needed.

(AAP, APHA, NRC, & MCHB, 2002, p. 409)

The United States national health and safety standards are extremely detailed and voluminous. However, child care centers need to maintain these standards for children's health and safety. Herr (2004) defined safety objectives that the staff has responsibilities for providing a safe environment for children. The basic objectives toward this goal are as follows: supervise the children at all times, maintain at least the minimum adult-child ratio as required in your state, develop safety limits, provide a safe environment, practice fire safety, know emergency procedures for accidental poisoning, develop plans for weather emergencies, recognize signs of child abuse and report any known or suspected cases, and teach children how to protect themselves from sexual assault. Additionally, Herr (2004) presented objectives for guiding health: develop center health policies, review the children's health records to ensure that they receive immunizations, recognize ill children when making daily health observations, isolate children who may have an illness from the group, contact parents on health issues when appropriate, plan a safe environment to prevent accidents, provide first aid treatment, take part in health-related in-service training, and include health in the curriculum.

In early childhood education and care centers, both teachers and children use toys, equipment, and educational materials daily or on a daily basis. Children could be injured

from them. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC, 2005) reported that an estimated 140,700 children were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms by toy-related accidents and 13 children died. Therefore, selecting toys and equipment is an extremely important responsibility of staffs. The CPSC provides information about the safety of children's products and recalls and reports an unsafe product. The CPSC is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risk of serious injury or death from consumer products. Also, the CPSC requires toy manufacturers to meet stringent safety standards and to label certain toys that could be a hazard for younger children. In a recent national study, the CPSC found that two-thirds of the child care settings had one or more serious safety hazards: cribs, soft bedding, playground surfacing, playground maintenance, safety gates, window blinds and curtain cords, clothing drawstrings, and recalled products (CPSC, 1999).

Another important factor of health is nutrition. Most child care centers provide snacks or meals for children. Teaching nutrition is an important responsibility for children's health, growth, and development. A good center program requires a good nutritional program that reflects children's ethnic backgrounds. Teaching nutrition program goals are as follows: providing nutritious meals and snacks, introducing new healthful foods, encouraging healthful eating habits, involving children in meal activities, and providing nutritional information to parents (Herr, 2004). In Korea, early childhood education and care programs which have more than 100 children are required to have a nutritionist which is enforced by the 'Early Child Care Legislation.' However, less than 40% of early childhood and care programs have a position of nutritionist due to a lack of administrative measures (Yang et al., 2005).

In Korea, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE, 1998b) practiced the 'National Kindergarten Curriculum' which included five areas for children's development. 'Physical Health in Daily Life' is the first area of this curriculum. This area is to help children develop good harmony of body and spirit by exercising physical fitness for daily living and establishing healthy and safe habits through various physical activities. This area consists of elements which include the following:

1. 'Sensory Motor and Physical Self-Awareness' emphasizes basic sensory motor skills and positive physical self-awareness.
2. 'Fundamental Motor Skills' area: children develop basic movement and physical fitness and participate in happy and active physical activities.
3. 'Physical Health' encourages children to establish healthy habits for daily living by knowing and practicing ways for both physical health, including hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention, and regular routines, and mental health.
4. 'Safety' area helps children to obtain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills basic to the maintenance of their physical safety.

(MOE, 1998b, p. 10; see also Korea Early Childhood Education Association Curriculum Revision Research Commission, 1997)

Examination of 'health and safety' in early childhood education between the United States and Korea reveals similarities, such as both countries strongly emphasized children's basic safety and health, which includes nutrition. Bae, Cho, and Jung (2005) analyzed research related to health, safety, and nutrition. In contrast to research between the United States and Korea, the United States researchers found that the most interesting topic was 'health.' The second most interesting topic was 'safety,' and 'nutrition' was

third. However, Korean research trends were in the opposite order. 'Nutrition' was the most interesting topic and 'safety' was second, and then 'health' was third. Also, the United States researchers steadily study various topics, such as children's mental health and children with special needs. However, Korean research lacks these two topics. In the United States, inclusive education was generalized, as compared to the inclusive education status in Korea.

Parent Communications and Involvement

The first and most essential of values is the dominance of the parent-child relationship (Bowman, 2003). Parents and family have a great influence on children's development and growth. Children's first learning is from their family. The parent's role is very important, such as the parent is the best teacher for their children. Parent's attitudes and behaviors should be models for their children's behavior. Therefore, parental involvement and support is essential for early childhood education.

Family involvement in early childhood education and care is as diverse as the early childhood education and care center environments in which children are enrolled. The vast majority of parent participation in programs is voluntary. Most programs provide parent-teachers conferences about the progress of their children and opportunities to discuss particular problems and to get referrals if necessary. Parent education also is quite common in all types of centers. Child care centers offer these programs to: 1) provide education for parents to improve their childrearing, 2) support empowerment and advocacy for low income families and families of children with special needs, and 3) support to stabilize or improve family functioning (Bowman, 2003).

Herr (2004) defined the purpose of involvement is to promote an exchange of ideas and information. Parents can gain by 1) developing an understanding of child growth and development, 2) gaining confidence in their parenting roles, 3) learning about their children's experiences at the center, 4) understanding their children by observing other children, 5) learning new ways of positively interacting with children, 6) becoming informed about community resources, 7) fostering the children's and parent's ability to interact with each other, 8) extending learning from the center into the home, and 9) understanding how a partnership between center and home can promote their children's development.

Vaden-Kiernan and McManus (2005) reported the percentage of students in kindergarten to first grade whose parents reported school-initiated school communication practices with parents in the United States in 2002-2003 as follows: 96% of parents received newsletters, memos, or notices from school, 55% of parents were communicated with by sending the family personal notes or e-mails specifically about their child, and 45% of parents received calls from schools on the telephone. Also, the percentage of students in kindergarten to first grade parents reported school practices to provide information to parents and parental satisfactions as follows: 93% of parents received information about students' performances and 65% of parents were satisfied with this information; 90% of parents received information about their children's likes in school and 55% of parents were satisfied with this information; 96% of parents received information about opportunities to volunteer and 74% of parents were satisfied with this information; 93% of parents received information about how to help students learn at home and 56% of parents were satisfied with this information; 84% of parents received

information about community services and 41% of parents were satisfied with this information; 91% of parents received information about how to help with homework and 60% of parents were satisfied with this information; and 80% of parents received information about why students are placed in particular groups or classes and 51% of parents were satisfied with this information. More than half of parents of kindergarteners and first graders agreed with the statement about their children's school encouraging parental involvement; 26% of parents 'strongly agreed,' 40% of parents 'agreed,' 3% of parents 'disagreed,' and only 1% of parents 'strongly disagreed.'

Most parents with children in kindergarten through first grade participated in school events in the United States by diverse activities: general school meeting (93%), regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference (92%), school or class event (71%), acting as a volunteer or serving on a school committee (54%), and school fundraising (70%) (Vaden-Kiernan & McManus, 2005). However, Korean kindergarten parents participated less in school activities, as compared to the United States parents, as follows: 57% of Korean parents took an active part in school activities and 43% of Korean parents were not much concerned about kindergarten activities. Most events operated in the daytime and there were time limitations for working parents regarding their involvement in school activities, although kindergartens tried to make some schedules on the weekend (Na, Yu, & Park, 2002). Bowman (2003) presented obstacles to successful parent involvement in early childhood education and care centers. The barriers are diversity of parental expectations, poor program conceptualization and implementation, parental reluctance to participate, and insufficient public support.

In 1994, the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education was established by the U.S. Department of Education to encourage and support families' involvement in their children's learning to higher standards. It was designed to increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home and to strengthen schools and improve student achievement levels. To achieve these goals, the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education encourages:

1. Mutual responsibility at home and at school and throughout the community to give students a better education and a good start in life.
2. Increased access to the resources, training, and information families need to help their children succeed in school.
3. Effective, regular two-way communication between families and schools.
4. Families to monitor their children's attendance, homework completion, and television watching; to become acquainted with school staff; to volunteer in school when possible; and to participate in the school decision-making process.
5. Family and student-friendly business practices.
6. Well-planned partnerships with a common vision in which family, business, community, education, and religious members generate a contagious enthusiasm for learning.
7. Family support to 1) schools where learning is assured, backed by performance indicators and measurement; 2) school goals that are strategic and integrated into the curriculum; and 3) schools' management and delivery of instruction.

8. Schools to welcome families as full partners in school activities and decision making.
9. Educators to access a broad range of tools to better engage families in children's learning.
10. Before and after-school learning activities in safe, drug-free environments where children interact with caring adults in meaningful learning activities.
11. The effective use of facilities, schools, community buildings and churches, for children and families.

(Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 2000, p. 1-2)

Early childhood education and care programs provide parent education to encourage not only becoming good parents, but also for adult education to develop in the overall community. The Korean Society for Early Childhood Education (KSECE, 1997) defined parent education as one kind of adult education for present and future parents. The purpose of parent education is to gain information of child educating and rearing, to improve family life, and heighten the level of their liberal culture (Lee et al., 2003). The concept of parent education became an active subject since the United States began the Head Start program in the 1960s. Parent education and training was to promote parental activeness and participation. Early childhood research trends also focused on parental attitudes and perceptions in the 1970s through the 1980s in the United States and after the 1980s in Korea. However, United States researchers defined a new concept of parent involvement that recognized parents as a specialist, such as a teacher and educational expert (Lee, Eom, & Lee, 2005). Additionally, child care is not only the parent's responsibility anymore in the home. More than 5.8 million grandparents were living with

grandchildren in the United States. Among this population, 2.4 million (42%) grandparents had the responsibility of caregivers without the children's parent in the home (Simmons & Dye, 2003). Therefore, parent involvement was expended as a family involvement. Moreover, family involvement and support is not the only requisite, but also public support is another requisite. Establishing close connections is very important among the early childhood education and care center, staff, family, and public. Community collaborations are often encouraged by federal, state, and local governments, which either require or encourage cooperative efforts.

Parent Perceptions of Early Childhood Education and Care Center

Most parents prefer that their own child is in a high-quality early childhood education and care center (Cryer & Burchinal, 1997). Many parents considered several aspects when they decide on their children's school, such as staff warmth, a good center program, social activities, and physical activities (Browne-Miller, 1990). Early childhood education and care center parents indicated that health, safety, and adult-child interactions were the most important aspects, and school curriculum aspects were also very important (Cryer & Burchinal, 1997).

There are a range of characteristics to determine early childhood education and care program choices for all parents, regardless of family income: 1) the location, number, and variety of center- and home-based programs in relation to family's home and the parents' places of employment, 2) variations in early childhood education and care options in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 3) enrollment capacity and waiting list size, 4) provision of care for children with mild illness, 5) tuition charged to cover operating costs of the program, 6) subsidy issues: eligibility for a subsidy, availability of a subsidy,

and the size of the parental co-parent, 7) availability of transportation to and from the program; possession of an automobile; ability to carpool; and availability, cost of , and access to public transportation, 8) compatibility of childrearing and educational philosophy between the family and the program, and 9) compatibility of a developmentally appropriate curriculum and developmental stage of the child and cultural background (Ranck, 2003).

Cryer (1999) defined important elements for quality early childhood education and care programs which are safe care, healthful care, developmentally appropriate stimulation, positive interactions with adults, encouragement of individual emotional growth, and promotion of positive relationships. Also, High/Scope's Program Quality Assessment (PQA) defined seven areas on domains to evaluate early childhood programs: learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, curriculum planning and assessment, parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and staff development, and program management (Epstein, 2003).

Yoon, Song, Choi, Jung, and Kim (2002) presented guidelines for how to choose a quality program for novice parents. The high-quality early childhood education and care centers prepared a good, quality curriculum and qualified teaching staffs with a proper environment close to home. Indications for choosing a quality program are as follows: 1) play-centered with integrated education to suit the different developmental stages of young children, 2) developmentally appropriate facilities and equipments, 3) a qualified teaching staff, including teachers, principal or director, a vice-principal with duty sense, warmness for children, and certification of qualification, and 4) parents need to agree with center educational philosophy and collaborate. Also, Yoon, Choi, and Kim (2004)

found parental differences on aspects of performance of their duties as parents in early childhood education and care programs. The parents had difficulties becoming parents of a student. And the parents were interested in relationships between their child and the teacher, and their child and other children. Also, parents requested support for early childhood education from the government.

Kim, Suk, and Kim (2002) reported Korean parents' perception of expenses in urban kindergarten. This study found that more than 60% of parents thought kindergartens were expensive, one-third percentage of parents felt expenses were reasonable. Only 0.6% of parents answered cheap. Na, Yu, Moon, and Lee (2000) found parents' perception of government support of expenses in early childhood education and care centers: 78.9% of parents thought expenses are shared between government and parents, 17.8% of parents responded all expenses charged by government, and 3.3% of parents answered parents bear all expenses for their children.

In the United States, 29% of children in kindergarten to first grade participated in school activities in 2002-2003. And some children participated in out of school activities: 53% participated in religious groups, 43% participated in organized sports, 20% participated in scouting, 14% participated in educational programs, and 11% participated in music lessons (Vaden-Kiernan & McManus, 2005). These results showed that the United States parents were highly concerned about religious activities and sports for their children. However, the Korean parents were highly concerned about early childhood specialty education. Lee, Jang, Jung, and Hong (2001) found that 70% of parents in private kindergarten thought that their children needed an early specialty education and 86% of parents sent their children to specialty institutes, such as after school. The most

frequent specialty educations were Korean as a native language, mathematics, and English as a foreign language, due to intellectual development and preparation of elementary school. Kim, Suk, and Kim (2002) reported that 68.8% of private kindergartens operated specialty education and that the biggest reason was parental request (40%). Also, 74.6% of early childhood care centers operated specialty education and the most frequent education programs were English as a foreign language, art, physical education, and Korea as a native language (Seo, Lim, & Park, 2002).

Kontos, Howes, Shinn, and Galinsky (1995) studied quality in family child care and relative care in the United States. Parents and teachers in early child care settings, with children's ages ranging from birth through 5 years, agreed on the most important elements in such quality programs: children's safety, parent-teacher communication about their child, and warm relationships between parent-teacher and their child.

Na, Yu, Moon, and Lee (2000) reported the Korean parents' considerations when parents selected an early childhood education and care center. The most considered aspect was curriculum (43.5%) and the second most considered aspect was center distance from home (13.6%). Other aspects of parents' considerations were: relationship with friends (9.8%), tuition (8.9%), program hours (6.1%), center facilities (5.7%), and teaching staff (5.3%). And Yang (2000) found similar results for consideration aspects to decide on a new early childhood education and care center. The most important aspect was curriculum (55%) and the second most important aspect was educational facilities (15%). Other aspects were as follows: teaching staff (14%), center distance from home (9%), tuition (3%), and program hours (3%). And Seo, Lim, and Park (2002) reported the parents' considerations of choosing an early childhood education and care center by

center characteristics. Parents' considerations in a child care center were as follows: teaching staff (15.0%), center distance from home (14.5%), curriculum (10.6%), director's educational philosophy (10.1%), program hours (9.2%), a rounded reputation (8.0%), atmosphere (6.5%), tuition (6.2%), safety (5.8%), health and nutrition (3.6%), facilities scale (3.6%), others (3.2%), surrounding environment (2.6%), and public school (1.0%). And parents' considerations in kindergarten were as follows: center distance from home (20.2%), curriculum (17.6%), teaching staff (14.7%), director's educational philosophy (10.1%), a rounded reputation (7.2%), safety (5.4%), atmosphere (5.2%), tuition (4.3%), others (3.3%), facilities scale (3.1%), health and nutrition (2.5%), surrounding environment (2.3%), public school (2.3%), and program hours (1.9%).

Vaden-Kiernan and McManus (2005) found that most of the United States parents of kindergarteners and first graders agreed with the statement that their children find their schoolwork challenging and that the students enjoyed school. Over a quarter of parents 'strongly agreed' (26%) and 58% of parents 'agreed' with the statement that students find their schoolwork challenging, 56% of parents 'strongly agreed,' and 40% of parents 'agreed' that the students enjoyed school. This study also found that the percentage of students in kindergarten to first grade whose parents reported being 'very satisfied' with school characteristics in the United States in 2002-2003 was as follows: 73% of the parents were very satisfied with the school; 78% of parents were very satisfied with teachers the student had that year; 72% of parents were very satisfied with academic standards of the school; and 76% of parents were very satisfied with order and discipline at the school. The percentage of Korean parental overall satisfaction about overall early childhood education and care centers was generally high. Parents reported being

'dissatisfied' with school characteristics. The most significant dissatisfaction aspects were: school facilities (19.4%), tuition (14.9%), distance (10.4%), curriculum (9.4%), lunch and snacks (8.5%), operating hours (7.7%), and teachers (5.3%). And 22.15% of parents were not dissatisfied with any school characteristics (Na, Yu, Moon, & Lee, 2000).

Summary

The historical roots of early childhood education were developed with two different programs, child care center and kindergarten, in both the United States and Korea. In 1838, the first day nursery was established in the United States. And in 1897, the first kindergarten was established in Korea. Both countries' early childhood education and care programs were developed and extended into segments, although early childhood educators' efforts were to integrate these fragmented systems.

There were similarities and differences of early childhood education and care center characteristics between the United States and Korea. Both countries' early childhood education and care policies cover children from birth through compulsory school age, but kindergarten enrollment is mandated in the United States. The compulsory school age is kindergarten through 12th grade in the United States and elementary school ages through middle school ages, which is equivalent to 9^{th} grade in the United States. Comparing the children's enrollment in early childhood education and care programs found that the United States children's enrollment rates were higher than that of Korean children, and enrollment of Korean children in private programs was very high. Additional public funding supports are needed in Korean early childhood education and special education programs, including inclusion education.

Curriculum reflects educational characteristics in these two countries. In the Unites States, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) developed standards and accreditation criteria for early childhood programs. The curriculum standards contain four areas of learning and development: 'Social-Emotional Development,' 'Physical Development,' 'Language Development,' and 'Cognitive Development' which includes the following subject matter areas: 'Early Literacy,' 'Early Mathematics,' 'Science,' 'Technology,' 'Creative Expression and Appreciation for Arts,' 'Health and Safety,' and 'Social Studies.' And the Korea 'National Kindergarten Curriculum' aim is to cultivate young children with the basic capability required to be a democratic citizen. The curriculum consists of five integrated areas: 'Physical Health Daily Life,' 'Social Relationship Daily Life,' 'Expression Daily Life,' 'Language Daily Life,' and 'Inquiry in Daily Life.' In Korea, specialty activities, particularly English as a foreign language activity, besides regular curriculum activities, are widespread in private kindergartens.

The role of the teacher is essential to young children. In the United States, there are no requirements for teaching qualifications in early childhood education and care. Instead, each state developed its own qualifications and teacher credentials. And Korean teachers' certifications in early childhood education and care are divided into kindergarten approved by the Minister of Education and child care approved by the Minister of Health and Welfare. The Korean public school teachers' wages are higher than the United States public school teachers and generally, public school teachers' income is better than other programs in both countries. The ratio of children to teacher in the United States was 15.5 children and less than 21 children in Korea. And the

percentage of teachers by age group showed that the United States teachers were older than Korean teachers. Also, most teachers in early childhood education and care programs were female in both countries.

School events encourage various and abundant experiences from new environments. School events have diverse characteristics, such as societal events, collective events, parental events, and religious events. Most programs make a plan for field trips in their school calendar. The curriculums promote field trips in both countries. School events are closely related to family involvement. Most parents participated in school events, such as parent-teacher conferences, volunteers, class events, and school fundraising.

Health and safety are both precedence issues in early childhood education. Early childhood education and care centers need to maintain a safe environment to prevent injuries from hazards. Therefore, professional organizations provide guidelines for early childhood education and care settings in both countries. The United States research trends of health and safety showed that early childhood educators were most interested in the topic of 'health,' the second was 'safety,' and 'nutrition' was third. However, Korean research trends were in the opposite order: 'nutrition,' 'safety,' and 'health.' And compared to the United States research, Korean research trends showed a lack of such topics as children's mental health and children with special needs.

The priority element is the relationship between parent and child. Early childhood education and care programs promote parent communications and involvement to develop the parent-child relationship. The United States early childhood educators defined a new concept of parents as a specialist. Also, the concept of parent involvement

extended to family involvement. The Korean parents were less involved in school activities, in contrast to the United States parents. There were also some barriers to parent involvement, such as time limitations for working parents, diversity of parental expectations, poor program conceptualization and implementation, parental reluctance to participate, and insufficient public support.

Parents want to send their children to high-quality programs. Many research studies showed parental perceptions of early childhood education and care centers. The Korean parents were highly concerned about specialty activities, such as native language, mathematics, and English as a foreign language. However, the United States parents were concerned about religious activities and sports. The Korean parents were more concerned about activities which promote intellectual development. And the United States parents thought that the most important aspects in early childhood education and care programs were child safety, parent-teacher communication about the child, and warm relationships between children and the child. The Korean parents felt that the most important elements for their children were curriculum, facilities, distance from home, teaching staff, and relationships with friends. Many parents were satisfied with early childhood education and care programs which enrolled their children in both the United States and Korea.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the parental perceptions of university early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea. This chapter contains the research methodology, including a description of the subjects, sample selection of the subject to whom the survey was administered, and the instrument that was utilized. Also, methods of data collection, procedures for data analysis, and some of the methodological limitations will conclude this chapter.

Subject Selection and Description

The subjects of this study were parents of children (age 3-5 year olds) who are currently enrolled in the Child and Family Study Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout, the United States, and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University, Daejeon, Korea, during the 2005-2006 school year. Subjects included 113 parents who participated, utilizing the survey instrument. Both males and females of various ages, educational backgrounds, and occupations responded. All subjects were assured that their completed questionnaires would remain confidential and anonymous.

A total of 180 surveys were distributed, with 60 in the United States, and 120 in Korea. Replies were provided by 113 subjects, which was an effective response rate of 62.78 percent. Forty questionnaires were returned to the researcher in the United States, which yielded a return rate of 66.67 percent, and seventy-three questionnaires were returned in Korea, which yielded a return rate of 60.83 percent.

Instrumentation

The data collected in this study was completed through the use of the parental questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by the investigator based on the literature review. The questionnaire contained nine sections and was written in English and translated to Korean. The first section of the questionnaire included general information about the respondents. This section consisted of 10 items which addressed parent's gender, age, marital status, relation to the child, child's gender, child's age enrolled in center, the number of children in the family, highest educational level, and occupation and employment status.

Section II of the questionnaire focused on the general evaluation of the child care center from the parent's perception. A Likert scale was used to measure the parental perception regarding their evaluation of the importance of the current child care center, such as physical environment, curriculum, director and teacher's educational competence, school events, children's health and safety, and parental involvement. The eight items utilized a Likert scale consisting of nine points that ranged from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important).

Section III included nine questions concerning the center characteristics. In this section, parents were asked how important the center characteristics were, including location and distance from home, building, classroom, playground design, educational teaching aids, equipment, play materials, and tuition costs, using a nine point Likert scale for the rating of each question.

Section IV of the questionnaire addressed the child care center curriculum. In this section, parents were asked how important each of the following curriculum activities

were: literacy activities, second language activities, math activities, social studies activities, art activities, music activities, physical activities, computer activities, culture activities, and safety education activities. This section included 12 questions and used the modified nine point Likert scale.

Section V of the questionnaire covered teacher characteristics. In this section, parents were asked how important teacher's educational philosophy and degree, religion, age, years of teaching experience, teacher and parent partnerships, relation to child, marital status, status as a parent, and ratio of children to teacher were. Each of the 11 items were rated using a Likert scale of one to nine.

Section VI included seven questions concerning director characteristics. A nine point Likert scale was used to determine how important the following director characteristics were: director's educational philosophy and degree, years of experience as a director, religion, age, and years of teaching experience as a teacher.

Section VII of the questionnaire consisted of seven items which dealt with the school events. This section utilized a Likert scale of one to nine to measure how important the school events were to the parents, such as parent-teacher conferences, children's work exhibitions, field trips, parent participation, children's performances, and parent education opportunities.

Section VIII contained eight questions about children's health and safety. A Likert scale of one to nine was used to measure the parental perception regarding how important the following health and safety factors were: cleanliness, sanitation, security, nutritional lunches and snacks, safety, administration of medication and first-aid, and center illness polices.

The final section of the questionnaire addressed parent communications and involvement opportunities. In Section IX, parents were asked to rate how important the daily communications, phone calls and e-mails, parent letters and newsletters, opportunities for parents to volunteer, parent-teacher conferences, and parent bulletin boards were on a modified nine point Likert scale.

After the instrument was constructed at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, it was translated into Korean by the researcher and pilot tested on seven Koreans, including professors and kindergarten and preschool directors in Korea. The cover letter and questionnaire can be found in Appendix A (English version) and B (Korean version).

Data Collection Procedures

Permission was sought from the University of Wisconsin-Stout child care center and Paichai University Kindergarten for survey parents in each center. Also, approval for this study was gained from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The investigator distributed the questionnaires and cover letters to the director of Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University in Korea on January 23, 2006. Each classroom teacher sent a questionnaire to each child's home with a parent letter. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the teacher in each classroom.

The questionnaires and cover letters were distributed to parents whose children were enrolled in the Child and Family Study Center at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the United States on March 1, 2006. The questionnaires were placed in each child's file to be taken home, with a cover letter and a return envelope attached. The questionnaires were identical. However, the questionnaires were a different color, visually separating the

United States parents from the Korean parents. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study and introduced the investigator. Both groups of parents were asked to return the survey within one week. One reminder notice was posted on the sign-in/out clipboards and one other reminder notice went home during that week via parent letters to ensure a higher return rate. A total of 113 out of 180 surveys distributed from the two countries were returned. The response rate was 62.78 percent.

Data Analysis

The survey used in this study was specially designed to assess parental perceptions within a university child care center. It also included statements designed to assess the parental preferences regarding the university early childhood education and care center.

The instrument was divided into nine separate sections. Section I of the survey, General Information, was analyzed by computed frequency distributions and percentages. A Likert scale was the response format used in sections two to nine format: 1 (not important), 3 (less important), 5 (moderately important), 7 (very important), and 9 (extremely important). In addition, the mean ($\overline{x}$ = average score of the participants), standard deviation (SD = distance from $\overline{x}$ of participant's score), and rank order were computed for each item in Section II through IX. A *t*-test analysis was also used to compare the two groups, the United States parents and Korean parents.

The responses of the survey were analyzed by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer User Support Services using a computerized quantitative statistics program, SPSS. Data from the survey were examined using descriptive statistics to classify, compare, and summarize the results.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. A major limitation of this study was the sample size. Selections of participants for this study were limited to the parents whose children currently attend the Child and Family Study Center at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the United States and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University in Korea. This study cannot be considered representative of all university early childhood education and care centers or of all early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea. Another limitation was that 92.9 percent of the respondents were female. Although almost half of the subjects were male, few of them participated. Furthermore, the instrument was designed by the investigator and was not a standard instrument. Therefore, it was not tested for reliability or validity.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the survey comparing the parental perceptions about university early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea. The questionnaire consisted of nine sections: 1) demographic characteristics, 2) general evaluation of the child care center, 3) center characteristics, 4) curriculum, 5) teacher characteristics, 6) director characteristics, 7) school events, 8) health and safety, and 9) parent communications and involvement opportunities. The demographic findings of the participants will be presented. The data collected were analyzed in relation to the research questions. The findings are discussed concerning the total population in reference to the research questions under investigation.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic information from Section I of the survey, including items 1 to 10, is presented in Table 1 though Table 12. The following is an overview of each demographic area: nationality, gender, age, marital status, relationship to child, child's gender, child's age enrolled in center, number of children in family, level of education, occupation, and employment status.

Nationality

Respondents were asked to indicate their nationality. In the survey, the nationality of the respondents was divided into two countries, America and Korea. Out of the total respondents surveyed, 40 (35.4%) were American and 73 (64.6%) were Korean. Table 1 presents the computed results.

Table 1

Nationality of Parents

Nationality	Frequency	Valid Percent
America	40	35.4
Korea	73	64.6
Total	113	100.0

Gender

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. For the American respondents, 3 (7.5%) were male and 37 (92.5%) were female. And for the Korean respondents, 5 (6.8%) were male and 68 (93.2%) were female. For the total respondents, 8 (7.1%) were male and 105 (92.9%) were female. See Table 2.

Table 2

Gender of Parents

	America		Korea		Total	
Gender	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Male	3	7.5	5	6.8	8	7.1
Female	37	92.5	68	93.2	105	92.9
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Age

Respondents were asked to indicate their age. For the American respondents, two of the categories – 19 years or younger and 51 or older, were not represented. The majority of respondents (n=18, 45.0%) were 31-35 years old. Ten respondents (25.0%) were 36-40 years old, six respondents (15.0%) were 26-30 years old, three respondents (7.5%) were 20-25 years old, two respondents (5.0%) were 41-45 years old, and one respondent (2.5%) was 46-50 years old. For the Korean respondents, 20-25 years old or younger years and 51 or older were not presented. Forty respondents (54.8%) were 36-40 years old, twenty-two respondents (30.1%) were 31-35 years old, six respondents (8.2%) were 41-45 years old, three respondents (4.1%) were 26-30 years old, and one respondent (1.4%) was two of the categories – 19 or younger and 46-50 years old. For the total respondents, fifty respondents (44.2%) were 36-40 years old, forty respondents (35.4%) were 31-35 years old, nine respondents (8.0%) were 26-30 years old, eight respondents (7.1%) were 41-45 years old, three respondents (2.7%) were 20-25 years old, two respondents (1.8%) were 46-50 years old, and one respondent (.9%) was 19 or younger. See Table 3.

Table 3

Age of Parents

	America		Korea		Total	
Age	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
19 or younger	0	.0	1	1.4	1	.9
20-25 years old	3	7.5	0	.0	3	2.7
26-30 years old	6	15.0	3	4.1	9	8.0
31-35 years old	18	45.0	22	30.1	40	35.4
36-40 years old	10	25.0	40	54.8	50	44.2
41-45 years old	2	5.0	6	8.2	8	7.1
46-50 years old	1	2.5	1	1.4	2	1.8
51 or older	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Marital Status

Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status. In the survey, the categories that included separated and widowed were not represented for both countries, America and Korea. For the American respondents, the majority of respondents (n=38, 95.0%) were married. One respondent (2.5%) checked two categories – single and divorced. For the Korean respondents, all respondents (n=73, 100.0%) were married. No Korean respondents were single, divorced, separated, and widowed. For the total respondents, the majority of respondents (n=111, 98.2%) were married. Table 4 presents the computed results.

Table 4

Marital Status of Parents

	America		Korea		Total	
Marital Status	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Single	1	2.5	0	.0	1	.9
Married	38	95.0	73	100.0	111	98.2
Divorced	1	2.5	0	.0	1	.9
Widowed	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0
Separated	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Relationship to Child

Respondents were asked to indicate their relationship to their child who was enrolled at the child care center. In the survey, the category that included guardian was not represented for either country. For the American respondents, 3 (7.5%) were fathers and 37 (92.5%) were mothers. And for the Korean respondents, 5 (6.8%) were fathers and 68 (93.2%) were mothers. For the total respondents, 8 (7.1%) were fathers and 105 (92.9%) were mothers. See Table 5.

Table 5

Relationship to Child

	America		Korea		Total	
Gender	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Father	3	7.5	5	6.8	8	7.1
Mother	37	92.5	68	93.2	105	92.9
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Gender of Child

Respondents were asked to indicate the gender of their child who was enrolled at the child care center. For the American respondents, 12 (30.0%) were boys and 27 (67.5%) were girls. One respondent had both a boy and a girl enrolled at the same child care center. For the Korean respondents, 35 (47.9%) were boys and 38 (52.1%) were girls. For the total respondents, 47 (41.6%) were boys and 65 (57.5%) were girls. See Table 6.

Table 6

Gender of Children

	America		Korea		Total	
Gender	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Boy	12	30.0	35	47.9	47	41.6
Girl	27	67.5	38	52.1	65	57.5
Other	1	2.5	0	.0	1	.9
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Age of Child

Respondents were asked to indicate the age of their child enrolled at the child care center. For the American respondents, the majority of children (n=16, 41.0%) were 3 years old. Fifteen respondents (38.5%) were 4 years old, seven respondents (17.9%) were 5 years old, and one respondent (2.6%) was 6 years old. For the Korean respondents, the majority of children (n=38, 52.1%) were 5 years old. Eighteen children (24.7%) were 6 years old, thirteen children (17.8%) were 4 years old, and four children (5.5%) were 3 years old. For the total children, forty-five children (40.2%) were 5 years old, twenty-eight children (25.0%) were 4 years old, twenty children (17.9%) were 3 years old, and nineteen children (17.0%) were 6 years old. See Table 7.

Table 7

Age of Children Enrolled at Center

	America		Korea		Total	
Age	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
3 years old	16	41.0	4	5.5	20	17.9
4 years old	15	38.5	13	17.8	28	25.0
5 years old	7	17.9	38	52.1	45	40.2
6 years old	1	2.6	18	24.7	19	17.0
Total	39	100.0	73	100.0	112	100.0

Number of Children

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of children in their family. For the American respondents, the majority of respondents (n=21, 52.5%) had two children. Twelve respondents (30.0%) had three children, six respondents (15.0%) had one child, and one respondent (2.5%) had four children. For the Korean respondents, the majority of respondents (n=57, 78.1%) had two children. Ten respondents (13.7%) had one child, and six respondents (8.2%) had three children. For the total respondents, the majority of respondents (n=78, 69.0%) had two children in their family. Eighteen respondents (15.9%) had three children, sixteen respondents (14.2%) had one child, and one respondent (.9%) had four children. Table 8 shows the details of frequency and percent.

Table 8

Number of Children in Family

	America		Korea		Total	
Number	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
1 child	6	15.0	10	13.7	16	14.2
2 children	21	52.5	57	78.1	78	69.0
3 children	12	30.0	6	8.2	18	15.9
4 children	1	2.5	0	.0	1	.9
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Level of Education

Table 9 reflects the level of education for the respondents. For the American respondents, approximately one-half of the respondents (n=23, 57.5%) had a Bachelor's degree. Eight respondents (20.0%) had a Master's degree, four respondents (10.0%) had a doctoral degree, three respondents (7.5%) graduated from senior high school, one respondent (2.5%) had vocational/technical schooling, and one other respondent (2.5%) was in progress of obtaining a Bachelor's degree. For the Korean respondents, approximately one-half of the respondents (n=43, 58.9%) had a Bachelor's degree. Nine respondents (12.3%) had a degree for two of the categories - Master's degree and senior high school degree, seven respondents (9.6%) had vocational/technical schooling, and five respondents (6.8%) had a doctoral degree. For the total respondents, approximately one-half of the respondents (n=66, 58.4%) had a Bachelor's degree, seventeen respondents (15.0%) had a Master's degree, twelve respondents (10.6%) graduated from senior high school, nine respondents (8.0%) had a doctoral degree, eight respondents (7.1%) had vocational/technical schooling, and one other respondent (2.5%) was in progress of obtaining a Bachelor's degree. See Table 9.

Table 9

Highest Education Level of Parents

	America		Korea		Total	
Education Level	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
High school	3	7.5	9	12.3	12	10.6
Voc-Tech school	1	2.5	7	9.6	8	7.1
Bachelor's degree	23	57.5	43	58.9	66	58.4
Master's degree	8	20.0	9	12.3	17	15.0
Doctoral degree	4	10.0	5	6.8	9	8.0
Other	1	2.5	0	.0	1	.9
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Occupation

Respondents were asked to indicate their occupation. For the American respondents, the majority of respondents (n=16, 41.0%) were in the educational field. Thirteen respondents (33.3%) were full-time homemakers. At the lower percentage, five respondents (12.8%) were in business, four respondents (10.3%) were students, and one respondent (2.6%) was in the medical field. For the Korean respondents, approximately one-half of the respondents (n=43, 58.9%) were full-time homemakers. Ten respondents (13.7%) were in educational field and eight respondents (11.0%) were in business. At the lower percentage, three respondents (4.1%) were in services field and three respondents (4.1%) were in other field. Two respondents (2.7%) were in two of the categories – family business and medical field. One respondent (1.4%) was in two categories –

engineer and government officer. For the total respondents, one-half of the respondents (n=56, 50.0%) were full-time homemakers. Twenty-six respondents (23.2%) were in the educational field, thirteen respondents (11.6%) were in business, four respondents (3.6%) were students, and three respondents (2.7%) were in three of the categories – medical field, services, and other occupation. Two respondents (1.8%) were in two of the categories – family business and one respondent (.9%) was a government officer. See Table 10.

Table 10

Occupation of Parents

	American		Korea		Total	
Occupation	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Homemaker	13	33.3	43	58.9	56	50.0
Business	5	12.8	8	11.0	13	11.6
Education	16	41.0	10	13.7	26	23.2
Family business	0	.0	2	2.7	2	1.8
Medical field	1	2.6	2	2.7	3	2.7
Engineer	0	.0	1	1.4	1	.9
Services	0	.0	3	4.1	3	2.7
Gov. officer	0	.0	1	1.4	1	.9
Student	4	10.3	0	.0	4	3.6
Other	0	.0	3	4.1	3	2.7
Total	39	100.0	73	100.0	112	100.0

Employment Status

In the survey, the employment status was divided into three categories – not employed outside home, part-time employed, and full-time employed. For the American respondents, seventeen respondents (42.5%) were full-time workers, sixteen respondents (40.0%) were not employed outside home, and seven respondents (17.5%) worked part-time. For the Korean respondents, almost half of the respondents (n=41, 56.2%) were not employed outside home. Twenty-four respondents (32.95%) worked full-time and eight respondents (11.0%) worked part-time. For the total respondents, the majority of respondents (n=57, 50.4%) were not employed outside home. Forty-one respondents (36.3%) worked full-time and fifteen respondents (13.3%) worked part-time. Table 11 presents the computed results.

Table 11

Employment Status of Parents

	America		Korea		Total	
Employment	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Unemployed	16	40.0	41	56.2	57	50.4
Part-time	7	17.5	8	11.0	15	13.3
Full-time	17	42.5	24	32.9	41	36.3
Total	40	100.0	73	100.0	113	100.0

Item Analysis

Sections II to IX were designed to measure parental perceptions of the importance of university child care centers were, including sections: 2) general evaluation of the child care center, 3) center characteristics, 4) curriculum, 5) teacher characteristics, 6) director characteristics, 7) school events, 8) health and safety, and 9) parent communications and involvement opportunities. Each section consists of 6 to 11 items. Each one of the sections and items is presented in Table 12 though Table 34. Each item was rated by parents on a Likert scale from 1 to 9: 1 (not important), 3 (less important), 5 (moderately important), 7 (very important), and 9 (extremely important). The results are showed with the mean and standard deviation for the American respondents and the Korean respondents on all items. Also, the tables show the rank order of the items from the highest mean to the lowest mean scores.

General Evaluation of the Child Care Center

Section II in the survey was designed to measure the parental perceptions regarding their evaluation of the importance of the current child care center were, including items: 1) physical environment, 2) curriculum, 3) director's educational competence, 4) teacher's educational competence, 5) school events, 6) children's health and safety, and 7) parent communications and involvement opportunities. The parents were asked their perception on the level of importance in relation to seven items in the survey, utilizing a nine point Likert scale from 1 (not important) through 9 (extremely important). Table 12 shows the mean, standard deviation, and rank order of the items.

For the American parents' perceptions, there were five items (6, 4, 1, 2, and 7) which had mean scores, ranging from 8.68 – 7.45, that indicated that American parents

thought that these items were very important. Also, in two items (3 and 5), the parents had moderately important mean scores, ranging from 6.93 – 5.85.

There were three items (6, 4, and 1) that the Korean parents thought were very important with mean scores ranging from 8.34 – 7.32, and four items (3, 2, 7, and 5) that the parents considered moderately important with mean scores ranging from 6.89 – 5.33.

Every item, Item 1 through 7, received a total group mean score above the mid-point ($\overline{x}$=5.00) of the Likert scale (5 – moderately important) that signified that both American and Korean parents thought that all items were important for their child enrolled at the child care center. Items 6 and 4 were the first and second highest mean score items for both American and Korean parents that indicated that parents felt that these items were the most important items: Item 6 – 'Children's health and safety (America – $\overline{x}$=8.68, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.34)' and Item 4 – 'Teacher's educational competence, including educational degrees, teaching experiences, and educational philosophy (America – $\overline{x}$=7.78, Korea – $\overline{x}$=7.84).' Also, the lowest mean score item was Item 5 – 'School events, including field trips, children works exhibition, and documentation of learning (America – $\overline{x}$=5.85, Korea – $\overline{x}$=5.33)' for both American and Korean parents. The other items (1, 2, 3, and 7) showed a different rank order between the American parents' perceptions and the Korean parents' perceptions. Table 12 explains the parents' perceptions on the child care center that their child receives.

Table 12

Section II: General Evaluation of the Child Care Center

Item	America				Korea			
	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Physical environment	40	7.45	1.176	4	73	7.32	1.223	3
2. Curriculum	40	7.73	1.320	3	73	6.77	1.603	5
3. Director's educational competence	40	6.93	1.817	6	73	6.89	1.752	4
4. Teacher's educational competence	40	7.78	1.349	2	73	7.84	1.344	2
5. School events	40	5.85	1.145	7	73	5.33	1.659	7
6. Children's health and safety	40	8.68	.730	1	73	8.34	1.083	1
7. Parent communications / involvement opportunities	40	7.45	1.218	4	73	6.52	1.529	6

Center Characteristics

Section III addressed the parents' evaluation of the current child care center characteristics were, including items: 1) location and distance from home, 2) building design and space, 3) classroom design and furnishings, 4) playground design and equipment, 5) education teaching aids, 6) high-tech equipment, 7) play materials, and 8) tuition cost. A Likert scale consisting of nine points that ranged from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important) was used to measure the American and Korean parents' perceptions. Table 12 presents the results of Items 1 through 8 in this section of the survey with the mean, standard deviation, and rank order for each item.

There were two items (7 and 5) that the American parents thought were very important with mean scores ranging from 7.55 – 7.45. There were six items (4, 3, 2, 8, 1, and 6) the parents felt were moderately important with mean scores ranging from 6.53 – 5.35. The American parents thought the most important item was Item 7 – 'Play materials, including blocks, puzzles, and dolls ($\overline{x}$=7.55)' and the least important items were Item 1 – 'Location and distance from home ($\overline{x}$=5.35)' and Item 6 – 'High-tech equipment, including computers and projector and audio-visual equipment ($\overline{x}$=5.35).'

There were two items (5 and 4) that the Korean parents considered very important with mean scores ranging from 7.05 –7.04. Also, there were six items (3, 7, 8, 1, 6, and 2) that the parents thought were moderately important with mean scores ranging from 6.74 – 5.18. For the Korean parents, the most important item was Item 5 – 'Educational teaching aids, including books, bulletin boards, and games ($\overline{x}$=7.05).' Also, the least important item was Item 2 – 'Building design and space ($\overline{x}$=5.18).'

Every item received a total group mean score above the mid-point (moderately important, $\overline{x}$=5.00) of the nine point Likert scale that indicated that American and Korean parents rated every item in Section III, center characteristics, as important. Table 13 presents the computed results.

Table 13

Section III: Center Characteristics

	America				Korea			
Item	n	$\overline{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\overline{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Location and distance from home	40	5.35	1.968	7	73	5.77	1.594	6
2. Building design and space	40	5.73	1.432	5	73	5.18	1.494	8
3. Classroom design and furnishings	40	6.28	1.358	4	73	6.74	1.270	3
4. Playground design and equipment	40	6.53	1.240	3	73	7.04	1.327	2
5. Educational teaching aids	40	7.45	1.197	2	73	7.05	1.499	1
6. High-tech equipment	40	5.35	1.703	7	73	5.71	1.419	7
7. Play materials	40	7.55	1.061	1	73	6.12	1.691	4
8. Tuition cost	40	5.65	1.733	6	73	5.92	1.656	5

Curriculum

Section IV addressed parents' perceptions of curriculum activities were, including items: 1) literacy activities, 2) second language activities, 3) science activities, 4) math activities, 5) social studies activities, 6) art activities, 7) music activities, 8) physical activities, 9) computer activities, 10) culture activities, and 11) safety education activities. A Likert scale consisting of nine points ranging from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important) was used. Table 14 presents the results of Items 1 through 11 in this section of the survey with the mean, standard deviation, and rank order of the items.

In the American parents' perceptions, six items (1, 8, 7, 6, 4, and 11) had mean scores ranging from 8.28 – 7.00 which represented that the parents thought that these activities were very important for their children. And there were five items (10, 5, 3, 2, and 9) that the parents felt were moderately important with mean scores ranging from 6.88 – 5.35. The highest mean score item was Item 1 – 'Literacy activities ($\overline{x}$=8.28).'

From the Korean parents' responses, there were four very important items (11, 8, 5, and 1) with mean scores ranging from 7.90 – 7.14. Six items (10, 7, 6, 3, 2, and 4) were items that the parents assumed were moderately important ($\overline{x}$=6.82 to $\overline{x}$=6.01). The most important item was Item 11 – 'Safety education activities ($\overline{x}$=7.90).' Also, there was only one less important Item 9 – 'Computer activities ($\overline{x}$=4.77).'

Most items had mean scores ranging above the mid-point ($\overline{x}$=5.00) of the nine point Likert scale that indicated that the American and Korean parents assumed that every item in Section IV, curriculum, were important, except for Item 9 – 'Computer activities' from the Korean parents' responses. Item 9 was the least important item for both American and Korean parents (America – $\overline{x}$=5.35, Korea – $\overline{x}$=4.77). See Table 14.

Table 14

Section IV: Curriculum

	America				Korea			
Item	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Literacy activities	40	8.28	.933	1	73	7.14	1.512	4
2. Second language activities	40	5.65	1.477	10	73	6.05	1.763	9
3. Science activities	40	6.65	1.331	9	73	6.19	1.381	8
4. Math activities	40	7.08	1.248	5	73	6.01	1.338	10
5. Social studies activities	40	6.75	1.410	8	73	7.47	1.226	3
6. Art activities	40	7.23	1.310	4	73	6.67	1.395	7
7. Music activities	40	7.30	1.265	3	73	6.77	1.419	6
8. Physical activities	40	7.85	949	2	73	7.88	1.201	2
9. Computer activities	40	5.35	1.847	11	73	4.77	1.637	11
10. Cultural activities	40	6.88	1.381	7	73	6.82	1.549	5
11. Safety education activities	40	7.00	1.601	6	73	7.90	1.325	1

Teacher Characteristics

Section V of the survey contained 10 questions and 5 sub-questions concerning the importance of teacher characteristics at the child care centers were, including items: 1) educational philosophy, 2) educational degrees, 3) religion, 4) age, 5) years of teaching experience, 6) teacher and parent partnerships, 7) relation to child, 8) marital status, 9) status as a parent, and 10) the ratio of children to teacher. A Likert scale, with a range of 1 (not important) through 9 (extremely important) was used in Items 1 to 10. Table 15

shows the results, with the mean and standard deviation for the American and Korean parents on all items, and the rank order of items based on the mean scores. Also, the parents were asked to select their preferences under the five items (4, 1, 8, 9, and 10) that they thought were items that were important to obtain a more specific response. The results of the sub-questions are depicted in Table 16 through 20.

There were four items (7, 10, 1, and 6) that the American parents felt were very important with mean scores ranging from 8.73 – 7.50. Item 2 – 'Teacher's educational degrees,' the parents thought was moderately important ($\overline{x}$=6.38). For Item 5 – 'Teacher's years of teaching experience,' the parents indicated teacher's years of teaching experience as being less important ($\overline{x}$=4.03). There were four items (4, 3, 9, and 8) that the parents felt were not important with mean scores ranging from 2.35 – 1.50: Item 4 – 'Teacher's age ($\overline{x}$=2.35),' Item 3 – 'Teacher's religion ($\overline{x}$=2.30),' Item 9 – 'Teacher's status as a parent ($\overline{x}$=2.20),' and Item 8 – 'Teacher's marital status ($\overline{x}$=1.50).'

From the Korean parents' responses, there were four items (7, 1, 10, and 6) that they felt were very important with mean scores ranging from 8.43 – 7.04, and the parents indicated moderately important for Item 5 ($\overline{x}$=6.10) and 2 ($\overline{x}$=5.64). For Items 4, 3, 8, and 9, the parents indicated that they were less important ($\overline{x}$= 4.79 to $\overline{x}$=3.26). The least important item was Item 9 – 'Teacher's status as a parent ($\overline{x}$=3.26).'

Both American and Korean parents thought that Items 1, 6, 7, and 10 were very important. The most important item was Item 7 – 'Teacher's relationship to my child (America – $\overline{x}$=8.73, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.43).' The three other very important items were Item 1 – 'Teacher's education philosophy (America – $\overline{x}$=7.73, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.19),' Item 6 –

'Teacher and parent partnerships (America – $\bar{x}$=7.50, Korea – $\bar{x}$=7.04),' and Item 10 – 'The ratio of children to teacher (America – $\bar{x}$=7.75, Korea – $\bar{x}$=7.52).' See Table 15.

Table 15

Section V: Teacher Characteristics

	America				Korea			
Item	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Teacher's education philosophy	40	7.73	1.358	3	73	8.19	1.126	2
2. Teacher's educational degrees	40	6.38	1.917	5	73	5.64	1.494.	6
3. Teacher's religion	40	2.30	1.682	8	73	4.19	1.761	8
4. Teacher's age	40	2.35	1.442	7	73	4.79	1.453	7
5. Teacher's years of teaching experience	39	4.03	1.495	6	72	6.10	1.465	5
6. Teacher and parent partnerships	40	7.50	1.301	4	73	7.04	1.495	4
7. Teacher's relationship to my child	40	8.73	.599	1	73	8.34	1.044	1
8. Teacher's marital status	40	1.50	.961	10	71	3.79	1.638	9
9. Teacher's status as a parent	40	2.20	1.667	9	71	3.62	1.553	10
10. The ratio of children to teacher	40	7.75	1.080	2	71	7.52	1.340	3

Table 16 reflects Item 4-1 – 'Preference age of teacher' from Item 4 – 'Teacher's age.' The parents rated this item on a Likert scale above mid-point ($\overline{x}$=5.00) which signified that the parents thought that the teacher's age was important for their children.

For the American parents, only three parents of the total American respondents (n=40) responded to this question. Two parents (66.7%) selected ages 31-35 and one parent (33.3%) chose ages 26-30. Forty Korean parents of the total Korean respondents (n=73) responded to this item. The majority of the parents (n=23, 62.5%) selected ages 26-30. Ten parents (25.0%) chose ages 31-35 and five parents (12.5%) preferred ages 20-25. See Table 16.

Table 16

Section V: Item 4-1: Preference Age of Teacher

	America		Korea		Total	
Age	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
20-25 years old	0	.0	5	12.5	5	11.6
26-30 years old	1	33.3	25	62.5	26	60.5
31-35 years old	2	66.7	10	25.0	12	27.9
Total	3	100.0	40	100.0	43	100.0

Table 17 presents the results of Item 5-1 – 'Preference years of teacher's teaching experience' from Item 5 – 'Teacher's years of teaching experience.' The parents rated this item on a Likert scale above 5 (moderately important, $\overline{x}$=5.00) which signified that the parents thought that the teacher's teaching experience was important for their children.

For the American parents, fifteen parents of the total American respondents (n=40) responded to this question. Nine parents (60.0%) preferred a teacher who had 6 to 10 years teaching experience. Five parents (33.3%) decided that 26-30 years teaching experience was important and only one parent (6.7%) preferred 11-15 years teaching experience. Also, sixty-four Korean parents of the total Korean respondents (n=73) responded to this item. The majority of the parents (n=46, 71.9%) chose 6-10 years teaching experience. Eighteen parents (28.1%) selected 1-5 years teaching experience. Table 17 presents the computed results.

Table 17

Section V: Item 5-1: Preference Years of Teacher's Teaching Experience

	America		Korea		Total	
Years	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
1-5 years	5	33.3	18	28.1	23	29.1
6-10 years	9	60.0	46	71.9	55	69.6
11-15 years	1	6.7	0	.0	1	1.3
Total	15	100.0	64	100.0	79	100.0

Table 18 reflects Item 8-1 – 'Preference marital status of teacher' from Item 8 – 'Teacher's marital status.' Parents rated this item above mid-point (moderately important, $\bar{x}$ =5.00) which signified that the parents thought teacher's marital status was important for their children.

There was no response from American parents that the teacher's marital status was important for their children. For the Korean respondents, there were twenty-two

parents of the total Korean parents (n=73) who responded to this question. Exactly one-half of the parents (n=11, 50.0%) preferred a married teacher and another one-half of the parents preferred that the teacher be single. See Table 18.

Table 18

Section V: Item 8-1: Preference Marital Status of Teacher

	America		Korea		Total	
Marital Status	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Married	0	.0	11	50.0	11	50.0
Not Married	0	.0	11	50.0	11	50.0
Total	0	.0	22	100.0	22	100.0

Table 19 presents the results of Item 9-1 – 'Preference status of teacher as a parent' from Item 9 – 'Teacher's status as a parent.' When the parents rated this item moderately important or higher ($\overline{x}$=5.00), this signified that the parents felt that the teacher's status as a parent was important for their children.

For the American parents, only seven parents of the total American respondents (n=40) responded to this question. All respondents of this question preferred a teacher who has children. Also, eighteen Korean parents of the total Korean respondents (n=73) thought that Item 9 was important for their children. Fourteen parents (77.8%) preferred a teacher who has children and four parents (22.2%) chose a teacher who does not have children. See Table 19.

Table 19

Section V: Item 9-1: Preference Status of Teacher as a Parent

	America		Korea		Total	
Parental Status	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
Children	7	100.0	14	77.8	21	84.0
No children	0	.0	4	22.2	4	16.0
Total	7	100.0	18	100.0	25	100.0

Table 20 indicates Item 10-1 – 'Preference of the ratio of children to teacher' from Item 10 – 'The ratio of children to teacher.' The parents who rated this item above mid-point ($\overline{x}$=5.00) signified that the parents thought that the ratio of children to teacher was important for their children.

For the American parents, thirty-three parents responded to this question out of forty respondents. Almost one-half of the parents (n=17, 51.5%) selected 6-10 children to one teacher, seven parents (21.1%) preferred 1-5 children, and another seven parents (21.1%) chose 11-15 children. Only two parents (6.1%) decided on 16-20 children. Also, seventy-one Korean parents replied out of the total respondents (n=73). Twenty-nine parents (40.8%) preferred 6-10 children, twenty-five (35.2%) decided on 11-15 children, ten parents (14.1%) decided on 16-20 children, five parents (7.0%) chose 1-5 children, and two parents (2.8%) felt that 21-25 children were appropriate for one teacher. Table 20 presents the computed results.

Table 20

Section V: Item 10-1: Preference of the Ratio of Children to Teacher

	America		Korea		Total	
Number of children	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
1-5 children	7	21.2	5	7.0	12	11.5
6-10 children	17	51.5	29	40.8	46	44.2
11-15 children	7	21.2	25	35.2	32	30.8
16-20 children	2	6.1	10	14.1	12	11.5
21-25 children	0	.0	2	2.8	2	1.9
Total	33	100.0	71	100.0	104	100.0

Director Characteristics

Section VI addresses parental perceptions towards the importance of director characteristics were, including the director's 1) educational philosophy, 2) educational degrees, 3) years of experience as a director, 4) religion, 5) age, and 6) years of teaching experience as a teacher. A Likert scale consisting of nine points ranging from 1 (not important) through 9 (extremely important) was used to measure the American and Korean parents' perceptions. Table 21 presents the results of Items 1 through 6 in this section of the survey with the mean, standard deviation, and rank order for each of the American and Korean parents' perceptions. Also, the parents were asked to select their preferences under three items (3, 5, and 6). The results of the sub-questions are shown in Table 22 through 24.

For the American respondents, only Item 1 – 'Director's educational philosophy ($\overline{x}$=7.63)' was very important. There were three items (2, 6, and 3) that the American parents felt were moderately important: Item 2 – 'Director's educational degrees ($\overline{x}$ =6.65),' Item 6 – 'Director's years of teaching experience as a teacher ($\overline{x}$=5.90),' and Item 3 – 'Director's years of experience as a director ($\overline{x}$=5.35).' There were two items (5 and 4) that the parents assumed were not important: Item 5 – 'Director's age ($\overline{x}$=2.18),' and Item 4 – 'Director's religion ($\overline{x}$=1.93).'

There was only Item 1 – 'Director's educational philosophy' that the Korean parents felt was very important with a mean score of 7.85, and there were three items (6, 3, and 2) that the parents thought were moderately important with mean scores ranging from 6.49 – 5.58. For Item 5 and 4, the parents indicated that they were less important: Item 5 – 'Director's age ($\overline{x}$=4.37),' and Item 4 – 'Director's religion ($\overline{x}$=4.18).'

Both American and Korean parents thought that Item 1 – 'Director's educational philosophy (America – $\overline{x}$=7.63, Korea – $\overline{x}$=7.85)' was very important for their children. Also, for Item 4 and 5, all the parents rated 'Director's religion, (America – $\overline{x}$=1.93, Korea – $\overline{x}$=4.18)' and 'Director's age (America – $\overline{x}$=2.18, Korea – $\overline{x}$=4.37)' as less important or not important for their children. See Table 21.

Table 21

Section VI: Director Characteristics

Item	America				Korea			
	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Director's educational philosophy	40	7.63	1.612	1	73	7.85	1.411	1
2. Director's educational degrees	40	6.65	2.045	2	73	5.58	1.471	4
3. Director's years of experience as a director	40	5.35	1.833	4	72	6.15	1.598	3
4. Director's religion	40	1.93	1.492	6	73	4.18	1.702	6
5. Director's age	40	2.18	1.500	5	73	4.37	1.349	5
6. Director's years of teaching experience as a teacher	40	5.90	1.646	3	72	6.49	1.482	2

Table 22 presents the results of Item 3-1 – 'Preference years of director's experience as a director' from Item 3 – 'Director's years of experience as a director.' The parents were asked this question, and when the parents rated on a Likert scale above 5 (moderately important, $\bar{x}$=5.00), that signified that the parents felt that director's years of experience as a director was important for their children.

For the American parents, twenty-one parents of the total American respondents (n=40) responded to this question. The majority of the parents (n=13, 61.9%) preferred a

director who had 6-10 years director experience. Six parents (28.6%) chose 11-15 years of director experience. Only one parent (4.8%) decided on 1-5 years experience and one parent selected 16-20 years director experience. Also, fifty-nine Korean parents of the total Korean respondents (n=73) thought that Item 3 was important for their children. The majority of the parents (n=25, 42.4%) preferred a director who had 11-15 years of experience. Sixteen (27.1%) parents decided on 6-10 years, thirteen parents chose 16-20 years, three parents (5.1%) selected 1-5 years, and only two parents (3.4%) felt that 21 years or longer director experience was suitable for their children. See Table 22.

Table 22

Section VI: Item 3-1: Preference Years of Director's Experience as a Director

	America		Korea		Total	
Years	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
1-5 years	1	4.8	3	5.1	4	5.0
6-10 years	13	61.9	16	27.1	29	36.3
11-15 years	6	28.6	25	42.4	31	38.8
16-20 years	1	4.8	13	22.0	14	17.5
21 years or longer	0	.0	2	3.4	1	2.5
Total	21	100.0	59	100.0	80	100.0

Table 23 reflects Item 5-1 – 'Preference age of director' from Item 4 – 'Director's age.' When the parents rated the item above mid-point (moderately important, $\overline{x}$=5.00), that signified that the parents thought that the director's age was important for their children as they answered the sub-questions.

Only two parents of the total American respondents (n=40) responded to this question about age preference for the director. One parent (50.0%) decided on ages 31-35 and the one other parent (50.0%) chose ages 36-40. And thirty-five Korean parents of the total Korean respondents (n=73) replied to this item. The majority of the parents (n=19, 54.3%) decided on ages 41-45. Eleven parents (31.4%) chose ages 34-40 and five parents (14.3%) preferred ages 46 or older director. See Table 23.

Table 23

Section VI: Item 5-1: Preference Age of Director

	America		Korea		Total	
Years	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
31-35 years old	1	50.0	0	.0	1	2.7
36-40 years old	1	50.0	11	31.4	12	32.4
41-45 years old	0	.0	19	54.3	19	51.4
46 or older	0	.0	5	14.3	5	13.5
Total	2	100.0	35	100.0	37	100.0

Table 24 presents the results of Item 6-1 – 'Preference years of director's teaching experience as a teacher' from Item 6 – 'Director's years of teaching experience.' The parents were requested to answer the sub-questions, when they rated the item above mid-point (moderately important, $\overline{x}$=5.00), that signified the parents assumed Item 6 was important for their children.

For the American parents, thirty parents of the total American respondents (n=40) responded to this question. The majority of the parents (n=19, 63.3%) preferred a director

who had 6 to 10 years teaching experience. Four parents (13.3%) decided on 1-5 years, six parents (20.0%) chose 11-15 years, and only one parent (3.3%) preferred none for teaching experience. Also, sixty-eight Korean parents of the total Korean respondents (n=73) replied to this item. Approximately half of the parents (n=33, 48.5%) chose 6-10 years teaching experience. Nineteen parents (27.9%) decided on 11-15 years, eleven parents (16.2%) selected 16-20 years, and three parents (4.4%) preferred 1-5 years. Table 24 presents the computed results.

Table 24

Section VI: Item 6-1: Preference Years of Director's Teaching Experience as a Teacher

	America		Korea		Total	
Years	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %	Freq.	Valid %
None	1	3.3	0	.0	1	1.0
1-5 years	4	13.3	3	4.4	7	7.1
6-10 years	19	63.3	33	48.5	52	53.1
11-15 years	6	20.0	19	27.9	25	25.5
16-20 years	0	.0	11	16.2	11	11.2
21 years or longer	0	.0	2	2.9	2	2.0
Total	30	100.0	68	100.0	98	100.0

School Events

In Section VII, school events, there were 6 items that covered the importance of school events at child care centers were, including items: 1) parent-teacher conferences, 2) children's work exhibition and documentation of learning, 3) field trips, 4) parent observation and participation, 5) children's performances, including plays, concerts, holiday celebrations, etc., and 6) parent education opportunities. A Likert scale that ranged from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important) was used for the parents to mark their specific response to each item. Table 25 presents the results of Items 1 through 6 in this section of the survey with the mean, standard deviation, and rank order for each of the American and Korean parents' perceptions.

The American parents' perceptions on Item 1 – 'Parent-teacher conferences' and 4 – 'Parent observation and participation' had mean scores ranging from 7.83 and 7.08, representing that the parents thought that these items were very important. And there were four items (2, 3, 5, and 6) that the parents felt were moderately important with mean scores ranging from 6.95 – 5.33. The lowest mean score item was Item 6 – 'Parent education opportunities ($\overline{x}$=5.33).'

From the Korean parents' responses, there were five moderately important items (1, 3, 4, 5, and 6) with mean scores ranging from 6.89 – 5.71. Only Item 2 – 'Children's work exhibition and documentation of learning ($\overline{x}$=4.81),' was less important.

Most items had mean scores ranging above the mid-point ($\overline{x}$=5.00) of the nine point Likert scale that indicated that the American and Korean parents assumed that every item in this section was important, except for Item 2 from the Korean parents' responses.

Item 1 – 'Parent-teacher conferences' was the most important item for both American and Korean parents (America – $\overline{x}$ =7.83, Korea – $\overline{x}$ =6.89). See Table 25.

Table 25

Section VII: School Events

	America				Korea			
Item	n	$\overline{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\overline{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Parent-teacher conference	40	7.83	1.083	1	73	6.89	1.696	1
2. Children's work exhibition / documentation of learning	40	6.95	1.413	3	73	4.81	1.785	6
3. Field trips	40	6.33	1.639	4	73	6.56	1.554	2
4. Parent observation / participation	40	7.08	1.269	2	73	5.97	1.490	3
5. Children performances	40	6.03	1.819	5	73	5.86	1.836	4
6. Parent education opportunities	39	5.33	1.628	6	73	5.71	1.775	5

Health and Safety

Section VIII addressed parental perceptions toward parents' evaluation of health and safety at child care centers were, including items: 1) cleanliness, 2) sanitation, 3) security, 4) nutritional lunches and snacks, 5) safety of classroom, playground, play materials, educational aids, school bus, etc., 6) administration of medication and first-aid, and 7) center illness polices, such as nursing and keeping sick children at home. A Likert

scale including nine points that ranged from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important) was used to measure the American and Korean parents' perceptions. Table 26 presents the results of Items 1 through 7 in this section of the survey with the mean, standard deviation, and rank order for both American and Korean parents' perceptions.

For the American parents' perceptions, all items (3, 5, 2, 1, 6, 7, and 4) had mean scores ranging from 8.48 – 7.88, representing that the American parents considered these items as very important. Item 4 – 'Nutritional lunches and snacks ($\overline{x}$=7.88)' had the lowest score and was the least important item for the American parents in this section.

The Korean parents thought that all seven items (3, 5, 4, 2, 1, 6, and 7) were very important with mean scores ranging from 8.63 – 7.38. Item 7 – 'Center illness policies, such as nursing and keeping sick children at home ($\overline{x}$=7.83),' had the lowest mean score.

Every item, Items 1 through 7, received a total group mean score above the seven points (very important, $\overline{x}$=7.00) of the Likert scale that signified that both countries' parents, American and Korean, thought that all items in this section were very important for their child enrolled at a child care center. Items 3 and 5 were the first and second highest mean score items for both American and Korean parents, indicating that the parents felt that these items were the most important items, Item 3 – 'Security (America – $\overline{x}$=8.48, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.08)' and Item 5 – 'Safety of classroom, playground, play materials, educational aids, school bus, etc. (America – $\overline{x}$=8.45, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.51).' Table 26 presents the computed results.

Table 26

Section VIII: Health and Safety

Item	America				Korea			
	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Cleanliness	40	8.35	.770	4	73	7.99	1.242	5
2. Sanitation	40	8.40	.810	3	73	8.08	1.199	4
3. Security	40	8.48	.816	1	73	8.63	.825	1
4. Nutritional lunches and snacks	40	7.88	1.114	7	73	8.12	1.154	3
5. Safety of classroom, playground, school bus, etc	40	8.45	.783	2	73	8.51	1.002	2
6. Administration of medication and first-aid	40	8.10	1.150	5	73	7.49	1.510	6
7. Center illness polices	40	7.65	1.46o	6	73	7.38	1.515	7

Parent Communications and Involvement Opportunities

In Section IX, there were 6 items that covered the importance of parent communication and involvement opportunities at child care centers were, including items: 1) daily communications, 2) phone calls and e-mails, 3) parent letters and newsletters, 4) opportunities for parents to volunteer, 5) parent-teacher conferences, and 6) parent bulletin boards. A Likert scale that ranged from 1 (not important) to 9 (extremely important) was used for the parents to mark their specific response to each

item. Table 27 presents the results of Items 1 through 6 in this section of the survey with the mean, standard deviation, and rank order for both American and Korean parents' perceptions.

For the American parents' perceptions, there were three items (5, 3, and 1) that had mean scores ranging from 7.78 – 7.08, representing that the parents thought that these items were very important for their children: 'Parent-teacher conferences,' 'Parent letters and newsletters,' and 'Daily communications.' And there were three items (2, 4, and 6) that the parents felt were moderately important with mean scores ranging from 7.10 – 5.05. The lowest mean score item was Item 6 – 'Parent bulletin boards ($\overline{x}$=5.05).'

From the Korean parents' responses, all six items (5, 3, 2, 6, 4, and 1) had mean scores ranging from 6.85 – 5.32 that signified that the Korean parents thought that all items in this section were moderately important. The lowest score item was Item 1 – 'Daily communication ($\overline{x}$=5.32).'

Every item had mean scores ranging above the mid-point (moderately important, $\overline{x}$=5.00) of the nine point Likert scale that indicated that the American and Korean parents assumed that every item in this section was important. Items 5 and 3 were the first and second highest mean score items for both American and Korean parents, indicating that the parents felt that these items were the most important items, Item 5 – 'Parent-teacher conference (America – $\overline{x}$=7.78, Korea – $\overline{x}$=6.85)' and Item 3 – 'Parent letters and newsletters (America – $\overline{x}$=7.10, Korea – $\overline{x}$=).' See Table 27.

Table 27

Section IX: Parent Communications and Involvement Opportunities

Item	America				Korea			
	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Ord.
1. Daily communications	40	7.08	1.670	3	73	5.32	1.971	6
2. Phone calls and e-mails	40	6.28	1.710	4	73	6.07	1.619	3
3. Parent letters and newsletters	40	7.10	1.277	2	72	6.34	1.502	2
4. Opportunities for parents to volunteer in classroom/field trips	40	5.85	1.331	5	73	5.74	1.724	5
5. Parent-teacher conferences	40	7.78	1.025	1	73	6.85	1.656	1
6. Parent bulletin boards	40	5.05	1.947	6	73	5.85	1.721	4

Research Questions

Section I to IX of the survey, including 6 to 11 items in each of the sections, are presented in Table 28 though Table 36, using a *t*-test for statistical differences. The mean and standard deviation are also computed. The following is an overview of each research question and section: general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety at child care center, and parent communications and involvement opportunities.

Research Question 1

Research question #1 – Were there differences in parents' demographic characteristics between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were two significant differences in Section I on the survey: Item 6 – 'Age of child enrolled at child care center,' and Item 7 – 'Number of children in family.'

To answer this question, a *t*-test was used. The *t*-test on age of child showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly lower ($\bar{x}$ =3.82) than the Koreans ($\bar{x}$ =4.96), with mean scores indicating that the American children who enrolled at child care centers were younger than the Korean children. The *t*-test also found a significant difference in number of children in family. There was a significant difference at the .05 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\bar{x}$ =2.20) than the Koreans' ($\bar{x}$ =1.95), indicating that the American parents had more children than the Korean parents had in their family. See Table 28.

Table 28

Significant Differences in Section I: Demographic Characteristics

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	P
6. Age of child enrolled in center	3.82	.823	4.96	.807	-7.064	.000	.001
7. Number of children in family	2.20	.723	1.95	.468	2.009	.049	.05

Research Question 2

Research question #2 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the general evaluations of the child care center between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in physical environment, director's educational competence, teacher's educational competence, school events, and children's health and safety based on nationality. There were two significant differences in Section II on the survey: Item 2 – 'Curriculum, including reading, math, science, art, social studies, etc.,' and Item 7 – 'Parent communications and involvement opportunities, including parent-teacher conference, daily news flash, talking with teachers, etc.'

The *t*-test on Item 2 – 'Curriculum' showed a significant difference at the .01 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$ =7.73) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$ =6.77), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that curriculum was more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 7 – 'Parent communications and involvement opportunities' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$ =7.45) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$ =6.52), indicating that the American parents felt that parent communications and involvement opportunities were more important than the Korean parents felt.

There was also a significant difference at the .05 probability level concerning Section II, the overall general evaluation of the child care center. The American parents' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$ =7.41) than the Korean parents ($\overline{x}$ =7.00),

signifying that the American parents assumed the overall general evaluation of the child care center was more important than the Korean parents assumed. See Table 29.

Table 29

Significant Differences in Section II: General Evaluation

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	T	Sig.	P
2. Curriculum	7.73	1.320	6.77	1.603	3.225	.002	.01
7. Parent communications and involvement	7.45	1.218	6.52	1.529	3.310	.001	.001
Average Section II	7.41	.719	7.00	.903	2.455	.016	.05

Research Question 3

Research question #3 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the center characteristics between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in center location and distance from home, building design and space, classroom design and furnishings, educational teaching aids, high-tech equipment, and tuition cost based on nationality. There were two significant differences in Section III of the survey: Item 4 – 'Playground design and equipment,' and Item 7 – 'Play materials, including blocks, puzzles, dolls, etc.'

The *t*-test on Item 4 – 'Playground design and equipment' showed a significant difference at the .05 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly lower ($\bar{x}$=6.53) than the Koreans ($\bar{x}$=7.04) did, with mean scores

indicating that the American parents thought that playground design and equipment was less important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 7 – 'Play materials, including blocks, puzzles, dolls, etc.,' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\bar{x}$=7.55) than the Koreans' ($\bar{x}$=6.12), indicating that the American parents felt that play materials were more important than the Korean parents felt. Also, there were no significant differences in overall Section III, center characteristics. Table 30 presents the computed results.

Table 30

Significant Differences in Section III: Center Characteristics

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	p
4. Playground design and equipment	6.53	1.240	7.04	1.327	-2.022	.046	.05
7. Play materials (blocks/puzzles/dolls)	7.55	1.061	6.12	1.691	5.499	.000	.001

Research Question 4

Research question #4 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the curriculums between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in second language activities, including listening, speaking, writing, and reading, science activities, physical activities, computer activities, and culture activities, including traditional and multicultural. There were six significant

differences in Section IV of the survey: Item 1 – 'Literacy activities as a language, including listening, speaking, writing, and reading,' Item 4 – 'Math activities,' Item 5 – 'Social studies activities,' Item 6 – 'Art activities,' Item 7 – 'Music activities,' and Item 11 – 'Safety education activities.'

The *t*-test on Item 1 – 'Literacy activities as a language, including listening, speaking, writing, and reading,' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=8.28) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=7.14), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that literacy activities were more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 4 – 'Math activities' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=7.08) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=6.01), indicating that the American parents felt that math activities were more important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 5 – 'Social studies activities' showed a significant difference at the .01 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=6.75) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=7.47), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that social studies activities were less important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 6 – 'Art activities' at the .05 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$ =7.23) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=6.67), indicating that the American parents felt that art activities were more important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 7 – 'Music activities' showed a significant difference at the .05 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\bar{x}$ =7.30) than the Koreans ($\bar{x}$ =6.77), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that music activities were more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 11 – 'Safety education activities' at the .01 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\bar{x}$ =7.00) than the Koreans' ($\bar{x}$ =7.90), indicating that the American parents felt that safety education activities were less important than the Korean parents felt. Also, there were no significant differences in overall Section IV, curriculum. Table 31 presents the computed results.

Table 31

Significant Differences in Section IV: Curriculum

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	p
1. Literacy activities	8.28	.933	7.14	1.512	4.939	.000	.001
4. Math activities	7.08	1.248	6.01	1.338	4.126	.000	.001
5. Social studies activities	6.75	1.410	7.47	1.226	-2.813	.006	.01
6. Art activities	7.23	1.310	6.67	1.395	2.061	.042	.05
7. Music activities	7.30	1.265	6.77	1.419	1.981	.050	.05
11. Safety education activities	7.00	1.601	7.90	1.325	-3.219	.002	.01

Research Question 5

Research question #5 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the teacher characteristics between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in teacher's educational philosophy, teacher and parent partnerships, and the ratio of children to teacher. There were eight significant differences in Section V of the survey: Item 2 – 'Teacher's educational degrees,' Item 3 – 'Teacher's religion,' Item 4 – 'Teacher's age,' Item 5 – 'Teacher's years of teaching experience,' Item 7 – 'Teacher's relationship to my child,' Item 8 – 'Teacher's marital status,' Item 9 – 'Teacher's status as a parent,' and Item 10-1 – 'Preference the ratio of children to teacher.'

The *t*-test on Item 2 – 'Teacher's educational degrees' showed a significant difference at the .05 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=6.38) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=5.64), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that teacher's educational degrees was more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 3 – 'Teacher's religion' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=2.30) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=4.19), indicating that the American parents felt that teacher's religion was less important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 4 – 'Teacher's age' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly lower ($\overline{x}$ =2.35) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=4.79), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that teacher's age was less important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 5 – 'Teacher's years of teaching experience' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=4.03) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=6.10), indicating that the American parents felt that teacher's years of teaching experience was less important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 7 – 'Teacher's relationship to my child' showed a significant difference at the .05 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=8.73) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=8.34), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that teacher's relationship to my child was more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 8 – 'Teacher's marital status' at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=1.50) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=3.79), indicating that the American parents thought that teacher's marital status was less important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test on Item 9 – 'Teacher's status as a parent' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=2.20) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=3.62), with mean scores indicating that the American parents felt that teacher's status as a parent was less important than the Korean parents felt.

Although there was no significant difference in Item 10 – 'The ratio of children to teacher,' there was a significant difference on the sub-question. The *t*-test found a significant difference in Item 10-1 – 'Preference of the ratio of children to teacher' at

the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=8.82) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=12.45), indicating that the American parents preferred less children per one teacher in the classroom than the Korean parents preferred.

There was also a significant difference at the .001 probability level concerning the overall Section V, teacher characteristics. The American parents mean score was significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=5.05) than the Korean parents ($\overline{x}$=5.95), signifying that the American parents assumed that the overall teacher characteristics were less important than the Korean parents assumed. See Table 32.

Table 32

Significant Differences in Section V: Teacher Characteristics

Item	America		Korea		t	Sig.	p
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD			
2. Teachers' educational degrees	6.38	1.917	5.64	1.494	2.245	.027	.05
3. Teacher's religion	2.30	1.682	4.19	1.761	-5.546	.000	.001
4. Teacher's age	2.35	1.442	4.79	1.453	-8.577	.000	.001
5. Teacher's years of teaching experience	4.03	1.495	6.10	1.465	-7.062	.000	.001
7. Teacher's relationship to my child	8.73	.599	8.34	1.044	2.475	.015	.05
8. Teacher's marital status	1.50	.961	3.79	1.638	-9.277	.000	.001
9. Teacher's status as a parent	2.20	1.667	3.62	1.553	-4.504	.000	.001
10-1. The ratio of children to teacher	8.82	4.042	12.45	4.913	-3.702	.000	.001
Average Section V	5.05	.712	5.94	.791	-5.928	.000	.001

Research Question 6

Research question #6 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the director characteristics between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in director's educational philosophy and director's years of teaching experience as a teacher based on nationality. There were four significant differences in Section VI of the survey: Item 2 – 'Director's educational degrees,' Item 3 – 'Director's years of experience as a director,' Item 4 – 'Director's religion,' and Item 5 – 'Director's age.'

The *t*-test on Item 2 – 'Director's educational degrees' showed a significant difference at the .01 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=6.65) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=5.58), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that director's educational degrees was more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 3 – 'Director's years of experience as a director' at the .05 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=5.35) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=6.15), indicating that the American parents felt that the years of director's director experience was less important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 4 – 'Director's religion' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly lower ($\overline{x}$=1.93) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=4.18), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that director's religion was less important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 5 – 'Director's age' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\bar{x}$=2.18) than the Koreans' mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.37), indicating that the American parents felt that director's age was less important than the Korean parents felt.

There was also a significant difference at the .001 probability level concerning the overall Section VI, director characteristics. The American parents' mean score was significantly lower ($\bar{x}$=4.94) than the Korean parents' mean score ($\bar{x}$=5.79), signifying that the American parents assumed that overall director characteristics was less important than the Korean parents assumed. Table 33 presents the computed results.

Table 33

Significant Differences in Section VI: Director Characteristics

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	p
2. Director's educational degrees	6.65	2.045	5.58	1.471	2.934	.005	.01
3. Years of experiences as a director	5.35	1.833	6.15	1.598	-2.416	.017	.05
4. Director's religion	1.93	1.492	4.18	1.702	-7.020	.000	.001
5. Director's age	2.18	1.500	4.37	1.349	-7.947	.000	.001
Average Section VI	4.94	1.018	5.79	.903	-4.558	.000	.001

Research Question 7

Research question #7 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the school events between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in field trips, children's performances, including plays, concerts, holiday celebrations, etc., and parent education opportunities, based on nationality. There were three significant differences in Section VII of the survey: Item 1 – 'Parent-teacher conferences,' Item 2 – 'Children's work exhibition and documentation of learning,' and Item 4 – 'Parent observation and participation.'

The *t*-test on Item 1 – 'Parent-teacher conferences' showed a significant difference at the .01 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=7.83) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=6.89), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that parent-teacher conferences were more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 2 – 'Children's work exhibition and documentation of learning' at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=6.95) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=4.81), indicating that the American parents felt that children's work exhibition and documentation of learning was more important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 4 – 'Parent observation and participation' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=7.08) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=5.97), indicating that the American parents thought that Item 4 was more important than the Korean parents thought.

There was also a significant difference at the .001 probability level concerning the overall Section VII, school events. The American parents' mean score was significantly higher ($\bar{x}$=6.60) than the Korean parents' ($\bar{x}$=5.97), signifying that the American parents assumed that the overall school events were more important than the Korean parents assumed. Table 34 presents the computed results.

Table 34

Significant Differences in Section VII: School Events

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	p
1. Parent-teacher conference	7.83	1.083	6.89	1.696	3.147	.002	.01
2. Children's work exhibition / documentation of learning	6.95	1.413	4.81	1.785	7.002	.000	.001
4. Parent observation / participation	7.08	1.269	5.97	1.490	4.147	.000	.001
Average Section VII	6.60	.976	5.97	1.150	2.297	.004	.01

Research Question 8

Research question #8 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the health and safety at the child care center between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in cleanliness, sanitation, security, nutritional lunches and snacks, safety of classroom, playground, play materials, educational aids, school bus, etc., and center illness polices, such as nursing and keeping sick children at home, based on nationality. There was one significant difference in Section VIII of the survey: Item 6 – 'Administration of medication and first-aid.'

The *t*-test on Item 6 – 'Safety of classroom, playground, play materials, educational aids, school bus, etc.,' showed a significant difference at the .05 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=8.10) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=7.49), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that administration of medication and first-aid was more important than the Korean parents thought. Also, there were no significant differences in overall Section VIII, health and safety. See Table 35.

Table 35

Significant Differences in Section VIII: Health and Safety

	America		Korea				
Item	$\overline{x}$	SD	$\overline{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	p
6. Administration of medication and first-aid	8.10	1.150	7.49	1.510	2.393	.019	.05

Research Question 9

Research question #9 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the parent communications and involvement opportunities between the United States and Korea? Using a *t*-test, there were no significant differences in phone calls and e-mails, and opportunities for parents to volunteer in classroom and field trips based on nationality. There were four significant differences in Section IX of the survey: Item 1 – 'Daily communications,' Item 3 – 'Parent letters and newsletters,' Item 5 – 'Parent-teacher conferences,' and Item 6 – 'Parent bulletin boards.'

The *t*-test on Item 1 – 'Daily communications' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=7.08) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=5.32), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that daily communications were more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 3 – 'Parent letters and newsletters' at the .01 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=7.10) than the Koreans' ($\overline{x}$=6.34), indicating that the American parents felt that parent letters and newsletters were more important than the Korean parents felt.

The *t*-test on Item 5 – 'Parent-teacher conferences' showed a significant difference at the .001 probability level based on nationality. The Americans scored significantly higher ($\overline{x}$=7.78) than the Koreans ($\overline{x}$=6.85), with mean scores indicating that the American parents thought that parent-teacher conferences were more important than the Korean parents thought.

The *t*-test also found a significant difference in Item 6 – 'Parent bulletin boards' at the .05 probability level by nationality. The Americans' mean score was significantly lower ($\bar{x}$=5.05) than the Koreans' ($\bar{x}$=5.85), indicating that the American parents felt that parent bulletin boards were less important than the Korean parents felt.

There was also a significant difference at the .05 probability level concerning the overall Section IX, parent communications and involvement opportunities. The American parents mean score was significantly higher ($\bar{x}$=6.52) than the Korean parents ($\bar{x}$=6.03), signifying that the American parents assumed that overall parent communications and involvement opportunities were more important than the Korean parents assumed. Table 36 presents the computed results.

Table 36

Significant Differences in Section IX: Parent Communications and Involvement Opportunities

	America		Korea				
Item	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Sig.	P
1. Daily communications	7.08	1.670	5.32	1.971	4.782	.000	.001
3. Parent letters and newsletters	7.10	1.277	6.34	1.502	2.699	.008	.01
5. Parent-teacher conferences	7.78	1.025	6.85	1.656	3.664	.000	.001
6. Parent bulletin boards	5.05	1.947	5.85	1.721	-2.252	.026	.05
Average Section IX	6.52	.931	6.03	1.200	2.254	.026	.05

Discussion

The intent of this study was to identify the parental perceptions about university early childhood education and care centers. Also, it used an attitude survey to compare these parental perceptions between the United States and Korea. The subjects of this study were parents of children (age 3-5 years old) who were enrolled in the Child and Family Study Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout, the United States, and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University, Daejeon, Korea, during the 2005-2006 school year. This discussion contains the following Section I through IX of the survey: 1) demographic characteristics, 2) general evaluation of child care center, 3) center characteristics, 4) curriculum, 5) teaching staff characteristics, 6) school events, 7) health and safety, and 8) parent communications and involvement.

Demographic Characteristics

Some of the most significant findings of this study related to demographic characteristics. This study found a significant difference that the American children (3.82 years old) who enrolled at child care centers were younger than the Korean children were (4.96 years old) ($p<.001$). The Child and Family Study Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout, the United States, has been designed to educate and care for preschoolers before kindergarten begins and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University, Korea, has been designed for kindergarteners before elementary school begins.

Another significant difference was that the American parents (2.20 children) had more children than the Korean parents (1.95 children) had in their family ($p<.05$). This finding is consistent with research conducted by the PRECAP, the MOHW, and the

KIHASA (2005), which stated that the Korean birth rate (1.16 children) is lower than the United States birth rate (2.04 children).

General Evaluation of the Child Care Center

The results of this study showed the parental perceptions of general evaluation of the early childhood education and care center their children attended. The American parents thought the three most important aspects were 'Children's health and safety ($\overline{x}$ =8.68),' 'Teacher's educational competence ($\overline{x}$ =7.78),' and 'Curriculum ($\overline{x}$ =7.73).' For the Korean parents, the three most important aspects were 'Children's health and safety ($\overline{x}$ =8.34),' 'Teacher's educational competence ($\overline{x}$ =7.84),' and 'Physical environment ($\overline{x}$ =7.32).' These findings were upheld in a study by Kontos, Howes, Shinn, and Galinsky (1995) and Cryer and Burchinal (1997) which found that parents in early childhood education and care settings thought one of the most important aspects was 'Children's health and safety.' Some studies in the literature review agreed with the American parental perceptions of this study which stated that parents thought 'Curriculum' was one of the most important aspects when they selected early childhood education and care programs (Browne-Miller, 1990; Cryer & Burchinal, 1997; Na, Yu, Moon, & Lee, 2000).

Also, these findings are partly in accord with research by Yang (2000) and Seo, Lim, and Park (2002). Yang (2000) found consideration aspects to decide on a new early childhood education and care center. The three most important aspects were 'Curriculum (55%),' 'Educational facilities (15%),' and 'Teaching staff (14%).' And Seo, Lim, and Park (2002) reported the parents' considerations of choosing early childhood education and care centers by center characteristics. The three most important parent considerations

in child care centers were 'Teaching staff (15.0%),' 'Center distance from home (14.5%),' and 'Curriculum (10.6%),' and parents' consideration in kindergarten were 'Center distance from home (20.2%),' 'Curriculum (17.6%),' and 'Teaching staff (14.7%).'

Center Characteristics

The findings of the parental perceptions of center characteristics were the American parents thought that the most important item was 'Play materials, including blocks, puzzles, and dolls ($\overline{x}$=7.55)' and the least important items were 'Location and distance from home ($\overline{x}$=5.35)' and 'High-tech equipment, including computers and projectors and audio-visual equipment ($\overline{x}$=5.35).' For the Korean parents, the most important item was 'Educational teaching aids, including books, bulletin boards, and games ($\overline{x}$=7.05)' and the least important item was 'Building design and space ($\overline{x}$ =5.18).' There were many findings of parental perceptions of their children's school. The findings of Yang's study supported the Korean parents' perceptions of this study. Yang (2000) found the second most important aspect to decide on an early childhood education care center for their children was educational facilities.

This study found that both American and Korean parents had less consideration about the 'Location and distance from home' than other items. However, some authors in the literature review found that parents thought that the center location and distance from home was one of the most important items to decide on early childhood programs (Na, Yu, Moon, & Lee, 2000; Seo, Lim, & Park, 2002). This study's subjects were only university early childhood education and care programs' parents, so they could have different criteria than other programs' parents to select a high quality program.

Curriculum

The results of this study on parental perceptions of curriculum showed a lot of differences between the United States and Korea. The American parents felt that the three most important activities among school curriculums were: 'Literacy activities ($\overline{x}$=8.28),' 'Physical activities ($\overline{x}$=7.85),' and 'Music activities ($\overline{x}$=7.30).' For the Korean parents, the three most important activities were: 'Safety education activities ($\overline{x}$=7.90),' 'Physical activities ($\overline{x}$=7.88),' and 'Social activities ($\overline{x}$=6.19).' These findings are consistent with some studies from the review of the literature. Brown-Miller (1990) found that many parents considered 'Social activities' and 'Physical activities' more important. And some studies' findings were related to the importance of 'Social activities.' Kontos, Howes, Shinn, and Galinsky (1995) and Na, Yu, Moon, and Lee (2000) found that the parents in early childhood education and care programs thought that the relationship between their child and friends was one of the most important aspects.

Also, a finding of this study was that both American and Korean parents thought that 'Second language activities' were less important than other activities. However, Lee, Jang, Jung, and Hong (2001), Kim, Suk, and Kim (2002), and Seo, Lim, and Park (2002) found that the Korean parents were strongly concerned about early childhood English education as a second language activities.

Teaching Staff Characteristics

The findings of the parental perceptions of teaching staff characteristics were that both American and Korean parents thought that the most important items were 'Teacher's relationship to my child (America – $\overline{x}$=8.73, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.43),' 'Teacher's education philosophy (America – $\overline{x}$=7.73, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.19),' 'The ratio of children to teacher

(America – $\overline{x}$=7.75, Korea – $\overline{x}$=7.52),' and 'Teacher and parent partnerships (America – $\overline{x}$=7.50, Korea – $\overline{x}$=7.04).' The review of the literature found parents perceptions of importance of relationship between teacher and their children (Browne-Miller, 1990; Cryer & Burchinal, 1997). This finding was upheld in a study conducted by Kontos, Howes, Shinn, and Galinsky (1995) which found that parent-teacher communication about a child was one of the most important aspects for children in child care programs.

Also, the American parents preferred less children ($\overline{x}$=8.82) per one teacher than the Korean parents ($\overline{x}$=12.45) preferred. The American parents' preference of child-teacher ratio matched with the NAEYC (2005) recommendation, 3-4 year olds (1:6~1:10). However, Korean regulation of child-teacher ratios, 3-5 year olds (1:20~1:30), was much higher than the Korean parents preferred in this study (Na et al., 2003). According to the OECD (2005f) report, the ratio of children in preprimary education to one teacher was 15.5 children per one teacher in the United States, and 21 children per one teacher in Korea. The findings of this study showed that both American and Korean parents preferred much less children per one teacher than the actual conditions. Moreover, the review of the literature studied teaching staffs' perceptions of the ratio of children to teacher in early childhood education and care centers. The findings were more children, 3-5 year olds (1: 11~1:22), than these research findings (Hangil Research Institute, 2001; Seo, Lim, & Park, 2002). Also, the most important aspect of director characteristics was 'Director's educational philosophy (America – $\overline{x}$=7.63, Korea – $\overline{x}$=7.85)' for both American and Korean parents. This finding agrees with research conducted by Seo, Lim, and Park (2002) which stated that 'Director's educational philosophy' was one of the most important elements for parents' consideration of early childhood programs.

School Events

The results of this study on parental perceptions of school events showed both American and Korean parents thought 'School events, including field trips, children's works exhibition, and documentation of learning,' was the least important element among early childhood education and care program aspects (America – $\overline{x}$=5.85, Korea – $\overline{x}$ =5.33). The American parents thought the most important elements of school events were 'Parent-teacher conferences' and 'Parent observation and participation.' The findings by Vaden-Kiernan and McManus (2005) supported these results in this study. Vaden-Kiernan and McManus (2005) found the percentage of students in kindergarten to elementary whose parents reported participation in school events in the United States in 2002-2003 as follows: 93% of parents attended a general school meeting, 92% of parents attended a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, 71% of parents attended a school or class event, 54% of parents acted as a volunteer or served on school committees, and 70% of parents participated in school fundraising. However, Na, Yu, and Park (2002) found the percentage of Korea kindergarten parental participation in kindergarten related to school events as follows: 57% of parents fully participated in activities and 43% of parents did not participate much in school activities. The findings of the literature review are consistent with the findings of this study that the American parents assumed overall that school events were more important than the Korean parents assumed ($p<.001$).

Also, 'Parent education opportunities' was less important than other elements among school events for both countries' parents (America - $\overline{x}$=5.33, Korea - $\overline{x}$=5.71).' However, the review of the literature stated the importance of parental education (KSECE, 1997; Lee et al., 2003; Lee, Eom, & Lee, 2005).

Health and Safety

The findings of the parental perceptions of health and safety were that both American and Korean parents thought that 'Health and Safety' were the most important elements among overall characteristics in early childhood education and care centers (America – $\overline{x}$=8.68, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.34). Some studies in the literature review regarding health and safety upheld these findings that the parents in early childhood education and care centers thought that 'Children's health and safety' was one of the most important aspects for their children (Kontos, Howes, Shinn, & Galinsky, 1995; Cryer & Burchinal, 1997). However, the findings of Seo, Lim, and Park (2002) showed a different result from the parent study findings that for Korean parents in early childhood education and care programs 'Children's safety' and 'Health and nutrition' were less important than other elements.

Also, both American and Korean parents thought that the most important items among health and safety elements were 'Security (America – $\overline{x}$=8.48, Korea – $\overline{x}$=8.08)' and 'Safety of classroom, playground, play materials, educational aids, school bus, etc.' And, the other most important aspects were 'Sanitation' in the United States ($\overline{x}$=8.40) and 'Nutritional lunch and snacks' in Korea ($\overline{x}$=8.12). The findings of the literature review reveal similarities with the findings of this study. Bae, Cho, and Jung (2005) focused on an examination of research trends about 'Health and safety' in early childhood education between the United States and Korea. The results showed that both countries strongly emphasized children's basic safety and health, which included nutrition.

Parent Communications and Involvement Opportunities

The results of this study on parental perceptions of parent communications and involvement opportunities in early childhood education and care programs showed that both American and Korean parents felt that the most important aspects in this section were 'Parent-teacher conference (America – $\overline{x}$=7.78, Korea – $\overline{x}$=6.85)' and 'Parent letters and newsletters (America – $\overline{x}$=7.10, Korea – $\overline{x}$=6.34).' The results of this study match the research presented in the review of the literature regarding parental involvement. The review of the literature indicated that 92% of parents with children in kindergarten to first grade participated in a parent-teacher conference. In addition, 96% of parents with children in kindergarten to first grade received school communications using newsletters, memos, or notices from school (Vaden-Kiernan & McManus, 2005).

In summary, the results of this study showed similarities and differences in parental perceptions in university early childhood education and care centers between the United States and Korea. Also, the research literature supported the data of the survey. Some areas were strongly upheld; while others needed more research and questions.

This chapter has examined the data analysis of the survey and provided discussion on the data analysis. Chapter V will contain a summary of the information and draw conclusions from the findings. Lastly, it will include recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter of this study summarizes the methodology and findings. It will then draw conclusions that have been deducted from the findings, and offer recommendations for further research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the parental perceptions of university early childhood education and care centers in the United States and Korea. This entailed a survey that consisted of nine sections and was written in English and translated to Korean. The sections related to demographic characteristics, general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety, and parent communications and involvement opportunities. The survey was developed by the investigator.

Methods and Procedures

The survey was administered in January 2006 in Korea and March 2006 in the United States. The population was drawn, by cluster sampling, from parents of children (age 3-5 year olds) who attended the Child and Family Study Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin, United States, and Paichai Kindergarten at Paichai University, Daejeon, Korea, during the 2005-2006 school year. The sample of the group of 180 subjects received a letter and a survey (see Appendix A – English, Appendix B – Korean) requesting their participation. A total of 113 out of 180 surveys distributed from the two countries were returned, computing to a 62.78 % return rate.

Each parent anonymously completed a nine part survey that encompassed demographics, general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety, and parent communications and involvement opportunities. The investigator developed and designed the instrument for research purposes.

Section I, General information, recorded parents' gender, age, marital status, relation to the child, child's gender, child's age enrolled in center, the number of children in the family, highest educational level, occupation and employment status. Sections II to IX were designed to measure parental perceptions of the importance of the university child care center, including the following sections: general evaluation of the child care center, center characteristics, curriculum, teacher characteristics, director characteristics, school events, health and safety, and parent communications and involvement opportunities. The parents were asked to rate 6 to 11 items in each section, using a Likert scale from 1 to 9: 1 (not important), 3 (less important), 5 (moderately important), 7 (very important), and 9 (extremely important).

Data Analysis

The responses of the survey were analyzed by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer User Support Services using a computerized statistics program, SPSS. Frequency distributions and the percentages were tabulated for Items 1-10 in Section I. In addition, the mean, standard deviation, and rank order were computed for each item in Section II through IX. A *t*-test analysis was also used to compare the two groups, the United States parents and the Korean parents.

The findings, based upon the analysis of the data, showed that 35.4% (n=40) of the respondents were American and 64.6% (n=73) were Korean. Also, for the American respondents, 92.5% of the respondents were female (mother) and 7.5% were male (father). And for the Korean respondents, 93.2% of the respondents were female (mother) and 6.8% were male (father). For the American respondents, the largest age category of the respondents (45.0%) was between the ages of 31 and 35. And for the Korean respondents, the majority of the respondents (54.8%) were between the ages of 36 and 40. The majority of the respondents (98.2%) were married in both countries. The respondents were asked to indicate the gender of their child who was enrolled at the university child care center. For the American respondents, 67.5% were girls and 30.0% were boys with 3 year olds being the largest age category (41.0%). And for the Korean respondents, 52.1% were girls and 47.9% were boys with the 5 year olds age category as the majority (52.1%). The majority of the respondents (69.0%) had two children in their family in both countries. Approximately one-half of the respondents (58.4%) had a Bachelor's degree in both countries. For the American respondents, the largest category of the respondents (41.0%) was in the educational field. And for the Korean respondents, approximately one-half of the respondents (58.9%) were full-time homemakers.

The responses to the perception statements indicated the importance of their evaluation of the current child care center were, including items: 1) physical environment, 2) curriculum, 3) director's educational competence, 4) teacher's educational competence, 5) school events, 6) children's health and safety, and 7) parent communications and involvement opportunities. Both American and Korean parents thought that all items were important for their child enrolled at a child care center. Both American and Korean

parents responded that the most important items were 'Children's health and safety' and 'Teacher's educational competence'. And the least important item was 'School events.'

The parents also indicated their responses to an evaluation of the importance of the current child care center characteristics were, including items: 1) location and distance from home, 2) building design and space, 3) classroom design and furnishings, 4) playground design and equipment, 5) education teaching aids, 6) high-tech equipment, 7) play materials, and 8) tuition cost. The results showed that both American and Korean parents thought that all elements were important for their child. The American parents felt that 'Play materials' and 'Educational teaching aids' were very important. And the Korean parents felt that 'Educational teaching aids' and 'Playground design and equipment' were very important. Also, the least important elements were 'Location and distance from home' and 'High-tech equipment' for the American parents. However, for the Korean parents, the least important element was 'Building design and space.'

The analysis of the data revealed the parental perceptions about how important curriculum activities were, including items: 1) literacy activities, 2) second language activities, 3) science activities, 4) math activities, 5) social studies activities, 6) art activities, 7) music activities, 8) physical activities, 9) computer activities, 10) culture activities, and 11) safety education activities. Both American parents and Korean parents thought that all activities were important, except for 'Computer activities' for the Korean parents. For the American parents, the most important item was 'Literacy activities.' However, for the Korean parents, the most important item was 'Safety education activities.' Also, the American parents thought that 'Physical activities,' 'Music activities,' 'Art activities,' and 'Safety education activities' were very important for their

children. However, the Korean parents thought that 'Physical activities,' 'Social studies activities,' and 'Literacy activities' were very important for their children. Both countries' parents thought that the least important item was 'Computer activities.'

The perception statements revealed how important the teacher characteristics were, including items: 1) educational philosophy, 2) educational degrees, 3) religion, 4) age, 5) years of teaching experience, 6) teacher and parent partnerships, 7) relation to child, 8) marital status, 9) status as a parent, and 10) the ratio of children to teacher. Both American parents and Korean parents indicated that 'Relationship to their child,' 'The ratio of children to teacher,' 'Education philosophy,' and 'Teacher and parent partnerships' were very important for their children. And both American parents and Korean parents felt that 'Teacher's age,' 'Teacher's religion,' 'Teacher's marital status,' and 'Teacher's status as a parent' were less important elements for their children. The majority of the respondents, both American and Korean parents (44.2%), thought that 6-10 children were enough per one teacher.

The analysis of the data found the parental perceptions regarding the importance of the director characteristics were, including the director's 1) educational philosophy, 2) educational degrees, 3) years of experience as a director, 4) religion, 5) age, and 6) years of teaching experience as a teacher. Both American parents and Korean parents thought that 'Educational philosophy' was the most important aspect for their children. And both American and Korean parents felt that the 'Director's religion' and 'Director's age' were less important aspects.

The responses to the perception statements indicated how important school events were, including items: 1) parent-teacher conferences, 2) children's work exhibition

and documentation of learning, 3) field trips, 4) parent observation and participation, 5) children's performances, and 6) parent education opportunities. Both American and Korean parents felt that the most important element was 'Parent-teacher conferences.' The least important element was 'Parent education opportunities' for the American parents. And the Korean parents thought that 'Children's work exhibition and documentation of learning' was less important element for their children.

The analysis of the data discovered parental perceptions regarding how important health and safety factors were, including items: 1) cleanliness, 2) sanitation, 3) security, 4) nutritional lunches and snacks, 5) safety, 6) administration of medication and first-aid, and 7) center illness polices. Both American and Korean parents felt that all health and safety aspects were very important. The most important aspects were 'Security' and 'Safety' for both countries' parents. The least important aspect was 'Nutritional lunches and snacks' for the American parents. However, for the Korean parents, the least important aspect was 'Center illness polices.'

The parents also indicated through their responses an evaluation of how important parent communications and involvement opportunities were, including items: 1) daily communications, 2) phone calls and e-mails, 3) parent letters and newsletters, 4) opportunities for parents to volunteer, 5) parent-teacher conferences, and 6) parent bulletin boards. Both American and Korean parents felt that all items were important. The most important items were 'Parent-teacher conferences' and 'Parent letters and newsletters' for both countries' parents. The least important item was 'Parent bulletin boards' for the American parents. However, for the Korean parents, the least important item was 'Daily communications.'

Limitations

This study represents a small population of two university early childhood education and care centers in two countries, the United States and Korea. More females (92.9%) than males (7.1%) responded. The results of this study are generalized only to that particular population. Furthermore, the instrument was designed by the investigator and was not a standard instrument.

Conclusions

As a result of the data reported in Chapter IV, there are conclusions to summarize. They will be discussed according to the nine research questions outlined in Chapter I.

Research question 1 – Were there differences in parents' demographic characteristics between the United States and Korea?

The American children who enrolled at child care centers were younger than the Korean children ($p<.001$), and the American parents had more children than the Korean parents had in their family ($p<.05$).

Research question 2 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the general evaluations of the child care center between the United States and Korea?

The American parents thought that 'Curriculum ($p<.01$)' and 'Parent communications and involvement opportunities ($p<.001$)' were more important than the Korean parents thought.

Research question 3 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the center characteristics between the United States and Korea?

The American parents felt that 'Play materials' were more important than the Korean parents felt ($p<.001$). However, the Korean parents thought that 'Playground design and equipment' was more important than the American parents thought ($p<.05$).

Research question 4 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the curriculums between the United States and Korea?

The American parents thought that 'Literacy activities ($p<.001$),' 'Math activities ($p<.001$),' 'Art activities ($p<.05$),' and 'Music activities ($p<.05$)' were more important than the Korean parents thought. However, the Korean parents thought that 'Social studies activities ($p<.01$)' and 'Safety education activities ($p<.01$)' were more important than the American parents thought.

Research question 5 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the teacher characteristics between the United States and Korea?

The American parents thought that 'Teacher's educational degrees ($p<.05$)' and 'Teacher's relationship to my child ($p<.05$)' were more important than the Korean parents thought. However, the Korean parents felt that 'Teacher's religion ($p<.001$),' 'Teacher's age ($p<.001$),' 'Teacher's years of teaching experience ($p<.001$),' 'Teacher's marital status ($p<.001$),' and 'Teacher's status as a parent ($p<.001$)' were more important than the American parents felt. Also, for 'Preference the ratio of children to teacher ($p<.001$),' the American parents preferred less children ($\overline{x}=8.82$) per one teacher in the classroom than the Korean parents ($\overline{x}=12.45$) preferred.

Research question 6 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the director characteristics between the United States and Korea?

The Korean parents felt that 'Director's years of experience as a director ($p<.05$),' 'Director's religion ($p<.001$),' and 'Director's age ($p<.001$)' were more important than the American parents felt. However, on 'Director's educational degrees,' the American parents thought that these were more important than the Korean parents thought ($p<.01$).

Research question 7 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the school events between the United States and Korea?

The American parents thought 'Parent-teacher conferences ($p<.01$),' 'Children's work exhibition and documentation of learning ($p<.001$),' and 'Parent observation and participation ($p<.001$)' were more important than the Korean parents thought.

Research question 8 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the health and safety at the child care center between the United States and Korea?

The American parents felt that 'Administration of medication and first-aid' was more important than the Korean parents thought ($p<.05$).

Research question 9 – Were there differences in parents' perception of importance about the parent communications and involvement opportunities between the United States and Korea?

The American parents thought that 'Daily communications ($p<.001$),' 'Parent letters and newsletters ($p<.01$),' and 'Parent-teacher conferences ($p<.001$)' were more important than the Korean parents thought. However, on 'Parent bulletin boards,' the Korean parents felt these were more important than the American parents felt ($p<.05$).

Recommendations

The methodology of this investigation, as well as the findings, prompt several recommendations relative to the research and the implementations of early childhood education and care programs. The recommendations for further study include:

1. Study a larger sample of university early childhood education and child care centers. The population was too limited to encompass the many facets of research. A larger, more widespread population sample that could include other university early childhood education and child care programs in Wisconsin in the United States and Daejeon in Korea and/or the surrounding state and province areas could prove useful.

2. Examine the role that fathers have in the education of their children as this is an area that needs further research. Recent research has shown the impact that fathers can have in their children's education. A survey on just the fathers' perceptions and interests could lead to a better evaluation of parental perceptions at university early childhood education and child care programs and other centers.

3. Conduct further research in the area of parental perceptions in early childhood education and child care, more specifically, long-term research, following these parents into elementary school to see how their perceptions and interests change over time or remain constant the same as their children grow older.

4. Compare the results of this study with the perceptions of a population of teachers and administrators regarding early childhood education and child care programs.

5. Evaluate the nature of other types of early childhood education and child care centers, such as private and public early childhood education and child care programs regarding parental perceptions.

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APPENDIX A

Parent Survey (English)

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Parental Perceptions of University Preschool Survey

March 01, 2006

Dear Preschool Parents,

The purpose of this study is to compare the parental perceptions of university early childhood education and care center in the United States and Korea. As an International student from South Korea, I will be obtaining my Masters degree in Education at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Currently, I volunteer at the Children and Family Center Program, where I observe the children and their behaviors. I have developed a questionnaire regarding parental perceptions in the Child and Family Study Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout.

I would be greatly appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire and return it in your child's file by **March 8th** or **9th**. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous on this study.

Thank you for your valuable time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Il Rang Lee,
Researcher

Karen W. Zimmerman, Ph.D., Professor (School of Education)
Research advisor

Survey of Parental Perceptions about Early Childhood Education and Care Center

This questionnaire is part of a study designed to explore the parental perceptions of characteristics of the university early childhood education and care center. **Do not write your name on the survey.** The questionnaire is completely confidential. Please answer all of the following questions to the best of your ability.

Section 1 – General Information

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Age: _____ 19 or younger _____ 31-35 years _____ 46-50 years
   _____ 20-25 years _____ 36-40 years _____ 51or older
   _____ 26-30 years _____ 41-45 years

3. Marital status: _____ Single _____ Divorced _____ Separated
   _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Other_____

4. Relationship to child: _____ Mother _____ Father _____ Guardian

5. Child's gender: _____ Boy _____ Girl

6. Child's age enrolled at center: _____ 3 years _____ 4 years _____ 5 years _____ 6 years

7. Number of children in your family: _____ Children

8. Highest educational level: (Check the highest level)
   _____ Junior high school _____ Bachelor's degree _____ Other_____
   _____ Senior high school _____ Master's degree
   _____ Vocational/Technical School _____ Dctoral degree

9. Main occupation/job: (check only one)
   _____ Homemaker _____ Family Business _____ Services
   _____ Business _____ Medical Field _____ Government Officer
   _____ Education _____ Engineer _____ Other_____

10. Employment status:
    _____ Not employed outside home _____ Employed part-time _____ Employed full-time

Section 2 – General Evaluation of the Child Care Center

Not Important	Less Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
①---------2---------③---------4---------⑤---------6---------⑦---------8---------⑨				

Directions:

Rate the following items on a scale of 1-9. Place the number in the blank before each item. Please be sure to mark each item.

How important are the following in your evaluation of the center?

_____1. **Physical environment** including classrooms, playground, educational materials and equipment

_____2. **Curriculum** including reading, math, science, art, social studies, etc…

_____3. **Director's educational competence** including educational degrees, teaching experiences, director experiences, and educational philosophy

_____4. **Teacher's educational competence** including educational degrees, teaching experiences, and educational philosophy

_____5. **School events** including field trips, children works exhibition/documentation of learning

_____6. Children's **health and safety**

_____7. **Parent communications and involvement opportunities** including parent-teacher conference, daily news flash, talking with teachers, etc…

8. Which of the above 1-7 are the most important?
   Pick 3 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____.

Section 3 –Center Characteristics

How important are the following center characteristics?

_____1. Location and distance from home

_____2. Building design and space

_____3. Classroom design and furnishings

_____4. Playground design and equipment

_____5. Educational teaching aids including books, bulletin boards, games, etc…

_____6. High-tech equipment including computers, projectors and audio-visual equipment

_____7. Play materials including blocks, puzzles, dolls, etc…

_____8. Tuition cost

9. Which of the above 1-8 are the most important?
   Pick 3 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____.

Section 4 –Curriculum

Not Important	Less Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

①----------2----------③----------4----------⑤----------6----------⑦----------8----------⑨

Directions:

Rate the following items on a scale of 1-9. Place the number in the blank before each item. Please be sure to mark each item.

How important are the following curriculum activities?

_____1. Literacy activities as a language including listening, speaking, writing and reading

_____2. Second language activities including listening, speaking, writing and reading

_____3. Science activities

_____4. Math activities

_____5. Social studies activities

_____6. Art activities

_____7. Music activities

_____8. Physical activities including outdoor play, large muscle and small muscle

_____9. Computer activities

_____10. Culture activities including traditional and multicultural

_____11. Safety education activities

12. Which of the above 1-11 are the most important?

Pick 5 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks

_____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

Section 5 –Teacher Characteristics

Not Important	Less Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
①----------2----------③----------4----------⑤----------6----------⑦----------8----------⑨				

Directions:

Rate the following items on a scale of 1-9. Place the number in the blank before each item. Please be sure to mark each item.

How important the following teacher characteristics?

_____1. Teacher's educational philosophy

_____2. Teacher's educational degrees

_____3. Teacher's religion

_____4. Teacher's age

If it is important, what is your preference age?

____ 20~25 years ____ 26~30 years ____ 31~35 years ____ 36~40 years ____ Over 41 years

_____5. Teacher's years of teaching experience

If it is important, what is your preference?

____ 1~5 years ____ 6~10 years ____ 11~15 years ____ 16~20 years ____ Over 21 years

_____6. Teacher and parent partnerships

_____7. Teacher's relationship to my child

_____8. Teacher's marital status

If it is important, what is your preference? _____ Married _____ Not married

_____9. Teacher's status as a parent

If it is important, what is your preference? _____ Children _____ No children

_____10. The ratio of children to teachers

If it is important, how many children should one teacher have in a classroom?

_____ Children

11. Which of the above 1-10 are the most important?

Pick 4 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____, _____.

Section 6 –Director Characteristics

Not Important	Less Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
①----------2----------③----------4----------⑤----------6----------⑦----------8----------⑨				

Directions:

Rate the following items on a scale of 1-9. Place the number in the blank before each item. Please be sure to mark each item.

How important are the following director characteristics?

_____1. Director's educational philosophy

_____2. Director's educational degrees

_____3. Director's years of experience as a director

If it is important, what is your preference?

____ 1~5 years ____ 6~10 years ____ 11~15 years ____ 16~20 years ____ Over 21 years

_____4. Director's religion

_____5. Director's age

If it is important, what is your preference?

____ 20~25 years ____ 31~35 years ____ 41~45 years

____ 26~30 years ____ 36~40 years ____ Over 46 years

_____6. Director's years of teaching experience as a teacher

If it is important, what is your preference?

____ None ____ 6~10 years ____ 16~20 years

____ 1~5 years ____ 11~15 years ____ Over 21 years

7. Which of the above 1-6 are the most important?

Pick 3 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____.

Section 7 –School Events

How important are the following school events?

_____1. Parent-teacher conferences

_____2. Children's work exhibition/documentation of learning

_____3. Field trips

_____4. Parent observation/participation

_____5. Children performances including plays, concerts, holiday celebrations, etc…

_____6. Parent education opportunities

7. Which of the above 1-6 are the most important?

Pick 3 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____.

Section 8 –Health and Safety

Not Important	Less Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
①	2	③	4	⑤ 6 ⑦ 8 ⑨

Directions:

Rate the following items on a scale of 1-9. Place the number in the blank before each item. Please be sure to mark each item.

How important are the following health and safety factors?

_____1. Cleanliness

_____2. Sanitation

_____3. Security

_____4. Nutritional lunches and snacks

_____5. Safety of classroom, playground, play materials, educational aids, school bus, etc…

_____6. Administration of medication and first-aid

_____7. Center illness polices such as nursing and keeping sick children at home

8. Which of the above 1-7 are the most important?
   Pick 3 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____.

Section 9 –Parent Communications and Involvement Opportunities

How important are the following parent communications and involvement opportunities?

_____1. Daily communications

_____2. Phone calls and e-mails

_____3. Parent letters and newsletters

_____4. Opportunities for parents to volunteer in classroom and field trips

_____5. Parent-teacher conferences

_____6. Parent bulletin boards

7. Which of the above 1-6 are the most important?
   Pick 3 the most important items and place the numbers in the blanks _____, _____, _____.

Thanks for Your Cooperation

APPENDIX B

Parent Survey (KOREAN)

배재대학교 부속 유치원 학부모 인식에 관한 설문지

유치원 학부모님들께

안녕하십니까? 저는 미국 University of Wisconsin-Stout 에서 교육학 석사를 전공하고 있는 학생으로 미국과 한국 학부모의 인식 비교에 관한 석사학위 논문을 준비하고 있습니다.

본 연구는 학부모님들의 유아교육기관에 대한 인식에 관한 연구입니다. 본 설문지는 학부모님들의 배재대학교 부속 유치원에 관한 생각을 조사하기 위하여 작성되었습니다. 유아교육의 발전을 위하여 학부모님들께 도움을 받고자 설문지를 보내드리오니 여러 가지로 바쁘시겠지만 작성하시어 1 월 26 일까지 유아 편에 보내주시면 연구에 크게 도움이 되겠습니다.

귀중한 시간을 할애하여 주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.

2006 년 1 월 23 일

연 구 자 : 이 일 랑

지도교수 : Karen Zimmerman

배재대학교 부속유치원장 : 오 영 희

학부모의 유아교육기관 인식에 관한 설문지

본 설문지는 대학부속 유치원에 관한 학부모 인식 조사를 위해 작성되었습니다. 본 조사의 결과에 대해서는 개인적인 정보가 누출되지 않도록 비밀을 보장하며, 본 연구의 목적 이외에는 사용하지 않을 것이오니 각 문항에 따라 솔직한 답변을 부탁드립니다.

1 – 기초 조사

1. 성별: _____남자 _____여자

2. 연령: _____ 19세 이하 _____ 31-35세 _____ 46-50세
   _____ 20-25세 _____ 36-40세 _____ 51세 이상
   _____ 26-30세 _____ 41-45세

3. 결혼 형태: _____ 미혼 _____ 이혼 _____ 별거
   _____기혼 _____ 미망인 _____ 기타_____

4. 유아와의 관계: _____ 어머니 _____ 아버지 _____ 보호자

5. 유아의 성별: _____ 남자 _____ 여자

6. 재원 중인 유아의 나이: _____ 만 3세 _____ 만 4세 _____ 만 5세 _____ 만 6세

7. 총 자녀의 수: _____명

8. 최종 학력: (가장 높은 학력에 표기해 주십시오.)
   _____ 중학교 졸업 _____ 학사 학위 _____ 기타_____
   _____ 고등학교 졸업 _____ 석사 학위
   _____ 전문대 졸업 _____ 박사 학위

9. 직업을 써주십시오: (주요 직업 한가지 항목에만 표기해 주십시오.)
   _____ 전업주부 _____ 자영업 _____ 서비스직
   _____ 회사원 _____ 보건/의료직 _____ 공무원
   _____ 교육직 _____ 기술직 _____ 기타_____

10. 근무 상태:
    _____전업주부 _____시간제 직업 _____전일제 직업

2 – 유아교육기관의 일반적 평가

전혀 중요하지 않다		그다지 중요하지 않다		중요하다		많이 중요하다		대단히 중요하다
①	2	③	4	⑤	6	⑦	8	⑨

아래 각 문항을 읽고 생각하시는 정도를 숫자(1-9)로 표기하여 주십시오. 숫자는 각 문항 앞 빈칸에 표기 하시면 됩니다. 만일 중요성의 정도가 양쪽 척도의 중간 수준이면 중간 숫자에 표기해 주십시오. (예, ①과 ③의 중간이면 2 에 표기해 주십시오.)

다음은 유아교육기관의 일반적 평가에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 교실, 운동장, 교구 및 교재 등과 같은 **물리적 환경**

_____2. 읽기, 수학, 과학, 미술, 사회성 교육과 같은 **유치원 교육과정**

_____3. 원장의 교육 학위, 교사로서의 교육 경력, 원장으로서의 교육 경력, 교육철학과 같은 **원장의 역량**

_____4. 교사의 교육 학위, 교육 경력, 교육철학과 같은 **교사의 역량**

_____5. 견학, 학예회 및 작품 전시회 등과 같은 **유치원 행사**

_____6. 유아의 **건강과 안전**

_____7. 학부모 상담, 가정 통신문과 같은 **학부모의 의사소통과 참여**

8. 위의 1-7 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 3 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주십시오. _____, _____, _____.

3 – 유치원 특성

다음은 유치원 특성에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 유치원의 위치 및 거리

_____2. 실외 건물 디자인과 공간구성

_____3. 실내 교실 디자인과 환경구성

_____4. 운동장 및 놀이터의 공간 구성과 특별실 등의 부대 시설물

_____5. 책, 게시판과 같은 교수용 교재, 교구

_____6. 컴퓨터, 프로젝터(projector), 시청각 교재와 같은 고기술 장비

_____7. 자동차, 블록, 퍼즐, 인형 등과 같은 놀이감

_____8. 유치원 교육비

9. 위의 1-8 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 3 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주십시오. _____, _____, _____.

4 – 교육과정

전혀 중요하지 않다	그다지 중요하지 않다		중요하다		많이 중요하다		대단히 중요하다
①	2	③	4	⑤	6	⑦	8 ⑨

아래 각 문항을 읽고 생각하시는 정도를 숫자(1-9)로 표기하여 주십시오. 숫자는 각 문항 앞 빈칸에 표기 하시면 됩니다. 만일 중요성의 정도가 양쪽 척도의 중간 수준이면 중간 숫자에 표기해 주십시오. (예, ①과 ③의 중간이면 2 에 표기해 주십시오.)

다음은 교육과정에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 듣기, 말하기, 쓰기, 읽기를 포함한 언어 활동

_____2. 듣기, 말하기, 쓰기, 읽기를 포함한 제 2 외국어 활동

_____3. 과학 활동

_____4. 수학 활동

_____5. 사회 교육 활동

_____6. 미술 활동

_____7. 음악 활동

_____8. 실외놀이, 대 근육, 소 근육 활동을 포함한 신체 활동

_____9. 컴퓨터 활동

_____10. 전통 교육 및 다문화를 포함한 문화적 활동

_____11. 안전 교육 활동

12. 위의 1-11 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 5 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주세요.
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

5 –교사의 특성

전혀 중요하지 않다	그다지 중요하지 않다		많이 중요하다	대단히 중요하다

①----------2----------③----------4----------⑤----------6----------⑦----------8----------⑨

아래 각 문항을 읽고 생각하시는 정도를 숫자(1-9)로 표기하여 주십시오. 숫자는 각 문항 앞 빈칸에 표기 하시면 됩니다. 만일 중요성의 정도가 양쪽 척도의 중간 수준이면 중간 숫자에 표기해 주십시오. (예, ①과 ③의 중간이면 2 에 표기해 주십시오.)

다음은 교사의 특성에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 교사의 교육철학

_____2. 교사의 학력

_____3. 교사의 종교

_____4. 교사의 연령
만약 중요하다면, 선호하는 연령은 무엇입니까?
_____ 20~25 세 _____ 26~30 세 _____ 31~35 세 _____ 36~40 세 _____ 41 세 이상

_____5. 교사의 교육 경력
만약 중요하다면, 선호하는 경력 기간은?
_____ 1~5 년 _____ 6~10 년 _____ 11~15 년 _____ 16~20 년 _____ 21 년 이상

_____6. 교사와 학부모와의 협력 관계

_____7. 교사와 내 자녀와의 관계

_____8. 교사의 결혼 유무
만약 중요하다면, 선호 하는 것은? _____ 기혼 _____ 미혼

_____9. 교사의 자녀 유무
만약 중요하다면, 선호 하는 것은? _____ 자녀 유 _____ 자녀 무

_____10. 교사와 유아 비율
만약 중요하다면, 내 자녀가 속한 교실은 교사 한 명당 몇 명의 유아가 적당하다고 생각합니까? _____ 명의 유아

11. 위의 1-10 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 4 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주세요. _____, _____, _____, _____.

6 – 원장의 특성

전혀 중요하지 않다	그다지 중요하지 않다	중요하다	많이 중요하다	대단히 중요하다

①----------2----------③----------4----------⑤----------6----------⑦----------8----------⑨

아래 각 문항을 읽고 생각하시는 정도를 숫자(1-9)로 표기하여 주십시오. 숫자는 각 문항 앞 빈칸에 표기 하시면 됩니다. 만일 중요성의 정도가 양쪽 척도의 중간 수준이면 중간 숫자에 표기해 주십시오. (예, ①과 ③의 중간이면 2 에 표기해 주십시오.)

다음은 원장의 특성에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 원장의 교육철학

_____2. 원장의 학력

_____3. 원장으로서의 경력
만약 중요하다면, 선호하는 경력 기간은?
_____ 1~5 년 _____ 6~10 년 _____ 11~15 년 _____ 16~20 년 _____ 21 년 이상

_____4. 원장의 종교

_____5. 원장의 연령
만약 중요하다면, 선호하는 연령은?
_____ 20~25 세 _____ 31~35 세 _____ 41~45 세
_____ 26~30 세 _____ 36~40 세 _____ 46 세 이상

_____6. 원장의 교사로서의 교육 경력
만약 중요하다면, 선호하는 경력 기간은?
_____ 무경험 _____ 6~10 년 _____ 16~20 년
_____ 1~5 년 _____ 11~15 년 _____ 21 년 이상

7. 위의 1-6 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 3 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주세요. _____, _____, _____.

7 – 유치원 행사

다음은 유치원 행사에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 학부모 상담

_____2. 유아 작품 전시회

_____3. 견학, 소풍

_____4. 학부모 참관 및 참여 수업

_____5. 발표회, 동극, 기념일 등을 포함한 유아의 특별 행사

_____6. 부모 교육

7. 위의 1-6 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 3 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주세요. _____, _____, _____.

8 –건강과 안전

전혀 중요하지 않다	그다지 중요하지 않다	중요하다	많이 중요하다	대단히 중요하다

①----------2----------③----------4----------⑤----------6----------⑦----------8----------⑨

아래 각 문항을 읽고 생각하시는 정도를 숫자(1-9)로 표기하여 주십시오. 숫자는 각 문항 앞 빈칸에 표기 하시면 됩니다. 만일 중요성의 정도가 양쪽 척도의 중간 수준이면 중간 숫자에 표기해 주십시오. (예, ①과 ③의 중간이면 2 에 표기해 주십시오.)

다음은 건강과 안전에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 청결

_____2. 위생

_____3. 안전

_____4. 점심과 간식 등의 영양

_____5. 교실, 놀이터, 교재, 교구, 통학 버스 등의 안전성

_____6. 약품과 응급 치료의 운영 관리

_____7. 격리, 양호 등을 포함한 유치원에서의 아픈 유아에 대한 관리 방침

8. 위의 1-7 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 3 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주세요. _____, _____, _____.

9 –학부모의 의사소통과 참여

다음은 학부모의 의사소통과 참여에 관한 질문입니다. 아래 각 문항이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시는지 중요도를 숫자로 표기해 주십시오.

_____1. 일일 의사 소통

_____2. 전화 및 이 메일

_____3. 학부모 편지와 가정 통신문

_____4. 교실 수업과 견학 등의 학부모 자원 봉사 및 참여 기회

_____5. 학부모 상담

_____6. 학부모 게시판

7. 위의 1-6 의 문항 중 어느 것이 가장 중요하다고 생각합니까?
가장 중요한 문항 3 가지를 골라 다음 빈칸에 표기해 주세요. _____, _____, _____.

설문에 응해 주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.