

**Background.** The state of Texas allows school districts with at least 15 eligible 3-year-old students to provide a half-day prekindergarten (pre-K) program to prepare students developmentally for the rigors of kindergarten and beyond. In 2014–2015, Austin Independent School District (AISD) piloted the prekindergarten for three-year-olds program. This program is held at Oak Springs and Zavala Elementary Schools. One teacher is assigned to each campus and teaches two half-day classes.

In Spring 2015, staff in AISD’s Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) worked with the Early Childhood Department staff to create and administer a survey to parents of students enrolled in the prekindergarten for three-year-olds program. This report summarizes responses from parents of these students at Oak Springs and Zavala.

**Respondents.** Of the 30 parents who responded, the majority (67%) had children enrolled at Oak Springs, and 33% were parents of children enrolled at Zavala.

Table 1 provides an overview of parents’ responses to various statements about the program and school.

**Parents of three-year-olds enrolled at Oak Springs and Zavala are satisfied with the pilot program and school (n=30)**

Statement	% Strongly agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Not sure/NA
I feel comfortable talking with my child’s teacher about concerns or needs.	77	20	3	0	0
My child likes to go to school.	77	17	7	0	0
My child’s academic and developmental needs are met at school.	63	27	7	3	0
I receive adequate information from the school regarding my child’s progress.	60	40	0	0	0
My expectations for my child’s education are being met at school.	63	27	7	3	0

Source. TLI Spring 2015 Parent Survey

**Expectations.** Parents were asked to explain their responses regarding the extent to which their expectations were met. Twelve parents responded, with most saying that their children were “learning a lot,” that teachers worked well with their children, and that the education their children were receiving was appropriate for their age.

**Benefits of program.** Twenty-six parents provided open-ended responses about what the program is doing well. Some of their responses were as follows:

- “Keeping me informed of my student’s behavior and progress. Good rapport.”
- “The children learn colors, letters, numbers, and how to behave in school and get along with other children.”

- “In my opinion, it seems that everything is good, especially because our children are content and look forward to returning to school.”
- “My son is improving his speech. I could not understand him sometimes and now I can understand him better.”

**Suggestions for program improvements.** Parents ( $n = 22$ ) provided suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the program. Most of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the program and did not have suggestions for improvement, and made comments such as “As long as they keep doing what they are [doing], then this will continue to be a success.” Of those who did have a suggestion for improvement, the majority (27%) stated that the program should be a whole-day program to provide students with more learning time.

Based on the responses to the parent survey, most parents are very satisfied with the prekindergarten for three-year-olds program. Their expectations for their children’s education were met, and students are growing academically and socially, and are being prepared to enter prekindergarten for four-year-olds program next school year. In light of parents’ feedback, recommendations for program improvement are to extend the program to a full day and to follow the progress of students who participated as 3-year-olds.