

The Kindergarten Teacher Survey

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And the Education Directorate's Center for Psychology in Schools and Education

Acknowledgements

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1996 Survey

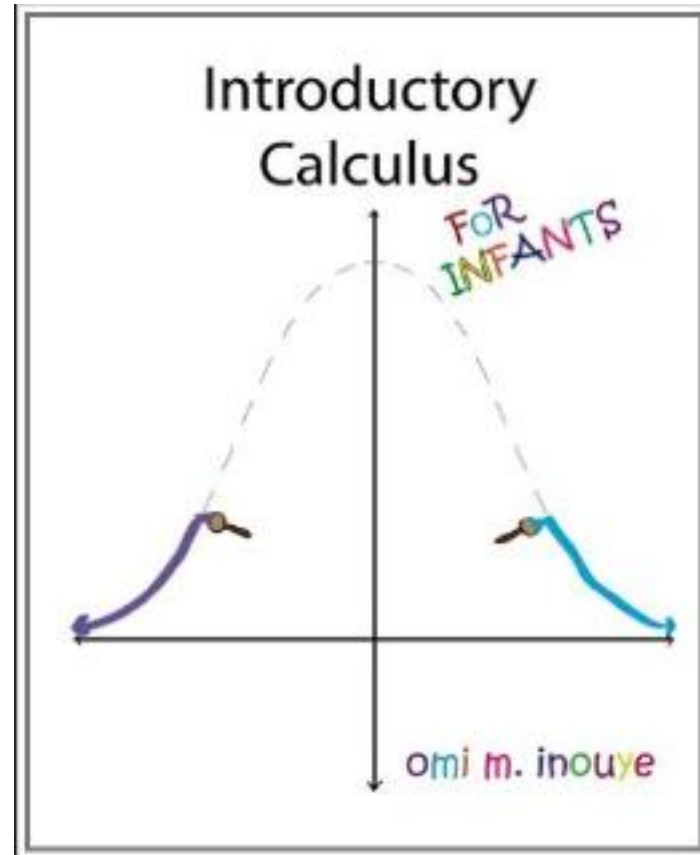
- Based on a survey of kindergarten teachers conducted in 1996, a number of papers were published on kindergarten teachers' perceptions.
- For example, Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2000) indicated that teachers' highest reported problem was students' difficulty following directions.

20 Years of Change in Schools

- Children are increasingly attending pre-Kindergarten
- Pre-Kindergarten has been expanded by private, local, state, and federal agencies.
- Kindergarten has increasingly moved to full-day programs.
- Activities of Kindergarten and pre-k have become more academic.
- Teachers are increasingly being held accountable for their teaching and children's learning.

Evidence supports the idea that Kindergarten is the new first grade

- There is downward pressure on the whole system to prepare students academically.
- What do teachers think?



(Bassok & Rorem, 2013)

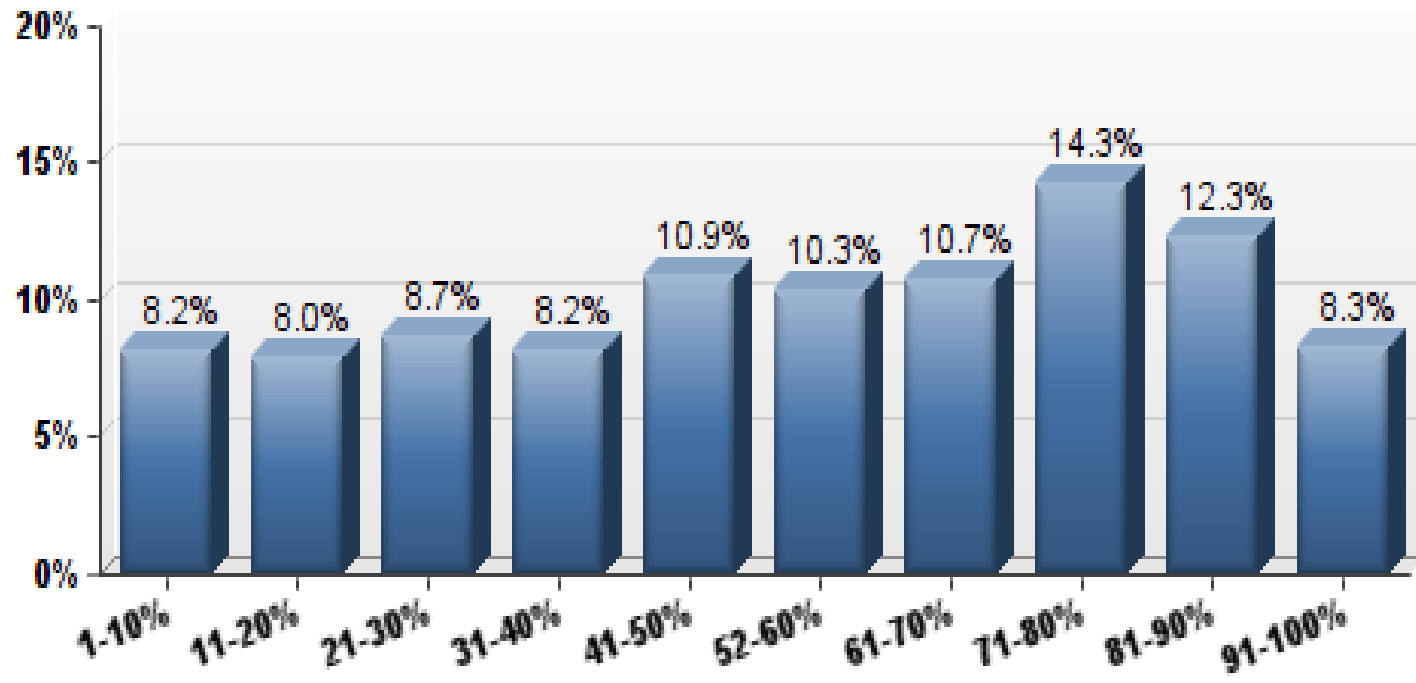
We wanted to hear again from Kindergarten Teachers' about

- Children's school readiness
- The relative importance of various (social, emotional, academic) skills.
- Characteristics of children in their classes

Our Sample

- In the spring of 2015, over 500 Kindergarten teachers across the US responded to an email and filled out our 38-question survey.
 - Surveying is one data collection method that has been successfully employed in assessing the quality of teacher preparation programs.

In your judgment, what percentage of children in your current class **was ready for kindergarten** when they started their kindergarten year?



Take Away

- Many children are not ready for Kindergarten.
→ May speak to the importance of pre-k programs.

Rank order of the most important skills needed by children when they enter kindergarten from (1) most important to (8) least important.

Knowing upper and lower case letters

Counting to 20

Understanding basic emotions (e.g., anger, sadness)

Calming themselves down when they're upset

Knowing how to read simple sentences

Knowing how to solve basic social problems

Notice the SEL characteristics that teachers
view as enhancing learning

Getting along with others

Take Away

- There is a mismatch between what pre-k programs are preparing kids to do versus what Kindergarten teachers want.

How many children in your current class entered with the following characteristics?

Rank	Question	None	A few	About one-fourth of the class	About half of the class	More than half of the class
1	Difficulty working independently					
2	Difficulty following directions					
3	Difficulty working as part of a group					
4	Lack of academic skills					
5	Difficulty paying attention					
6	Problems with social skills, getting along with other children					
7	Difficulty communicating/language problems					
8	Act quickly without thinking					
9	Other (describe)					
10	Demonstrate excessive worrying					
11	Demonstrate excessive crying					
12	Throw tantrums easily					

Take Away

- Many children have difficulty in the skills that Kindergarten teachers want them to have.

Based on your experience, how many children in your current class entered Kindergarten with the following characteristics?

Question	None	A few	About one-fourth of the class	About half of the class	More than half of the class
Were eligible for Free/Reduced price lunch					
Could recognize the alphabet					
Were English Language Learners					
Could write the alphabet					
Could add single digit numbers					
Could read simple sentences					

Take Away

- Many Kindergarten teachers have children who are at/near poverty or who are learning English.

To what degree did your certificate program prepare you to teach the following groups of children?

Question	Not at all	A little	Some	A Lot
Children who are homeless				
Children who are migrants				
Children who transfer into the school mid-year				
Children who are immigrants				
Children who have no pre-K experience				
Children with limited English proficiency				
Children who have social or behavioral difficulties				
Children from low income families				
Children with disabilities/special needs				
Children who are academically advanced				
Children who have mathematics difficulties				
Children who are racial/ethnic minorities				
Children who have reading difficulties				

Take Away

- When we look at kindergarten teachers' perceptions of their teacher preparation programs, they are likely to be unprepared to help many of their students.

Implications

- Despite years of education reform, teachers don't feel prepared and teachers don't think children are prepared.
- This survey highlights the idea that kindergarten teachers may want pre-k to focus on social–emotional skills
- Also, Kindergarten teachers have challenging jobs and schools of education may need to do a better job preparing teachers work with students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Extensions of this Work

- Survey has been translated into Chinese and is presently being distributed to 3rd Year Preschool (~kindergarten) and 1st grade teachers there.
 - If you know teachers in China, please share this link:
Third Year Preschool Teacher:
<http://www.sojump.com/jq/5454909.aspx>
First Grade Teacher:
<http://www.sojump.com/jq/5453873.aspx>
- We are also working on translating it into Slovakian.

Thank you!