

ABSTRACT

Preschool Readiness Programme in Jamaica

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This study was aimed at examining the preschool readiness programme offered in early childhood institutions in Jamaica to record its usefulness to preschoolers preparing to enter primary schools. Readiness skills were examined, the objective was to find out the capabilities of preschoolers preparing for the next level of education. The readiness skills examined were visual perception, visual motor coordination, figure ground and left/right orientation.

One hundred preschoolers, fifty boys and fifty girls, ranging in age from five and a half to six years old were selected from the population of preschoolers in ten early childhood institutions. These early childhood institutions are situated in the metropolitan centre of Kingston and St. Andrew. Five basic schools were chosen as the children in these schools were already experiencing the preschool

readiness programme. The other institutions included two infant schools, one infant department and two preparatory schools.

The TVMS test of visual motor skills was utilized to examine children's acquisition of the above mentioned skills. Students' 't' statistic, Two-way analysis of variance and Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) were the statistical tools used to analyse the data.

The evidence presented in the study seems to support the basic conclusion that preschool readiness programmes can be useful in helping children to master some readiness skills which are deemed to be essential for the start of formal schooling. A suggested conclusion also is that if preschoolers are exposed to the readiness skills of visual perception, figure ground, left/right orientation and visual motor coordination, they may master these skills which seem to be the foundation for formal learning at the grade one level.