

THE JOURNAL OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

THE KANSAS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

STATE OF KANSAS



PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR

TO THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS, GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, All children and youth can learn with the proper support, and have the inalienable right to an education that meets their needs; and

WHEREAS, Children's mental health is directly linked to their learning and development, and sound psychological principles are integral to instruction and learning; social and emotional development; prevention and early intervention; and supporting culturally-diverse student populations; and

WHEREAS, Mental health encompasses mental wellness (resiliency and social skills), mental health problems (mild signs and symptoms interfering with performance), and mental illness (diagnosable disorders), and too many children and youth with mental health concerns are not getting the help they need and mental health problems and disorders interfere with life and school success; and

WHEREAS, Schools provide an optimal context to provide mental health services because of the nature of the learning environment, and the fact that most children are accessible and familiar there, and school-based mental health services are a critical part of a continuum of mental health services for children and youth; and

WHEREAS, Meeting children's mental health needs is a wise investment because prevention/earlier intervention are more cost-effective than remediation, incarceration, or lost productivity, and school psychologists are specially trained to deliver a continuum of mental health services and academic supports within the school setting; and

WHEREAS, School psychologists facilitate collaboration and help parents and educators identify and reduce risk factors; create effective, caring schools; access needed community resources; and implement research-driven prevention and intervention strategies; and

WHEREAS, Citizens of Kansas should recognize the vital role that school psychologists play in the personal and academic development of our state's children:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK PARKINSON, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF KANSAS do hereby proclaim November 8-12, 2010 as

School Psychology Week

in Kansas and encourage all citizens to join in this observance.

Done: At the Capitol in Topeka
under the Great Seal of the
State this 15th day of
November, A.D. 2010



BY THE GOVERNOR:

Handwritten signature of Mark Parkinson, Governor of Kansas.

Handwritten signature of Chris Biggs, Secretary of State.
Secretary of State

Handwritten signature of Brad Bryant, Assistant Secretary of State.
Assistant Secretary of State

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Submissions are not only welcome, they are necessary to the maintenance of this journal as a timely publication which meets the needs of the Kansas school psychologist community. If the editors haven't heard from you in a while, we look forward to your contribution!

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

Kansas Association of School
Psychologists
Annual Convention
October 6-7, 2011
Manhattan, KS
<http://www.kasp.org>

119th Annual Convention of the American
Psychological Association
August 4-7, 2011
Washington D.C.
<http://www.apa.org>

Counsel for Exceptional Children
2011 Convention & Expo
April 25-28, 2011
National Harbor, MD
<http://www.cec.sped.org>



**Membership
Information and
Membership
Forms are
available online!
Check it out at
[http://kasp.org/
membership.htm](http://kasp.org/membership.htm)**

KASP Board Meeting Minutes

KASP's Executive Board met on January 15, 2011 in Emporia. The meeting was called to order by President Lena Kisner with all board members present. After the agenda was summarized and items added, Lena handed over the gavel to our incoming President, Betsy Leeds. The following paragraphs review topics of conferences, KASP offerings, and news from our national organization.

Lonnie Parker reported on the 2010 KASP budget as well as the budget for 2011 and ways the board can reduce expenses and cost. Judy Ball, Convention Chair, presented a review of the 2010 convention. Feedback was positive overall and attendance was great. Planning for the 2011 convention is gearing. One major vendor has been scheduled and the Board plans on proceeds from this vendor going to the NASP Children's fund. The 2011 KASP convention will be held in Manhattan, KS on October 6th-7th. The Board approved conducting electronic voting at the next convention. This will help to facilitate a more comprehensive voter representation. Judy Ball is currently determining a date, venue, and theme for the 2012 convention.

KASP Board Members met with legislators on March 21, 2011 and results of those contacts were positive. Please feel free to join your Association's efforts next year.

School psychology at the national level continues to strive full steam ahead. NASP members have met with the Secretary of Education and congressional committees to discuss our economic situation as well as those issues we tackle every day with our students. Regina Kimbrel, our Kansas Delegate for NASP, reported that NASP membership is up nationwide, but Kansas membership is a little behind. Be sure to stay involved in your state and national organizations as they provide tons of learning opportunities and resources that will help you day to day. Regina's term as Kansas NASP Delegate will be up in June of 2012, so a new state delegate will be voted on next January for those interested.



Mark your Calendars

For the
2011 KASP Convention

October 6-7, 2011

Manhattan, KS

More details to follow

Convention Call for Presentation Proposals

The 2010 convention was a huge success with almost 300 attendees and it is now time to focus on the 2011 convention planning process. The next KASP convention, titled **Interventions: Practical Solutions for the School Psychologist** will be in Manhattan on Oct 6th and 7th, 2011. The convention will focus, almost entirely, on interventions strategies. There will be one session on ethics, specifically designed for those who need NCSP recertification hours in that area.

On Friday, Dr. John Maag, the featured speaker, will present the entire day on strategies for dealing with resistance. Most of Thursday will be devoted to break out sessions on interventions presented by professionals in the field. If you are interested in presenting on an intervention strategy that is working for you please complete the form in this newsletter. If you know of someone who is doing something special or want a particular speaker to present, please contact Judy Ball, Convention Chair jkbresearch@yahoo.com.

CALL FOR PRESENTATION PROPOSALS
Kansas Association of School Psychologists
2011 Fall Convention
Manhattan, Kansas
October 6th and 7th, 2011

THEME OF CONVENTION: Intervention: Practical Strategies for the School Psychologist

Submission deadline: May 1, 2011

Presentation Title:	
Contact Name:	
Business Name:	
Home Address:	
Email:	

Audio Visual/Room Needs:

<input type="checkbox"/>	VCR/TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overhead Projector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Podium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microphone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other(please specify)				

Attach the following information (please type):

- Name of the presentation
- Brief description of the session to be printed in the convention program (25-50 words)
- Name and affiliations of all presenters
- Objectives of your proposed presentation
- Abstract of the proposed presentation (100-500 words)

Send Completed Proposals to: Judy Ball, Convention Chair
 1841 Rd. F
 Emporia, Kansas 66801
 By email to: jkbresearch@yahoo.com

Note: Presenter(s) will need to register for the convention if attending other sessions. However, please note on your registration form your presentation status. Registration fees will be waived for one presenter.

Kansas Association of School Psychologists

Membership Application January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

<input type="checkbox"/> Practitioner (\$40.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor (\$40.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator (\$40.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Trainer (\$40.00)
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent (\$40.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired (\$10.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Student at (\$10.00)	University:

Student membership requires annual verification of status. Student status requires enrollment in a minimum of 6 hours leading to certification as a school psychologist or an advanced degree. If you are on internship, you must have your provisional certification and be enrolled in internship credits.

Signature of University Trainer

Please mark any committees on which you would be willing to serve:

_____ Futures	_____ NCSP	_____ Suicide Prevention
---------------	------------	--------------------------

Would you be willing to serve as a KASP liaison for your district, coop, or university?	Yes	No
Do you want to be included in the KASP Directory of Independent Evaluators?	Yes	No
Do you want to be included on the KASP Listserve? (provide email address above)	Yes	No
Would you be willing to serve on the KASP Executive Board?	Yes	No
Are you bilingual?	Yes	No
If so, would you be willing to be included on a statewide directory?		

All members please sign (signature indicates agreement to abide by Ethics and Standards of KASP/NASP).

Signature _____ Date _____

Send Payment to: KASP
PO Box 1801
Emporia, KS 66801

Early Childhood Assessment Practices of School Psychologists

By: Brandi Hockman

Abstract

Despite the importance of early childhood assessment and intervention in school psychology practice, little research has been conducted on the training and assessment practices of school psychologists in this area (Lidz, 1977; Kaplinski, Lidz, & Rosenfield, 1992; Mowder, 1996). In this study, 178 school psychologists in the state of Kansas reported their training in early childhood issues, early childhood services that they typically provide, and the assessment procedures and instruments that they typically used. Behavioral observation, consultation, and screening were reported as the most frequently offered services. Approximately 80% of the respondents reported receiving training in early childhood issues, which was an improvement from earlier studies (Kaplinski, Lidz, & Rosenfield). The specific instruments used were very similar to those reported in previous studies (Kaplinski, Lidz, & Rosenfield), with the *Stanford-Binet 5* and *Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-III)* remaining popular.

Early Childhood Assessment Practices of School Psychologists

Assessment of young children is an important activity for many professionals, including school psychologists. What early childhood assessment practices are school psychologists currently engaging in? Although previous research has been conducted on this question (Lidz, 1977; Kaplinsky, Lidz, & Rosenfield, 1992), there is a need for updated information on the assessment practices of school psychologists. The present study examines the current practices of school psychologists in the state of Kansas in the area of early childhood/preschool assessment.

Early childhood/preschool assessment is important for a variety of reasons. One common reason for engaging in early childhood/preschool assessment is ruling out developmental delays; early detection of delays should lead to a more positive educational and development outcome. Other reasons for engaging in early childhood assessment range from examining the severity of various behaviors (e.g. aggression, hyperactivity, being disruptive, etc.) to gathering information to help determine appropriate preschool placement and even routine milestone checks. Many times preschool-aged children are not yet ready, mentally or physically, to perform on standardized tests that are intended for slightly older children (Bracken, 1987; Lidz, 1977). However, previous research has indicated that many preschool-aged children are assessed using standardized instruments (Bracken, 1987; Harrington, 1984; Lidz, 1977). The current study will help to update the literature on current trends in school psychology assessment for early childhood (Lidz, 1977, Kaplinski, Lidz & Rosenfield, 1992; Wilson & Reschly, 1996). Another important question that needs to be addressed is the current state of training in the area of early childhood assessment (Mowder, 1996). A lack of emphasis on early childhood/preschool assessment in school psychology training programs will likely affect the assessment practices of school psychologists.

Training in Preschool Assessment

Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) and Mowder (1996) underscored the need for appropriate training during graduate programs in the area of early childhood assessment. Kaplinski et al. found that in a study of 142 preschool psychologists, 55% reported that they were not prepared for early childhood assessment in their graduate programs; in fact, many school psychologists reported receiving their only training on-the-job (87%), through in-service workshops (84%) or by reading or self-study (83%). Wilson and Reschly (1996) also noted that few university programs were providing training for preschool assessment in accordance with Public Law (PL) 99-457, now part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

Mowder (1996) suggested that school psychology training in early childhood intervention should prepare professionals to work in interdisciplinary teams. Additionally, Mowder suggested that, ideally, all early intervention professionals (e.g. speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, early childhood educators) should participate in some of the same training courses to share points of view and learn from other perspectives. It is important for these professionals to share their specific knowledge of young children with one another to gain a more comprehensive picture of how young children function.

At a minimum, school psychology coursework in the area of early childhood should include courses in the area of assessment and intervention, early childhood development (typical and atypical), developmental disabilities, and family dynamics and systems. The understanding that early intervention services are distinctly

and qualitatively different from the services that are provided to older children is key in translating early childhood training into practice (Mowder, 1996).

Early Childhood School Psychology Services

Serving in early childhood programs is an important role for school psychologists. Although many school psychologists may not work exclusively in early childhood settings they are in a unique situation to provide direct and indirect support and services to families and teachers (Tobin, Sansosti, & McIntyre, 2007). At the most basic level, school psychologists can offer knowledge and expertise in the area of the education and development of young children with those professionals in early childhood education (Tobin, Sansosti, & McIntyre). In addition to knowledge of development and education, school psychologists have knowledge of the early childhood assessment process and the most appropriate assessment instruments.

During the assessment of children, it is important for school psychologists to identify common goals between teachers, parents, and themselves for the success of children. By communicating with teachers, common goals about assessment, consultation, and intervention will be developed to aid in the education of children (Hojnoski & Missall, 2006). The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2009) stated it is critical to assess the progress of young children in order to help them develop socially through peer interactions during structured and unstructured play as well as to help them master early learning skills. Additionally, NASP (2009) affirmed that school psychologists should emphasize contextualized assessments rather than using single-point-in-time measurements when making high stakes decisions. Multiple assessment opportunities using multiple methods should be used to gather information about young children.

Current State of Early Childhood Assessment

As mentioned previously, only a few studies have been conducted on the assessment practices of school psychologists in the area of early childhood. Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) surveyed 142 school psychologists from the membership list of the preschool special interest group of NASP/Division 16 of the American Psychological Association. The survey asked respondents to report how frequently they used various assessment procedures and instruments. With regards to assessment procedures, the most common was File Review, with 81% reporting "Always" used. This was followed by Standardized Developmental Measure (80%), Parent Interview (73%), Teacher Interview (53%), Classroom Observation (46%), and Adaptive Behavior Measurement (34%). The least frequently used procedures were Dynamic Assessment (3%), Piagetian Measure (4%), and Home Observation (4%). For assessment instruments, the only test that was used by at least two-thirds of the respondents was the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale*. The *Vineland*, *McCarthy Scales*, *Bayley*, *K-ABC*, and observation were reported being used by at least one-third of the respondents. Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield highlighted trends in early childhood assessment and the need for improved training of school psychologists in the area of preschool/early childhood assessment.

Wilson and Reschly (1996) reported the results of two surveys of the frequency of use of various assessment instruments by school psychologists. Although the study was focused on general assessment practices, a section of the survey addressed preschool and family assessment. The surveys were conducted in 1986 (n = 242) and 1991-1992 (n = 251). Wil [PubMed](#) son and Reschly reported that preschool and family assessments were not widely conducted by school psychologists; nearly half of the sample reported using no preschool or family measures. Those who did report assessing preschool-aged children and their families did so using very few measures. In the 1991-1992 sample, the only preschool instrument that was reported to be used at least "some of the time" by 35% of the sample or more was the *Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-R)*. The *Bayley Scales* were reported used by approximately 20% of the sample. With regards to general trends in assessment practices, Wilson and Reschly reported that rating scales seemed to be underused for assessing adaptive behavior and targeting problem behaviors. However, use of structured observation techniques increased; in the five years between the surveys, the number of anecdotal observations decreased while structured observations increased in number.

Although Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) and Wilson and Reschly (1996) have documented trends in early childhood assessment practices by school psychologists, these studies have become dated. The most current information was collected in 1991-1992 and there have been many developments since that time as instruments have been updated and new instruments have been created. In addition, early childhood school assessment. Examining the early childhood assessment practices of school psychologists will help identify trends and important targets for improving

intervention has grown in importance; with a greater focus on early childhood intervention, the assessment role of school psychologists may have changed as well.

Types of Early Childhood Assessments

There are a variety of early childhood assessment procedures and instruments. Standardized cognitive and developmental assessments are often used to gain information that can be compared to a normative group, usually a national sample. Some examples of standardized cognitive and developmental assessments include the *Bracken Basic Concepts Scales* (BBCS-3:R; Bracken, 2006), the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale* (Roid, 2003), and the *Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence* (WPPSI-III; Wechsler, 2002). Observations, sometimes standardized, are often used to gain information regarding how a child functions in different environments. Behavior Rating Scales, such as the *Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist* (CBCL; Achenbach, 2001), the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* (ASQ; Bricker & Squires, 1999), and the *Behavior Assessment System for Children* (BASC-II; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004), provide information based on the perceptions of parents and other caregivers. Other assessments are geared toward gaining information regarding family dynamics to better understand the context in which the child is functioning.

Quality of Instruments

Writing in 1987, Bracken suggested that many instruments used for early childhood assessment suffered from poor reliability and validity. Assessment instruments are typically developed for older children, although they are often applied to preschool-aged children. The “lack of standardized criteria contributes to the continued use of preschool instruments that are of inferior quality” (Bracken, 1987, p. 314). For example, most standardized measures attain reliability coefficients in the very high range (.92-.95+), whereas standardized assessments for preschool-aged children typically attain reliability coefficients in the high range only (.80’s). Although the reliability of instruments has improved in recent years, early childhood instruments remain less reliable than instruments used with older populations (Sattler, 2001). Lidz (1977) stated “while reliability and validity are constant issues of concern in assessment, they take on a special importance in the assessment of young children, particularly the issue of reliability” (p. 130).

Summary

Historically, researchers have noted the importance of improving the quality of early childhood assessment instruments and practices (Bracken, 1987; Lidz, 1977). Also, researchers have noted that the need for improved training in school psychology graduate programs in the area of early childhood assessment (Kaplinski, et al., 1992; Mowder, 1996). Despite these concerns, there has been little recent research on the early childhood assessment practices of school psychologists. Wilson and Reschly (1996) conducted a survey of services provided by school psychologists and identified a number of targets for improved practices in the area of school psychology assessment. Kaplinski et al. (1992) and Wilson and Reschly (1996) are the most recent studies that examined early childhood assessment practices, highlighting a need for more recent research on the topic of preschool assessment. Examining the early childhood assessment practices of school psychologists will help identify trends and important targets for improving the preparation and continuing education of school psychologists in this important area of practice.

Research Questions

The purpose of the present study is to examine the current practices of school psychologists in the area of early childhood/preschool assessment. The following research questions were explored:

- (1) What are the demographic characteristics of the school psychologists who provide early childhood services?
- (2) What particular services do school psychologists provide in the area of early childhood?
- (3) How much training is provided in early childhood in graduate programs?
- (4) What kinds of assessment practices are school psychologists using with preschool-aged children, and how do these compare with those identified by Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992)?
- (5) Which early childhood assessment instruments are school psychologists using?

METHOD

Participants

Participants were school psychologists who are current or previous members of the Kansas Association of School Psychologists (KASP). The entire KASP membership database was utilized, consisting of current and former members of KASP including those who are retired, those who were only members as students,

and those who have left the state. The initial mailing consisted of 951 surveys. After the initial mailing and a follow-up postcard as a reminder, 178 surveys were returned usable for a response rate of 19%. However, it should be noted that several surveys were returned unusable due to respondents being retired, no longer working as a school psychologist, or not yet working in the field. In 2004, there were an estimated 665 school psychologists working in the public schools in the state of Kansas (Charvat, 2004). If it is assumed that there were approximately 665 potential active school psychologists in the state at the time of this study, the response rate for active school psychologists (rather than retired or no longer working as a school psychologist), would be 27%.

Materials

A questionnaire inquiring about the early childhood assessment practices of school psychologists used in Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) was adapted with permission for this study. The survey included questions regarding training received in the area of early childhood assessment, number of assessments given, referral sources, reasons for referral and amount of time spent on assessment. Also, participants were asked to report the frequency of use of a wide variety of assessment procedures and to respond to an open-ended question referring to approaches to assessment of young children.

Additional survey information for the present study included items for demographics (age, sex, ethnicity, etc.) and population of area served (rural, suburban, and urban). Years of practice, level of training (master's, specialist, and doctorate), areas of assessment training (school-aged, preschool, IQ, achievement, etc), and job responsibilities (specialization in a certain area) were also asked. The measure also included questions pertaining to frequently used assessment batteries for very young children.

Procedure/Results

Research Question 2: What particular services do school psychologists provide in the area of early childhood?

Respondents (N = 86) who indicated that they provided early childhood services were asked to rate how frequently they provided each of twelve services in early childhood (See Table 2). A 5-point Likert-type scale was used (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, and 5 = always). Behavioral observation was the most frequently offered service, followed by consultation, screening, social/emotional assessment and cognitive assessment. The least offered service was counseling, followed by authentic assessment, family intervention, progress monitoring, and program evaluation.

Research Question 3: How much training is provided in early childhood in graduate programs?

School psychologists were asked if they received training in early childhood as part of their training program. Of the 178 who responded, 142 (80%) indicated that they had received training in early childhood during their post-secondary education. Of those who did receive training in early childhood, 24% indicated that some of the training took place during their undergraduate work, while 76% indicated that it was part of their graduate program. Respondents also indicated that they received training in early childhood during their practicum experience (57%) and internship (42%). School psychologists were also asked what other sources they utilized for training in early childhood. On-the-job experience was the top response (84%) followed by professional conferences (61%), district inservices/workshops (60%), reading journal articles (47%), NASP publications (44%), and internet sources (29%).

Additionally, 40% of respondents indicated that they received training in their graduate program in courses that were offered with students from other disciplines. Of the 40% of respondents who indicated that they were offered classes with other disciplines, 46% indicated that their classes were offered with students from special education and early childhood special education, 39% indicated that their classes were offered with speech/language pathology students, occupational therapy students and physical therapy students, and 16% of respondents indicated that courses were offered with students from counseling and clinical psychology programs.

Years of Experience and Training in Early Childhood. Inspection of the frequency distribution of the years of practice (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years, and 31-40 years) and whether or not they received training in early childhood shows that as years of practice increased, likelihood of training in early childhood decreased (See Table 3). A chi-square test of the null hypothesis that training in early childhood would be distributed across all ranges of practice with respect to the number of respondents in each range was significant beyond the .05 level: $\chi^2(4) = 38.83$; $p < .001$. Respondents with more years of practice were less likely to have had training in early childhood during their training program than those who reported fewer years of practice.

of practice.

Research Question 4: What kinds of assessment practices are school psychologists using with pre-school-aged children, and how do these compare with those identified by Kaplinksi, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992)?

School psychologists who provided early childhood services were asked to rate how frequently they used 17 different assessment procedures for early childhood evaluation purposes (See Table 4). The list of assessment procedures was taken with permission from Kaplinksi, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) in order to provide a comparison of assessment practices from 1992 to the current study (2009). Respondents reported how frequently they used each procedure using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, and 5 = always).

Before discussing the results, it is important to note the differences between the 1992 and 2009 samples. The 1992 sample included school psychologists who were members of the early childhood interest group of Division 16 of the American Psychological Association. Although educational level was not reported, it is likely that the respondents were primarily doctoral-level school psychologists, as APA is a primarily doctoral-level organization. In contrast, the 2009 respondents were practicing school psychologists in the state of Kansas, and the majority were trained at the specialist level. Despite these differences, as the 1992 study is the only study specifically addressing early childhood assessment practices available in the research literature (Wilson and Reschly (1996) investigated which instruments were commonly used, but not which procedures), the comparison does provide a glimpse of possible trends in early childhood assessment procedures over time.

Compared to 1992, respondents in the current study were less likely to report using a Standardized Developmental Measure and Social Maturity Scale (See Table 4 for frequencies). Trends in terminology may be a factor in this finding. However, differences were also noted in other procedures. Current respondents were also less likely to report frequent use of Parent Interviews, Adaptive Behavior Measures, Home Observations, Piagetian Measures, and Dynamic Assessment. The most commonly used procedures in the current study were file review, classroom observation, teacher interview, and parent interview. Taken together, it appears that the respondents in 2009 appeared to use fewer assessment procedures than did respondents in 1992. On none of the assessment procedures did 2009 respondents report a higher percentage of "always" than did respondents in 1992.

Research Question 5: Which early childhood assessment instruments are school psychologists using?

Respondents were also asked to rate how frequently they used each of 24 different assessment instruments (1 = zero times per month, 2 = 1-5 times per month, 3 = 6-10 times per month and 4 = greater than 10 times per month). See Table 5 for mean ratings and frequency distributions of frequency use.

Cognitive Instruments. The *Battelle Developmental Inventory*, *Bracken Basic Concepts Scales*, and *Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence* were rated among the top ten instruments most frequently used. It should also be noted that many cognitive measures included on the list were rated as rarely used or never used, including the *Bayley Scales of Infant Development*.

Behavior Measures. The most frequently used instruments were the *Behavior Assessment System for Children* and the *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales*. Additionally, other behavior rating scales were frequently used by school psychologists with preschool-aged children, including the *Conner's Rating Scale* and the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire*; however, the *Bayley Behavior Rating Scale* was used rarely.

Other Instruments. With the early childhood population, other kinds of instruments were used with some frequency, including the *Beery Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration*, the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test* and *Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment*.

Respondents were also asked to report whether there were any assessments that they frequently used that were not listed on the questionnaire. Table 6 listed the assessments that were reported and the number of respondents who listed them. The most frequently listed assessment were the *Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills* (N = 20), the *Differential Abilities Scale-II* (N = 15), and the *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-II* (N = 5).

DISCUSSION

This study provides an updated overview of training experiences, service provision, and assessment practices in the area of early childhood school psychology. Kaplinksi, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) conducted the last survey study of early childhood assessment practices; the current provides updated information on assessment practices in the state of Kansas. As early intervention and early childhood services continue to grow in emphasis, updated information on current practices should be helpful in identifying trends and targets for

further development.

Service Provision in Early Childhood School Psychology

Approximately half of the respondents reported that they provided early childhood services as a part of their school psychology responsibilities, and *behavioral observation* was the most frequently provided service. *Consultation, screening, social/emotional assessment* and *cognitive assessment* were reported as the next most frequently offered services. The least frequently offered services were *counseling, authentic assessment, family intervention, and progress monitoring*. Based on the responses gathered in this study, it may be that early childhood school psychology services continue to be more assessment and consultation focused than intervention focused. Although it is possible that the assessment and consultation services endorsed by respondents were completed with interventions in mind, additional research in this area is needed. Are early childhood school psychology services moving towards an intervention focus, or do school psychologists continue to spend most of their time on initial screening and assessment? With the paradigm shift in special education to the RTI model, school psychologists can be an integral part of intervention and prevention teams in early childhood.

Training in Early Childhood School Psychology

Wilson and Reschly (1996) noted that few university programs were providing training in the area of early childhood and Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield (1992) stated that there were "serious gaps in the training and backgrounds of school psychologists" in the area of preschool assessment (p. 2). However, results from the current study show that improvement has been made in the training of school psychologists in areas related to early childhood. The percentage of school psychologists who reported receiving training in early childhood has risen from 45% in the Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield study to 80% in the present study. Also, respondents with more years of practice were less likely to have had training in early childhood during their training program than those who reported fewer years of practice. Moreover, respondents indicated that training received in early childhood came from several different sources, including undergraduate and graduate courses as well as practicum and internship experiences. Consistent with Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield, respondents indicated that of the other sources utilized for training in early childhood, on-the-job experience was the most common, followed closely by attending professional conferences and district inservices/workshops and reading journal articles and NASP publications.

Graduate Training Issues. Many respondents indicated that during their graduate program, courses were offered with students from other professional disciplines. Most of these courses were offered in conjunction with students from special education and early childhood special education, while others were offered with students from speech/language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling and clinical psychology programs. Mowder (1996) asserted that most training approaches do not prepare professionals to work effectively in teams. To better facilitate team effectiveness, Mowder suggested that all early interventionists should participate together in some of the same courses during training. By doing this, early interventionists would not only learn a body of knowledge but also learn to interact and engage with one another, share points of view, and learn from other disciplines and perspectives about early intervention. The results of the current study indicate that many of the respondents have had opportunities for cross-disciplinary coursework in their graduate training program.

Assessment in Early Childhood School Psychology

Assessment Practices. Consistent with Kaplinski, Lidz, and Rosenfield, the most commonly used assessment practice by school psychologists in early childhood was *file review*. *Parent and teacher interviews* were also indicated to be frequently used assessment practices. Also consistent with Kaplinski et al. were ratings on *home observation, Piagetian measures, and dynamic assessment*, all of which are practices that were infrequently used. *Classroom observation*, however, was used more frequently than *standardized developmental measures*, which were reported more frequently in the Kaplinski et al. findings. In general, it appears that the assessment practices of school psychologists in early childhood settings have remained fairly consistent over the years. Those practices that were reported more frequently in 1992 (*file review, classroom observation, teacher and parent interviews*) continued to be reported more frequently in 2009, while more specialized assessment practices (such as *Piagetian measures* and *dynamic assessment*) continue to be used sparingly. However, it does appear that respondents in 2009 reported using fewer assessment procedures, as none of the assessment procedures were rated as being more frequently used in 2009 than in 1992. This finding may be the result of differences in the samples (APA Division 16 early childhood interest group versus state association membership list) or it may truly indicate a narrowing of the pool of assessment procedures used by current

school psychologists. Further research should examine these two possibilities. At the very least, the findings indicate that more “progressive” assessment procedures such as dynamic assessment (Lidz, 2003) have failed to make much of an impact on the practice of school psychologists. The assessment approach of current school psychologists appears to be largely the same as that of school psychologists in the early 1990’s.

Assessment Instruments. In the current study, the three most frequently used assessment instruments were the *Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-II)*, the *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales*, and the *Batelle Developmental Inventory*. Wilson and Reschly (1996) underscored the need for the development of behavior and social skills rating scales. It is evident that since that time, not only have behavior and social skills rating scales been developed or improved upon, but that school psychologists are using more and more behavioral measures, especially with the early childhood population. Whereas in Wilson and Reschly’s findings, rating scales for behavior seemed to be underused, in the present study behavior measures were among the most frequently used measures by school psychologists. With regards to cognitive measures, it is interesting that the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale* is no longer the dominant instrument as reported by Kaplinski, Lidz and Rosenfield (1992); the *Stanford-Binet* and the *Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-III)* were reported as being used at approximately the same rate (29% reported using the S-B 1-5 times per month while 34% reported using the WPPSI-III).

Respondents also reported which assessments they frequently used that were not listed on the questionnaire. These responses may help identify trends in the use of newly developed instruments. With regards to cognitive measures, fifteen respondents reported frequently using the *Differential Abilities Scale – II*. For adaptive behavior, five respondents reported using the *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System – II*. Although respondents reported using these instruments to measure cognitive processes and adaptive behavior, the frequency of use remains much less than the more popular instruments in these categories (*Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence* and the *Vineland Scales*).

Best practices in the field of school psychology require the use of technically adequate measures; those that are appropriately standardized, have evidence of validity, and a high degree of reliability (Thomas & Grimes, 2008). In order to uphold best practices, a shift in the assessment practices of school psychologists to include more measures that are designed specifically for use with preschool-aged children should take place, as many of the broader cognitive and behavioral measures have less reliability and validity when used with the younger populations that they are normed for (Thomas & Grimes). By using measures that are developed for use in early childhood, the issue of reliability and validity of the measure may become less concerning. Supplementing early childhood assessment data with preschool forms of instruments with many age levels would be ideal, although the primary data should be gathered using assessment instruments and practices geared specifically for early childhood.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are a number of limitations that should be considered when evaluating the results of the study. First, the issue of the generalizability of the study findings is important to note. Survey respondents were school psychologists from the membership of one state school psychology association; it is not known whether the results accurately reflect practices of school psychologists across the United States. As Wilson and Reschly (1996) noted, the roles and responsibilities of school psychologists in the area of early childhood likely vary considerably by state and district. Future research examining the practices in other states and regions would help determine whether the results of this study are particular to the state of Kansas or whether they are reflective of national trends. Second, the limitations of the survey instrument should be noted. For example, not all possible assessment measures used in early childhood practice were included within the survey.

With the recent changes in legislation mandating a shift in special education to the RTI model, the role of the school psychologist is evolving. School psychologists are participating in special education in different ways than ever before. Further exploration of the roles and responsibilities of school psychologists in the early childhood setting is warranted to track possible changes as a result of the increased emphasis on RTI models. In addition, research on trends in school psychology training programs would also be helpful, as assessment practices are likely closely tied to training trends (Wilson and Reschly, 1996).

Table 1 *Demographic Characteristics of School Psychologists who Provide Early Childhood Services*

Demographic Variable	Provide EC (N = 86) n (P)	Don't Provide EC (N = 92) n (P)
Gender		
Male	13 (15%)	27 (29%)
Female	73 (85%)	65 (71%)
Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	80 (93%)	83 (90%)
White, Hispanic	2 (2%)	7 (8%)
Black, non-Hispanic	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Hispanic	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
Native American	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Age		
20-25	0 (0%)	3 (3%)
26-30	11 (12%)	11 (12%)
31-40	25 (29%)	19 (21%)
41-50	21 (24%)	

Table 2 *Mean Frequency of Early Childhood Services*

Table 3
Percentage of School Psychologists with Training in Early Childhood

Years of practice	P	X ² (4)	Phi
1-5	88.2%	38.83*	.468*
6-10	96.9%		
11-20	90.0%		
21-30	55.6%		
31-40	40.0%		

*p < .001. P = percentage.

Table 4

Frequencies for Assessment Practices: Kaplinski et al. (1992) to Current Study (2009)

Assessment Practice	M(SD)	Alw.	Freq.	Occ.	Rar.	Nev.
File Review						
1992	--	81%	11%	3%	1%	4%
2009	4.4 (.9)	64%	22%	9%	4%	1%
Stan. Dev. Measure						
1992	--	80%	15%	3%	1%	1%
2009	3.7 (1.2)	28%	35%	29%	4%	10%
Parent Interview						
1992	--	73%	16%	7%	2%	2%
2009	4.0 (1.1)	42%	30%	19%	7%	2%
Teacher Interview						
1992	--	53%	27%			
2009	4.3 (.8)	50%	37%	10%	4%	0%
Adapt. Beh. Measure						
1992						
2009	3.3 (.9)	13%	23%	50%	13%	3%
Crit-ref Dev. Measure						
1992	--	30%	24%	23%	12%	11%
2009	2.9 (1.2)	8%	24%	30%	23%	15%
Parent-child Interaction						
1992	--	27%	18%	31%	18%	5%
2009	2.5 (1.2)	8%	8%	33%	24%	27%
Parent Rating Scale						
1992	--	26%	37%	27%	7%	3%
2009	3.5 (1.0)	17%	29%	43%	8%	4%

Free Play, 1:1						
1992	--	21%	28%	24%	17%	10%
2009	3.1 (1.3)	16%	25%	28%	16%	15%
Structured Play, 1:1						
1992	--	21%	17%	23%	26%	13%
2009	2.8 (1.3)	13%	18%	30%	19%	20%
Teacher Rating Scale						
1992	--	18%	36%	29%	7%	10%
2009	3.4 (1.0)	15%	30%	41%	10%	4%
Social Maturity Scale						
1992	--	18%	24%	26%	14%	18%
2009	2.1 (1.1)	3%	8%	27%	21%	42%
Curr-referenced Measure						
1992	--	9%	18%	20%	24%	29%
2009	2.5 (1.3)	8%	17%	27%	14%	34%
Home Observation						
1992	--	4%	22%	23%	30%	21%
2009	2.0 (1.0)	1%	6%	23%	26%	44%
Piagetian Measure						
1992	--	4%	9%	19%	24%	44%
2009	1.2 (.6)	--	1%	3%	14%	82%
Dynamic Assessment						
1992	--	3%	11%	19%	19%	48%
2009	1.5 (.8)	--	3%	13%	17%	67%

Note: For the current study (2010), n's ranged from 75 to 84. Crit-ref Dev. Measure = Criterion-referenced Developmental Measure. Curr-referenced Measure = Curriculum-referenced Measure. Alw. = always, Freq. = frequently, Occ. = occasionally, Rar. = rarely, Nev. = never.

Table 5

Means and Frequencies of Use of Assessment Instruments

Instrument Name	n	M (SD)	Zero X's per month F(P)	1-5 X's per month F(P)
<i>Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-II)</i>	81	1.98 (.77)	21 (26%)	45 (56%)
<i>Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales</i>	83	1.66 (.63)	34 (41%)	44 (53%)
<i>Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI-2)</i>	82	1.55 (.67)	43 (53%)	35 (43%)
<i>Conner's Rating Scale (CRS-R)</i>	84	1.51 (.61)	45 (54%)	36 (43%)
<i>Bracken Basic Concepts Scales (BBCS-3:R)</i>	82	1.48 (.77)	54 (30%)	20 (11%)
<i>Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-III)</i>	83	1.40 (.58)	53 (64%)	28 (34%)
<i>Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale</i>	82	1.35 (.58)	56 (69%)	24 (29%)
<i>Beery Dev. Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery VMI)</i>	81	1.32 (.59)	59 (73%)	19 (24%)
<i>Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment (TPBA)</i>		1.30 (.62)		
<i>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Tests (PPVT-IV)</i>	82	1.29 (.53)	61 (74%)	18 (22%)
<i>Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)</i>	82	1.27 (.65)	67 (82%)	10 (12%)
<i>Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC)</i>		1.24 (.53)		
<i>Burks' Behavior Rating Scale (BBRS-2)</i>	82	1.18 (.42)	68 (83%)	13 (16%)
<i>Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)</i>		1.15 (.45)		
<i>Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)</i>	82	1.13 (1.11)	81 (99%)	1 (1%)

Note. F = frequency. P = percentage. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 5 continued

Means and Frequencies of Use of Assessment Instruments

Instrument Name	n	M (SD)	Zero X's per	1-5 X's per
			month F(P)	month F(P)
<i>Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)</i>	83	1.08 (.28)	76 (92%)	7 (4%)
<i>Individual Growth & Development Indicators (IGDIs)</i>	83	1.08 (.32)	77 (93%)	5 (6%)
<i>Developmental Observation Checklist System (DOCS)</i>	82	1.02 (.16)	80 (98%)	2 (2%)
<i>Bayley Behavior Rating Scale</i>	79	1.01 (.11)	78 (99%)	1 (1%)
<i>Bayley Scales of Infant Development (BSID-II)</i>	79	1.01 (.11)	78 (99%)	1 (1%)
<i>Miller Assessments for Preschoolers (MAP)</i>	82	1.01 (.11)	81 (99%)	1 (1%)
<i>Infant-Toddler Developmental Assessment (IDA)</i>	82	1.00 (.00)	82 (100%)	--
<i>Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS)</i>	82	1.00 (.00)	82 (100%)	--
<i>McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities</i>	82	1.00 (.00)	82 (100%)	--

*Note.*F = frequency. P = percentage. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 6

List of Assessments Frequently Used but Not Listed on the Questionnaire

Assessment Instrument	N	Percentage of Total Respondents
Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS) – 2 nd Ed.	20	11.2%
DAS-II	15	8.4%
ABAS-II	5	2.8%
Observation Forms	4	2.2%
Bracken BCS-III	3	1.7%
Childhood Autism Rating Scale	3	1.7%
DIAL Screening	3	1.7%
Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS)	3	1.7%
HELP for Preschoolers – 2 nd Ed.	3	1.7%
Questionnaires	3	1.7%
Learning Accomplishment Profile – Diagnostic	3	1.7%
Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLBS)	3	1.7%
Asperger’s Syndrome Diagnostic Scale	2	1.1%
Bender II	2	1.1%
Brigance Screening	2	
Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers	2	1.1%
Functional Behavior Assessment	2	1.1%
K-BIT II	2	1.1%
Leiter-R	2	1.1%
Young Children’s Achievement Test (YCAT)	2	1.1%

Note: The following instruments were listed by one respondent: Alpern-Bell Developmental Profile, Authentic Assessment, BDI-2, Behavior Evaluation Scales III, Broilan ADD Scales, Carolina Curriculum for Infants, CBM, CELF-4, Conner’s, CPPSI, Creative Curriculum, CSBS, Detroit Test of Learning Aptitude – Primary, Developmental Assessment of Young Children, Developmental Tasks for Kindergarten Readiness II, DP II, Draw-A-Person, GADS, KABC-II, Kindergarten Readiness Test, KSEALS, KTEA-II, PEP-3, Pictorial Test of Intelligence, PKBS-2, PLS-2, Preschool Developmental Checklist, Preschool Evaluation Scales, Quick Neurological Screening Test, Routines Based Interview, SAED, SATTiRE, Sensory Profile, SIB-R, TERA-3, TEWL-2, Vineland Social Emotional EC, VMI, Woodcock-Johnson III.

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