Why Not Play: Incorporating Play into the Kindergarten Literacy Curriculum

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How is student literacy development influenced when play through music and hands-on activities are embedded into the classroom curriculum and daily routine?

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Abstract

Play allows children to practice skills learned during teacher instruction, develop problem solving skills, gather and process information quickly, and reduce stress and behavioral issues (Driscoll & Nagel, 2010). But, many critics, both in early childhood education and outside the early childhood profession, question why so much emphasis is placed on play. The objective of this research is to study how play through music and play through hands-on activities embedded into the classroom curriculum influence literacy development. Action research, involving classroom observations and student assessments was conducted in a kindergarten classroom where music and hands-on play is incorporated into the daily routine and curriculum to establish how play improves students’ literacy development. This research provide information for teachers and administrators to consider when developing instructional strategies to improve kindergarten students’ letter and sound identification knowledge.
**Introduction**

This proposal outlines my plans to conduct an action research project to study how music and hands-on play embedded into classroom activity affects kindergarten students’ literacy growth. For the purpose of this research, the word “play” is used to describe music and hands-on activities that are directed by teachers as well as activities that are freely chosen and directed by students within the classroom boundaries. This definition includes many types of play, including singing and moving to songs, chants, and rhymes; puzzle play; block play; art activities; dramatic and make-believe play; thematic play; and play with open-ended objectives. All of these play activities are congruent with the kindergarten curriculum. In 2003, Gmitrova and Gmitrov conducted research comparing how teacher-directed and child-directed pretend play impacted cognitive competence in kindergarten students. This research study, unlike Gmitorva and Gmitrov, will look at the impact of how both teacher-directed and child-directed play through music and hands-on activities help improve kindergarten students’ letter and sound identification knowledge.

Play comes in various forms and it is not all fun and games. When children are allowed to play it helps them learn important social and academic skills. Play allows children to practice skills learned during teacher instruction, develop problem solving skills, gather and processes information quickly, and reduce stress and behavioral issues (Driscoll & Nagel, 2010). But, many critics, both in early childhood education and outside the early childhood profession, questions why so much emphasis is placed on play. My initial interest in this topic began in my own classroom when I noticed that students learned and retained skills better when taught with different methods and strategies. It further expanded as I spoke with my colleagues and other kindergarten teachers in my school district and discovered that they have had similar
experiences. At my school, however, faculty members currently are discussing whether teaching through play is preferable to teaching by standards. I want to further study the topic of play to acquire more knowledge and bring additional insight to the discussions currently taking place among my colleagues.

Having worked with a school population of largely low socioeconomic status, where 85% of the students are English language learners for the past ten years, it has come to my attention that when my students enter the kindergarten classroom, not only are majority of them lacking in academic skills, but they do not know how to play properly. What’s more, they have not developed social and emotional means of coping with situations on their own. For many of my students, the concept of play involves sitting in front of the TV or playing video games. Children today spend less time playing with their peers and more time playing alone with educational toys, video games, and computer games (Bodrova, & Leong, 2003, p.1). For many of my students, kindergarten is their first exposure to school or any form of structured environment. In short, they lack academic skills as well as social interaction skills. My students not only need to learn academic skills, but also social and emotional skills as well. One of the best way to accomplish both sets of skills is through play. Play, whether it be free or guided, helps children develop ways to interact with others, to understand themselves better, to improve their cognitive skills, and to improve academic skills and knowledge (Miller & Almon, 2009; Sandberg & Heden, 2011; Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2012; Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013).

In the past, majority of my kindergarten colleagues incorporated hands-on play and music into the daily routine in addition to providing developmental centers at the end of the day. In recent years, with changes in the state standard requirements, some of my colleagues are more focused on direct academic instruction and have taken play and developmental centers out of the
daily routines. In classrooms today, great pressure and stress have been placed on educators to teach reading, writing, and math skills and most teachers have limited the time for play and exploration in their daily routine (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Hemphill, 2006; Miller & Almon, 2009). This trend is something I have also encountered from other educators in my school district. Conversations with other teachers with various schools who have commented on the fact that either teachers themselves or principals at their schools are taking developmental centers and play out of the curriculum. Many of these teachers and principals believe that the 15-20 minutes of required recess is adequate play for students. However, for children to do their best learning, recess is not enough; they need opportunities to move throughout the day (Miller & Almon, 2009). Play in its various forms can be incorporated into the classroom without teachers losing time from academic instruction.

Play does not necessarily mean “free-play” where students get to do whatever they want. It can also mean “child-directed” play where children create groups and play different games according to their interest (Gmitrova & Gmitrov, 2003), or “guided” or “teacher-directed” play where the teacher guides students in learning through hands-on, child-centered educational methods that help children develop academically (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013). Play, whether child-directed or teacher-directed, develops many areas of the brain because it involves emotion, cognition, language, and sensorimotor actions (Gmitrova & Gmitrov, 2003). Play does not have to have its own specific time in the classroom routine; it can be incorporated into the teacher-directed instruction and then through child-directed activities where students practice skills acquired during the lesson in a fun and engaging manner.

This project consists of action research focusing on how play through hands-on activities and music affect kindergarten students’ letter and sound identification. This research will explore
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whether the use of music and hands-on activity play in a kindergarten classroom increases letter and sound knowledge. It will also explore whether placing more emphasis on integrating play in the daily instruction will increase students’ learning. Research conducted by Wallerstedt and Pramling (2012) indicates that play is cultural and contingent on a child’s experiences and tools made available to them. Integrating hands-on play and music play into the classroom routines and curriculum will help improve students’ academic performance and provide the best learning environment for developmental growth to take place.

**Research Question(s)**

To better understanding how play affects kindergarten students’ letter and sound identification knowledge, two types of play were explored: 1) music play and 2) hands-on activity play. The research questions addressed in this research project are as follows:

**Main question:** How might play through hands-on activities and music affect and benefit kindergarten students’ letter and sound identification knowledge?

1. Does embedding music and hands-on activity play into the daily classroom routine and curriculum increase students’ letter and sound identification knowledge?
2. Do students who participate with positive attitude toward play show an increase in letter and sound identification knowledge?
3. Do guided play and free play increase students’ letter and sound identification knowledge?
4. Do play areas with authentic environmental print and props increase students’ letter and sound identification knowledge?

The first two questions were explored through action research conducted in my kindergarten classroom. The expanded Literature Review addresses questions three and four.
Literature Review

The following is a preliminary literature review of what studies and research say about the importance of play for young children’s development, as well as the importance of play in the school setting. The literature review examines four key aspects of play: first, what is happening to play in classrooms today; second, the importance of play and its benefits in the classroom; third, academic and cognitive benefits gained through guided play and free play; and fourth, the effect and benefit of using music and hands-on activity play in the classroom. This project will expand on this literature review and the knowledge gained will guide and inform the action research conduct.

Disappearance of Play in the Classroom

In schools today, new emphasis on school performances and higher achievements is diminishing the role of play in the classroom. Play time is being reduced in favor of teaching academics at a younger and younger age. Children today have very little time to play in creative and open-ended ways (Levin, 2000). Increase in educational instruction and excessive testing are forcing educators, who are aware of the importance of play, to diminish developmentally appropriate activities in their classroom because there is not enough time in the day to both implement the required curriculum and provide play (Miller and Almon 2009). Miller and Almon delineate three reasons for why play is not incorporated into the daily routine in many kindergarten classrooms: 1) standardized curriculum limits the inclusion of different forms of play; 2) teachers do not feel as if there is enough time to incorporate play; 3) administration does not value play in the classroom (2009). They found that in today’s classroom, children spend more time being instructed and tested in literacy and math throughout the day in teacher-directed instruction than they do learning through play (Miller & Almon, 2009, p.15).
Miller and Almon’s (2009) report, based on nine new studies of 14 kindergarten classrooms in New York and Los Angeles, contain some disturbing findings on the disappearance of play in kindergarten classrooms. In a survey of 254 teachers, 25 percent reported that they did not have time at all for free play in their classrooms. Most of these teachers also stated that they spend two to three hours each day on literacy, math, and test preparation and only 30 minutes or less on play or choice time (p. 18). The push for more academics in early education has also contributed to the decrease of play in the classrooms. Their study revealed that seventy-nine percent of the New York teachers and eighty-two percent of the Los Angeles teachers spend more than 30 minutes per day on testing or test preparation (p.20). They further assert that the lack of materials, resources, and support from school administrators has reduced time for unstructured play in the classrooms. Their findings show that in both New York and L.A., only 12 to 13 percent of the 254 teachers surveyed said they had enough dramatic play materials for their students (Miller and Almon, 2009, p. 19).

All over the country, play is being decreased in classrooms due to increased emphasis on the academic demands of state standards. Educators today have more professional pressure on them to spend more time on academic content such as reading, writing, and language exercises than ever before (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). With the increase in academic demands, playtime in kindergarten has given way to worksheets and drills (Hemphill, 2006). To gain knowledge and understanding of elementary school teachers’ perspectives on the foundation of play in children’s learning process, Sandberg and Heden (2011) interviewed seven elementary school teachers from grades 1 through 6. Their study found that teachers got the best educational results when they focused on supporting children’s play. But they also found that less time is being given to
play in the early years, even though research indicates that play helps students’ social, language, physical, cognitive, and academic developments.

**Importance of Play and its Benefits in the Classroom**

*General Benefits of Play in the Classroom*

A well balanced child needs play that addresses physical, social, and emotional development. Children need the balance of both free play and playful learning under an educator’s supervision to create a rich environment for learning (Miller & Almon, 2009). According to Miller and Almon, play in the classroom does not have to be an “anything goes” situation, but, kindergarten classrooms should not be so tightly structured that students are denied the opportunity to learn through their own exploration. They state that a classroom rich in child-initiated play and a playful classroom with focused learning given by the teacher, creates the best and healthiest environment for students’ learning and development (p.22).

The inclusion of play in classroom activities results in positive social effects and academic growth. Research indicates that children gain a strong social interaction foundation when they engage in play in a social context. Students’ empathy and self-esteem are strengthened through role-playing games, dramatization, and rule games. Students are more motivated and willing to learn when play is involved (Sandberg & Heden, 2011). A sense of power and control are gained when children are able to master new experiences, ideas, and concerns through play (Levin, 2000). Play also allows children to build relationships with peers, learn to work in teams and cooperate with others, develop problem solving skills, and make connections between their environment and the world around them (Colker, 2008; Swartz, 2005). Swartz (2005) reports that play helps support development of a healthy self-concept because children gain a sense of competence during play (p.101). When play is conducted in purposeful
and meaningful ways, children tend to express pride in their accomplishments. They experience feelings of competence when they complete a task through play. These feelings of accomplishment help them build confidence as learners who are capable of working out new ideas and mastering new experiences (Colker, 2008; Levin, 2000; Swartz, 2005). Children who are allowed to engage in play such as make-believe play tend to show lower stress levels than those who are not (Miller & Almon, 2009, p.50).

Research links play to children’s developmental growth. Not only does play promote social and emotional development, it also develops children’s physical health and development. For example, playing with playdough helps children practice fine motor skills, develop eye-hand coordination and control of hand movement (Swartz, 2005). Playing with blocks allows children to develop gross motor and fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and to learn to maintain balance (Colker, 2008, p.17). Play fosters the development of deliberate behaviors such as physical and mental voluntary actions (Bodrova & Leong, 2003, p.4).

Children learn best by doing, therefore, children’s learning is enhanced when they are provided with hands-on play activities that stimulate their motivation and interest. Through hands-on play, children gain a sense of power and control that comes from mastering new experiences, ideas and concerns. They learn to transform their experiences into creations that are uniquely their own (Everett & Piscielli, 2006). Hands-on play helps children develop and practice many different skills. It allows children to explore their senses, use and improve their fine motor skills and develop their language and conversational skills. Working in a hands-on way provides more realistic and exciting experiences for children, which leads to positive emotional outcomes (Holstermann, Grube & Bögeholz, 2010). As children try new ideas and
experiences by doing hands-on activities, they develop a variety of concepts and skills, including basic literacy, numeracy, and gross and fine motor development (Levin, 2000).

Play through music likewise, helps children develop gross and fine motor skills as they dance, clap, jump, and finger play to “Incy Wincy Spider” (Parlakia & Lerner, 2010). Music provides the opportunity for children to learn and practice self-regulation, work cooperatively with others, build relationships, develop cultural awareness, and become team-oriented problem-solvers who are confident and able to think creatively (Compbell et al, 2014; Parlakia & Lerner, 2010). When children are given the opportunity play through music, they become stimulated and engaged learners in many ways. Music helps children think creatively, make connections, and develop aesthetic awareness. It also provides the opportunity for self-expression (Welch & al, 2012). When children are provided with structured and open-ended musical activities, it helps create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect (Paquette & Rieg, 2008, p.227).

**Play Environment and Literacy Development Growth through Play in the Classroom**

The ability to communicate in a real world situation through reading, writing, speaking, listening, or thinking is the means of being literate. Children develop these literacy skills when they are provided with meaningful play in their everyday environment. Giles and Tunks (2010) suggest that children’s play area should be stocked with authentic environmental print because children benefit from exposure to print in their environment. Children’s first exposure to written language is through early encounters with environmental print, words and graphic symbols. Children typically read print from their surrounding environment before reading from books (p.23). During their observational study, Giles and Tunks observed a 4 year-old making a connection between his teacher’s name Ms. McMillian and the sign for McDonalds (p.23).
Similarly, Bergen points out the benefits of a print-rich environment in play areas. He reports that kindergarten students’ ability to read print embedded in the environment increases when they use literacy materials and are engaged in literacy acts taught through play. The use of literacy materials and the engagement in literacy acts through play help increase children’s literacy skills such as phonological awareness (Bergen, 2002; Roskos and Christie, 2001). When children are involved in high levels of hands-on play such as a “town-building” activity, using literacy materials, they are likely to become spontaneous readers and have greater verbalization skills because they tend to use elaborative narratives and higher levels of narrative structures (Bergen and Mauer, 2000). Furthermore, children’s language abilities and vocabulary skills expand as they learn to communicate ideas while playing with hands-on activities such as playdough. As children interact and converse with each other in symbolic and constructive play using playdough, they practice listening, understanding, and speaking skills that help prepare them for reading and writing (Swartz, 2005).

Classrooms that are stocked with literacy materials and tools also stimulate literacy interaction during play and enrich students’ learning. When children’s environments are stocked in this way, it fosters the acquisition of knowledge that children need to learn to read and write. And as children interact with one another in such environment, they share literacy knowledge with their peers (Roskos & Christie, 2011). According to Roskos and Christie, pretend play relates to future reading and comprehension skills because as students participate in such play, they are practicing role-appropriate behaviors and language consistent with a particular storyline (p.213). Pretend play also contributes to children’s ability to formulate, organize, and sustain story problem and plot episodes (p. 214). Likewise, thematic play, where a teacher reads the story then helps students enact the story, contributes to conceptual knowledge. Children are able
to connect separate events into logical sequencing, which improves their comprehension skills. Play also helps improve students’ phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, and oral language abilities, which contribute to reading and writing skills (p.214).

Play through music can also transform a classroom into a positive learning environment where children can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. Music fosters creativity and enhances literacy skills. Children’s language and literacy development are enhanced through music. With the use of repeated songs, chants, and rhymes throughout the day in the classroom, concepts about print become more meaningful and conventions of print are learned in context (Paquette & Rieg, 2008, p. 228). Hallam (2010) states that when children are active in music, their brains’ encoding of linguistics and sounds is sharpened. The use of music in the classroom provides effective experiences for children to develop listening skills. Music activates literacy and language learning in two ways: first, it supports children development of spoken language as well as their receptive language; second, listening to music supports children’s development of phonemic awareness because they are able to distinguish different sounds and phonemes as they listen to various types of songs, chants, and rhymes (Parlakia and Lerner, 2008).

**Academic and Cognitive Benefits Gained through Guided-Play and Free-Play**

The research goals of Gmitrova and Gmitrov (2003) and Wallerstedt and Pramling (2012) were to find the relationship between learning and play through teacher-directed play (guided play) and child-directed play (free play). Gmitrova and Gmitrov (2003) studied two forms of play: “teacher-directed play” where the teacher plays the dominant role in the play process by directing children’s activity; and “child-directed play”, where students form and play in different small groups on their own. Fifty-one children ranging from ages three through six were observed during a process involving 26 observations. The experiment required two teachers to present
similar activities to a large group of students in their own classrooms and then allow free play in small groups to take place after the instructions. Data was collected on children’s affective and cognitive behavior in relation to generally accepted classifications from Bloom for the cognitive domain and from Krathwohl for the emotional domain (p.243). In addition, teachers’ educational performances were measured by the amount of motivation used to direct the playing process. This study found a substantial increase in cognitive indicators when students played in small groups compared to when teachers instructed them in large groups. In small groups, 113.1 cognitive behaviors were measured, versus 45.7 behaviors measured during teacher-directed lessons (p. 244). The data also revealed a positive correlation between teachers’ behavior and children’s behavior in the cognitive domain during child-directed play processes that was lacking in the emotional domain. However, the teacher-directed whole group lesson favored emotional development over cognitive development (p.245). As a result of the data, the researchers concluded that both forms of play should be combined in order to provide a balance between children’s cognitive and emotional development (Gmitrova & Gmitrov, 2003).

Wallerstedt and Pramling (2012) focused their research on play and learning and their relationship in the context of goal-directed practices based on a sociocultural perspective, which states that “The child’s play is fundamentally cultural and contingent on experiences made, and tools appropriated” (p. 8). In their study, children were given the opportunity for free play after receiving lessons on discerning time in music. Participants included three teachers and 27 children ranging in age from six to eight. A total of three 40-minute lessons were conducted and observed. The teachers introduced and taught children about dimension of sound through instruments, body movements, and participation. After each lesson, students were given the opportunity for free-play. The result of this study revealed that during free-play, children were
observed making use of the information the teacher introduced during the lesson. Their results established six notions on play and learning:

1) Free-play is contingent on prior experiences and cultural tools students have appropriated or are in the process of appropriating.

2) Play and learning intertwine and children do not stop learning when they leave the classroom. Children do not stop learning when they are outside of the classroom or during free play. They are more inclined to incorporate their learning into their free play, which provides insight to the fact that they are learning.

3) Play allows students to share knowledge they have acquired.

4) Play helps develop children’s speech and language. Children are able to communicate with one another during play using vocabulary learned during the lesson that shows. This helps children develop vocabulary skills and oral language skills.

5) Play is contingent on motivated action, which gives children access to certain experiences. Giving children access to certain experiences paves the way for new forms of playing. The cultural tools children appropriate allows them to not only communicate with others, but also with themselves which helps them regulate their own activities. It allows them to adjust their playing based on their own understanding and motivation.

6) In play, being able to express oneself requires some kind of cultural tool to make sense to others. Personal expression is also simultaneously a form of social adaptation.

Based on the data collected, the researchers concluded that teacher-directed play provides children with appropriate tools needed during free-play. Therefore, both forms of play should be considered in the classroom, instead of trying to define play in one form (p.12-13).
Guided play is the bridge between teacher directed instruction and free-play. Guided play can be as effective and developmentally appropriate in delivering content as child-centered exploration. It creates learning opportunities that encourage children to become active and engaged partners in learning alongside the teacher (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff, 2013). The most positive means of helping young children’s development is through guided hands-on, child-driven educational methods (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). Guided play allows teachers to: enhance children’s exploration and discovery; ask open-ended questions; and help children explore play tools in ways that children might not have considered using them. These circumstances fit into a social-constructivist theory of learning (Weisberg et al., 2013, p. 105).

Weisberg et al. (2013) further elaborate on the benefits of guided play. First they suggest guided play leads to better academic progress. It helps improve reading, vocabulary, and mathematical and spatial skills. Children who participate in guided play show better working memory and cognitive flexibility (p. 106). Second, guided play has positive influences on children’s socio-emotional development. It reduce stress and decreases problem behaviors (p.107). Third, guided play boosts creative thinking and problem solving abilities (p. 107). Although the authors do suggest that in some situations guided play might limit exploration and learning, they point out that children learn best in an actively engaged constructive and interactive environment where learning tools are meaningful (p.108). Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009), mimic this finding with scientific evidence that states children need both adult-guided play and free play to best prepare them in school.

The Benefits of using Music and Hands-on-Activity Play in the Classroom.

Providing enjoyable literacy practices for children offers them strategies needed to improve literacy. Several studies have reported on ways to incorporate play into literacy skills
Listening is imperative for the development of phonological awareness. Children need plenty of opportunities to practice listening—with explicit instructions (teacher-directed) and without explicit instruction (child-directed) throughout the day. When educators use music and listening games such as Bingo, Simon Says, Sound on-Sound off, Noise Scavenger Hunt and clapping and tapping pattern games, students learn to listen for specific sounds, distinguish differences and similarities in sounds, get a sense of directionality with sounds, and to match letters or objects to the correct sound. Music and listening games also allow students to learn phonological awareness through hands-on learning that involves body and mind (Miller, 2010). Roskos et al. (2003) also affirm that music and listening games increase children’s awareness of the sounds of language. When students participate in activities such as listening to stories and poems, letter and sound matching games, and alphabet and rhyme chants, their knowledge of the alphabet, sounds, and phonological awareness improves. Songs, rhymes and chants are all ways for children to play with sounds of language and develop phonemic sensitivity. A song such as Bingo helps make connections between singing words and letters and writing and reading words and letters (Wilford, 2000, p.3). Paquette and Rieg (2008) also describe how traditional songs such as Bingo, Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Mary Had a Little Lamb and Row, Row, Row Your Boat, help young children practice individual letters and sounds. Integration of music such as songs and rhyming songs into daily instruction is an effective way to improve phonemic awareness (Stone, 2014).
Several research studies have found that children tend to score higher on reading level tests when they participate in music instruction (Stone, 2014). In a 2006 study of 4,739 elementary and middle school students in four United States regions, Johnson and Memmott (2006) found a strong correlation between students’ academic growth and their participation in music programs. Researchers also believe that music instruction impacts students’ phonemic awareness, vocabulary growth, and helps build listening skills. Music instruction has been linked to verbal memory, which is essential for children learning to read (Stone, 2014). In a study of 90 six to 15 year old boys, Ho, Cheung, and Chan describe how students with musical training had better verbal learning and retention abilities as compared to students without musical trainings (Ho, et al., 2003).

Along with music, open literacy centers that allow children to use hands-on manipulative such as playdough, craft sticks, puzzles, blocks, and paint give them the opportunity to explore the alphabet, use inventive spelling and make new words (Williams, 2014). Williams also describes how play through sharing of books helps children become more creative in choosing roles when reenacting out stories. According to the Kentucky Department of Education (1999), read aloud, games, and singing in small or large groups help students recognize letters and names, sequence events, retell stories, answer questions about stories, and develop interest in books and storytelling. Games like “What is missing,” “I have who, who has,” and rhyming games with letter and rhyme association help students learn about sounds and letter recognition (Blackburn, 2008). When students participate in read aloud and shared reading, they get exposed to reading skills and strategies including phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension, which they can apply during independent reading or reenactment (Anderson, 2004).
The use of literacy props in dramatic play areas allows children to make a strong and meaningful connection to literacy (Barclay, 2004). Pretend play such as housekeeping, and restaurant allows children to practice emergent reading and writing skills as well as construction of simple narrative stories (Roskos et al., 2013). It provides opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary, sentence patterns, and valuable print-related behaviors (Barclay, 2004). Welch (2008) conducted a study that concluded that the comprehension growth of students who participated in pretend play with a prop set increased because they were able to expand on the original story by adding new elements on their own. When children use props, especially nonspecific props during dramatic play, they are more inclined to use descriptive language while interacting with their play partner (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). Thematic play such as, “Reader’s Theatre” or re-enactment is another way to provide a structured play experience for children to help improve literacy skills. Creative drama techniques such as puppet shows, story drama, and reenactment increase story recall and comprehension. Reenactment activities strengthen students’ comprehension of the story and reinforce their knowledge of new vocabulary words (Roskos & Christie, 2000, p.219).

The literature reviews confirms that play improves kindergarten students’ literacy development significantly. However, one question that needs further exploration is, how the combination of teacher-directed and child-directed play through music and hands-one activities impacts literacy skills, specifically letter and sound identification knowledge. That will be the focus of this research project.

**Methodology**

Action research is the process of engaging in a systematic enquiry with the purpose of understanding and improving teaching (Hopkins, 2008). It is not a precise or predictable
endeavor because it involves people. Rather, it is a cyclical process of “think - do - think” to research and create change. In action research, we first think of a current practice and how it can be improved, then we do something about it to create change, and finally, we think again about what we have done and its effect on present practices (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009, p.1).

Action research was chosen for this project to address the current issues faced revolving around play in the classrooms. Action research combines both qualitative and quantitative measures, a method of study that is very practical for teacher-researchers attempting to shed light on the mysteries of schooling and of their students’ learning (Grady, 1998). It allows for research questions and problems to be framed in an open-ended format, which leads to discovery of new information (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

According to MacNaughton and Hughes (2009), an action researcher hopes to create change for the better, dreams of a better world, and desires to make a difference. The goal for this research was to apply an action plan in my classroom to use play through music and hands-on-activity to have a positive impact on students’ letter and sound identification knowledge.

MacNaughton and Hughes (2009) also state that action research that creates meaningful change must generally go through several cycles of “think-do-think”. They further elaborate on four steps of action research cycle. This research study was conducted by using the four step of action research identified by MacNaughton and Hughes.

The first two steps of action research comprise the “thinking” phase. The first step of the “thinking” phase of action research is choosing to change the present situation in hopes of improving students’ learning (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009). In many kindergarten classrooms across the country, playtime is disappearing and being replaced with worksheets and drills. Many educators are questioning the importance of play in the classrooms and are limiting or
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eliminating play altogether. In many classrooms today, students have very little time to play due to increase an in educational instruction and inappropriate testing required by state standards. Educators are having difficulties incorporating playtime into the already busy, academics-filled schedule. But, play does not have to have its own time slot in the classroom. It can be embedded into the daily routine and curriculum through hands-on activities and music. Using music and listening games and hands-on activities helps children develop strategies needed to improve literacy skills. Children learn best by doing, by being active and involved in their learning. Supporting play in the kindergarten classroom helps children develop socially linguistically, physically, cognitively, and academically (Sandberg & Heden, 2011).

The second step in the “thinking” phase is planning for a change. When planning for a change, one needs to understand and examine the need and reasons for the action research as well as its effect in the classroom (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009). Play not only helps children’s developmental growth process, it also stimulates their motivation and interest, making them engaged learners. The incorporation of play through the use of music and hands-on activity in the classroom daily routine and curriculum helps students improve literacy skills (especially letter and sound identification knowledge), needed in reading and writing. This connection between play and development support by the findings of many researchers who have studied this issues. Stone (2014), has found that integrating music such as traditional and rhyming songs into the daily instruction is an effective way to improve phonemic awareness. Likewise, Paquette and Rieg (2008) have found that using traditional songs such as Bingo and nursery rhymes help children practice individual letters and sounds. The findings of Miller (2010) and Rosko et al. (2003), also support the theory that using music and listening games in the classroom allows children to play with sounds of language, thus increasing their letter knowledge, sound
recognition, and phonological awareness. Alongside music and listening games, hands-on activity play such as blocks, puzzles, and paint give children the opportunity to explore the alphabet, use inventive spelling, and make new words—skills needed in reading and writing (Williams, 2014). Similarly, the use of letter and rhyming games help children learn about sounds and letter recognition (Blackburn, 2008). Embedding music and hands-on activity play into the daily routine and curriculum will benefit kindergarten students in recognizing and improving in their letter and sound knowledge.

After the two steps of the “thinking” phase comes the “doing” phase, known as creating change, collecting and analyzing data. This phase is comprised of three stages: gathering baseline data; creating your first change (implementing the action); then finally collecting data about the effects of the change. (MacNaughton, et al, 2009, p.135). To implement the first stage of the “doing” phase ‘gathering baseline data’, the Baldrige Assessment (See Appendix B) was given to all students. The assessment measures students’ facility with upper and lowercase letter identification, letter sound identification, recognition of beginning sounds, recognition of rhyming words, and recognition of frequently used sight words (Prince William County Materials, 2009). There is no data available about the validity and reliability of the Baldrige assessment, but it is the benchmark literacy test given to all kindergarten students in the school. The second stage of the “doing” phase is ‘creating your first change’ (implementation of the plan). Once the baseline data were collected, the implementation of the plan was put in place. During the weeks of implementation of the action plan, the third stage of the “doing” phase occurred. Weekly data were collected on the effects of the changes taking place.

The final step of a meaningful action research is the “thinking” phase of reflecting and sharing the lessons of your change, in which I drew conclusions from my analysis of the data.
and shared what I had learned from the project overall (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009, p.213). During action research, reflecting on the process and the data should be ongoing. The researcher must pose earnest questions and continue along the systematic data collection even in the face of discouraging or contradictory findings. Sharing the findings of the action research with identified stakeholders provide helpful insights into the study and helps others finds means of using the data to support their own research.

Role of the Researcher

This research was conducted to study how play through music and hands-on activity affects students’ letter and sound identification knowledge. The research took place in my own kindergarten classroom. As the primary researcher and observer of the students as well as the teacher, I observed my students’ letter and sound identification knowledge directly. To collect data needed for this research project, lessons and activities were planned that incorporated play through music and hands-on activities into the routines and curriculum for my students as a part of their daily normal classroom procedure. To ensure the safety of all participants of this research project, approval was obtained to conduct this research from the IRB and the appropriate school officials in my school district before the start of this research. I also obtained consent from the parents of the participants who are minors as well as from the participants themselves. (See Appendix A)

Setting of this Study and Participants

The research for this project was conducted in an elementary school in Northern Virginia over a six week period. The school is a Title I and Title III designated school, meaning each child is defined as being well below the poverty line in the state of Virginia. There are 809 students who attend this school. Out of these 809 students, 90% are economically disadvantaged,
and roughly 76.5% are English language learners (ELLs). The school’s kindergarten classes alone have 156 students with classroom populations ranging from 19 to 23 students at any given time. For the majority of the students, kindergarten is their first exposure to school or any form of structured environment. The participants of this study are kindergarten students assigned to my classroom. Students range from five to six years of age. All the participants were in the classroom during implementation of play lessons for this action research.

Procedure

Before implementing action research, a baseline data using the Baldrige assessment was given to all students within the first two weeks of school. The results of the Baldrige assessment allowed me to see which students have not met the required benchmark for the beginning of the year letter and sound recognition. Those students who fell below the benchmark were identified as the participants of this study and were given another Baldrige Assessment as a baseline before implementing an action plan. I created a formative letter and sound assessment aligned with the Virginia Standard of Learning and the school district’s curriculum map that would be used to administer a weekly formative assessment throughout the implementation of the action plan. (See Appendix C). The weekly assessments were used to monitor students’ letter and sound progress during the study to determine if more action or modification was needed. At the same time, I also created an observational checklist that was used to monitor students’ behavior and participation level during the research. The checklist helped me gain insight into how students’ attitude, participation, behavior, and effort during play activities help in their letter and sound recognition. (See Appendix D).

All students in the classroom participated in the play activities, however data were only gathered on students identified as participants. Students were provided with music play during
carpet time and hands-on activities during learning centers. Students participated in singing and movement activities during carpet time Monday through Thursday twice a day for ten minutes per session, keeping in mind the attention span of five and six year olds. Students sang ABC songs, recited poems and chants, listened to nursery rhymes, and participated in interactive read aloud sessions. Songs such as The ABC Song, The Wheels on the Bus and reciting nursery rhymes such as Itsy Bitsy Spider and Mary Had a Little Lamb were used during carpet time. This is a fun and playful way to teach children letter and sound identification, build vocabulary, and increase oral language skills (Schiller, 2007). Songs, chants, and rhymes provide children the opportunity to hear sounds in spoken words and to play with the sounds of language. It also gives children a means of creating their own nonsense words, which indicates the understanding of phonemic awareness (Canizares, 2015).

During the first carpet session each day, a nursery rhyme was read to students and then they listened to the letter/sound song “Apple, apple /a/ /a/ a” with picture flash cards to help students associate the letter with the letter sound. After this, students participated in the letters of the day activity. They listened to the letter of the day song from the “Have Fun Teaching” YouTube channel. As students watched the video, they moved and acted out the movements to each letter. I focused on one letter each day. Students practiced writing the letter of the day and also drew a picture of something that began with the letter sound. As students participated in these activities, I made notes on the checklist of students’ participation and enthusiasm level.

During the second carpet session, students participated in Interactive Read-Aloud with children’s books such as No David, Brown Bear Brown Bear, and Where is Spot. This reading, when done with clear instructional focus, improves students’ achievement (Hoyt, 2006). Read-Aloud helps children learn the standards of reading by watching and listening to the teacher
Why Not Play: Incorporating Play into the Kindergarten Literacy Curriculum

apply the standards in action. Some aspects of read-aloud, such as turn and talk, thinking partner, shared reading, and reader’s theater created an environment where children got the opportunity to become strong participants in their own learning and developed strong oral language (Hoyt, 2006). On Mondays and Wednesdays, I read a story to the students with discussions during reading. At the end of each story, students turned and talked with a partner about the book (Think-pair-share). On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I re-read the story using puppets or felt boards to tell the story. On Fridays, students were given the opportunity to act out the story using props. Two books were read each week. After the books were read, they were placed on the bookshelf for students to re-read on their own in their own words throughout the week. This carpet time process took place each week using the same lesson format, but the letters and texts were changed each week.

During hands-on activity play, students were grouped based on data collected from Baldrige pre-assessment. Students participated in hands-on activity play Monday through Thursday each week. Each day students participated in two hands-on play activity for ten to fifteen minutes per session. One session was with me (teacher-researcher) and the other session was student directed. In the session with the teacher, students played various alphabet games such as: name game, alphabet bingo, what is missing, and alphabet memory, among others. The other sessions were student directed. Students participated in various hands-on activities such as: big books, buddy reading, library, retelling with puppets or flannel boards, listening center, ABC center, puzzles, letter stamps, letter match, rhyming games and activities, and writing center. Centers such as big books, library, and buddy reading are ways to reinforce strategies and skills students learn during read aloud and shared reading. Students get the opportunity to practice rereading text and build upon their comprehension of the text (Region 4, 2014). As students read
and reread books in big book center and during buddy reading, they find specific letters and words, which helps improve their phonemic awareness (Region 4, 2014). When students are engaged with materials such as ABC books, magnetic letters, alphabet blocks and puzzles, and alphabet charts during ABC centers, their knowledge of letter identification significantly increases (Roskos et al., 2003).

Each day, students had a choice between two hands-on activities to participate in for ten to fifteen minutes. For example, on Monday, students had the choice between working on the “alphabet tray” or “big book center.” On Tuesday, students had the choice between working on “alphabet puzzles” or “letter stamp.” On Wednesday, students had the choice between “playing alphabet games on the computer” or “letter match.” On Thursday, students’ choices were between “playing alphabet games on the tablet” or “retelling with puppets or felt board.” Hands-on activities varied based on students’ interests and ability to master the skills quickly with each activity and game. This process took place each week using the same format, but the center choices and games were rotated and modified. As students worked on these hands-on play activities, I observed them and made notes on their attitude, participation, behavior, and effort during play activities.

Implementation of the action research took six weeks. At the end of the six weeks, the Baldrige test was re-administered as a posttest to participants to track progress of the effect music and hands-on-activity play had on students’ letter and sound identification knowledge. I then analyzed the pre and post-test scores to determine if students showed growth in their letter and sound identification knowledge. The results from the pre and post-test of participants were compared to what the average increase was for students on the Baldrige test last year over a comparable six-week period where play was not emphasized in the daily curriculum. In
analyzing data from last year’s Baldrige assessments, an average increase of 7% in uppercase letters, 8.4% in lowercase letters, and 10.9% in letter sound increase was achieved by students in a six-week comparable period. With the use of play through music and hands-on activity embedded into the daily curriculum, the data from this research should yield a larger increase of students’ knowledge of letters and sounds. I also analyzed the observational checklist and compared it to the data collected from the Baldrige pre and post-assessments scores to determine if students’ attitude, participation, behavior, and effort had an impact on their letter and sound identification knowledge. With the data at hand, my goal is to not only share the information with my kindergarten colleagues, who have similar student populations during our professional development data meeting, but to also share it with the administration and other grade level educators during professional staff meetings. If I am able to show the potential benefits and growth of students’ letter and sound identification knowledge through the use of music and hands-on activity play, teachers and administrators will be able to see more clearly the importance of incorporating play into the daily routine and curriculum in order to improve students’ learning experience.

Analysis

Data from this study show that the students made gains from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. This study sought to answer two research questions. The first question was: Do play through music and hands-on activities increase students’ letter and sound knowledge? To answer this question, quantitative data from the pre-and post-assessments were analyzed. Each pre-and post-assessment was examined to see the number increase each student gained within the time period of this study. The second question was: Do positive attitude and participation in activities help increase students’ letter and sound knowledge? To answer this research question, I
analyzed a qualitative data from the observational checklist. The students’ observational checklist was coded and analyzed for recurring themes and frequency of behavior.

Quantitative data from the pre- and post-assessments were analyzed to examine growth in letter and sound recognition. Both the pre- and post-assessment required students to identify 26 uppercase letters, 26 lowercase letters and 26 letter sounds. The first result that examined was for uppercase letter identification knowledge from the pre- and post-assessments of all participants. The second result that was examined was the lowercase letter identification knowledge of all participants. The final result analyzed was students’ sound identification knowledge from the pre- and post-assessment of all participants.

![Figure 1. Individual uppercase letter growth](image)
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Lower Case Letters

![Graph showing individual lowercase letter growth.](image)

**Figure 2.** Individual lowercase letter growth

Sounds

![Graph showing individual letter sound growth.](image)

**Figure 3.** Individual letter sound growth
In figures 1, 2, and 3, the line graphs demonstrate the growth for uppercase and lowercase letter and letter sound knowledge for individual participants from the pre-assessment (blue line) to the post-assessments (orange line). Figure 1 shows that sixteen students increased in their uppercase letter identification knowledge, while five students either did not make any growth or had already achieved at the highest possible point on the pre-assessment. Figure 2 shows that nineteen students increased their lowercase letter identification knowledge, while two students showed no growth. Figure 3 shows that fifteen students increased their sound identification. Two students received the highest possible points during the sound pre-assessment, and no changes were indicated in their post-assessment. Four students on the other hand, did not show an increase in sound identification knowledge from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. In analyzing the data, I noted that the same four students show little or no growth in both letter identification and sound identification knowledge. Of the four students, one of them is Developmentally Delayed, two are non-English speakers who just arrived at the start of school from another country and one is a very limited English speaker.

The overall growth in the increase of letter and sound identification knowledge is noticeable in figure 4. The graph below shows the percentage growth in uppercase, lowercase and letter sounds of all participants as a whole. 81% of students made some growth and increased their knowledge of uppercase letters from the pre and post assessments. An average increase of 8.7% was achieved by students in uppercase letter identification between the pre-and post-assessments. 90% of students increased their knowledge of lowercase letter identification with an average class score increase of 8.4% achieved between the pre-and post-assessments. With letter sound identification knowledge, 77% of all participants showed growth with only
14% making little or no increase from pre to post assessment. An average score increase of 8.4% was attained by participants between the pre-and post-assessment.

![Pie charts showing percentage of No Change, Same, and Change for Upper Case Letters, Lower Case Letters, and Sound.](image)

Figure 4. Whole class average growth

Qualitative data from the observational checklist was analyzed for level and frequency of students’ participation. Students were monitored during implementation of music and hands-on activity play after the pre-assessment to determine how students’ attitude, participation level, behavior, and effort affected the growth of their letter and sound identification knowledge. One theme I noted during the observational checklist was that students who frequently exhibited an “I can“ attitude and were involved in the activity made more growth in their letter and sound
knowledge as compared to students who gave up easily or did not even attempt the activity. Three out of the four students who continuously made little or no growth in their letter and sound knowledge were usually quiet and uninvolved during activities or they gave up easily during play activities that seemed challenging. Students 1, 12, 16, and 20 from figure 1 and 2 were very active learners who tried very hard to please and were first to volunteer to participate. These four students made the most significant growth in their letter and sound knowledge from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment.

Another theme I noted during the observational checklist was that students who paid attention during activities and put greater effort into the work or activity showed significant growth in their letter and sound identification knowledge as compared to those who did not. Student 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were students who had difficulties staying focused and paying attention during play activities. These five students required constant redirections during activities. Student 9 was also very disruptive and at times had to be removed from the group. Students 5 and 8, who turned five years of age at the end of September, had difficulties staying focused and on task for more than five minutes. Student 10, whose English language is limited, shut down and refused to work or participate if anyone indicated that she had made a mistake. For example, while working on a name puzzle activity, student 10 completed the puzzle incorrectly. I showed her the right way to write her name and asked her to make her puzzle match mine. Because such action signaled failure to student 10, she stopped participating altogether and refused to continue the activity. Unlike their peers who focused and put great effort in their work during most activities, these five students inability to stay focused and pay attention and lack of effort negatively affected their letter and sound identification growth. These students made little or no growth in their learning from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment data.
Discussion

Emphasis on school performance and higher academic achievement has brought much distress into classrooms nationwide. Educators feel as though the pressure to meet the explicit expectations of the curriculum and instructional practices limit their ability and time to provide more opportunities for meaningful and engaging learning experiences (Miller & Almon, 2009). But, that is what makes play through music and hands-on activities such enriching and unique learning experiences. Music and hands-on activity play, allows educators to incorporate both curriculum content and instructional practices with meaningful and engaging learning experiences to enhance students’ learning opportunities.

Previous studies have found positive results in students’ literacy skills when teachers incorporate music and hands-on play into the curriculum and daily routine. These positive results include improvement in phonological awareness, oral language abilities, listening skill, creativity, and reading and writing skills (Roskos & Christie, 2011). Note that these positive results were also evident in the present study. But, the concept of embedding music and hands-on play into the curriculum and daily routine discussed in this present study is differentiated from prior studies as it expands on previous studies by examining students’ participation level and specific behaviors exhibited during play.

The findings from this research study supported the notion that music and hands-on play improve phonemic awareness found in previous studies. This research revealed that play through music and hands-on activities can lead to an increase of letter and sound identification knowledge. Although students demonstrated growth in their letters and sound identification knowledge, not much significance was established as compared to data from previous year where students did not receive specific instructions through music and hands-on play. As we analyze
and compare data from this research compared to data from previous year, we must take into account the dynamics of each group of students and how it those differences affected the average score of students’ letter and sound identification knowledge.

In terms of uppercase letters, participants’ scores increased by an average of 1.7% more than previous students (8.7% average increase, as compared to 7.0% average increase last year). In terms of lowercase letters, however, the score for both groups of students made an average of 8.4%. Not much gain was achieved by participants who received specific instruction through music and hands-on play from those who did not. As for letter sound knowledge, participants from this study had a lower class average percentage growth than the prior year (8.4% average increase in this study as compared to 10.9% average increase last year).

While formative data reflects that students showed improvement in letter identification and letter sound knowledge, even though they are not significantly different from the previous year, there are some factors that may or may not have affected these results. First among these factors is that this research included more non-English speakers and very limited English speakers as well as students with learning disabilities compared to the previous year’s students. Participants in this study include two non-English speakers, one very limited English speaker, and one developmental delayed student. Last year’s group of students included only two non-English speakers. Another factor that may or may not have affected these results is the number of students in the classroom. There were 21 students present in the classroom during the research study. Last year, was only 18 students, which meant more time could be devoted to each student than was possible this year. Another factor that may or may not have affected these results is that only five out of 21 students attended preschool before coming to kindergarten. 76% of the participants in this study had never attended school or any form of structured environment. For
these students, many of them stayed at home with parents or siblings for the first five years of their lives with no academic exposure. When compared to last year’s class, where nine out of eighteen (50%) of the students attended pre-school, the participants of this study were at a disadvantage. In this study, there were more students in the classroom, more limited English speakers and higher number of students who had not attended pre-school. If the participants of this research had been equipped with same academic exposure and skills, and environmental dynamics, the average score would have been higher. Even with the disadvantages in comparison to last year’s students, the participants were able to achieve a higher average score or equivalent average score to last year’s average score. When students enter kindergarten with a blank slate, they have a long way to go to catch up to their peers.

**Conclusion and Implications for Future Research**

Results from this research indicate that music and hands-on activity play, along with positive attitude, behavior, and participation, help students grow and increase in letter and sound identification knowledge. Students’ scores improved overall from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. The results of this study support previous research conducted on the importance of play through music and hands-on activities in kindergarten literacy growth. The result of this study also indicate that students’ participation and behavior affect students’ learning. This is one area future researchers still need to study to better understand what specific behaviors or level of participation affect students’ literacy growth and how.

In conclusion, this study helps demonstrate that when classroom teachers embed play through music and hands-on activities into the curriculum and daily routine, it benefits students in helping them increase their letter and sound identification knowledge in a meaningful and engaging way.
References


Appendix A

Parent Consent Form

Dear Parents,

My name is Linda Yeboah and I am your student’s kindergarten teacher and a graduate student in the University of Mary Washington’s College of Education. In order to successfully complete my graduate degree, I am conducting a research project in my classroom from September 7, 2015 to October 16, 2015. Therefore, I am requesting your consent for your child to participate in my research study. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you agree, I will also ask your child for his or her agreement to participate. Please read further to learn about what the study entails.

My research focuses on developing students’ letter and sound identification knowledge. I am particularly interested to learn what play involving music and hands-on activity has on students’ improvement of letter and sound identification knowledge. However, the students in your child’s class will receive regular instruction in whole groups, small groups, pairs, and individual work as we normally do. I will assess students with a pre-and post-test on letter and sound identification to gain insight into students’ knowledge. I will also give them weekly formative assessments to monitor their progress. During the unit I will be actively instruct your child with standard based lessons, provide guidance and support, answering students’ questions, and giving feedback. I will use a check sheet to make observations of students’ play activity during group activities and individual centers. At the end of the study, I will analyze data from the pre- and post-tests, formative assessments, and observations to see what improvements students made within the six week time frame.

Students whose parents allow them to participate in the study will be doing the same work as required for all students in the class. However, for the purposes of my research I will use data only from students who have parental consent to participate in the study. There are no extra benefits to any students for participating in the study, and no penalties for any students who do not participate in the study. Whether your child participates in this research or not, the decision will have no effect either positive or negative on the student’s grades on any assignment.

All observation sheets and test scores collected from individual students will be kept completely confidential. I will not reveal any confidential information about your child to anyone else, unless required by law to do so. In any reports I make about this research, all students will be given pseudonyms and I will not report any identifying information about individual students or their school.

The benefit of this research is to provide information for teachers and administrators to consider when developing instructional strategies to improve kindergarten students’ letter and sound identification knowledge.

The risks to students participating in the study are minimal. Since all students in the class will be doing the same activities, the risks of participation are the same as the normal risks of being in school. If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, and later change your mind, you have the right to withdraw him/her from the study without penalty at any time.
If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, please sign the form below and return it to me by August 31, 2015. If you have any questions before returning the form, or at any time throughout the duration of the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at yeboahlk@pwcs.edu. The research described above has been approved by the University of Mary Washington IRB which is a committee responsible for ensuring that research is being conducted safely and that risks to participants are minimized. For information about the conduct of this research, contact the IRB chair, Dr. Jo Tyler, at jtyler@umw.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to review this letter.

Sincerely,

Linda Yeboah

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Form to be completed by Parent or Guardian

All of my questions and concerns about the research described above have been addressed. I choose, voluntarily, to allow my child to participate in this research project. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

__________________________
print first and last name of child

__________________________
print name of parent/guardian

__________________________
signature of parent/guardian __________

date

Form to be completed by Researcher

I confirm that the parent/guardian named above has been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the parent or guardian.

__________________________
print name of researcher

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signature of researcher __________

date
### Appendix B  Baldrige Assessment Sheet

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I can say the letter sounds in isolation.

Student’s Name:

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<th>Z</th>
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<td>s</td>
<td>l</td>
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|        | u | y | b | p | d
|        | N | D |
|        | E |

I can read my lowercase letters.

Standard: Alphabet Recognition

Student’s Name:

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</table>
|        | u | y | b | p | d
|        | N | D |
|        | E | F | T | X | E | R |

I can read my uppercase letters.

Student’s Name:
## Appendix C

### Weekly Assessment Data Sheet

**Letter/Sound Assessment**

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**Total**
### Appendix D  
#### Class Participation Checklist

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<td>Try/Attempts to try</td>
<td>I can</td>
<td>Disruptive</td>
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