
NEWSLETTER

A Longitudinal Study of the Relationship between Preschool Readiness and the Adjustment to Preschool Transition in Young Children

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THIS majority of young children suffer from separation anxiety to varying degrees in the early stage of preschool attendance, where they first leave home to confront a new environment, experiencing a transition from dependence to self-reliance and from a free and easy home environment to a setting of discipline. Early preschool adaptation affects the younger children's attitudes towards and perceptions of kindergarten life in their entire preschool years and even their future social adjustment. How to help preschoolers ease and circumvent the maladaptation in their early kindergarten life to facilitate a smooth preschool transition deserves in-depth research. This study focuses on analyzing the effects of preschool readiness on young children's adjustment to preschool transition using latent growth models.

Research findings show that:

- i. Children adapted to kindergarten at a greater rate in the initial period than later periods. The initial level of preschool adaptation was negatively related to the rate of adjustment. There were significant differences in the initial level and rate of preschool adjustment among individuals.
- ii. There was no correlation between the initial level and rate of preschool adjustment and the gender, age, and being the only child or not in preschoolers. A healthy daily routine developed before kindergarten attendance could positively predict the initial level and rate of preschool adjustment in them. The toilet habit could positively predict the rate of preschool adjustment among them.
- iii. Negative emotion-regulation methods, particularly the release of negative emotions, inversely predicted the initial level of kindergarten adaptation in preschoolers.

Based on research findings, the following implications were drawn:

- Parents of children with a low initial level of preschool adjustment need not worry too much about their coping with kindergarten life in that young children can make big progress in this regard within a short term.

- Necessary are adequate life preparations before kindergarten attendance, including self-care ability and a good daily routine. Young children should be well-trained to adapt to preschool life in terms of the daily schedule, mid-day nap, and toilet habit.
- In home-school co-education before the kid's kindergarten attendance, special attention should be paid to increasing their ability to regulate emotions. Training on emotion-regulation strategies is not only beneficial for the child's preschool adjustment but also for their lifelong social adaptation.
- Pre-kindergarten preparation should be incorporated into preschool education. Policies and guidelines for the home-school community ought to extend to the preparation period before the child's kindergarten attendance.

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