Ready! Set! School! Project

Focus Group Report

Group R—Session 1: 3/1/06

Location: Price Utah, 755 North Cedar Hills Dr.

Introduction:

We have assembled three different groups of parents of pre-school aged children to provide baseline data about what they currently do to help prepare their children for school. Recording the baseline, getting acquainted with the parents and having the parents in each group become acquainted with one another is the primary goal of Session One.

Each of the three groups will meet twice more as we enter into the pilot product testing phase of the research. The second session will introduce each group to the Ready! Set! Go! Products and sample their initial reactions. The third meeting, after the parents have taken home the materials and used them with their children for about a month, will focus on detailed comments from the groups of parents after testing the product.

Group R:

The "R" stands for rural. This group is comprised of 14 women from Carbon County who fit the main demographic of having a preschool aged child. Three of the participants are from Wellington, one is from Huntington and the other 10 are from Price. The income level and socio-economic level of this group skewed somewhat lower than the urban mixed group and on par with the LIMELL group.

Session Overview:

Jack Wilbur conducted the session, which lasted approximately one hour. Each of the parents were asked to state their name, indicate how many children they have and their ages.

Then each parent was given an opportunity to talk about what they do to help prepare their child for kindergarten. Who are the care providers? What sort of things does the child do with them? What do you do with your child?

The final questions were opened up for voluntary answers. Parents were asked how they know what they teach their pre-school children. Where do they get that information? The final formal question was designed to find out what areas of their child's development they would like more information about.

What follows is an edited, but fairly detailed transcript of their answers to the major questions:

What do they do now?

Kristina—2 children, 3 and almost eight. Teach preschool to 15 four and five year olds
We try to do a lot of things that occur naturally as far as counting and shapes. We'll count as we set the table. We count plates and napkins. We read a lot. Before kids get into kindergarten they want them to have 2000 hours of lap time. As far as social we just work on getting along with each other and playing nicely with friends. Working on independence.

Ann Lewis—3 children, 9, 5, 18 mos
My five year old was in Kristina's class. He was in for speech. He does a lot better he hardly stutters any more. We just do a lot of reading. I have him tell back what I read. He plays educational computer games. He can write his name and he likes to try to write everyone in the family's name. We go to story time and it helps.

Megan Durrant—3 children, 4, 2, 9 mos
I'm just kind of doing an at home thing. My mom is a preschool teacher and my father in law is a school teacher. They've given me a lot of worksheets. In the morning we'll spend about an hour on work sheets. We sing the alphabet. I printed a lot of things off the internet that we can match colors. He loves the computer. He knows where his games are. Sesame Street website.

Kim—2 children, 4, 18 mos
Bentley is four. We like to read. We could read all night long. As we go throughout the day we do various activities. We make cookies, paint and draw. He can write his name and recognize his letters and stuff. As I am on the computer he'll come up and want to write his name. He goes to bed listening to educational CDs or music.

Jessica—4 children, 10, 7, 5, 7 mos
I work in an elementary school so I have a lot of resources. But she mostly likes to be read to. My older children as homework have to come home and read. She likes to listen.

Leisha—2 children, 5 and 2
My oldest is in preschool and it's pretty academic. They learn their ABCs and name. At home we just reinforce what he's going in school. If we wants to write a Thank You note to someone I write out the note and he traces it. We read a lot of books that he like. He's starting to recognize letters.

Ashley—2 children, 4 and 2
Spencer goes to preschool four days a week. It's mainly social. They do the alphabet and stuff. At home we read and go on nature walks. Bring home a leaf and draw it. We watch

teaching videos like the Alphabet Factory. We play a lot of games. Whether it's Candyland, learning the colors that way or just counting the dice.

Natalie—4 children, 15, 11, 10, 5
He goes to preschool and they really concentrated on academics more than just socializing. They're writing their numbers up 10. They have a goal to count to 100, he is on 39. The focus on letters but not in order. They have been working on shapes, one per month. They've done rhyming. He has kind of a speech problem where he leaves off the first letter. We've been working on that. His older sister likes to play school with him, so she helps out.

Ashton—2children, 3, 8mos
I read to him a lot. We like to read. I did buy him these cup counting things. They've got five cups with different colors. You have to put the bears in them and count them. He's kind of figured out his colors and is matching the colors. We've got flashcards. Songs, he learns his ABCs from music.

Tiffany—2 children, 5 and 6mos
Chad is in preschool here. He's in Kristina's class. We do a lot of flashcards, but he's deaf so we do a lot more with sign language than working with his speech. We work on signing and shapes and colors. I have to learn just as much as he does so we are both doing it together.

Jamie—a 3 year old
I take him to preschool he goes two days a week. I work with him on his speech because he doesn't talk too well. I just try to sound out the words clearly. When I read a book I'm more into talking about the pictures than read it word for word.

Corrine—2 children, 8, 5
My oldest one was in Head Start so I remember what they did with him. He knows how to write his name because I did the dots.

Ann—2 children, 14, 3
I read to her every night before she goes to bed. After I read to her she'll take the book and read it back to me what she remembers. I worked with her colors. She's in a daycare and she's worked with her numbers. She can count to 12. She likes the file folder games.

Tina—3 children, 7, 6, 4
He's in the head start here in Price. I'd rather have him here in Price than Wellington. I do a lot of file folder games with him. The colors the shapes, the numbers. Then with his name I do a tracing. I write it and he traces it. Then I get a lot of ideas from Head Start. They do this one that's a fishing game. They have to catch a fish and on each fish is the color of the fish or a shape or a number. I go into the school a lot so I know what they do there. My girls went to the Head Start too so I knew what to expect.

Other Questions:

Do any of you participate in formal play groups?

We have a Mom and me group that meets twice a week. We have activities for the kids. It's activities for the kids from games to tour to the park.
After school program in Wellington. I take him with me.

Internet as a resource for you or something for them?

Sesame Street dot com and preschool printables. Disney has printables.
PBS kids website. He likes Buster. We've gotten on their and played.
They have one my kids have always like where they can type inb their name and things about them and it creates a story.
Another one that's good is Crayola.
My son likes Bob the Builder.

Where else do you go to get the information you use?

I just bring everything home from Head start.
I remember a lot of things they did with me older boy. That's how I knew to teach him to read and write.
I went down the isle at Wal-Mart. That's where I got stuff.
You also get information from other family members.
I like to go to family resource center.
PTA.
Parents as Teachers
The County Health Department Early Intervention program comes out and does some of that stuff.

What other areas of learning do you wish you had more resources?
They are putting too much in the kids head all at once. Touch points. It seems like the kids have to go so fast. Kids develop at different rates.
I'd like to know if I'm doing the right things with her.