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The current study explores the relationship between child care program administration, organizational climate, and global quality. The newly developed Program Administration Scale (PAS; Talan & Bloom, 2005) was utilized in the study. Both program administration and organizational climate were found to be positively correlated with preschool classroom global quality. There was a significant relationship between organizational climate and a language/interaction factor of the ECERS-R. Director education was related to higher quality administrative practices and not-for-profit centers scored significantly better than for-profit centers. Additionally, a relationship between the PAS and the Parents and Staff Subscale was found. Based on this finding, it is recommended that research and Quality Rating Systems using the Environment Rating Scales incorporate the Parents and Staff Subscale in final scores. Discussion including policy implications of the current findings and future research is included.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD CARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION,
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, AND GLOBAL QUALITY

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem.....	1
II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	6
Bioecological Perspective.....	6
Feminist Critique	12
III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	17
Global Quality.....	17
Salary and Education in Context.....	19
Program Administration.....	22
Program Administration and Global Quality	23
Organizational Climate	31
Organizational Climate and Child Care Quality.....	31
Organizational Climate and Job Satisfaction.....	32
Program Administration and Organizational Climate	33
IV. STUDY PURPOSE.....	37
V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANALYSES.....	43
VI. METHODOLOGY	48
Procedure	48
Participants.....	49
Measures	51
VII. RESULTS	56
Preliminary Analyses.....	56
Scale Statistics	57

Organizational Climate and Global Quality	59
Organizational Climate and Language/Interaction	60
Program Administration and Global Quality	61
PAS and Parents and Staff Subscale	61
Organizational Climate and Program Administration	63
Director Experience and Education	65
Additional Analyses.....	65
 VIII. DISCUSSION	 68
Leadership and Management Practices.....	70
Parents and Staff Subscale of the ERS	74
Program Administration and Organizational Climate	75
Organizational Climate	78
Reliability of Director Reports.....	79
For-Profit and Not-For-Profit Status.....	82
Limitations	83
Policy Implications	85
Conclusion and Future Research	87
 REFERENCES	 90
 APPENDIX A. TABLES.....	 100
 APPENDIX B. FIGURE 1.....	 105
 APPENDIX C. PROCEDURAL FLOW CHART.....	 106
 APPENDIX D. PHONE SCRIPT FOR RECRUITMENT.....	 107
 APPENDIX E. CHILD CARE WORK ENVIRONMENT SURVEY – SHORT FORM.....	 109
 APPENDIX F. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION SCALE SUMMARY	 110

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
TABLE 1. Center Demographics.....	100
TABLE 2. Center Populations.....	101
TABLE 3. Race and Education of Teachers and Directors.....	102
TABLE 4. Teaching Staff Hourly Wage and Benefits.....	103
TABLE 5. Director Salary and Benefits.....	103
TABLE 6. Pearson Correlations.....	104

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
FIGURE 1. PAS Average Score Frequencies.....	105

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

The child care industry is growing rapidly as a service profession. According to the Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in North Carolina (Trail, Wohl, & Estess, 2004) the industry has three functions: it creates jobs, enables a work economy, and provides opportunity to enhance children's school readiness. The child care industry enables the American economy and serves as its own workforce employing teachers, directors, and support staff. The child care industry also impacts children during critical times of development and helps families meet child care needs. All three functions of the child care industry as identified by the Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in North Carolina (Trail, Wohl, & Estess) are important in their own right; however, this profession that is so multi-dimensional maintains only very minimal professional standards. Currently, child care quality is a national problem as the workforce is plagued with recruitment and retention barriers (Whitebook, Sakai, Gerber, & Howes, 2001). These barriers prevent high quality care and education universally for all children. Although some states have created initiatives to increase education and compensation among child care teachers, the most recent data indicate that education, compensation, and retention continue to challenge the child care workforce (Center for the Childcare Workforce, 2004).

The child care industry has historically struggled with poor working conditions including no breaks, unpaid overtime, lack of benefits, low salaries, low status, and an academically unprepared workforce (Madoigliani, 1986). Today the child care industry continues to struggle with the same issues of high turnover rates, inequitable compensation, a range in academic preparation, and little attention to the work environment. Whitebook et al. (2001) describe the child care workforce as “alarmingly unstable” (p.v) with 82% of child care teachers in 1994 and 76% of child care teachers in 1996 no longer retained in 2000. The Center for the Childcare Workforce (2004) estimated the average hourly wage for child care teachers to be \$8.37, near the poverty level. Further, between 1999 and 2000 the national turnover rate was estimated at 30% (Whitebook et al.). When addressing recruitment and retention of qualified child care teachers, the Center for the Childcare Workforce highlights the need to focus on the work environment in addition to wages and benefits. Because the child care work environment has not been the focus in quality enhancement initiatives, there is uncertainty as to its long term implications for the workforce and quality of care. In addition, without immediate attention put on the child care work environment, poor professional standards for the child care workforce and the conditions they work in may continue to be barriers to an already fragmented profession.

The current study explored the relationship between child care teacher work environments – program administration and organizational climate – and classroom global quality. Conceptually, the work environment is the aggregate of two concepts including program administration and organizational climate. Program administration

describes the leadership and management practices of an organization including program values, goals, and vision as well as implementation of tasks and development of systems (Talan & Bloom, 2004). Organizational climate describes how the leadership and management practices of the work place are perceived by the staff and their collective experience (Bloom, Sheerer, & Britz, 1991). Global quality describes the overall holistic view of the child care setting including the quality of care-giving and education for children as well as the working dynamics between and among staff. This study empirically addressed several unique questions that focus on teacher work environments including program administration and organizational climate and child care global quality. That is, this study attempts to provide an explanation for the dynamic relationship among leadership and management practices of program administration, teachers' perceptions of their work captured in organizational climate, and how that may in turn affect the classroom and interactions experienced by children. Understanding the effects of the work environment (program administration and organizational climate) on child care global quality has important implications. It provides a foundation to improve global quality by focusing on the needs of teachers to do their job best. In addition, understanding what characteristics as well as how characteristics of program administration impact the organizational climate and global quality is critical to improving professional standards.

Until recently there has been no objective measure of child care program administration. This has made it difficult to study administrative practices reliably and to attain an overall picture of the work environment. Subsequently, research has not been

able to empirically address the connection between a comprehensive evaluation of program administration and organizational climate. This study allowed for such exploration. Further, there are vast implications in the way child care quality is measured and regulated by empirically testing the relationship between program administration, organizational climate, and child care global quality. That is, currently child care quality is measured without a comprehensive examination of program administration that includes leadership and management practices. The implications of the current study may lead researchers and practitioners to focus more heavily on administrative indicators important to teacher performance. In addition, the current study has the capability to identify characteristics of program administration that are related to better organizational climate and its impact on global quality. Consequently, this focus may be just what the profession needs to decrease turnover, increase retention, recruit highly qualified teachers, and bring more prestige to the profession. In turn, current standards for child care program administration may be challenged resulting in long term changes to the status quo.

The current study is supported theoretically and empirically. A bioecological perspective and feminist critique create a theoretical foundation for the study. Secondly, a literature review explores three main constructs including 1) child care global quality, 2) child care program administration, and 3) child care organizational climate. It is important to note that the aggregate of child care program administration and organizational climate delineate a fourth concept, work environment. Past research examining the importance of global quality on children's experiences and outcomes,

indicators of child care program administration in relationship to child care quality, and the relationship between the work environment – program administration and organizational climate – and global quality is discussed. In addition, conceptual definitions of each construct are further defined. Finally, the methodology of the study is described, followed by the results and discussion.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Bioecological Perspective

Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective describes human development through interactions between people, objects, and symbols within an environment over time (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Subsequently, when examining the child care industry, the developing person of focus is the child care teacher or staff involved within the industry that comprise the workforce. This focus requires a shift from child care studies that predominantly center on the developing child to viewing child care as an industry with a workforce of developing adults (Murry, 2000). Therefore, it is essential to view the child care workforce as active participants within the child care environment interacting with people, objects, and symbols across the profession.

The first proposition of the bioecological theoretical perspective describes the interactions between the developing person, objects, and symbols of an environment as the *proximal processes* that "function as the engines of development" (p. 118, Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Further, Bronfenbrenner and Evans contend that proximal processes support either *competence* or *dysfunction* within an environment. Competence describes "knowledge, skill, or ability" while dysfunction is the "recurrent manifestation of difficulties" (p. 118). The proximal processes that occur within an environment can be central to a construct such as workforce competence or dysfunction

and are reinforced by levels of exposure – including *duration, frequency, interruption, timing, and intensity* – of the objects, symbols, and interactions in the work environment (Bronfenbrenner & Evans). This idea is especially relevant to child care as staff adapt to the administrative practices and organizational climate influencing facility retention or turnover. Based on high rates of turnover and poor quality child care in the United States (Whitebook et al., 2001), it seems the child care industry is supporting a workforce that is functioning at the level of dysfunction rather than competence.

The second proposition of the bioecological theoretical perspective describes developmental outcomes as a *joint function* of the developing person, process, context, and time (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model incorporates the interactions between the developing person and the processes that occur within a context over time (Bronfenbrenner & Evans). Specifically, in reference to the child care industry, the teacher is the developing person (P). Child care teachers enter the profession with a variety of individual characteristics such as but not limited to sex, race, socio-economic status, marital/partnership status, self-concept, beliefs, experiences, and education that define them as people and influence their interactions.

Within the child care work environment, teachers engage in interactions with others and the surroundings that lead to processes (P) that affect their personal and professional development. For example, teachers must work within the boundaries of a facility and its resources, interact with other teachers, directors, and parents, as well as form relationships with the children in their care. In addition, the processes that occur within the child care setting are situated within a larger social context, an overarching

cultural milieu, expectations, and political ramifications. The bioecological perspective breaks down the complexity of context (C) by dividing it into several inter-related systems including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Individuals' immediate environments are considered microsystems, the interaction between various microsystems such as home and work is an example of the mesosystem while influences of environments that indirectly affect the developing person describe the exosystem. All the systems are embedded within the larger societal ideologies and culture embodied by the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). For example, in reference to the lives of teachers in the child care industry; their immediate work environment is centralized as the microsystem of focus. Further, their family responsibilities (i.e. marital and parental interactions) that may affect their stress, affect, and interpersonal interactions in the work environment are captured in the mesosystem. For additional detail, Cassidy, Vardell, and Buell (1995) illustrate an ecological model with the early childhood teacher as the developing person in focus. An example of the exosystem can be described by the effects that children's home environments have on teachers. Specifically, the influences of children's home environments on their behaviors in turn are experienced by teachers because they must interact directly with the children and face a myriad of issues produced by children's unique home environments. All of the aforementioned systems are influenced by the macrosystem; for example, the rise in child care demand is a result of a societal shift with an increase in dual and sole income households with young children. Further, how society values young children and those who care and educate them is nested within the macrosystem. Legislative forces also

impact the macrosystem. For example, state Quality Rating Systems such as the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project, create standards that inform the profession and public about what is required for different levels of quality care and education. These standards subsequently become a part of a contextual understanding of what early care and education should be like.

The proximal processes of child care teachers develop out of their daily experiences within the child care industry and these experiences are compounded by time (T). Child care teachers have qualitatively unique experiences in the industry as they are influenced by their interaction within their work environment as well as their participation in the overall industry. That is, child care teachers employed by facilities with positive leadership, management, and organizational climates have distinct working experiences compared to teachers employed by facilities with negative leadership, management, and organizational climates. In addition, teachers involved in professional activities outside their work place experience a wider vision for child care beyond the boundaries of their own facility while teachers uninvolved in professional development may feel disconnected from a larger professional vision and lack connection to the field. The element of time is referred to as the chronosystem.

The chronosystem includes the duration of time. For example, child care teachers working in high quality child care over time are likely to have different experiences in the field than those working in child care of lesser quality as a result of varied practices and interactions within the work place. As those experiences are compounded by time, competency or dysfunction within the environment become further supported. For

example, Cassidy, Hicks, Hall, Farran, and Gray (1998) provide evidence that contextual factors in child care facilities may contribute to lower quality care-giving in spite of training. Specifically, Cassidy et al. found child care teachers participating in the North Carolina Child Care Corp to exhibit less positive responsiveness and become significantly more detached and harsh with children during care-giving after nine months of experience while their knowledge of child development remained consistent. These findings support the idea that proximal processes that occur within the work environment of child care facilities may be as important as those traditionally received through formal education and child care specific training. In addition, these findings suggest that the work environment, if poor, may compromise the positive effects of formal education over time as represented in the chronosystem.

It is important to note that time is embedded in each of the systems of the bioecological model. That is, Bronfenbrenner and Evans describe development as occurring in context over time. With this in mind, time, in each of the systems of context, impacts the developing individual. For example, time – a work day, a “school year”, a career – is experienced by teachers within the microsystem of the child care work environment. Additionally, time as represented in the chronosystem of the macrosystem captures historical views of caring for children and impacts current societal value (or lack of value) towards the individuals teaching young children. Therefore, the chronosystem creates a complex web across the systems of the bioecological model and subsequently influences teachers as they develop within the child care industry.

The third proposition of the bioecological perspective describes individuals' need to engage in interactions with others who care about their well-being and are committed to their development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). This proposition is in response to increased attention on “chaotic systems” (p. 121) where fragmentation in society has caused disconnect between humans within communities, families, schools, and workplaces (Bronfenbrenner & Evans). More specifically, *chaotic systems* are defined by Bronfenbrenner and Evans as “frenetic activity, lack of structure, unpredictability in everyday activities, and high levels of ambient stimulation” (p.121). Interestingly, child care - with high rates of turnover, lack of support, poor working conditions, and the complexity of working with parents and children – also seems to describe a chaotic system. In fact, Buell and Cassidy (2001) utilize chaos theory to describe the complex nature of the child care industry and caution against simple cause and effect linearity as a method to increasing child care quality. That is, making a change in one domain of quality (ex. regulation, materials, teacher education) is likely to be felt in a variety of other areas and across systems (micro, exo, meso, and macro). In other words, it should be with great caution to assume a change will lead to an anticipated effect with only positive implications on a single level. Rather, Buell and Cassidy support improving child care quality from many directions including child care workforce development that includes but is not isolated to training and compensation. Further, Bronfenbrenner and Evans note that chaos can interfere with proximal processes affecting either competence or dysfunction. Theoretically, when examining the child care industry as a chaotic system, providing child care teachers with work environments that include resources and

interventions to minimize and buffer dysfunction seems inherent to improving overall quality.

Feminist Critique

Historically, women have been the caretakers of children and this is reflected in the child care industry with a workforce of nearly 100% women (Whitebook et al., 2001). Subsequently, it is essential to examine the historical care-giving of children when evaluating the status of today's child care industry. In addition, Flax (1979) reminds us that child care is beyond "something that enables women to work, but locates both right in the center of feminist demands" (p. 6-7). Exploring women's issues, including child care, involves understanding the dynamic relationship between biological and social conditions of the present and historical structure of society (Jagger & Strahul, 1986). Therefore, feminism has a responsibility to address child care as an important element in the development of women's liberation that is fundamental to children's development.

From a feminist perspective gender roles and socially constructed norms are central to women's experiences (Hayes, Flannery, Brooks, Tisdell, & Hugo, 2000; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Specifically, Hartsock (1986) identifies five elements of social relations that have been forces of oppression including patriarchy, capitalism, White supremacy, forms of social interaction, and language that have lead to socially constructed norms and a hierarchy of social positions. Subsequently, understanding women's gender roles and socially constructed norms are critical to depicting an accurate picture of the child care industry's development in society over time as well as its current status. For example, as roles and norms are challenged and

women have entered the workforce other social ramifications have become dispersed (Hartsock) such as an increase in need for out-of-home child care. Yet, it is striking to note as women have entered the workforce, the workforce that cares for children is nearly 100% women. That is, women who once cared and educated children in the home are now a part of a profession that embodies similar characteristics of work including predominately women.

Understanding the child care workforce as gendered and recognizing a gendered voice embedded in the unique history and context is critical when addressing the challenges faced in the industry. For example, jobs that remain differentiated by sex illuminate both gendered inequalities as well as class differences (Flax, 1979). Because the child care industry is predominately women, it seems oppression is occurring from the direction of both within and outside the organization. In addition, as women have been marginalized in the child care industry, their power as a collective group has been dispersed and dismantled, making it more difficult to create substantial change. In essence, as oppression has been lifted off women as primary caregivers in the home (although not suggesting it has been eliminated), it has shifted to the population who care for children in other settings, specifically child care. Hartsock (1986) suggests that a feminist strategy to improving women's lives must involve "use [of] our organizations as places where we begin to redefine social relations and to create new ways of working which do not follow the patterns of domination and hierarchy set by the mode of production as a whole" (p.16). That is, the oppression of women within child care

identifies a central organizational venue or opportunity to implicate change that has the potential for altering social relations for women in this setting.

Hayes et al. (2000) and Belenky et al. (1986) emphasize the collective voice and unique experience of womanhood. To give power to the child care profession it is necessary to give voice to the challenges that face the workforce. Awareness of the challenges in the child care industry (low wages, high turnover rates, poor working conditions) has begun to be raised. However, it is questioned as to whether or not society truly hears the voice of the child care workforce through all the noise that accompanies the historical and social expectations around the act of caring for children (Tuominen, 2000). Studies that examine the child care workforce have primarily been about women and not necessarily for them. Although research about the child care workforce provides information that explains “what is”, research that is for women creates emancipatory change that actually aims to improve their lives (Acker, Barry, Esseveld, 1983). Because historical roots of care-giving are embedded in the role of women, research that simply documents their cries for professionalism in the field, does not address the fact that these issues are largely ignored by society because of women’s socialized expectations around their biological and innate responsibility to children.

Modigliani (1986) identifies the child care profession as socially devalued and points out a complex relationship between the participation of teachers in the industry – who are desperately needed – further exploiting the problem of poor working conditions by their very involvement. For example, although the child care industry has a history of functioning with low professional standards, Whitebook et al. (2001) found over two-

thirds of the workforce to be satisfied with their work and would recommend it as a career to others. This phenomenon may exist because women are providing responses that are socially acceptable to internally justify their participation in the child care industry and cater to their psychological well-being (Klein, 1983). Touminen (2000) describes this paradox as a result of child care entering a market economy that challenges historical “ideologies of caregiving” and “conventional definitions of ‘work’” (p.117). Further consciousness-raising among the child care workforce is necessary to reduce their exploitation within the child care industry. That is, the contradiction between socially derived boundaries around modern child care (ex. operating hours, cost, rules and regulations, evaluation, training and education, professional opportunities, etc.) and historical expectations around the act of caring such as love, compassion, and accommodation must be explored. This further delineates the child care industry as situated within a historical context that socially, politically, and economically defines it as women’s work compensated with intrinsic value rather than professional prestige and financial compensation (Murray, 2000; Ranck, 1999). In fact, historically, child care, when needed, was typically provided by female family members in the home rather than a service institution. As women have entered the workforce for both reasons of economics and equity, families alone have not been able to meet child care needs, resulting in a demand for child care services in the private and public sectors (Scarr, 1998).

As attempts have been made to view child care as a profession, low compensation, lack of benefits, and poor work environments continue to marginalize

women who dedicate themselves to working with children. Without improved work standards, the child care industry comprised primarily of women continues to feed a historically oppressive institution. Subsequently, poor working conditions make it difficult to retain highly qualified teachers which in turn affect the quality of children's experiences. As the child care industry continues to subject teachers to poor working conditions they also risk losing them as a result of burnout and more appealing career alternatives (Guelman & Guo, 1998). Therefore, in order to retain qualified teachers, it seems especially important at a time when the demand for child care is increasing, for attention to be placed on the voice of the workforce that has gone, long enough, unheard.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Global Quality

Global quality describes an overall, holistic view of child care programs including both structural and process-oriented factors (see Vandell & Wolfe, 2000 for a review of the literature). It describes the dynamic relationships of the bioecological model within the child care setting. For example, global quality includes health and safety, the indoor and outdoor environment, materials, activities, interactions with and between children, parents, and staff, and administrative practices. The Environment Rating Scales (ERS), although frequently referred to as process measures, capture child care global quality by including both structural and process-oriented indicators (Cassidy, Hestenes, Hansen, Hegde, & Shim, 2005). The ERS are utilized to measure child care quality nationally and internationally with both typically and atypically developing children (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2003).

Studies that have examined child care environments in order to predict child outcomes commonly use the ERS as a measure of global quality. Child care global quality has been found to be related to children's experiences and subsequent development. The Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (Helburn, 1995) found most child care to be poor to mediocre, below the level that promotes optimal development, utilizing the Infant/Toddler and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ITERS,

ECERS). While the majority of young children were cared for in low to mediocre quality programs, children in higher quality programs were more advanced in language, math, and social development after controlling for child and parent characteristics (gender, ethnicity, and parent education). Consequently, it is devastating to recognize that those children in lower quality programs and sometimes unsafe environments were experiencing care that perhaps negatively impacted their development. Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, and Clifford (2000) also found child care global quality to predict children's language, math, and social development across gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic statuses. In addition, after controlling for gender and parent education, Burchinal and Cryer (2003) found ECERS global quality scores to be associated with higher cognitive and social outcomes among White, Black, and Hispanic children. Howes, Phillips, and Whitebook (1992) also found global quality to impact teacher-child interactions and peer relationships. For example, higher quality classrooms with more developmentally appropriate activities were more likely to have sensitive teachers. Children in these classrooms were also more likely to have secure relationships with their teachers and better peer interactions. These findings support the idea that quality care is important for all children including their development and relationships.

With increasing attention on school readiness, longitudinal effects of child care quality on children's outcomes are striking. Specifically, a 3 year longitudinal study that examined Black infants found cognitive development, receptive language, and communication skills to be enhanced in programs that scored higher on the ITERS (Burchinal, Roberts, Riggins, Zeisel, Neebe, & Bryant, 2000). The NICHD Early Child

Care Research Network (2003) reported enhanced cognitive development among 4 ½ year olds who experienced higher quality child care at 6, 15, 24, and 36 months old while controlling for their current child care experiences. Specifically, when both current child care and home variables were controlled for, children involved in high quality care between 6 and 36 months of age performed better on cognitive measures including vocabulary, language, problem solving, and short-memory compared to children who experienced lower quality care. Another longitudinal study, with a sample of 733 children with demographics representative of the United States, found child care global quality to be related to children's language, cognitive, math, behavioral, and social development in elementary school (Peisner-Feinberg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, & Yazejian, 2001). Subsequently, there is strong evidence that suggests child care global quality has important implications for children's development and their later success in elementary school.

Salary and Education in Context

Two of the strongest predictors of global quality that have been clearly linked to children's academic and developmental outcomes include teacher salaries and education (Phillips, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney, Abbott-Shim, 2001; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes, & Cryer, 1997; Scar, Eisenberg, & Deater-Deckard, 1994; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). Specifically, the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (Helburn, 1995) found that not only the level of teacher education related to child care global quality, but global quality increased when the percentage of teachers with high education in a facility increased. That is, the better the ratio of teachers in a single facility with high education levels, the

higher the global quality. Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese, and Russell (1995) also found education to be linked to more developmentally appropriate practices and beliefs. Specifically, as few as 12 to 20 community college credits in early childhood education led to more developmentally appropriate practices and beliefs among teachers. Arnett (1989) found teacher training and education to be related to levels of positive interactions with children. Teachers with some training exhibited less authoritarian behaviors than teachers with no training while, teachers with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education fared best in their child related attitudes and interactions. Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford, and Howes (2002) also found teachers with college degrees to provide higher quality care than their less educated peers. They also found participation in professional development workshops in addition to formal education to be related to higher quality care compared to teachers with similar education levels but no involvement in professional development. Although education is continually supported as a predictor of quality child care, Whitebook et al. (2001) found that as teachers become more qualified through education they are also more likely to leave the field if they continue to earn low wages and work alongside teachers with less education. This paradox is costly to the child care profession. It suggests that as initiatives work to improve teacher education and training in an effort to increase the quality of care, the industry is not successfully retaining the teachers. This phenomenon calls further attention to the issues in the child care work environment – beyond education and compensation – and the dynamic relationship between preparing highly qualified teachers for the field and retaining them.

Salary is also an important factor of global quality. For example, the Cost Quality and Child Outcomes Study (Helburn, 1995) found teachers with higher salaries tended to have higher levels of education which predicted better quality care. Although teachers with college degrees had higher salaries than their lesser educated peers, they also found that teachers with bachelor's degrees to be proportionally underpaid compared to teachers with less education. Although equitable compensation is essential to professionalizing the child care industry, it is naive to assume that salary itself improves the quality of care. Rather, salaries may be indicators of the overall context of child care centers. For example, Phillipps, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney, and Abbott-Shim (2001) found teacher education and salary along with regulatory compliance and parent fees to be associated with classroom global quality. In this study there was a relationship between teacher salaries, regulatory compliance, and parent fees suggesting that a variety of indicators may be likely to exist simultaneously. The Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (Helburn, 1995) also found states with more stringent regulatory rules to have higher quality child care than states with fewer regulatory demands. Again, this study illustrates the power of macro level indices on quality and further recognizes the importance of identifying confounding factors in addition to what salaries "buy". Characteristics of child care teachers such as education are important to recognize but, how those characteristics are supported in the industry are perhaps of greater significance. Higher salaries seem to financially enable the industry to compete in the workforce market and retain highly qualified teachers. In addition, the child care industry may be more likely to meet higher standards (indicators that tend to predict quality care) if more attention is

placed on regulation including professional expectations (education and compensation). Subsequently, how teacher characteristics and their work environments within a context interact to enhance competence (or dysfunction) and promote (or compromise) professional excellence is in need of exploration.

Program Administration

Conceptually, child care program administration involves the leadership and management of the organization including staff qualifications, administrative practices, and provisions made for staff. Child care program administration is a part of the work environment with the organizational climate making up the other part. The Center for the Child Care Workforce (1998) endorses the idea that the program administration is important to child care quality. In fact, the Center for the Child Care Workforce developed the Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care to aid in the improvement of child care work environments. The standards include *wages, benefits, job descriptions and evaluations, hiring and promotions, termination, suspension, severance, and grievance procedures, classroom assignments, hours of work, and planning time, communication, team building, and staff meetings, decision making and problem solving, professional development, professional support, diversity, health and safety, and physical setting*. Although the Model Work Standards seems to contain face and content validity, because its intended use is primarily in application by teachers and directors as a center-wide assessment tool and not for research, its reliability has not been tested. However, the recent development of the Program Administration Scale (PAS; Talan & Bloom, 2004) offers a scientifically sound means for measuring child care

administrative practices in a comprehensive way (a more detailed description is provided in the methods section). Child care program administration as measured by the PAS includes the following subscales: *human resource development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications*. In general, child care program administration includes the leadership and management practices and the provisions for and of employment.

Program Administration and Global Quality

Global quality is intended to capture a holistic view of child care quality. Therefore, it seems important to include child care administrative practices when representing global quality. North Carolina and other states have recognized teacher qualifications as critical to child care quality by including education as a category of the rated license required for all child care facilities. However, when examining child care global quality, other indicators of administrative practices are often given little attention compared to child-related factors such as materials, activities, health and safety, and teacher-child interactions. Yet, both the ITERS-R (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2003) and the ECERS-R (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998), commonly used measures of global quality, contain questions that assess administrative practices within the “Parents and Staff” subscale. The Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R includes the following items: *provisions for parents, provisions for personal needs of staff, provisions for professional needs of staff, staff interaction and cooperation, supervision and evaluation of staff, and opportunities for professional growth*. In addition, the

ITERS-R contains an item that addresses *staff continuity*. However, it is important to note that although some studies include the Parents and Staff subscale (or equivalent subscale, Adult Needs, in the original versions) in the final global quality scores (see Farran & Son-Yarbrough, 2001; Hubbs-Tait, McDonald Culp, Huey, Culp, Starost, & Hare, 2002; La Paro, Sexton, & Snyder, 1998; Scarr, Eisenberg, & Deater-Deckard, 1994; Phillips, Howes, & Whitebook, 1991), the majority of studies omit it when calculating the overall average score. Because global quality assessments allow for the quantification of the overall quality of child care programs, it seems that questions that address the working conditions of staff would be important to include.

The program administrative indicators of the ERS have been excluded from studies for a variety of reasons. For example, Scarr, Phillips, McCartney, and Abbott-Shim (1993) describe the ITERS and ECERS as assessing “developmental appropriateness of care, including teacher-child interactions, health and safety provisions, qualities of physical environment, appropriateness of play materials, and daily activities” (p.185) yet leave out adult needs in this description. Bryant, Maxwell, and Burchinal (1999) justify excluding the adult needs (and the special needs) items by suggesting the inclusion of only the “child-related items” (p.456). This study examined the affects of Smart Start, a community initiative and intervention to improve child care quality. The study reported improved quality over the 2-year testing period. However, excluding the needs of staff in this report may have been counterproductive to measuring the impact of Smart Start since many Smart Start initiatives address issues such as wages and other working conditions.

The exclusion of the Parents and Staff subscale that contains administrative indicators has become common practice in child care research. For example, de Kruif, McWilliam, Maher Ridely, and Wakely (2000) cite other colleagues to justify their use of only “child-related items” by stipulating, “previous studies have indicated that for each scale a single total score comprised of the child-related items can provide a reliable and valid index of classroom quality” (p. 254). This justification seems counterproductive to the spirit of research. Eliminating items prior to analyzing the psychometric properties of the data does not allow for exploratory analyses nor does it allow the ability to confirm reliability and psychometric properties against other research. For example, Scarr et al. (1994) found the ITERS and ECERS to contain one factor and found when randomly selected subsets of any 12 items were drawn they accurately estimated the final global quality scores. This suggests when using the original ITERS and ECERS for research, randomly eliminating some of the subscales does not necessarily limit the accuracy of the final global quality score. However, with the revised version of the ECERS, Cassidy, Hestenes, Hegde, Hestenes, and Mims (1995), found different yet equally compelling psychometric properties. They found the ECERS-R to contain two factors (activities/materials and language/interactions) including 16 items that when used together could accurately predict the entire global quality score with a .92 correlation between the factors and the entire scale. The activities/materials factor included item 3. *Furnishings for relaxation and comfort*, 5. *Space for privacy*, 15. *Books and pictures*, 19. *Fine motor*, 20. *Art*, item 22. *Blocks*, 24. *Dramatic play*, 25. *Nature/science*, and 26. *Math/number*. The language/interactions factor included item 17. *Using language to*

develop reasoning skills, 18. Informal use of language, 30. General supervision of children, 31. Discipline, 32. Staff-child interactions, 33. Interactions among children, and 36. Group time. Based on these examples, it is important to note that research that specifically omits the administrative indicators provides valuable information about child care quality and children's outcomes. Additionally, abbreviated versions of the ERS may be useful for research to increase sample sizes and prevent data saturation. But, shortened versions risk not capturing all aspects of quality and may further remove the importance of the work environment from the field. Subsequently, it is equally important to consider the benefits of exploratory research while weighing the difficult balance of collecting enough data efficiently and in a cost-effective manner while not compromising subsequent findings (Hansen & Gable, in press).

While conducting exploratory analyses with the ITERS-R and including the items of the Parents and Staff subscale, Hestenes, Cassidy, Hegde, & Hansen (under review) found four factors: materials/activities, safety/organization, language/interactions, and parents/staff. The materials/activities factor included item 3. *Provision for relaxation and comfort, 14. Using books, 15. Fine motor, 16. Active physical play, 18. Music/movement, 20. Dramatic play, 22. Nature/science, 24. Promoting acceptance of diversity, and 24. Free play.* The safety/organization factor included item 2. *Furniture for routine care, play and learning, 4. Room arrangement, 9. Diapering/Toileting, 10. Health practices, 11. Safety practices, 25. Supervision of play and learning, and 29. Scheduling.* The language/interactions factor included item 12. *Helping children understand language, 26. Peer interaction, 28. Discipline, and 38. Supervision and*

evaluation of staff. The parents/staff factor included item 1. *Indoor space, 33. Provisions for parents, 34. Provisions for personal needs of staff, 35. Provisions for professional needs of staff, 36. Staff interaction and cooperation, and 39. Opportunities for professional growth.* Findings from the exploratory and confirmatory analyses of Hestenes et al. support the inclusion of the indicators that measure items related to the work environment when examining global quality. Consequently, with teachers being at the heart of what happens in early childhood programs, eliminating indicators that examine their work environment seems to ignore important characteristics of the environment that may help explain child care quality.

Implementing a measure and ignoring theoretically important concepts within it suppresses questions that should be asked, considered, and empirically explored. Therefore, when indicators like the Parents and Staff subscale are not considered important enough to even collect, questions around this subscale are further suppressed and issues around reliability and validity become un-addressed. The importance of this issue can be further understood by recognizing the relationship between the indicators of the administrative practices and other indicators of quality care and education. That is, direct measurement of the administrative practices seems critical to accurately describe and measure its influences on global quality. In addition, routinely eliminating the Parents and Staff subscale limits exploratory analyses that may identify unique characteristics of the needs of staff in order to promote quality child care. Further, eliminating this subscale also limits analyses that may suggest revisions to this subscale are needed. Routinely ignoring administrative indicators in research contributes to the

already devalued industry, fails to address concerns among the workforce, and further suggests the work environment does not matter when examining child care quality.

In addition to research, the indicators of global quality that measure administrative practices are important for regulation and consultation (Cassidy et al., 2005; Scarr, et al., 1994). That is, when using the ERS for program improvement and technical assistance, it is critical to use the entire scale to ensure quality from all perspectives. In addition, in regulation and consultation, it seems negligent to use an abbreviated version of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R with the same justification used by researchers to randomly drop items, especially ones that focus on the needs of staff. That is, researchers aim to collect data in the most efficient way that captures constructs without leading to data saturation whereas in regulation or consultation the goal is to improve quality and therefore requires thorough examinations and interventions. While it is true that the Parents and Staff subscale measures a unique set of factors, there is not confirming evidence that it is appropriate to eliminate the entire subscale. Deleting the scores of the Parents and Staff subscale devalues the critical needs of the teachers who are at the forefront of providing high quality care and education. It produces incomplete results that do not promote a comprehensive picture of the child care industry. Exclusion of the administrative indicators supports the erroneous assumption that the industry's work environment does not influence teacher behavior or child outcomes. In addition, because of the known importance of high quality child care in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, excluding administrative practices from global quality sets a precedent that the needs of child care staff are unimportant.

Including administrative practices as a part of child care global quality is an effort to increase the known variance that distinguishes high quality child care that promotes child outcomes from low quality child care that does not. For example, when trying to delineate the factors that contribute to high quality child care, in a regression model, capturing the most variance is important to understanding the larger picture. Omitting the administrative practices from global quality eliminates the opportunity to better understand its impact on child care quality and ignores realities faced by the workforce in the child care industry. In order to optimally improve child care quality over time, it is necessary to move away from a basic linear explanation and account for as many factors as possible that may affect quality child care (Buell, & Cassidy, 2001). Including indicators that specifically address the needs of teachers as a part of global quality may provide a more accurate picture of overall child care quality and better explain the dynamic nature of the industry and its impact on children. This idea is also represented in the medical field with hospital work environments impacting the quality of patient care (for reviews see American Association of Critical Care Nurses, Institute for Safe Medication Practices, Institute of Medicine of the National Academics, and Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations).

Currently, there is limited understanding about the multi-faceted nature of child care work environments that retain teachers who create high quality programs. However, there is evidence that the administrative practices relate to global quality. One study by Phillips et al. (1991) found administrative practices to predict the use of developmentally appropriate activities. Using the original versions of the ITERS (1990) and ECERS

(1986), Phillips et al. found the Adult Needs (Parents and Staff) subscale to predict an activities factor (materials, scheduling and activities) of both scales. This evidence supports the use of the administrative indicators as well as the need for additional research to examine the relationship between program administration and global quality.

A relationship between program administration and child care quality cannot be ignored as children become the focus of child care teacher behaviors affected by their competence or dysfunction within their work environment. In fact, Mill and Romano-White (1999) found the administrative practices to be one factor that predicts affectionate and angry behaviors of teachers working with young children. Specifically, Mill and Romano-White found a significant difference among job rewards, job concerns, and supervisor support between groups of teachers who exhibited angry behaviors compared to those who were more affectionate. These findings support the idea that the administrative practices for teachers directly impact the quality of care and education provided to children. In addition, Bloom and Sheerer (1992) found leadership training for teachers and directors to significantly improve classroom quality scores. This finding is important to consider as policy initiatives are developed to help improve child care quality and suggests that training directors and teachers to create better work environments may be as important as training them about appropriate activities. Attention on the child care industry's program administration is necessary to understand its multi-dimensional characteristics and to describe the relationship between leadership and management and global quality.

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate is a part of the child care work environment and is closely related to program administration in that it describes how staff perceives the administrative practices. Bloom (1988) defines organizational climate as “the collective perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values of the individuals in a particular work setting” (p. 111-112). Based on this definition, the administrative practices contribute to the working morale within individual facilities. Provisions and interactions that affect teacher experiences affect the overall facility culture and in turn influence attitudes, practices, and productivity within the child care setting (Bloom, Sheerer, Britz, 1998). Subsequently, the collective perceptions of teachers across the profession describe a professional climate of the industry as a whole. Therefore as program administration improves across the profession, perceptions among participants in the industry’s workforce would seem to positively change. Subsequently, teachers’ feelings of professionalism may collectively redefine a sense of professionalism and esteem within the child care field.

Organizational Climate and Child Care Quality

Organizational climate has been posited to affect child care quality. Specifically, Ekholm and Hedin (1987) found child care organizational climate (attitudes and teamwork) to impact teacher interactions with children that they described as either present or future focused. Centers with greater levels of teamwork were more likely to be future focused when interacting with children. That is, teachers who worked in facilities that exhibited more teamwork were also more likely to be active in planning activities and

interacting with the children during play while being flexible to their needs.

Subsequently, children in future-focused environments were more likely to be more engaged in activities. This study provides evidence that the organizational climate, affected by the philosophies of practice within the program administration at both the adult and child levels impact children's experiences in care. Bloom (1996) also found differences in organizational climate in centers of different quality. Specifically, Bloom compared the organizational climate of child care centers using the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES) that were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with those that were not accredited. The ECWES captures teacher perceptions of the administrative practices and therefore when averaged across the center staff describe the overall organizational climate of the center. Bloom found centers that were accredited and therefore likely to be of higher quality to also have staff that had better perceptions and attitudes about the overall work environment.

Organizational Climate and Job Satisfaction

Organizational climate has also been related to job satisfaction. Specifically, Pope and Stremmel (1992) found organizational climate and job satisfaction to be two distinct concepts yet they also found the two measures to be significantly correlated. Although the sample size was relatively small (27 centers and 94 teachers), correlating organizational climate with job satisfaction provides important information to the child care industry. That is, organizational climate or how the program administration is perceived by teachers lends to their job satisfaction which may help explain rates of

turnover. With high rates of turnover, it would seem that organizational climate may be at a minimal level. However, Manlove and Guzell (1997) found job satisfaction to be related to employee retention but not as a reason for turnover. They found the level of job satisfaction to be higher for teachers who stayed in their jobs but was not a significant reason for leaving their job. Rather, tenure and exhaustion were better predictors of turnover than job satisfaction. Although these findings are slightly different than other studies, they complement the idea that the work environment is a complex system of relationships and further suggest that resources in the program administration may act to improve organizational climate that reduces exhaustion and prevents burnout. Stremmel, Benson, and Powell (1992) also found teachers who were more satisfied with their work to be less emotionally exhausted or burnt out. Interestingly, teachers' salary did not impact their exhaustion levels providing evidence that teacher perceptions of their work experience may be a unique construct that functions independently to predict quality (Stremmel, et al.). That is, the organizational climate may play a critical role in retaining teachers when controlling for salary. Child care teachers who are able to financially stay in the field may be more likely to stay long term if the program administration supports a positive organizational climate and is conducive to their personal and professional needs.

Program Administration and Organizational Climate

It is difficult to isolate administrative practices from organizational climate in discussion. Although they are two distinct concepts, they are frequently connected in research because aggregately they make up the overall work environment. That is, indicators of program administration seem to influence how staff perceives their work

experience. For example, Goelman and Guo's (1998) review of the literature identifies a complex relationship between administrative practices and the impact on child care teacher burnout. When examining the literature, burnout is found to be related to a variety of factors including wages, job descriptions, communication, workplace social support, education, employment history, personality and perceptions of child care work. Goelman and Guo describe a web of professional standards that promote functional program administration and organizational climate. In addition, Whitebook and Sakai (2003) found lower rates of turnover among teachers who did not experience director turnover and among teachers who belonged to a professional organization. How director turnover and involvement in professional organizations affects the work experience is important to consider. Stremmel and Powell (1990) found directors to have an important role in teacher job satisfaction. They found that directors' involvement in providing classroom focused information, staff meetings, evaluations, and enabling self assessments – all a part of program administration -- to account for 40% of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction. These indicators of program administration clearly affected teachers' satisfaction with their jobs. It seems then that director leadership has an important role in defining a system of program administration that sets expectations and measures staff development and classroom practices. Conly and Levison (1993) found changes in job responsibilities that alter roles and career opportunities to enhance job satisfaction among experienced teachers, but not with teachers new to the field. This further supports the necessary attunement needed between directors and staff that will address career moves

and provide stimulating advancement and opportunity to retain teachers and maintain job satisfaction while not overwhelming new hires.

With a range of experience and education within the child care workforce, there is a challenge to retain qualified teachers while also mentoring, training, and educating teachers new to the field. Therefore, in addition to retaining highly educated and skilled teachers, work environments must also meet the needs of those entering the field at the minimal educational levels. Provisions must be made for retaining both highly educated and skilled teachers as well as those who meet the minimal educational requirements. Howes, James, and Ritchie (2003) found teachers to be more likely to stay in the field when they were mentored or actively supervised. In addition, Bloom (1988) suggests working relationships that mold into community foster increased communication and understanding. Subsequently, administrative practices that promote the development of community and increases communication among child care teachers may be reflected in the organizational climate.

Curbow's review of the literature (1990) on job stress among child care teachers describes variation in organizational climate based on teacher characteristics, including skill, psychological, social, and economic resources. As education and professional development aid new understandings of "best practice", it seems especially important to provide administrative practices that nurture diversity and various skill levels and keep invested teachers in the workforce. Teachers who are committed to their jobs are less likely to leave (Stremmel, 1991) and therefore it is critical to create work environments that strengthen organizational commitment among teachers. In addition, Berk (1985)

found teachers that were committed to the field were also more likely to have higher education levels, displayed more appropriate interactions with children, and were more satisfied with their job. Retaining skilled teachers with high levels of education as well as experience is necessary to professionalizing the child care industry. Subsequently, child care work environments that do not support state and national efforts to increase teacher education and compensation put extensive resources and efforts of professional development systems at risk of being compromised. Creating professional development systems that finance specialized training and supplement teacher salary are unable to reach the goal of creating a more stable workforce if work environments are unable to retain them.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY PURPOSE

Currently, child care global quality is frequently measured without considering the work environments for teachers who create the very learning environments for children found to impact their development. In addition, the administrative practices of child care teachers have historically been fiscally and socially oppressive contributing to an unstable workforce. Further, an unstable child care workforce is counterproductive to the societal need for an increase in quality child care that enables a work economy and prepares children for school. Subsequently, a comprehensive examination of the relationship among administrative practices, the organizational climate, and children's learning environments seems necessary to address a holistic view of child care global quality.

There are a myriad of influences of program administration that have been studied independently rather than comprehensively. Therefore, these indicators as described in the review of literature must be coordinated to capture an overall view of program administration in order to effectively enhance the child care industry. In addition, organizational climate seems equally as important to the work environment but, a clear relationship between program administration and organizational climate has not been able to be tested due to the lack of a comprehensive measure of program administration. In support of the child care industry and the enhancement of child care quality, there is a need to objectively assess and regulate child care program administration and explore its relationship with global quality. Additionally, because teacher-child interactions are

critical to children's experiences, the relationship between organizational climate (how teachers perceive their work environment) and classroom process quality (i.e. teacher-child interactions) is of interest. The current study explores this relationship between process quality utilizing a teacher/child interaction factor found within the ITERS-R (Hestenes et al., under review) and the ECERS-R (Cassidy et al., 2005) and organizational climate.

When the ITERS and ECERS were revised in 2003 and 1998 respectively, the Parents and Staff subscale was enhanced to include more questions that examined child care administrative practices including involvement with parents. The original versions (Adult Needs) contained 4 items. The revised subscale includes 7 items (ITERS-R) and 6 items (ECERS-R), respectively, each with a range of 11 to 14 indicators. The Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R both include questions that examine provisions for parents (ex. administrative information, fees, health rules, program philosophy, discipline policy, parent-teacher communication and conferences, and different levels of parent involvement), provisions for personal needs of staff (ex. adult restroom, staff lounge, storage for personal belongings, number and flexibility of breaks), provisions for professional needs of staff (ex. phone access, file and storage space, space for individual conferences and adult meetings, equipped administrative office), staff interaction and cooperation (ex. communication among staff, interpersonal interaction, equity of duties, how responsibilities are handled, planning time), supervision and evaluation of staff (observations, written evaluations, type and usefulness of feedback, self evaluations, and actions to make improvement), and opportunities for professional

growth (orientation, staff meetings, in-service trainings, professional resources available, support for professional development, and educational requirements). In addition, the ITERS-R contains an item that measures staff continuity (ex. how often children must adjust to new staff or groups, the number of stable staff that care for children, how transitions to a new group are handled). Because the Parents and Staff subscale is frequently left out of reported analyses of global quality, little is known about the relationship between these questions and global quality scores. In addition, the one study that clearly found a relationship between the Adult Needs (Parents and Staff) subscale and an activities factor (Phillips, Howes, & Whitebook, 1991) used the original versions of the ERS which have since been revised calling for further investigation. Therefore, additional research is needed to examine the relationship between the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R and the final global quality scores. In addition, in order to validate the questions included in the Parents and Staff subscale as appropriately measuring administrative practices, an additional measure of program administration seems critical to the analysis. Because there are a limited number of items in the Parents and Staff subscale, the reliability of the subscale to capture administrative practices is questionable. In addition, the subscale is largely dependent on teacher self-report rather than direct observation or documentation which may be reflecting organizational climate rather than the actual program administration.

To address the need to objectively measure program administration, Talan and Bloom (2004) recently developed the Program Administration Scale (PAS) that replicates the format of the ERS allowing for ease in dual usage for both research and application.

The PAS measures child care leadership and management including *human resource development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications*. Initial analyses indicate that there is moderate correlation between the PAS and ECERS-R Parents and Staff subscale (.53) and the PAS and the Professional Growth subscale of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (.52) (Talan & Bloom, 2004). While the PAS is designed to objectively and reliably measure child care administrative practices, the ECWES is based on teacher report and therefore represents teacher perceptions and describes the collective organizational climate of the work environment. The Parents and Staff subscale of the ERS, like the PAS, is scored by reliable assessors. The relationship between the Parents and Staff subscale that includes unique indicators to the revised versions of the ERS and global quality is in need of exploration. In addition, the relationship among program administration, organizational climate, and global quality using the revised versions of the ERS is in need of exploration.

It is important to note that the Parents and Staff items are mostly based on teacher interview rather than direct observation. The PAS items are scored primarily through director report that is evidenced with proof of documentation and direct observation. Both perceptual and objective evaluations of work environment are important to consider when examining the child care industry. The relationship between perceptual (organizational climate) and objective measures of the administrative practices of the work environment is in need of further exploration. In addition, the distinct relationship

between a comprehensive evaluation of program administration as represented in the PAS and the organizational climate is unknown. Rather, Talan and Bloom's (2004) moderate correlations between the PAS and administrative practices and organizational climate were based on the Parents and Staff subscale of the ECERS-R and the Professional Growth subscale of the ECWES while not addressing the whole scales. Therefore, the following study proposes to examine child care program administration (objective), organizational climate (perceptual), and the relationship to global quality using the entire ITERS-R and ECERS-R to capture global quality and the entire ECWES short form to capture organizational climate.

The current study contributes to the child care research aiming to improve the quality of child care for children and stabilize the workforce with skilled and knowledgeable teachers. The study describes the relationship between the child care program administration, organizational climate and global quality. In addition, it tests the validity and reliability of inclusion of the Parents and Staff subscale of the ECERS-R and ITERS-R as a part of the final global quality scores. The study also makes use of the newly developed Program Administration Scale (PAS; Talan, & Bloom, 2004) in order to describe its relationship with global quality scores of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R. The use of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES short form; Bloom, et al., 1998) also allows the impact of the administrative practices on organizational climate and its relationship to global quality to be tested. The implications of this study are important to the child care industry and the way child care global quality is both measured and regulated. Implications for future research and application of the ERS for

regulatory and technical assistance may be altered as a result of these findings.

Subsequently, it is critical for an improved and stable child care workforce and its implications on child care quality to examine the relationship that the work environment – program administration and organizational climate – has on global quality.

CHAPTER V
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANALYSES

Organizational Climate and Global Quality

Research Questions 1. What is the relationship between child care center organizational climate and classroom global quality as measured by the a) ITERS-R and b) ECERS-R?

Hypothesis 1a. It is hypothesized that the organizational climate as measured by the ECWES will have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ITERS-R. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 1b. It is hypothesized that the center organizational climate as measured by the ECWES will have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ECERS-R. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Organizational Climate and Language/Interaction

Research Questions 2. What is the relationship between child care center organizational climate and the language/interactions of a) infant toddler and b) pre-school classrooms?

Hypothesis 2a. It is hypothesized that the center organizational climate as measured by the ECWES will have a significant positive correlation with the

Language/Interaction factor (see Hestenes et al., under review) within the ITERS-R classrooms. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 2b. It is hypothesized that the center organizational climate as measured by the ECWES will have a significant positive correlation with the Language/Interaction factor (see Cassidy et al., 2005) within ECERS-R classrooms. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Program Administration and Global Quality

Research Question 3. What is the relationship between program administration as measured by the PAS and classroom global quality as measured by a) ITERS-R and b) ECERS-R?

Hypothesis 3a. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS will have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ITERS-R. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 3b. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS will have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ECERS-R. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

PAS and Parents and Staff

Research Question 4. What is the relationship between program administration as measured by the PAS and program administration as measured by the Parents and Staff Subscale captured in the a) ITERS-R, b) ECERS-R, and c) ITERS-R and ECERS-R?

Hypothesis 4a. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R classrooms will have a significant positive correlation. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 4b. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale of the ECERS-R classrooms to have a significant positive correlation. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 4c. Because the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R contain the exact same questions with the exception of one additional question in the ITERS-R, it seems acceptable to analyze this subscale by combining the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms. By combining the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms, the statistical power is increased. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS and the Parents and Staff of the combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms will have a significant positive correlation. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between program administration as measured by the PAS and program administration as measured by the Parents and Staff factor found by Hestenes et al. in the ITERS-R?

Hypothesis 5. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS will have a significant positive correlation with the Parents and Staff factor (Hestenes et al., under review) within the ITERS-R classrooms. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Organizational Climate and Program Administration

Research Question 6. What is the relationship between center organizational climate and program administration as measured by a) the PAS, and the Parents and Staff Subscale of the b) ITERS-R classrooms, c) ECERS-R classrooms, and d) combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms?

Hypothesis 6a. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS will have a significant positive correlation with center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 6b. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the ITERS-R classroom Parents and Staff subscale will have a significant positive correlation with the center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 6c. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the ECERS-R classroom Parents and Staff subscale will have a significant positive correlation with the center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 6d. It is hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R classroom Parents and Staff subscale will have a significant positive correlation with the center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Director Experience and Education

Research Question 7. What is the relationship between PAS scores and directors' a) years of child care administrative experience and b) education level?

Hypothesis 7a. It is hypothesized that PAS scores and directors' years of child care administrative experience will have a significant positive correlation. A Pearson r correlation is used to test this relationship.

Hypothesis 7b. It is hypothesized that PAS scores and directors' education level will have a significant positive correlation. An independent samples t-test is used to test this relationship.

CHAPTER VI

METHODOLOGY

Procedure

Data collection occurred in cooperation with the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP) (see Appendix A for procedure flow chart). Participants included child care directors and teachers who received assessments as a part of North Carolina's rated license or as a part of a practice assessment that was geared towards technical assistance also conducted through NCRLAP. Participants were recruited from throughout the state including rural, suburban, and urban areas from February 2005 through June 2005. ITERS-R and ECERS-R assessments included in the sample spanned from November 2004 through June 2005. On average, PAS assessments occurred within 76 days ($SD = 49.75$) of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R assessments. Early childhood classrooms in public schools were omitted from the study because of their unique administrative characteristics.

Initially, directors of centers recently assessed by NCRLAP were contacted by phone and provided with a description of the study including both the PAS assessment and organizational climate survey (see appendix B for script). If interested, a PAS assessment was scheduled for the earliest date possible. Additionally, directors were sent a packet including information about the study, a consent form for participation in the PAS assessment, a list of documents that would need to be reviewed if applicable for their center, a director survey, and enough surveys for teacher staff that worked greater

than 10 hours per week. Directors were requested to distribute the surveys to staff. The surveys included demographic questions in addition to questions that assessed the organizational climate with the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey short form (ECWES; Bloom, Sheerer, & Britz, 1998). A postage paid addressed envelope was attached to each survey for confidential return.

Upon completion of the PAS assessment, directors were compensated with a \$75 gift card to Target and a copy of the PAS. Additionally, directors were sent a one-page summary of their PAS results. Upon completion of data collection and analyses, directors were invited to attend a workshop that provided a tutorial on using the PAS as a self-assessment tool and results from the study were shared. As a token of appreciation for returned surveys, respondents were entered into a drawing to win a \$50 gift card to Target.

During phone recruitment, if a director was not interested in participating in the PAS, they were given the opportunity for their center to only participate in the organizational climate part of the study just including the surveys. However, most centers interested in the study at all were interested in the entire study; therefore, analyses reflect this sample only.

Participants

Because the assessment process is a voluntary part of the state's rated license and practice assessments for technical assistance are also voluntary, an over-representation of higher quality facilities in North Carolina are likely represented in the sample. Standard procedure of NCRLAP is to randomly select one-third of all classrooms in each age

category to be assessed using the appropriate ERS for the rated license. Those assessments that utilized the ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R were considered in the current study. Centers participating in practice assessments (also conducted through NCRLAP) had at least three assessments or classrooms in any given age group that were assessed. All assessments utilizing the ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R were included in the current study.

Initially 32 centers were recruited to participate in the entire study. However, two centers were unresponsive when trying to schedule the PAS assessment resulting in 30 participating centers. At the end of data collection the final sample resulted in 30 centers with a PAS assessment and at least two Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R) assessments. Among the 30 centers, 245 surveys were returned resulting in a total response rate of 43%. However, 12 surveys were removed from analysis because the respondent indicated that their position did not include working in the classroom which brought the sample to 233 teachers. Additionally, only centers with greater than a 20% response rate were considered in the organizational climate analyses ($n = 26$) resulting in the removal of an additional 8 surveys from analyses. Therefore, a sample size of 225 teacher surveys resulted, representing 26 centers with a center response rate of greater than 20%. Additionally these centers were represented by at least two survey respondents and as many as 24 ($M = 9$; $SD = 5$) and a response rate ranging from 22% to 100% ($M = .49$; $SD = .23$).

Measures

For purposes of this study, the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R; Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2003) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) were used to assess child care global quality. The Early Childhood Work Environment Survey short form (ECWES; Bloom, Sheerer, & Britz, 1998) was used to examine organizational climate. The Program Administration Scale (PAS; Talan & Bloom, 2004) was used to objectively evaluate the program administration.

ITERS-R and ECERS-R. The ITERS-R and ECERS-R are widely used measures that assess child care global quality. The original ECERS was developed in 1980 and revised in 1998 and the ITERS was developed 1990 and revised in 2003. The revised versions are now used in place of the originals with additional content that focuses on diversity, special needs, and current “best practices”. Both versions have been widely used in research to measure the global quality of infant/toddler and early childhood classrooms, capturing both structural and process-oriented domains.

The ECERS-R includes 43 items and 470 indicators while the ITERS-R includes 39 items and 467 indicators. They both have 7 subscales including space and furnishings, personal care routines, language-reasoning (ECERS-R) / listening and talking (ITERS-R), activities, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. They are designed as observational measures that typically require three to five hours of observation and a teacher interview. Based on the observation each of the items are scored from 1 (inadequate) to 7 (excellent). The measures have also been used to assess classrooms with

typically and atypically developing children (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center Center, 2003). The breadth and depth of the measures seem to contain both face and content validity by addressing important characteristics and practices of quality early care and education. In addition to research, they are used as a part of regulatory enhancement programs in nineteen states including North Carolina. When using the scales for research, individual research studies reach their own “acceptable” inter-rater reliability. For example, the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project maintains an inter-rater reliability of at least 85% within one point.

The ECERS-R (Harms et al., 1998) has been widely used in a variety of large national and international studies. The ECERS-R was found to have high internal consistency of .92 with a subscale internal consistency of .71 to .88 (Harms et. al). Its measurement of global quality includes both structural and process-oriented components across the scale (Cassidy et al., 2005). Sakai, Whitebook, Wishard, and Howes (2003) used both the original ECERS and the ECERS-R simultaneously in 68 classrooms. By comparing the results of classroom scores based on the original ECERS and the revised version construct validity was tested. The goal of the study was to determine if scores of the original ECERS can be legitimately compared to the revised edition, a concern for longitudinal and cross-sectional research that compares and utilizes both measures (Sakai et al.). The scores between the ECERS and ECERS-R were highly correlated ($p < .001$) with scores on the ECERS-R slightly lower. The convergence between the original and revised ECERS strengthens the construct validity for the revised edition. Both measures, although slightly different, captured similar global quality scores allowing for legitimate

comparisons to be made over time during the scale transition. A similar study comparing the ITERS and ITERS-R has not been published.

The ITERS-R (Harms et al., 2003) is intended to reflect “best practices” for infants and children up through 30 months of age. The interclass correlations range from .67 (personal care routines) to .92 (parents and staff) with a comprehensive scale correlation of .92. In addition, the authors figured the scale correlation of only the “child specific items” because “some researchers will omit the Parents and Staff Subscale” to be .92 (p. 3, Harms et al., 2003). Internal consistency for each subscale ranged from .47 (space and furnishings) to .80 (interaction) with the “full scale” internal consistency to be .93 and “all child items” to be .92 (p. 3., Harms, Cryer, & Clifford). It should be noted that the internal consistency of the Parents and Staff subscale was reported to be .68, higher than space and furnishings (.47) and personal care routines (.56). According to the authors, because acceptable levels of internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha are generally above .60, they caution the use of the Space and Furnishings and the Personal Care Routines subscales (Harms et al.). Interestingly, unlike the Parents and Staff subscale, the Space and Furnishings and Personal Care Routines subscales are not commonly left out of analyses.

The Early Childhood Work Environment Survey. The Early Childhood Work Environment Survey short form is an abbreviated version of the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey long form (Bloom et al., 1998). Like the long form, the ECWES short form evaluates the organizational climate based on 10 dimensions including *collegiality, professional growth, supervisor support, clarity, reward system, decision*

making, goal consensus, task orientation, physical setting, and innovativeness (Bloom et al.). There are a total of 20 questions that can range in score from 0 to 5, 5 being the highest score. In addition, there are three open ended questions that relate to organizational climate. In addition to the standard questions included in the ECWES short form, other demographic questions were asked.

The Early Childhood Work Environment Survey was developed to measure organizational climate specifically in child care settings. Because it involves teacher report it focuses on subjectivity. Bloom (1999) suggests the subjective experiences of teachers are important to understand because they describe how an objective reality is interpreted or “filtered” and its meaning for teachers. Subsequently, the ECWES should be used to capture teacher and directors perceptions. The ECWES long form has been used in several studies as a measure of organizational climate unique to child care and has been found to contain distinct dimensions of the work environment with high internal consistency with a Chronbach’s alpha of .95 (Bloom & Sheerer, 1992). In addition, internal consistency of the subscales have been found to be of acceptable levels ranging from .66 (decision-making) to .92 (congruence with ideal) across many studies (Bloom, 1996; Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Bloom, 1988). The ECWES survey includes the same dimensions as the long form, providing a snap shot of the organizational climate (Bloom et al.,1998). The short form, due to its abbreviation, increases the likelihood of participation in the current study and is intended to provide an accurate score that represents the organizational climate.

Program Administration Scale. The Program Administration Scale (PAS; Talan & Bloom, 2004) examines child care program administration including leadership and management practices based on director report that is evidenced by documentation and observation. Initially, directors are interviewed for approximately two hours and their responses are confirmed through evidence of documentation. The PAS includes 25 items and 10 subscales including *human resource development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications*. The PAS is modeled after the ERS with a 7-point scale and is scored similarly with 1 as inadequate and 7 as excellent. Like the ERS subscales are averaged for a final score. Reliability and validity of the PAS was assessed with a sample of 67 centers representing small, medium, and large centers that were both accredited and not accredited (Talan & Bloom, 2004). The internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha was .85 for the total scale. A Pearson's r found the subscales to be correlated from .09 to .63 with a mean of .33 and the item correlations to range from .02 to .78. Among 8 assessors the inter-rater reliability was 90% within one point. Finally, as previously reported, moderate correlations were found between the PAS and the ECERS-R Parents and Staff Subscale (.53) and the PAS and the Professional Growth Subscale of the ECWES (.52).

CHAPTER VII

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Center Demographics. Initially, descriptive analyses were conducted to understand the demographics of the centers represented in the sample. As documented in Table 1, 83% of the programs offered infant care, 90% offered toddler care, 100% offered preschool care, and 67% offered school age care. Sixty percent of the centers were for-profit while 40% were not-for-profit programs. Table 2 describes the center populations including licensing capacity and number of hired staff for the participating centers. Additionally, according to director report, on average within the last 12 months there was 16% turnover among administrative staff, 23% turnover among teaching staff, and 8% turnover among support staff.

Teacher Demographics. Of the 30 centers participating in the PAS, each center agreed to participate in a survey that included questions that measured organizational climate. The majority of the respondents were women (96.8%) ranging in age from 17 to 74 ($M = 35.8$; $SD = 12.2$). Teacher racial/ethnic background and education is reported in Table 3. Teachers had a range of experience from less than 1 year to 28 years ($M = 7.2$; $SD = 5.7$) and worked at the current facility for a range of less than 1 year to 28 ($M = 3.3$; $SD = 3.9$). Teacher hourly wages and benefits received are reported in Table 4.

Director Demographics. Of the 30 participating centers, 25 directors completed the survey. One hundred percent of the directors were women ranging in age from 23 to 79 years old ($M = 40.8$; $SD = 13.7$). Director racial/ethnic background and education is reported in Table 3. Director salary and benefits received are reported in Table 5. Additionally, directors reported working from 40 to 60 hours per week ($M = 43.4$; $SD = 5.7$) and reported working at their current facility for a range of less than one year to 18 years ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 3.93$). Years of child care administrative experience ranged from less than one year to 28 years ($M = 8.54$; $SD = 6.45$). Additionally, directors reported having a range of years of experience teaching young children with some reporting less than 1 year experience and some with as many as 20 years ($M = 5.73$; $SD = 6.21$). Sixty-four percent of the directors reported that they worked with an assistant director.

Scale Statistics

Program Administration Scale. Each of the 30 centers participated in a PAS assessment. The first 21 items of the first nine subscales were used to evaluate the program administrative practices. The final subscale, Staff Qualifications was not used in the analyses because information was not consistently reported for all classroom teachers, which is needed to accurately complete this subscale. The internal consistency of the first nine subscales combined was acceptable ($\alpha = .88$). On a likert scale of 1 to 7, the scores were positively skewed within normal range with a mean score of 2.87 ($SD = .88$) and a range of 1.14 to 5.19. A certified Program Administration Scale assessor with an inter-rater reliability of 100% within one point of the authors collected this portion of the data.

Early Childhood Work Environment Survey – Short Form. The internal consistency for the ECWES measuring organizational climate perceived by the teachers was acceptable ($\alpha = .95$). On a likert scale of 1 to 5, the individual ($n = 224$) reports of organizational climate scores were negatively skewed within normal range with a mean of 4.03 ($SD = .78$) and a range of 1.69 to 5.0. Organizational climate measured at the center level ($n = 26$) was negatively skewed within normal range with a mean of 3.97 ($SD = .53$) and a range of 2.76 to 4.86.

The internal consistency of the directors' perceptions of organizational climates was acceptable ($\alpha = .92$). The reports of organizational climate scores ($n = 25$) were negatively skewed within normal range with a mean of 4.16 ($SD = .47$) and a range of 3.05 to 4.85.

Environment Rating Scales. Each center participating in the PAS also participated in at least two Environment Rating Scale assessments. On average there were 76 days ($SD = 49.75$) between the PAS assessment and the classroom assessments using the Environment Rating Scales (ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R). The Environment Rating Scale assessments were conducted in collaboration with the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP). A total of 55 ECERS-R assessments and 34 ITERS-R assessments were conducted across the 30 participating centers. Assessors collecting this portion of the data maintained an inter-rater reliability of at least 85% within one point.

The internal consistency of the ECERS-R was acceptable ($\alpha = .83$) as was the ITERS-R ($\alpha = .91$). Including all seven subscales, the ECERS-R and ITERS-R scores

were negatively skewed within normal range with ECERS-R scores ranging from 3.90 to 6.00 ($M = 5.06$; $SD = .54$) and ITERS-R scores ranging from 2.70 to 5.79 ($M = 4.38$; $SD = .89$). Analyses were completed separately on the ECERS-R and ITERS-R. The ITERS-R and ECERS-R scores were not averaged because of the unique properties of the scales. That is, ECERS-R ($M = 5.06$) scores tended to be higher on the 1 to 7 likert scale when compared to the ITERS-R ($M = 4.38$) scores. Additionally, the standard deviation of the ECERS-R ($SD = .54$) was lower than that of the ITERS-R ($SD = .89$). Because centers did not have equal numbers of infant/toddler and preschool classrooms and some centers were represented by only ITERS-R assessments while others were represented by only ECERS-R assessments, averaging the scores was not appropriate. Therefore, hypotheses including the ITERS-R and ECERS-R scores area analyzed at the classroom level. Generally, there were at least two classroom assessments within each center, therefore a benefit of looking at relationships at the classroom-level was that it potentially allowed for greater power within analyses. Table 6 provides a summary of findings addressing each of the research questions.

Organizational Climate and Global Quality

Research Questions 1. What is the relationship between child care center organizational climate and classroom global quality as measured by the a) ITERS-R and b) ECERS-R?

Hypothesis 1a. It was hypothesized that the organizational climate as measured by the ECWES would have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ITERS-R. This hypothesis was not supported. A Pearson r

correlation did not find a statistically significant relationship between the organizational climate scores and the ITERS-R classroom scores ($r(26) = .015, p = .94$), however the sample size was quite small.

Hypothesis 1b. It was hypothesized that the center organizational climate as measured by the ECWES would have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ECERS-R. This hypothesis was supported. The relationship between center organizational climate and ECERS-R classroom scores was tested and a moderate positive correlation that was statistically significant was revealed, $r(44) = .301, p = .045$.

Organizational Climate and Language/Interaction

Research Question 2. What is the relationship between child care center organizational climate and the language/interactions of a) infant toddler and b) pre-school classrooms?

Hypothesis 2a. It was hypothesized that the center organizational climate as measured by the ECWES would have a significant positive correlation with the Language/Interaction factor (see Hestenes et al., under review) within ITERS-R classrooms. This hypothesis was not supported. A Pearson r correlation did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between the center organizational climate and the Language/Interaction factor within ITERS-R classrooms, $r(26) = .17, p = .395$.

Hypothesis 2b. It was hypothesized that the center organizational climate as measured by the ECWES would have a significant positive correlation with the Language/Interaction factor (see Cassidy et al., 2005) within ECERS-R classrooms. This

hypothesis was supported. A Pearson r correlation revealed a moderate positive relationship that was statistically significant between center organizational climate and the language/interaction factor of ECERS-R classrooms, $r(44) = .412, p = .005$.

Program Administration and Global Quality

Research Questions 3. What is the relationship between program administration as measured by the PAS and classroom global quality as measured by a) ITERS-R and b) ECERS-R?

Hypothesis 3a. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS would have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ITERS-R. A statistically significant relationship was not found between ITERS-R classroom scores and PAS scores, $r(33) = .232, p = .186$.

Hypothesis 3b. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS would have a significant positive correlation with classroom global quality as measured by the ECERS-R. This hypothesis was supported. A Pearson r correlation revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between PAS scores and ECERS-R classroom scores, $r(54) = .291, p = .031$.

PAS and Parents and Staff Subscale

Research Question 4. What is the relationship between program administration as measured by the PAS and program administration as measured by the Parents and Staff Subscale captured in the a) ITERS-R, b) ECERS-R, and c) ITERS-R and ECERS-R?

Hypothesis 4a. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R classrooms would have a

significant positive correlation. This hypothesis was supported. The ITERS-R Parents and Staff subscale, which had a moderate internal consistency, had a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship with the Program Administration Scale, $r(33) = .42, p = .01$.

Hypothesis 4b. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale of the ECERS-R classrooms would have a significant positive correlation. This hypothesis was partially supported. When examining the relationship between the ECERS-R Parents and Staff Subscale and the PAS, a statistical trend was found, $r(54) = .223, p = .10$. However, it is important to note that the internal consistency of the Parents and Staff subscale of the ECERS-R was low and therefore likely impacting the error.

Hypothesis 4c. Because the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R contain the exact same questions with the exception of one additional question in the ITERS-R, it seemed acceptable to analyze this subscale by combining the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms. By combining the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms, the statistical power increased. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS and the Parents and Staff of the combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms would have a significant positive correlation. This hypothesis was supported. A Pearson r correlation revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the PAS and the Parents and Staff Subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms, $r(88) = .287, p = .006$.

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between program administration as measured by the PAS and program administration as measured by the Parents and Staff factor found by Hestenes et al. in the ITERS-R?

Hypothesis 5. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS would have a significant positive correlation with the Parents and Staff factor (Hestenes et al., under review) within ITERS-R classrooms. This hypothesis was supported. A statistically significant moderate correlation was found between the Program Administration Scale and the parents and staff factor, $r(33) = .38, p = .03$. This factor included 6 items: 1. *Indoor Space*, 33. *Provisions for parents*, 34. *Provisions for personal needs of staff*, 35. *Provisions for professional needs of staff*, 36. *Staff interaction and cooperation*, and 39. *Opportunities for professional growth*.

Organizational Climate and Program Administration

Research Question 6. What is the relationship between center organizational climate and program administration as measured by a) the PAS, and the Parents and Staff Subscale of the b) ITERS-R classrooms, c) ECERS-R classrooms, and d) combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms?

Hypothesis 6a. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the PAS would have a significant positive correlation with the organizational climate. This hypothesis was partially supported. To test the relationship between the PAS scores and organizational climate a Pearson r correlation was used. A statistical trend was found between the program administration score as measured by the PAS and the organizational climate, $r(25) = .331, p = .098$. It is important to note that the sample size for this

analyses was quite small ($n = 26$) and therefore it is likely that this finding would be statistically significant with a larger sample size and greater power.

Hypothesis 6b. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the ITERS-R classroom Parents and Staff Subscale would have a significant positive correlation with the center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation was used to test this relationship. This hypothesis was not supported. There was not a significant relationship between the center organizational climate and the program administration as measured in the ITERS-R classroom Parent and Staff subscale, $r(26) = -.021, p = .918$.

Hypothesis 6c. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the ECERS-R classroom Parents and Staff Subscale would have a significant positive correlation with the center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation was used to test this relationship. This hypothesis was not supported. There was not a significant relationship between the center organizational climate and the program administrations as measured in the ECERS-R classroom Parent and Staff subscale, $r(44) = .019, p = .903$.

Hypothesis 6d. It was hypothesized that the program administration as measured by the combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R classroom Parents and Staff Subscale would have a significant positive correlation with the center organizational climate. A Pearson r correlation was used to test this relationship. This hypothesis was not supported. There was not a significant relationship between the center organizational climate and the program administrations as measured in the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classroom Parent and Staff subscale, $r(72) = -.002, p = .988$.

Director Experience and Education

Research Question 7. What is the relationship between PAS scores and directors' a) years of child care administrative experience and b) education level?

Hypothesis 7a. It was hypothesized that PAS scores and directors' years of child care administrative experience would have a significant positive correlation. Because the PAS is set up as a rubric for improving administrative practices over time, it was of interest to see if director experience or education was related to PAS scores. Director years of experience and education was attained from the director surveys that were returned ($n = 25$). A Pearson r correlation revealed that years of child care administrative experience was not correlated with PAS scores, $r(23) = .096, p = .66$.

Hypothesis 7b. It was hypothesized that PAS scores and directors' education level to have a significant positive correlation. For education, all directors in the sample had at least "some college courses". An independent samples t -test revealed that directors with at least some college courses or a 2-year college degree scored significantly lower ($M = 2.49; SD = .80$) on the PAS than did directors with at least a 4-year degree ($M = 3.24; SD = .79$), $t(22) = -2.22, p = .037$. Additionally, an independent samples t -test indicated that directors with the North Carolina Administration III Credential scored significantly better ($M = 3.5; SD = .74$) compared to directors with no or a lower level Administration credential ($M = 2.48; SD = .70$), $t(21) = -3.419, p = .003$.

Additional Analyses

Because it is recommended procedure when implementing the PAS to first interview directors and then to verify their responses with supporting documentation, it

was of interest to see if the scores based on directors' stated practices aligned with the scores assigned following the document verification, a key element to a valid assessment. A Pearson r correlation revealed that directors' reported practices are significantly correlated with the scores assigned by a trained assessor, $r(29) = .96, p = .00$. However, a paired sample t test revealed that the mean score of directors' stated practices ($M = 3.25, SD = 1.04$) was significantly different than the mean PAS score following document verification ($M = 2.87, SD = .88$), $t(29) = -6.73, p = .00$. That is, directors claim to implement practices that would score significantly higher on the PAS than the scores assigned by a trained assessor based on supporting documentation.

Because the sample was split between for-profit centers ($n = 18$) and not-for-profit centers ($n = 12$), it was of interest to examine differences in PAS and organizational climate scores by auspice. An independent sample t -test revealed that the PAS mean score for not-for-profit centers was significantly higher ($M = 3.25, SD = .91$) than for the for-profit centers ($M = 2.61, SD = .79$), $t(28) = 2.04, p = .05$. It is important to note that PAS scores were higher in not-for-profit while there was not a significant difference between directors' educational backgrounds in not-for-profit and for-profit centers. Specifically, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that there was no difference in educational backgrounds of directors in for-profit and not-for-profit centers, $F(1, 22) = 1.43, p = .245$. While the PAS scores were significantly different by auspice, this did not hold true when examining center organizational climate scores. Although the center organizational climate mean score was higher for not-for-profit centers ($M = 4.13; SD = .47$) compared to the for-profit centers ($M = 3.83; SD = .55$), they were not

significantly different, $t(24) = 1.45, p = .16$. However, when examining individual teacher perceptions of the organizational climate by auspice and increasing the power, an independent sample t -test revealed that teachers working in not-for-profit centers rated the organizational climate ($M = 4.18; SD = .07$) significantly better than teachers working in for-profit centers ($M = 3.95; SD = .07$), $t(196) = 2.26, p = .025$. Teachers working in not-for-profit centers also reported earning an average of \$7.94 per hour and teachers working in for-profit centers reported earning an average of \$7.51 per hour. According to an independent samples t -test, this \$0.43 difference represents a statistical trend that not-for-profit teachers earned more per hour than for-profit teachers, $t(217) = 1.84, p = .067$. Although directors in not-for-profit centers on average earned \$31,568.00 per year while for-profit center directors earned \$27,554 per year, with the current sample size ($n = 20$) this difference was not statistically significant, $t(18) = 1.22, p = .24$.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION

This study intended to empirically address several unique questions that focused on child care teacher work environments including program administration, organizational climate, and child care global quality. That is, the proposed study aimed to provide an explanation for the dynamic relationship between leadership and management practices of program administration, teachers' perceptions of their work captured in organizational climate, and how that relates to classroom global quality and interactions experienced by children (See Table 6 for correlation summary).

The findings support the idea that the child care workforce experiences a range of administrative practices across centers and perceive their work environments differently. According to the bioecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000), this range is due to varied interactions within the environment by people, objects, and symbols and that the proximal processes are distinct. Additionally, the current study found that child care center organizational climates are reflected in classroom quality and teacher-child interactions. Therefore, it seems that the early childhood microsystem is not only physically shared by both the children and the teachers, but that the proximal processes are shared as well. This is supported in one of the strongest relationships reported in the current study between organizational climate and the language/interaction factor of preschool classrooms. That is, evidence revealed that organizational climate or

the teachers' collective perceptions of the work environment is reflected in classroom global quality scores and the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms. That is, the centers with high quality teacher-child interactions also had higher quality organizational climate. Supporting evidence was also found that linked child care management and leadership practices to preschool classroom quality. These findings were not replicated in the infant/toddler classrooms. However, the sample size of classrooms assessed using the ITERS-R ($n = 27$) was considerably smaller. Therefore, findings related to the ITERS-R should not be interpreted as conclusive. Further research examining the relationship between program administration and organizational climate in infant/toddler classrooms is recommended with a larger sample.

Utilizing the ECERS-R, the current study suggests that program administration and organizational climate matter to quality early care and education. That is, by correlating program administration and organizational climate with preschool classroom quality, this study supports the idea that considering work environments of directors and teachers may be important to improving child care quality. That is, the leadership and management practices of program administration should be considered as a variable when attempting to raise quality in early childhood programs by building a competent workforce. Additionally, focusing on the organizational climate, or how teachers perceive the work environment, and the practices of the program administration require conceptualizing early care and education not only as a microsystem of developing children but, also as a microsystem of developing adults. That is, the global quality scores of preschool classrooms represent the environment created for children's

development. The current study found these scores to be related to the program administration and organizational climate, environments created that adults develop within. With these findings in mind, early care and education settings become a learning environment for both children and adults concurrently. Subsequently, based on the third proposition of the bioecological perspective, both children and adults seek interactions within their environment that support their well-being and development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2002). Teachers are taught to provide this support in the classroom. It is time that teachers and directors are taught how to provide this support in the work environment as well.

Leadership and Management Practices

The newly developed Program Administration Scale (PAS; Talan & Bloom, 2004) helps to identify important areas in which early childhood directors must be competent. The PAS measures director leadership and management by incorporating both transactional and transformational qualities of effective administrative practices. For example, transformational qualities of the PAS include the development of program values, goals and vision whereas some transactional qualities include the implementation of tasks and systems (Talan & Bloom). Additionally, many of the items include collaboration and involvement of teaching staff in decision making.

Results from the current sample further support the idea that more attention is needed on the quality of leadership and management practices in early care and education centers. That is, on a 1 to 7 likert scale the average PAS score in the current sample was 2.87 (SD = .88) with a range of 1.14 to 5.19. According to the PAS, on average, the

quality of program administrative practices among the sample was meeting less than “minimal” standards and no centers were in the “excellent” range. This is especially surprising since the sample represents higher quality child care in North Carolina. Additionally, the average from the current sample is lower than the initial average ($M = 3.59$) reported by Talan and Bloom (2004). However, the average scores reported by Talan and Bloom are only slightly above the “minimal” standard set by the scale. Therefore, both scores suggest needed improvement in leadership and management practices of early care and education centers. It is important to note that the current sample, like the sample reported by Talan and Bloom (2004), did not have prior knowledge of the content of the PAS prior to the assessments.

The PAS explicitly articulates expectations of director leadership and management. It is designed as a rubric with each item fostering the development or improvement of leadership and management practices over time with the most basic foundation at the 1-level and optimum practices at the 7-level. Therefore, potentially with time, it is likely that directors using the PAS in either self-assessment and/or quality enhancement initiatives may lead to improvements and raise standards in program administration across the early childhood field (Talan and Bloom, 2004). At minimum, if the current study elicited directors to think about and question their practices and work environment, created dialogue among them and other directors and/or teachers, consciousness was raised and perhaps future actions were positively altered.

Based on the low PAS scores reported in the current study and the study conducted by Talan and Bloom, question is raised about the validity of the 1, 3, 5, 7 anchors of “inadequate”, “minimal”, “good”, and “excellent”. That is, the scale seems to lack construct validity that connects the theoretical gradations of “inadequate”, “minimal”, “good”, and “excellent” to the hierarchy of administrative practices within the scale. For example, are the indicators at the 5 or “good” level better than indicators at the 3 or “minimal” level? It may be that the differences in practices represent different management styles that are acceptable depending on the context rather than a hierarchy of quality. Further, are the requirements of the “good” and “excellent” levels realistic and achievable for the child care industry and are the scores reflective of standards truly at these theoretical gradations? These are issues future research should address.

Although there is some question regarding the anchors of quality depicted by the PAS, it is perhaps the most reliable and comprehensive definition of excellence for leadership and management in early childhood settings. Conceptually, it contains both face and content validity. For example, Talan and Bloom (2004) found moderate correlations between subscales of the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale. Additionally, the current study suggests that it contains discriminate validity by making distinctions between administrative practices among the centers participating in the study and parsing out distinctions between lower and higher quality practices in leadership and management. Further, the alpha coefficient ($\alpha = .88$) of the scale indicates that the items contain acceptable internal consistency or reliability.

Based on the frequency of mean scores below 5 or below the “good” level (see Graph 1), it is evident that attention needs to focus on improving leadership and management practices in early childhood settings. Clearly, within the industry, there is room for growth. From a feminist perspective, this information raises awareness. However, according to Acker, Barry, and Essveld (1983), research that is for women creates emancipatory change. The current study aimed to do this in several ways. First, during the interviews, director consciousness was raised by merely asking the questions of the PAS. Additionally, the directors were provided with the results of the assessment and a copy of the PAS for self-improvement. Upon completion of the study directors were also invited to a workshop where the results were shared and discussed and the PAS as a tool was explored. By providing the directors in this study with information that will improve the quality of their programs, it empowers them to make changes in a risk-free context.

Unfortunately, there are few director preparation programs or educational opportunities for directors to learn the qualities associated with being an effective leader and developing a positive work environment (Bloom & Sheerer, 1992). This situation subsequently contributes to the lack of knowledge about the responsibilities associated with administration and being a leader in early childhood settings. In fact, Morgan (1997) describes the early childhood field to “have been reluctant to devise formal preparation programs for the role of director” (p. 11) further adding to the ambiguity of explicitly defining the role of director and its leadership and management responsibilities in early childhood programs.

The results of this study support directors attaining at least a 4-year degree and participating in education opportunities to reach towards higher early childhood leadership and management practices like the North Carolina Level-III Administrative Credential in order to improve their administrative practices and program quality. Subsequently, developing director preparation programs to prepare directors for their leadership role in the early care and education setting creates standards that may improve leadership and management practices within the industry. These recommendations require macro level changes, changes that are a result of societal and political views.

Parents and Staff Subscale of the ERS

The current study offers support to include the Parents and Staff subscale within the ITERS-R and ECERS-R when assessing global quality. When combining classroom ITERS-R and ECERS-R classroom scores, a statistically significant relationship was found between the Parents and Staff subscale and the PAS. While there was a positive correlation between the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R classrooms, the internal consistency of the ECERS-R and ITERS-R Parents and Staff subscales are low to moderate at best which may suggest a need to revise this portion of the scales. Revising the Parents and Staff subscale may lead to higher internal consistency when measuring this construct using the ERS. However, it is important to note that when used in conjunction with the other indicators of the Environment Rating Scales, the Parents and Staff Subscale does not compromise the internal consistency of the entire ITERS-R and ECERS-R.

The use of the Parents and Staff subscale of the Environment Rating Scales would raise much needed public awareness and improve standards by clearly communicating through the macrosystem that the work environment is an integral part of global quality. Additionally, with a larger sample, Talan and Bloom (2004) found moderate correlations between subscales of the PAS and the Parents and Staff subscale. Further, use of the Program Administration Scale in addition to the Environment Rating Scales may also bring much needed focus to the importance of management and leadership practices in early childhood settings and by significantly raising the standards of the child care work environment, a more stable workforce may result.

Program Administration and Organizational Climate

In the current study there was a statistical trend that the program administration as measured by the PAS and organizational climate were correlated. A larger sample size is recommended to further test this relationship. Additionally, for purpose of this study the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey – short form was used to measure organizational climate. The short form contains all 10 dimensions of organizational climate and held together well with a high internal consistency. However, the long form allows for each dimension to be examined individually. For example, Talan and Bloom (2004) found the PAS to have a statistically significant correlation to the Professional Growth Subscale of the ECWES long form but, did not report on the other subscales.

It is interesting to note that the PAS scores of the current study were positively skewed within normal range while the organizational climate scores were negatively skewed within normal range. This disparity may be the difference between measuring

subjective perceptions as organizational climate reflects and more objective ratings like the PAS scores reflect. Both types of measurement reveal important indicators of quality in the current study. That is, both the PAS scores and the organizational climate scores were found to independently be correlated with global quality in preschool classrooms.

With both management and leadership practices as well as how those practices are perceived by staff in the organizational climate correlated with classroom global, both constructs seems important to consider in early care and education settings. That is, the PAS provides a rubric for management and leadership practices to improve over time. However it is likely that these changes must include the perspectives and participation of the teaching staff in shared leadership rather than making change without staff input. This seems necessary to positively impact the organizational climate that is also reflected in correlations with classroom global quality and language and interaction experienced by children. Additionally, from a feminist perspective, as consciousness is raised among teachers in the child care industry, the extrinsic value of their career may become increasing important compared with the intrinsic value, shifting the societal expectation of care-giving in the private and public sectors.

From a feminist perspective, Hayes et al. (2000) and Belenky et al. (1986) describe the importance of listening to the collective voice. Interestingly, the PAS incorporates indicators that address issues of shared leadership and collaboration. Considering the needs of teachers through collaboration and shared leadership are inherent to maintaining a healthy organizational climate. Morgan (1997) describes current leadership trends to incorporate shared leadership through collaboration.

Additionally, Bloom (1995) supports shared leadership or what is termed “participatory management” by including personnel (i.e. teachers) in decisions that impact their work. More specifically, Bloom states, “participatory management is based on two operating assumptions – that individuals have the right to be involved in making choices that affect their lives, and that people who are involved in making decisions will have a greater stake in those decisions than those who are not” (p. 55). These ideas are all supported by feminist theory with the collective voice giving power to the profession.

The PAS helps to develop practices that allow directors to move beyond the daily transactions and to additionally provide an environment to develop a cohesive, involved, and committed teaching staff. Whitebook (1997) reminds us to include teachers in decision making processes; that leadership among teachers must also be valued and that teachers must be included to build a more inclusive field representing increased diversity. Lambert et al. (2002) further describes this as constructivist leadership and states, “leadership is beyond person and role and embedded in the patterns of relationship we will refer to as ‘reciprocal processes’” (p. 42). Like the proximal processes described in the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000), reciprocal processes promote excellence by including teachers in constructivist leadership that Lambert et al. describe as developing diverse representation that is reflective of those within the context while valuing individual and collective experiences through collaboration. These collective experiences are at the heart of the organizational climate and therefore must be considered when implementing administrative practices.

Organizational Climate

The relationship between the organizational climate and the ECERS-R teacher-child interaction factor is compelling and further supports the contention that teachers' perceptions of their work environment are also experienced within the interactions they have with the children with whom they work. Additionally, this supports the idea that children and adults share the child care microsystem and both are developing and changing based on the environment as described by the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The current findings support research by Ekholm and Hedin (1987) that found teacher attitudes and center level team-work to impact teachers' interactions with children in the classroom. Additionally, Bloom (1996) found organizational climate to be significantly better in programs that were NAEYC accredited and likely to be of higher quality compared to programs that were not accredited by NAEYC. Based on these findings, the theoretical proposition that proximal processes support either *competence* or *dysfunction* within an environment made by Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) is supported with competence describing "knowledge, skill, or ability" and dysfunction describing "recurrent manifestation of difficulties" (p. 118).

The organizational climate of child care work environments and its relationship with the language and interactions used in classrooms is interesting and elicits a need for further research. As teachers' process their work environment while working with children, not only are teachers' development affected but, there is a relationship with the environment that children are developing within as they are interacting with the teachers. Subsequently, the administrative practices and professional standards in the field that

support healthy organizational climates are shared with the environment that children are learning and developing in. Therefore, as young children learn patterns of interactions including problem solving and the development of relationships and social responsibility, the organizational climate experienced by teachers in their work environments seems related. Therefore, as children's learning environments and adults' work environments are related, just as initiatives are increasing child care quality by focusing on classroom environments, work environments seem equally important to build a stable competent industry of developing professionals.

Child care work environments may not only be important to recruitment and retention in building a stable workforce, but also may be important when addressing child care quality from the stand point of preparing children for school and building social responsibility among them. Therefore, child care work environments, and most importantly how teachers perceive their work environment, are variables that must be addressed and no longer be our last priority in the pursuit to improve child care quality. As previously mentioned, for the purpose of this study the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey – short form was used. It would be interesting to examine the relationship of each dimension of the organizational climate with teacher-child interactions.

Reliability of Director Reports

Significant differences were found between scores on the PAS based on directors' stated practices and those assigned by a trained assessor upon completion of document verification. This finding suggests that although directors may have good intentions of

implementing a practice, without systems of accountability, these practices may go left unattended. For example, there were cases when directors indicated that they provided feedback to new teachers during their introductory or probationary period (Item 1. Staff Orientation, Indicator 5.1) however, they seldom had documentation to support this claim. It may be that directors were providing verbal feedback and this feedback may have been useful to the new teachers. However, without documentation there is no benchmark created for teachers to focus on improvements and to revisit during evaluations. Additionally, feedback may be casually provided in passing or during a quick observation but, without documentation it is indeterminable if this feedback is thorough and if it is understood by the new teacher who may be overwhelmed with learning the logistics of working within a new environment.

Another example of cases that directors responses were positive but, supporting documentation was not available includes the implementation of staff meetings found within Item 9., Internal Communications. Directors frequently indicated that staff meetings either occurred at least twice a year or monthly but, were often unable to provide documentation of these meetings. It may be with good intention that directors try to plan staff meetings and some meetings may even occur. Additionally, it is possible that directors have good intentions to have staff meetings and therefore perceive them to regularly occur; however, without a system for implementation they may occur less frequently than what is perceived.

From item 14., Program Evaluation, directors were asked about assessment tools used by staff and parents to evaluate the program. If tools were used (ex. survey), there

were some cases where there was not evidence that data from the evaluations were used to develop written plans for program improvement (a requirement of indicator 5.3). A director implementing a tool for parents and staff to assess the program may feel they are receiving feedback about the program and even perceive that their programmatic decisions are based on these evaluations thus meeting the minimal standards for this item. However, without reflecting on these assessments with staff and creating a plan for improvement, it is questionable how influential these evaluations are. Further, directors may have good intentions to develop a plan for improvement and may have even conceptualized one mentally, but without documentation it may go without implementation as a result of other pressing issues and hurried schedules. These are just a few of the many examples where directors were unable to provide adequate documentation to support their administrative practices. The development of the PAS may help directors understand the importance of documentation while also allow them to monitor the capitalization of their good intentions.

It is evident that documentation is an important element of the PAS. Subsequently, child care centers that are managed from a central office must be made aware of documentation that should be available to on-site directors. For example, there were cases where directors did not have records of payroll, insurance, or taxes that were paid, a requirement of item 12., Budget Planning. However, some directors indicated these documents were at the central office. Additionally, information on staff wages and salary increases (needed for Item 4. Compensation) was sometimes not available to on-site directors in the cases that there was a central office. Therefore, centers with

organizational structures that include a central office should consider how to best collaborate and communicate with the individuals at the center level. Additionally, executives at central offices should be made aware of the implications of their practices on the leadership and management capabilities at the center level. The discrepancy between directors' stated practices and those assigned by a trained assessor support the need for reliability training when utilizing the PAS in quality enhancement initiatives or regulation.

For-Profit and Not-For-Profit Status

Talan and Bloom (2004) included both for-profit and not-for-profit child care centers in the sample that tested the psychometric properties of the PAS and concluded that it was applicable for both types of programs. Interestingly, in the current study, not-for-profit centers scored significantly higher than for-profit centers. Additionally, at the center level, organizational climate scores were higher for not-for-profit centers than for-profit centers although not statistically significant. The examination of individual teacher perceptions of the work environment revealed that individual scores of organizational climate were significantly higher for teachers working in not-for-profit centers. Although it may seem that for-profit centers would be more focused on their leadership and management practices to increase revenue or at minimum sustain its respective child care sites, not-for-profit centers did significantly better on the PAS. This may be due to increased levels of accountability required for federal and state funding of not-for-profit programs as well as other private donations. Additionally, not-for-profit centers seem more likely to have multiple sources of involvement including boards and community

partnerships. Contrary to this, for-profit centers sometimes have a central office or owner solely involved with finances and oversees policies and procedures with little collaboration from on-site directors. It is important to note that all centers in the study had room for improvement; scores overall were low. However, in the current sample, not-for-profit centers were more likely to score better on the PAS than for-profit centers.

Based on limited research comparing for-profit and not-for-profit child care centers, it seems differences between auspice have been found. For example, in a review comparing for-profit and not-for profit child care Kagan (1991) concluded that staff-child ratios tended to be better and quality of environment and expenditures were generally higher for not-for-profit programs. Similarly, the Cost Quality and Outcomes Study (Helburn, 1995) found quality among for-profit centers in North Carolina to be significantly lower than the not-for-profit centers. Kagan further contends, “that the mixed sector system so deeply imbedded in our society as a permanent reality only confirms the need for spirited inquiry” (p.100). Subsequently, although in the current study ITERS-R and ECERS-R averages were not significantly different based on profit-status, it is interesting to note that the program administration was.

Limitations

The sample size was a limitation to the study. Specifically, there were simply not enough ITERS-R classrooms or centers with ITERS-R assessments to meaningfully draw conclusions about the relationship between the PAS and ECWES and ITERS-R. Additionally, the number of centers included in the study was also small impacting the power of the analyses. Recruitment procedures also created a limitation to the study.

Participants volunteered to either be a practice site for the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project or requested an assessment to be considered in the state's rated license. Because of their voluntary nature, the centers in the study are likely to represent higher quality child care in North Carolina. Because most of the centers were involved in Environment Rating Scale assessments as a part of North Carolina's rated license they also may have undergone some recent changes in the center in preparation for the assessment impacting the organizational climate scores. Repeating this study in centers being assessed in situations where it did not impact their licensing may be advantageous to confirm the results. Additionally, organizational climate was measured using the ECWES – short form. It would be more comprehensive to measure organizational climate using the long form.

Pre-school programs housed in public schools were not included in the sample. It would be interesting to see how the PAS could be utilized in the public Pre-K movement. For example, some Pre-K classrooms are more connected to the operations of the elementary school in which they are housed while others are more connected with the management of the county Pre-K initiative. In this case, the Pre-K teacher might be considered the on-site director for the pre-school program sponsored by the outside funding source. In other cases, the school principal may act as the on-site administrator. As public school Pre-K classrooms are increasing, it may be advantageous to extend the PAS into these settings to learn about the unique characteristics of the program administration in public school Pre-K.

Policy Implications

There are many important policy implications of this study. Based on the current findings, it is premature to eliminate the Parents and Staff subscale of the Environment Rating Scales in quality enhancement initiatives and applied research. Currently, evaluative practices that exclude the Parents and Staff subscale of the ITERS-R and ECERS-R are doing so without enough evidence to justify this decision. That is, in basic research, researchers strive to protect against a Type I error where a positive finding is actually false. However, in applied research, where evaluations of programs are impacting the lives of humans, we must learn to protect against Type II errors (Provasac & Carey, 2003). That is, suggesting a program, intervention, or practice does not work, when in fact it does, can drastically impact people's lives. For example, evaluators choosing to eliminate the Parents and Staff subscale in the ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R are contributing to the possibility of a Type II error. That is, when assessing child care quality, work environment standards - such as the questions within the Parents and Staff subscale - that are ignored fail to increase awareness about the importance of good work environments for teachers, fail to contribute to improved working conditions, and subsequently fail to sustain quality child care. Subsequently, from a feminist perspective, dropping these indicators adds to the oppression within the field and gives the message that the work environments of the women teaching and caring for young children do not matter. Furthermore, recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce continues to be problematic and compromised experiences for children result. Therefore, it is recommended that quality enhancement initiatives utilizing the Environment Rating

Scales require the implementation of the scales in their entirety including the Parents and Staff subscale as a component of global quality.

Based on the bioecological theoretical perspective, to create societal change impacting teachers work environments, macro level changes must occur. One way to create change at the macro level aimed at improving standards for teacher work environments is to create supportive policies. For example, as Quality Rating Systems are developing across the nation, the use of the Program Administration Scale as a performance measure in quality enhancement initiatives and regulation is being explored. Further, with the introduction of the PAS, it seems that leadership and management of child care centers must be a construct that elicits further attention and goes beyond the questions of the Parents and Staff subscale of the Environment Rating Scales. Therefore, including the leadership and management practices in comprehensive center evaluations used for quality ratings is not only logical but, may be necessary to achieve an accurate picture of the environment in which both children and adults develop. In order to produce accurate evaluations of program quality, Mark and Shortland (1987) recommend using multiple methods and sources when collecting information. Implementing the PAS as an additional measure of quality allows for a more comprehensive understanding of quality child care.

As standards focus on child outcomes, quality child care must include a construct that enables a strong, stable, and qualified early care and education workforce to provide children with optimal experiences. Therefore, improving the leadership and management across the profession is a recommended priority to succeed in this quest. Including the

PAS in Quality Rating Systems creates an opportunity to recognize programs with high quality work environments and develop a system of intervention to improve centers that are struggling. These interventions may promote the retention of qualified teachers in the field. Subsequently, encouraging and creating incentives for directors to participate in director preparation programs that teach the necessary skills of being an effective director is inherent to this provision. Additionally, modifying and phasing in course content requirements that promote skills reflected in the PAS is a direction that should be explored.

Conclusion and Future Research

Child care directors are the leaders of their perspective programs and hold important positions for the development of their individual organizations as well as the field and community (Bloom, 1991). In fact, Bloom and Sheerer (1992) describe child care directors as the “gatekeepers of quality” (p.593). This description highlights the important role directors have in increasing child care quality across the field for the teaching workforce as well as the children, families, and communities that early care and education serves. Bloom and Sheerer further contend, “the director shapes the work environment for the teaching staff who, in turn, provide the critical link to the children” (p. 580). In other words, as leaders, child care directors implement practices that create a framework to work within and set a tone for developing the organizational climate by fostering and modeling relationships among teaching staff, parents, and children.

The implications of the current theoretical and empirical evidence are great. These implications point to the need to focus more efforts on developing the leadership skills of

directors that maintains healthy organizational climates through preparation programs, on-going trainings, interventions, and perhaps regulation. Finally, because director leadership and management seems to be a component that should be considered in the stability and improvement of the child care industry, workforce, and classroom quality, further research is recommended that includes a larger sample, further examines the psychometric properties of the PAS, and uses the ECWES long form to examine all 10 dimensions of organizational climate discriminately. Additionally, research that examines the impact of leadership and management practices and organizational climate longitudinally on recruitment and retention and includes additional measures of teacher-child interactions is recommended.

In conclusion, a relationship between child care work environments including program administration and organizational climate and child care quality is supported theoretically and empirically. This study supports the idea that child care leadership and management practices and organizational climate are correlated with global quality. Further, the relatively low scores on the PAS suggest a need to focus quality enhancement initiatives and director preparation programs on improving child care work environments. Additionally, leadership and management practices and organizational climate should not be ignored when improving child care quality and building a stable workforce. Therefore, teaching directors and teachers about healthy work environments and professional relationships may be a component to include when teaching them about creating optimal environments for children. That is, in a shared microsystem, if the proximal processes of the work environment do not promote healthy development among

teachers, how do we expect the proximal processes in the classrooms to promote healthy development among children?

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Appendix A

Tables

Table 1

Center Demographics

Centers (n = 30)	Percentage	n
Age Level Care		
Infant care	83%	25
Toddler care	90%	27
Preschool care	100%	30
School-age care	67%	20
Programs Offered		
Full day program	100%	30
Part day program	17%	5
School day program	37%	11
Before/after school program	63%	19
Accreditation, Auspice, and Funding Sources		
NAEYC accredited	13%	4
For-profit	60%	18
Not-for-profit	40%	12
Head Start funding	7%	2
State pre-k funding	53%	16
Faith based funding	23%	7

Table 2

Center Populations

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Licensing capacity	20	259	139	50.53
Full-time teachers	4	36	15.5	7.7
Part-time teachers	0	22	4.1	5.3
Full-time administrative staff	1	4	2	0.72
Part-time administrative staff	0	4	0.2	0.76
Full-time support staff	0	3	0.93	0.78
Part time support staff	0	3	0.5	0.86

Note. Full-time is considered 35 hours per week or more and part time is considered less than 35 hours per week

Table 3
Race and Education of Teachers and Directors

Race/Ethnicity	Teachers		Directors	
	Percentage	n	Percentage	n
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	4		
Black/African American	34	74	28	7
Hispanic/Latino	2	4		
Native American	3	6	4	1
White/European American	58	130	68	17
Other	1	2		

Highest Education	Percentage	n	Percentage	n
High School	25	53		
Some College	40	86	17	4
2-Year College Degree	18	38	21	5
4-Year EC/CD Degree	8	18	17	4
4-Year Other Degree	6	12	29	7
Some Graduate Courses or Degree	3	7	17	4

Table 4

Teaching Staff Hourly Wage and Benefits

	n = 219	Percentage	n
\$5.50 - \$6.99		19	40
\$7.00 - \$8.49		43	94
\$8.50 - \$9.99		21	46
\$10.00 - \$11.49		13	28
\$11.50 - 12.99		5	10
\$14.60 or higher		1	1
Fully paid health Insurance		11	18
Partially paid health insurance		47	86
Fully paid dental insurance		4	7
Partially paid dental insurance		11	18

Table 5

Director Salary and Benefits

	n = 25	Percentage	n
\$20,000 - \$23,004		5	1
\$23,005 - \$26,000		15	3
\$26,001 - \$31,179		35	7
\$31,180 - \$35,360		10	2
\$35,361 - \$40,000		20	4
\$40,001 - \$45,000		15	3
Fully paid health insurance		22	4
Partially paid health insurance		65	11
Fully paid dental insurance		0	0
Partially paid dental insurance		12	17

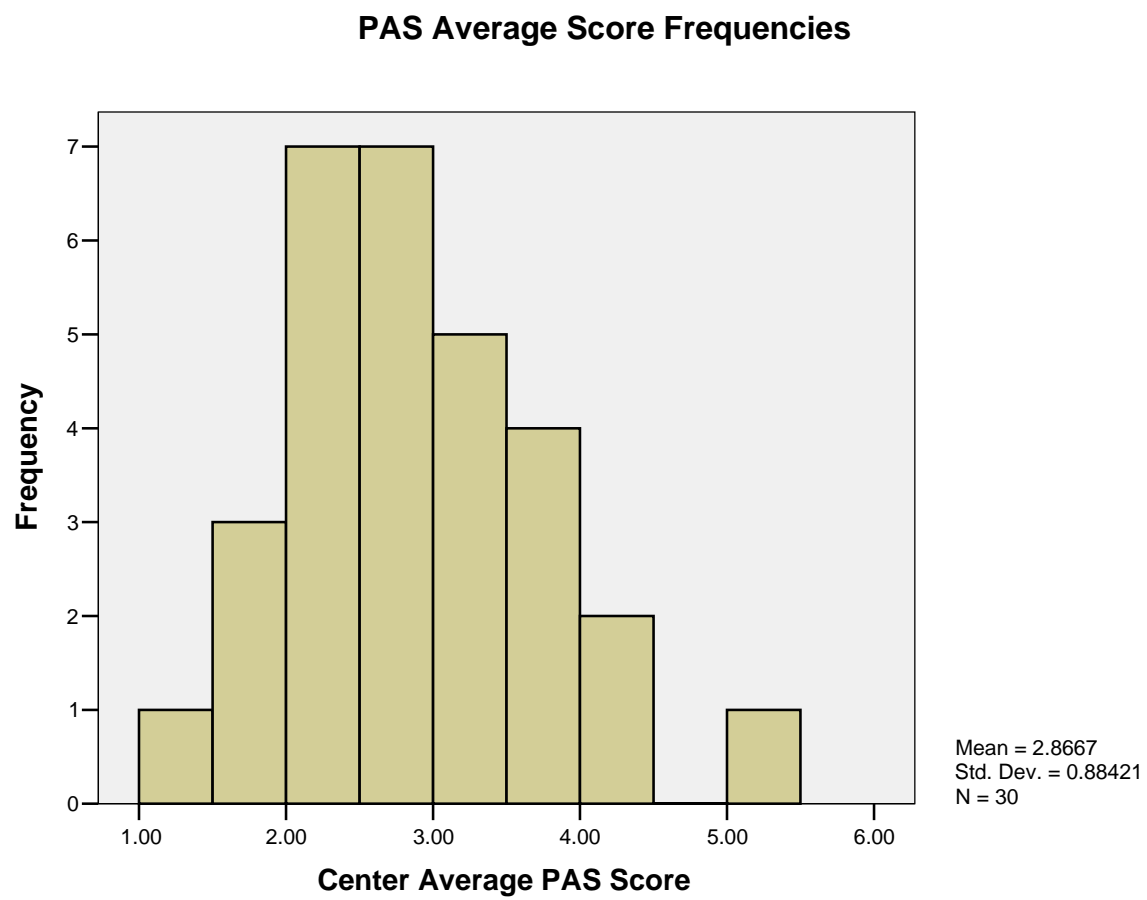
Table 6 Pearson Correlations

	ITERS-R	ECERS-R	ITERS-R Language/ Interaction Factor	ECERS-R Language/ Interaction Factor	ITERS-R Parents and Staff Subscale	ITERS-R Parents and Staff Factor	ECERS-R Parents and Staff Subscale	Combined ITERS-R and ECERS-R Parents and Staff Subscale	Program Administration Scale (PAS)	Organizational Climate (ECWES)
Program Administration Scale	n = 34	n = 55			n = 34	n = 34	n = 55	n = 89		n = 26
	0.232	0.291**			0.42***	0.38**	0.223*	.287***		0.331*
Organizational Climate (ECWES)	n = 27	n = 45	n = 27	n = 45	n = 27		n = 45	n = 72	n = 26	
	0.015	0.301**	0.17	0.412***	-0.021		0.019	-0.002	0.331*	

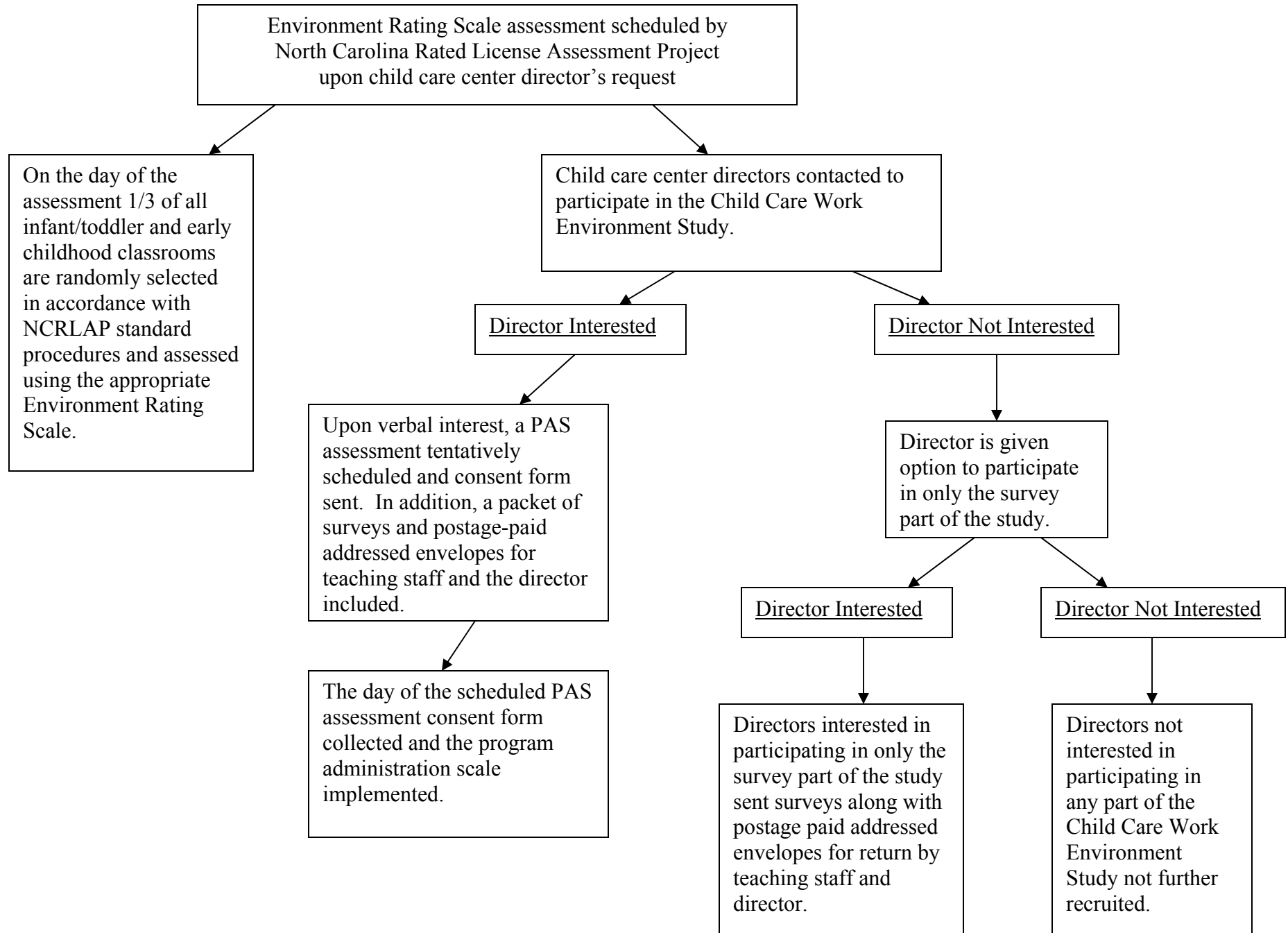
* $p < \text{or} = .10$ ** $p < \text{or} = .05$ *** $p < \text{or} = .01$

Appendix B

Figure 1



Procedural Flow Chart



Appendix D

Phone Script for Recruitment

Hi. My name is Joanna Hansen, may I please speak with (director's name).

Hi (director's name). My name is Joanna Hansen and I am a graduate student in the department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It is my understanding that you have scheduled an Environment Rating Scale assessment with the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (or recently were a part of an assessment by the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project). I am conducting a study that is looking at the relationship between child care work environments and child care quality. For example, one aspect of the work environment that may impact child care quality involves how staff is supervised. This is a unique study that will contribute valuable information to the field about child care work environments. If you are interested in participating, there are no risks involved. In fact, there are several benefits for you and your center. And, of course, this will in NO WAY affect your star rating. If you participate, you will receive a \$75.00 gift card to Target and a copy of the newly released Program Administration Scale: Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management. In addition, I will send you a one page summary of your child care work environment and upon completion of the study you will be invited to attend a free training on ways you can improve your child care work environment by a certified Program Administration Scale assessor.

Are you interested in learning more about the study? Is this a good time to discuss it?

There are two parts of the study:

The first part of the study involves an assessment of your program administration. This includes an interview with you about your administrative practices followed by a review of your documents (for example, your parent packet and proof of fire drills). I will send you a complete list. The interview usually takes about two hours and the review of documentation usually takes two to three hours.

The second part of the study involves a survey that you and interested teaching staff would complete. The survey asks questions about your center and what it is like to work there. The survey only takes about 15 minutes to complete and in return you and each participating teacher will be entered into a drawing for a \$50.00 gift card to Target.

Does this sound like something that you would like to participate in?

If yes: Excellent! I think you will be happy with your participation. The next step then is for me to schedule a date to come to your center to interview you. Remember, I will be there for about five hours – two interviewing and two to three reviewing your documents. When would be a good time to do this? <date

scheduled and directions given> How many teachers and teaching assistants working more than 10 hours per week do you currently have employed at your center?

You should expect to receive in the mail in a few days, a consent form, a list of the documents I will need to review, and enough surveys and addressed, postage paid envelopes for you and your teaching staff. Please distribute the surveys and envelopes among your staff. Those interested in participating will need to complete them and return them in the addressed, postage paid envelopes provided. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. My direct line is 336.334.3302 and it is provided in the material that I am sending you as well.

If no: Would you be interested in just participating in the survey part of the study?

If yes: Great! How many teachers and teaching assistants that work more than 10 hours a week does your child care center employ? I will send you enough surveys and postage-paid addressed envelopes for you and your teaching staff. Upon receiving them, please distribute them to your staff. Thank you for your participation. This information is very helpful to the field.

If no: Thank you for your time.

Appendix E

CHILD CARE WORK ENVIRONMENT SURVEY – SHORT FORM

Indicate in the space provided the numeral (0-5) which most accurately describes how you feel about each statement.

Never 0	Seldom 1	Sometimes 2	Somewhat regularly 3	Frequently 4	Always 5
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- _____ Staff are friendly and trust one another.
- _____ Morale is high. There is a good team spirit.
- _____ Staff are encouraged to learn new skills and competencies.
- _____ The center provides guidance for professional advancement.
- _____ Supervisor(s) are knowledgeable and competent.
- _____ Supervisor(s) provide helpful feedback.
- _____ Communication regarding policies and procedures is clear.
- _____ Job responsibilities are well-defined.
- _____ Salaries and fringe benefits are distributed equitably.
- _____ Promotions are handled fairly.
- _____ Teachers help make decisions about things that directly affect them.
- _____ People feel free to express their opinions.
- _____ Staff agree on school philosophy and educational objectives.
- _____ Staff share a common vision of what the center should be like.
- _____ The program is well planned and efficiently run.
- _____ Meetings are productive. Time is not wasted.
- _____ The work environment is attractive and well-organized.
- _____ There are sufficient supplies and equipment for staff to do their jobs.
- _____ Staff are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their work.
- _____ The center implements changes as needed.

What three words describe the climate of this center as a place to work?

What do you perceive to be the greatest strengths of this center? _____

What areas do you feel could use some improvement? _____

Appendix F

Program Administration Scale Summary

Subscales	Items
Human Resources Development	1. Staff Orientation 2. Supervision and Performance Appraisal 3. Staff Development
Personnel Cost and Allocation	4. Compensation 5. Benefits 6. Staffing Patterns and Scheduling
Center Operations	7. Facilities Management 8. Risk Management 9. Internal Communications
Child Assessment	10. Screening and Identification of Special Needs 11. Assessment in Support of Learning
Fiscal Management	12. Budget Planning 13. Accounting Practices
Program Planning and Evaluation	14. Program Evaluation 15. Strategic Planning
Family Partnerships	16. Family Communications 17. Family Support and Involvement
Marketing and Public Relations	18. External communications 19. Community Outreach
Technology	20. Technological Resources 21. Use of Technology
Staff Qualification	22. Administrator 23. Lead Teacher 24. Teacher 25. Apprentice Teacher/Aid