

TITLE: Letter Name and Sounds Identification: A look at the Correlation between Children's Names and Their Early Writing Skills

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Introduction: Recent reports of American children's school performance show that more than 30% of 4th graders in the US failed to demonstrate basic writing skills. It is important to promote writing skills in early years; however, since teaching guidelines for preschool writing is vague, preschool teachers rarely promote children's early writing skills, (e.g., letter writing, name writing and spelling). One common assumption is that children learn letters within their names earlier than the letters that do not appear within their name. This project mapped letters within children's names to the letters they wrote during writing assessments in order to examine whether children can not only recognize their names' letter names and sounds earlier than the other letters, but also write their name's letters earlier.

Method: 120 children (44.2% male, age mean = 54.0 months, SD = 3.9) were assessed by trained GSU student research staff twice- once in September and once in December. Children tested were primarily from low-income families, all within the Atlanta metro area. Children were first asked to write their name. If the children were able to produce a recognizable letter, they were dictated to write letters by the examiners. If not, children were assigned to a testing measure focused on prerequisite writing skills. All children were then shown a card with printed letters and asked to say the letter name and letter sounds. Ratio variables were created:

% of Letters Correct in Name	Letters Correct Within Name/Total Unique Letters in Name
% of Letters Correct Outside of Name	Letters Correct Outside of Name/Total Letters Not in Name
% of Sounds Correct in Name	Letters Correct Within Name/Total Unique Letters in Name
% of Sounds Correct Outside of Name	Letters Correct Outside of Name/Total Letters Not in Name
% of Letters Wrote in Name	Letters Correct Within Name/(Letters Given Within Name)
% of Letters Wrote Outside of Name	Letters Correct Outside of Name / (10 – Letters Given Within Name)

Results: While the analysis of the data is ongoing, the research aims to compare the percentage of letter names and sounds for letters within the name correctly identified to the percentage of letter names and sounds for other letters to determine if there is a positive correlation. It will examine the same comparison using the children's ability to write letters upon request. Regression analyses will be conducted for analyses.

Discussion: The primary purpose of this study is to prepare evidence for effective writing instruction in early childhood classrooms. We will examine the pattern of children's writing development, which prepares a foundation for future development of teaching strategies. Based on the results, a more detailed discussion will be provided for presentation.