

Puppetry in Art Therapy to Explore Prosocial Behaviors in Head Start Preschoolers

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## ABSTRACT

This master's thesis offers the results of a four-week pilot study to explore the use of puppetry in an art therapy intervention to increase prosocial behaviors with urban, Head Start preschoolers. The researcher employs storytelling techniques, the weekly creation of puppets, and a role-playing exercise using the puppets to practice prosocial behaviors including empathy, sharing, helpfulness, kindness, and generosity. The researcher employed a mixed method research approach utilizing a pre- and post Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), observation of social behaviors, journaling and utilized collage-making as a reflective, arts-based research practice. Anticipated results include an increase in prosocial classroom behaviors in addition to increases in autonomy, ability to focus, creative engagement, and social engagement. Additional research was recommended.

*Keywords:* art therapy, play therapy, prosocial behaviors, preschoolers, puppetry

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

*The biggest deficit that we have in our society and in the world right now is an empathy deficit. We are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else's shoes and see the world through their eyes.*

Barack Obama (2006)

Advocates and researchers have long agreed that prosocial development needs to start early in the home and continue in preschool (Spivak & Durlak, 2016). Results from a recent survey in Illinois indicated that only 24% of preschool-aged children were prepared for kindergarten entry (Illinois State Board of Education, 2018). According to Weinstein and Ryan (2010), the promotion of prosocial behavior (PSB) increases the formation of networks and communities that support coexistence, well-being, and healthier social and environmental contexts. These behaviors included helping behaviors, altruism, cooperation, and solidarity directed toward the benefit of others. Jones and Kahn (2017) wrote that early intervention and the prosocial development of preschool children influenced cognitive development and social-emotional health as they developed into adolescents and adults. Additionally, research conducted by Jones, Greenberg, and Crowley (2015) suggested that perceived early social competence served as an indicator for significant long-term outcomes. These outcomes promoted developmental factors that altogether could strongly influence life course.

### Problem Statement

Research has shown that bullying, victimization, and school rejection has dysregulated stress responses had serious effects on long-term physical and mental health for individuals and their surrounding environments (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, & Rose, 2018; Prinstein, Rancourt, Guerry, & Browne, 2009; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2013). Developing prosocial behaviors as early as the preschool years has been seen to help prevent bullying while also

setting a foundation for academic success as children got older (McCarty, Teie, McCutchen, & Geller, 2016). Preschool and Head Start curricula placed emphasis on evidence-based programming that taught social-emotional skills (Klorer & Robb, 2012; Lobo & Winsler, 2006). Klorer and Robb (2012) also observed that these programs often did not commonly incorporate the arts in social-emotional skills development. Furthermore, although many preschool-aged children developed these prosocial skills naturally, some children did not. Prosocial skills development can decrease the risks for later social problems such as bullying (Lam, 2012).

Art therapy has been used as an effective means for developing prosocial behaviors in the classroom (Cortina & Fazel, 2015). Children have learned and practiced prosocial skills through art therapy interventions in a school-based environment (Cortina & Fazel, 2015). Engaging in role play techniques with puppets has been useful in therapeutic settings for young children to practice social skills (Kelly, 1982). Additionally, art therapy interventions that combined interactive methods have been effective in developing and practicing interpersonal skills (Rosen, Pitre, & Johnson, 2016). Prosocial behaviors are important for developing friendships, and research has shown that increased prosocial skills help with a child's development of academic ability (Bierman et al., 2008). This pilot study has contributed to the limited existing research showing that art therapy interventions with puppetry can contribute to improved prosocial behaviors with Head Start preschoolers.

### **Research Question**

This study was guided by the question, *will the creation of puppetry in an art therapy intervention combined with role-play interaction with preschoolers promote prosocial behaviors in an urban, Head Start classroom?*

**Basic Assumptions**

Early childhood has been broadly recognized as a critical time when children develop social-emotional, physiological, and cognitive skills. According to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987), art making can contribute tremendously to early childhood development because the creation of art facilitates a child's interaction with their environment where learning can take place. The development of cognitive skills has helped to support the development of prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989; Spivak & Durlak, 2016). Prosocial behaviors refer to voluntary acts intended to improve or benefit the welfare of others (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). According to the researchers, empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness were described as prosocial behaviors. The preschool years have been known to provide an opportunity to cultivate prosocial skills through social-emotional learning. Metzl (2015) posited that art therapy was an effective modality for children, zero to five years old, offering structure as well as creativity to address treatment and learning goals. Metzl (2015) further postulated that social-emotional, physiological, and cognitive competencies can be assessed and treated through art therapy interventions. Additionally, emerging research proposes that across the lifespan, the arts can promote openness, encourage interconnectedness with people and communities, and offer the opportunity to consider multiple perspectives (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015). According to Fox and Schirrmacher (2012), the arts in early childhood supported children's burgeoning autonomy, making independent decisions on what materials they would use and how they chose to apply and arrange these materials in composition. According to Klein (1991) and Sautter (1994), participating in art activities has helped young children build self-esteem and learn to tolerate criticism and praise from both peers and adults. The results of this study showed that an art therapy puppetry intervention



combined with story-telling and play interaction promoted prosocial classroom behaviors for Head Start preschoolers in an urban environment.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to demonstrate how art therapy in a Head Start classroom offered an opportunity for preschoolers to develop prosocial behaviors. Data from this study can inform the creation of classroom interventions that support prosocial development. Research obtained by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA; 2015) have garnered positive results in the connection between arts participation and early social-emotional development in quasi-experimental and experimental studies. Additionally, studies that used experimental designs suggested that arts participation could support social-emotional skills such as prosocial behaviors (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010). In a study conducted by Brown and Sax (2013) related to arts enrichment programs with preschool students, greater positive emotions including interest, happiness, and pride were observed in comparison to peers that did not include an arts integration program. The NEA (2015) reported that studies that use quasi-experimental and experimental designs exhibited increased prosocial behaviors, general social skills, and better emotional regulation. Furthermore, increasing capacity for social-emotional regulation in preschool has been shown to strengthen a child's capacity for learning while helping them to maintain and develop positive social relationships (Blair, 2002; Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, & Davidson, 2015). Longitudinal research has suggested that developing a strong capacity for self-regulation during early childhood predicted health, financial stability, and educational attainment into adulthood (Flook et al., 2015; Moffit et al., 2010).

## Definition of Terms

**Head start.** Head Start is a federally funded program promoting school readiness of children, birth to age five from low-income families enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development (National Head Start Association, 2016).

**Art therapy.** According to the American Art Therapy Association (2018), art therapy has been defined as a profession that integrates mental health and human services to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and communities through the creative process and applied psychotherapeutic processes. Art therapy uses art media as a vehicle for therapeutic expression.

**Bibliotherapy.** Bibliotherapy has been described as a creative arts modality that used fiction, poetry, and film as treatment or prevention for emotional and behavioral maladjustment (Montgomery & Maunders, 2015). Developmental bibliotherapy used literature and film to promote healthy social and emotional growth and to support mental health (McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013). Developmental bibliotherapy can be used by educators and therapists that work with children and young adults.

**Play therapy.** The Association for Play Therapy (n.d.) has defined play therapy as theoretical framework established as an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists incorporate play techniques to help clients prevent and/or resolve psychosocial difficulty in order to achieve optimal growth and development.

**Expressive therapies continuum (ETC).** This has been described as a framework for using art in therapy while serving as a means to organize art media and experiential activity interaction and process information and form images (Hinz, 2009; Kagin & Lusebrink, 1978a, 1978b; Lusebrink, 1990).

**Social-emotional learning.** Social-emotional learning has been defined as the effective application of knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to comprehend and regulate emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and convey empathy for others, develop positive relationships, and make decisions (Weisberg, 2015).

### **Justification of the Study**

There was limited research with regard to the use of puppetry and art therapy techniques in the development of prosocial behaviors in early childhood. The researcher intended to build on existing research and believed that through the arts, individuals, families, and communities could cultivate new insights and illuminate aspects of social consciousness and the collective human experience. Children may not be able to explain their experiences in ways that were generally understood to adults, and society often overlooked the importance and challenges of a child's early years (Zero to Three Workforce Development Project, 2013). Heckman's (2011) research findings with a consortium of economists, developmental psychologists, sociologists, statisticians, and neuroscientists have indicated that the quality of early childhood development heavily influenced health, economic, and social outcomes for individuals and society as a whole. Developing prosocial skills in the preschool years could help to prevent negative behaviors as children became older (Bierman et al., 2008). This study combined art therapy with early intervention to validate the use of art therapy to develop prosocial behaviors with Head Start preschoolers.

## CHAPTER II

### **Literature Review**

Current literature was reviewed surrounding urban, preschool-aged children in relation to social-emotional learning and the development of prosocial behaviors in the classroom. Additionally, developmentally appropriate assessments and interventions were reviewed with regard to the development and tracking of prosocial behaviors. Theoretical perspectives were also reviewed with regard to early childhood. Art therapy, play therapy, and puppetry techniques were also discussed with regard to designing a pilot study designed to help preschoolers develop prosocial behaviors. Additionally, art therapy, drama therapy, play therapy, bibliotherapy, and puppetry techniques were considered in relation to the development of prosocial behaviors for the implementation of an intervention for an urban, Head Start, preschool environment.

### **Social-Emotional Development and Learning**

According to Yates et al. (2008), the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning has considered social and emotional development as the development capacity of a child from birth to age five and the process it takes for them to form close and secure relationships with adults and peers. This process has been known to include their experience and ability to self-regulate and express emotions in a culturally appropriate manner (Yates et al., 2008). Research has indicated that when schools support social-emotional learning (SEL), students benefit in both academic achievement and improved social-emotional functioning (Heath, Smith, & Young, 2017; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) recommended five interconnected core competencies for social and emotional learning in the preschool years. This

included self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, n.d.; Heath et al., 2017). Durlak et al. (2011), found that when youth participated in school-wide SEL programs, student attitudes improved with regard to self, peers, and school; internalizing and externalizing problems were reduced; and academic performance increased (Heath et al., 2017). Additionally, SEL has been a proactive approach to school-based mental health (SBMH) focused on prevention helping students to successfully navigate through life's challenges (Heath et al., 2017; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). In support of SEL initiatives, self-reports were helpful in the assessment of student's perception of curricula. In a study that measured the validity of pediatric self-reports, Varni, Limbers, and Burwinkle (2007) reported that there was an emerging paradigm shift in support of pediatric self-report outcomes that assessed the value of healthcare services.

### **Prosocial Behaviors**

Prosocial behaviors and involvement have long been regarded as a core value of human civilization (Lam, 2011). Prosocial behaviors were observable early in child development. According to Hay (1994), prosocial responding became both cognitively and emotionally regulated during the preschool years. Additionally, Baillargeon et al. (2017) reported that continuity and discontinuity existed in how children develop and maintain prosocial behaviors.

Within the first two years of life, infants helped, shared, and comforted others (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Morris, 2014; Svetlova, Nichols, & Brownell, 2010; Vaish & Tomasello, 2014; Van de Vondervoort, Akin, Kushnir, Slevinsky, & Hamlin, 2018; Warneken, 2013). Additionally, by two years old, it was possible for children to possess prosocial behaviors and be motivated through communicative prompting, parental

expectations, or concrete rewards (Barragan & Dweck, 2014; Brownell, Svetlova, Anderson, Nichols, & Drummond, 2013; Dahl, 2015; Hammond & Carpendale, 2015; Hepach, Haberl, Lambert, & Tomasello, 2017; Hepach, Vaish, & Tomasello, 2012; Vaish, Carpenter, & Tomasello, 2009; Van de Vondervoort et al., 2018; Warneken, 2013). Researchers have agreed that prosocial development needs to start early in the home and continue in preschool (Spivak & Durlak, 2016). Prosocial behaviors could be positively related to psychological and emotional processes as well as other socially competent outcomes and intellectual accomplishments in young children (Wentzel, 2015). Research has suggested that young children who learn prosocial skills are more likely to have positive relationships, acceptance, and friendships later on in school and as adults (Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, & Miller, 1991). Eisenberg et al.'s (1991) study also suggested that prosocial skills enable a child's ability to develop friendships in addition to supporting their development of academic skills. Conversely, Haas et al.'s (2011) postulated that children with conduct problems tend to have increased peer problems. Research has also suggested that teachers and classmates have the potential to promote the development of prosocial behaviors in young children (Wentzel, 2015). For example, Bierman et al.'s (2008) study with Head Start children found a positive correlation between high prosocial competence and cognitive preparedness for advancement into Kindergarten.

Van de Vondervoort et al. (2018) conducted a study with young children and puppets in order to determine the selectivity of prosocial behaviors in early childhood. Their experiment used pre-made puppets in a play scenario that contained prosocial and antisocial events with protagonistic and antagonistic characters. Among their results, the researchers found that early prosociality was motivated by deservingness demonstrating that prosocial interactions in early childhood follow a partner-fidelity model of cooperation. The partner-fidelity model of

cooperation suggested that cooperative acts were reciprocated through additional cooperative acts and uncooperative acts were punishable in order to maintain cooperative systems at large (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981; Bull & Rice, 1991; Van de Vondervoort et al., 2018).

**Sharing and helpfulness.** Hepach, Vaish, and Tomasello (2012) reported that young children were intrinsically motivated to see others being helped. Sharing and helpfulness with others allowed groups of cooperators to achieve successes that individuals could not have achieved alone (Van de Vondervoort et al., 2018). Additionally, Chernyak and Kushnir (2013) determined that giving preschoolers choice and autonomy increased prosocial sharing behaviors. Artist and puppeteer Peter Schumann of the Bread and Butter Theater in rural Vermont embraced community theater. Many of the puppets in his theater required 60 people to operate stating that cooperation was instrumental in the production of the shows while stressing the importance of collaboration over solo practice (Averett, 2016). Research has demonstrated that sharing with others was rewarding suggesting a proximal mechanism for humans to engage in prosocial behavior (Paulus & Moore, 2017). Paulus and Moore (2017) identified increases in generosity among preschoolers after the children understood the affective benefits of sharing. Additionally, Dunn, Aknin, and Norton (2008) determined that generosity and spending money on others promoted happiness. Furthermore, Aknin, Hamlin, and Dunn (2012) also determined that giving led to happiness in young children.

**Empathy.** Hynes and Hynes-Berry (2012) described empathy as the capacity to understand or imagine another's feelings or thoughts without having experienced them oneself. Eisenberg et al. (2014) conducted a study exploring empathy-related responding in children. The researchers examined sympathy and empathy as it related to the development of other-oriented morality in children and its effective motivation for moral behavior. The researchers found that

sympathy was in fact more important than empathy in the development of children's prosocial behavior and empathy-related responding.

**Kindness.** Research has shown that kindness in young children can be reciprocal (Barragan & Dweck, 2014). These researchers determined that simple reciprocal interactions were characterized by mutual care and commitment. Additionally, the researchers reported that children sought clues about how the world worked, and reciprocal interactions ignited enactment and the expectation of altruism in young children. Furthermore, Barragan and Dweck (2014) determined that simple reciprocal interactions triggered children's kindness and other acts of altruism. The researchers also determined that after an activity offering a reciprocal interaction, children seemed to work toward creating a community representative of care and commitment.

### **Disruptive Behaviors**

According to Abidin and Robinson (2002), disruptive behaviors have been reported as the most common reason a student was referred for services. Disruptive behaviors have been described as behaviors externalized by a child that interfere with the teacher's ability to teach and interfere with the child's ability to learn and are rooted in one's ability to self-regulate (Meany-Walen, Bratton, & Kottman, 2014). Self-regulation has been explained as the ability to self-control in relation to thoughts, actions, and emotions. According to Egger and Angold (2006), the five most common groups of childhood psychiatric disorders have included attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, oppositional defiant and conduct disorders, anxiety disorders, and depressive disorders. Wilens and Spencer (2013) reported that attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) was among the most common neurobehavioral disorders in children and adolescents. Additionally, Charach, McLennan, Belanger, and Nixon (2017)



reported that disruptive behavior problems in preschool-aged children presented significant risk factors for neurodevelopmental and mental health disorders.

Additionally, research has suggested that a child's capacity for regulating attention and emotion provides a strong foundation for school readiness (Blair, 2002; Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, & Davison, 2015). Research in early childhood has further suggested that self-regulation has predicted school readiness including math and reading skills in preschool and beyond (Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). According to Egger and Angold (2006), disruptive behaviors have affected an estimated 9% to 15% of preschool-aged children.

### **Poverty and Children**

Research has shown that poverty increased the likelihood of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. Children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have been known to be at higher risk of being behind developmentally both academically and social-emotionally and as a result manifest negative classroom behavior. Metzler, Merrick, Klevens, Ports, and Ford (2016) postulated that early experiences mattered in relation to later education, employment, and income, and as a result, affected life quality. Head Start has been serving poverty impacted children and their families in the United States since 1965. Poverty has been known to negatively impact childhood learning impeding trajectories for success into adulthood. It is important for educators to incorporate social-emotional learning techniques when working with young children (Heath, Smith, & Young, 2017). Research has shown that by three years old, poor children have heard 30 million fewer words than their affluent peers leading to disparities in school readiness and long-term quality of life deficiencies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). These children have been known to be more likely to be hungry and less likely to have access to quality healthcare. Additionally,

poor children have been known to be more likely to drop out of high school decreasing their likelihood of employment while increasing their risk of adult poverty (Moffitt et al., 2011).

### **Early Intervention and Arts Enrichment in Head Start**

Head Start is a federal program that launched nationally in 1965 as a summer school program designed to serve low-income children helping them to catch-up and learn in a few weeks what they needed to know before starting elementary school. The current mission of Head Start is required to address a) education and early childhood development, b) health and safety, c) nutrition, d) mental health, e) family partnerships, and f) community partnerships (National Head Start Association, 2016). Research has shown a correlation between early intervention in the emotional development of preschoolers with fewer problem behaviors and greater academic success later in school (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky-Shearer, Fusco, & McWayne, 2005; Izard, Trentacosta, King, & Mostow, 2004; Klorer & Robb, 2012; Qi & Kaiser, 2003). Additionally, schools have been viewed to be in an important position to identify children suffering from emotional and behavioral difficulties to provide accessible early intervention to prevent the onset of more severe problems later on (Meany-Walen et al., 2014). Klorer and Robb (2012) spearheaded art therapy and arts engagement work with Head Start preschools in southern Illinois through a partnership with the University of Southern Illinois Edwardsville. Klorer and Robb reported that through use of art therapy directives, the preschoolers learned to follow directions, share materials, tell stories, express feelings, focus, and cooperate.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

Early childhood is noted by significant development in self-regulatory skills needed to support school readiness and social-emotional competence. Prosocial behaviors have been

included among these social-emotional competencies. The following theoretical perspectives offer current views on art therapy, childhood development, and early intervention.

**Jean Piaget.** Piaget was the first psychologist to create a systemic study of cognitive development. Piaget's theory of cognitive development explained cognitive functions as a process occurring at different stages of biological development as an individual interacted with their environment (Piaget, 1959). Piaget defined the stages of cognitive development in humans and established preoperational as a stage. Piaget's (1959) research led him to conclude that children under the age of five were in the preoperational stage of cognitive development. Additionally, Piaget (1959) was the first to study children's egocentrism and believed that preoperational children were cognitively egocentric. Piaget found that during the preoperational stage, that even when young children became aware of different perspectives, they had difficulty discerning their views from those of others (Royzman, Cassidy, & Barron, 2003). Additionally, during the preoperational stage, preschool aged children began participating in symbolic play while learning to manipulate symbols. Piagetian theory illuminated the need for preschool students to be actively engaged in the development of their knowledge base (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987).

**Viktor Lowenfeld.** Lowenfeld (1957) believed that the art-making process contributed to various elements of children's creative and mental growth in addition to enhancing emotional well-being. According to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987), while vocal expression began early in a child's life, a child's first permanent record was in the form of a scribble at the age of approximately eighteen months. Lowenfeld and Brittain further stated that all children began with scribbling regardless of culture and that scribbling was a natural part of child development reflecting physiological and psychological growth. They additionally

observed that it was typical for young children to engage in random color selection in addition to using more of the picture plane than older children.

Lowenfeld (1954) wrote a guide to answer parents' questions about their children's artwork discussing the relationship of creative activity to the happiness and mental-emotional adjustment of the child. Lowenfeld discussed the importance of inquiry with regard to children's artwork. Emphasizing the artwork, he elaborated on the graphic characteristics, problems, and reactions experienced at different ages. Lowenfeld reported that between four and five years of age, the average child started to relate to the outside world and draw figures and objects. He further warned that it was critical not to force a child to relate their art to the outside world until they were ready to do so.

**Erik Erikson.** Erikson (1968) postulated that a child's ability to identify with others was a fundamental social ability. Erikson's (1963) stages of psychosocial development assumed that psychosocial crises occurred throughout every stage of development with a tension between individual need and conflicting societal needs. Preschoolers, ages 3-4 years old, were categorized in Erikson's Initiative vs. Guilt stage of psychosocial development. Erikson believed that it was important for children at this stage to feel a sense of initiative and purpose as they develop their interpersonal skills. Furthermore, Erikson (1968) believed that individually, identity was the sum of all successive identifications of the earlier years when a child becomes like the people depended upon.

**Positive psychology.** Positive psychology has been defined as the study of positive emotions, character, and institutions and communities promoting positive development (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005). Positive psychology focuses on building strengths and fostering wellness as opposed to diagnosing pathology. Martin Seligman's definition of positive

psychology has evolved into what he considers to be a “full life” measured by five distinct elements. These elements used the acronym of PERMA and included positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishments (Isis, 2016; Seligman, 2011). Engaging in PERMA has been known to promote overall well-being enabling one’s ability to flourish. Increasingly, positive psychology concepts such as gratitude, character strengths, positive emotions, and engagement have informed early education intervention programs (Shoshani & Sloan, 2017).

**Positive art therapy.** Positive art therapy like positive psychotherapy incorporated and required warmth, accurate empathy, basic trust, genuineness, and rapport (Isis, 2017; Seligman, 2011). Positive art therapy has supported individuals and aimed to increase well-being through artistic pathways that surfaced purpose and personal meaning resulting in increased positive emotions and engagement (Wilkinson & Chilton, 2013). Wilkinson and Chilton further stated that the purpose of positive art therapy was to activate client strengths, induce flow, increase positive emotions, and express life purpose and meaning. In a positive art therapy session, the art therapist may have the client elaborate on a one-page, written positive introduction and create a positive self-object out of art materials of the client’s choosing to focus on strengths and build upon positive attributions.

**Mindfulness.** Mindfulness originated from Asian traditions (Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). Mindfulness training in young children has been known to enhance attention in addition to promoting self-regulation and prosocial behavior in young children (Flook et al., 2015). Zelazo and Lyons (2012) also suggested that using age-appropriate mindfulness training with early childhood populations can support self-regulation. The researchers reported that mindfulness training helped with school readiness. Furthermore, the researchers found that mindfulness

exercises optimally promoted the development of self-regulation targeting iterative processing of information while reducing anxiety.

### **Interventions Appropriate for Preschoolers**

According to Horovitz (1983), art therapy was an appropriate therapeutic modality for preschool-age children. In a 1980 pilot study, the researcher successfully initiated an art therapy program for preschoolers in a community mental health center for children and their families in Rochester, NY. Additionally, art therapy also helped children who did not have the verbal capacity to articulate crisis for children who have been violated or abused. Many art therapists including Malchiodi (2012) believed that art served as a way to communicate feelings and experiences without words. Metzl (2015) further postulated that using art therapy within a grounded theory framework could offer both creativity and structure responding well to identified issues in the early stages of life. Additionally, Webb (2007) and Gil and Drewes (2005) have stated that art making is a form of play and has been historically used in therapeutic work with children and families. Malchiodi (2012) has also reported that art making could offer both children and adults a sense of initiative and purpose, and engaging in a role-playing interaction with their puppets offered an opportunity to develop interpersonal skills including prosocial behaviors.

**Puppetry.** Puppets can be enterprising by nature and over centuries have supported the fields of education, psychology, therapy, recreation, advertising, public relations, international diplomacy, as well as sex, politics, and religion (Latshaw, 1978). Origins of the puppet date back to antiquity when puppets and masks linked humans to the spirit world (Blumenthal, 2005; Latshaw, 1978). Plato used shadow puppets in his analogous teachings in classical Athens, and during the 5th Century B.C., Potheinos performed with his marionettes in the theatre of

Dionysius (Latshaw, 1978). During the Middle Ages, puppets assisted with bringing religious teachings alive within the Church. William Shakespeare, in the Elizabethan age, also referred to puppets in his plays. Puchinello or “Punch” of “Punch and Judy” was first performed in England in 1662 and has entertained crowds centuries later. Puppetry in the United States grew out of the European tradition of entertainment rather than the American Indian’s use of puppets and masks for ritual. The 20th Century puppet evolved with television and the inclusion of children’s programs including *The Howdy Doody Show*, *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, and *Sesame Street*. Puppets today have continued to provide a simulation device for exploring the inner and outer workings of human creativity (Latshaw, 1978).

**Puppetry in therapy.** Handmade puppetry has interwoven art therapy with play therapy, psychodrama, and drama therapy (Moon, 2010). The use of puppets in therapy has been considered effective in actively engaging the client (Moon, 2010). Puppets have been known to offer the opportunity to address representation or partial representation of self, others, and/or environment (Bernier & O’Hare, 2005). Guterman and Martin (2016) discussed the use of puppetry in clinical settings with aggressive children as a way for them to engage in their personal narratives while externalizing their problems. According to Latshaw (1978), the puppet has been known to be a liberating device for a client in therapy as well as a very informative tool for the psychologist-observer trained in interpreting therapeutic matter. Latshaw further elaborated that puppets in therapy provided a gentle way to express the self in an indirect manner. Additionally, in clinical settings, puppets have been used in assessment (Ringoot et al., 2013), to improve communications skills (Karakurt, 2012), and have helped with developing problem-solving skills (Kim, 1993). In addition to art therapy applications, puppets have also been used within the context of cognitive behavioral therapy (Knell & Dasari, 2012), gestalt play

therapy (Blom, 2006), and psychodynamic treatment (Bromfield, 2007). Additionally, as a therapeutic metaphor, the puppet has been seen to become an extension of its creator and illuminate subconscious parts of the self (Ackerman, 2005).

From an art therapy perspective, puppetry has supported young children in identifying emotions while also relating emotions to specific situations. Malchiodi (2012) also reported that creating a puppet can help facilitate story-telling. Denham and Couhoud (1990) used fabric puppets and examined the identification of emotions on the knowledge of feelings including happiness, sadness, anger, and fear in 45 preschoolers, aged 2-4-year-olds. Puppets were embedded in the assessment process in order to capture participant attention while maintaining group social interaction (Denham & Couhoud, 1990). Denham and Couhoud found that the older children in the preschool class were able to identify emotions better than the younger children. Additionally, the researchers found that the preschoolers could recognize emotion better than identifying emotion, and their abilities to recognize happy emotions were greater than the recognition of negative emotions.

**Educational initiatives.** Historically, puppetry has expanded imagination and supported educational initiatives. Puppet educational programs including puppet construction and dramatic role play have gained much success with participants. Results for such programs have included an increase in communication and understanding, a sense of group accomplishment, and a sense of pride (Bernier & O'Hare, 2005). According to O'Hare (2005), a well-planned, school puppetry program could encompass multiple intelligences, and puppet play in conjunction with story-telling could strongly assist with literacy goals.



## **Bibliotherapy**

Bibliotherapy was based on the psychotherapeutic principles of *identification* (with character or plot), *catharsis* (point in story where reader gains inspiration), *insight* (motivation for positive change), and *universalization* (recognizing that one is not alone in their struggle) (Hebert & Kent, 2000; Lenkowsky, 1987; McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013). Since the early 1920s, some librarians, mental health professionals, and teachers have made efforts to compile preferred reading lists specifically outlining their therapeutic purposes (Bryan, 1939; Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1994/2012). Research conducted by Montgomery and Maunders (2015) postulated that bibliotherapy could have a small to moderate effect on the prosocial behavior of children. Research has shown that bibliotherapy and experiencing stories has evoked change in attitude or behavior and enhanced problem-solving capabilities to increase resourcefulness while showing the reader that they are not alone (Harvey, 2010; McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013). According to Britton (1993), when an individual can see themselves in a story or piece of literature, balancing roles between spectator and participant the reflective process has been engaged.

Bibliotherapy has been an effective pairing with other therapeutic modalities including art therapy and play therapy. Dunn-Snow (1997) incorporated art therapy and bibliotherapy (stories read to children) with children, ages 4-8-years old as a method to promote awareness of self and others. In 1995, Dunn-Snow conducted a pilot study combining art therapy and language arts in a large public school system. The results provided an effective method for meeting the social and emotional needs of the students and are in favor of group art therapy combined with bibliotherapy, and language instruction (Dunn-Snow, 1997). Seung-Mcfarland (2008) employed developmental bibliotherapy including art in an effort to positively impact the emergent racial identity of African American children, ages 5-7 years old. Cohen (2001)

postulated that through the identification with characters in books and other media, individuals could extend emotional horizons and social perspectives.

### **Play Therapy**

Play therapy goals have often included emotional control and the development of problem-solving and communication skills along with learning how to relate to others and behavior modification (APT, n.d.). Play therapy has offered participants the opportunity to practice socially appropriate behaviors while experimenting with new thoughts and feelings in a secure and contained environment (Meany-Walen et al., 2014). According to Heller and Taglialatela (2018), clay, sand, paint, crayons, puppets, and dolls were the art materials and toys typically used in play therapy. Puppets, story-telling, role-playing, and art supplies were frequently used within the therapeutic context with children.

### **Art Materials Appropriate for Preschoolers**

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) demonstrated that art materials must meet the expressive needs of the child, and each art material had its own characteristics that for different kinds of expression. Considering the developmental hierarchy of the Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC), young children begin to experience art media at a kinesthetic and sensory level (Hinz, 2009). Kinesthetic/Sensory materials can include tempura paints for painting, clay for pounding and pushing, and paper for cutting and tearing. Lusebrink (1991) explained that children need to physically handle and manipulate materials in order to picture them internally. Rubin (2005) demonstrated in her work with children that art-making using materials with structure offered a protective barrier and framework that enabled children to test themselves. Additionally, Klorer and Robb (2012) in their work with Head Start preschoolers reported using developmentally appropriate and nontoxic art media including an array of papers, oil pastels, crayons, tempera

paints, scissors, glue, yarn, buttons, beads, clay, fabric scraps, and canvas. Klorer and Robb further incorporated play therapy props such as dolls, puppets, puzzles, books, and board games in their work with preschoolers. The Reggio Emilia Approach to art education also considers how young children will experience the qualities and characteristics of the art materials (Cadwell, Gandini, Hill, & Schwall, 2005). According to Ackerman (2005), the actual puppet creation process can be simple using basic materials including fabric, glue, glitter, or a folded paper plate.

In consideration of the aforementioned literature, the researcher formulated an art therapy intervention using puppetry, story-telling, and role-playing. The intervention was designed to promote prosocial behaviors in an urban, Head Start preschool environment. Pre- and post assessments were assigned along with a participant self-report.

## CHAPTER III

### **Methodology**

A mixed methods research approach has been known to offer a pragmatic worldview incorporating elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study employed Goodman's (1997) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) as a pre- and post assessment. Additionally, Duncan et al.'s (2003) Young Child Session Rating Scale (YCSRS) was used with the preschool student participants before and after each data collecting session. Then a modified social behavior scale to track participant social behaviors and engagement with art materials was incorporated. Furthermore, a reflective collage-making practice was employed following each data collecting session as a method of reflective practice and to add an arts-based research component. Collecting diverse types of data allowed the exploration of puppetry as an art therapy intervention, and its potential impact on prosocial behaviors with the preschool participants. This study focused on prosocial behavior responses focused on sharing, empathy, helpfulness, and kindness. The schedule for the six-week period consisted of two observation sessions and four sessions with story-telling, puppet-making, and role-playing.

### **Participants**

The participants for the pilot study consisted of eight low-income, predominately Hispanic, preschoolers in an urban Head Start environment. The participant group consisted of eight, four-year-old preschool students, four boys and four girls. Guardian consent was obtained for each of the participants through the use of a consent form including permission to photograph artwork and video record play interaction. The preschool teacher obtained guardian consents explaining any unfamiliar language and translating the information to

Spanish when necessary. Families were also presented with a flyer outlining the details of the pilot study. Participant identities were protected through use of an assigned participant code. All data collected has been protected and appropriately stored. Weekly visits were made to the classroom two weeks prior to the start of the pilot study to observe the classroom interactions and routine while building rapport with the participants and staff in the classroom environment. The researcher also participated in a follow-up visit several weeks after the last session of the study as reflected on the study schedule.

According to the Illinois Report Card for 2016-2017, the research site served low-income preschool children and their families with 94.9% of the school's population receiving public aid (Illinois Report Card, 2017). In 2017, the average annual household income for the families affiliated with the site was \$19,000 USD, the school's ethnic/racial make-up consisted of 94.9% Hispanic, 3.3% Black, 1.4% White, and 0.4% Asian. Additionally, nearly 47.1% of the student population were English learners coming from non-English speaking households (Illinois Report Card, 2017).

The researcher also interviewed the participating Head Start preschool Master teacher. She explained that presenting issues in her classroom included disruptive behaviors. The Master teacher indicated that the students would benefit from working on appropriate expression of feelings, prosocial behaviors, behavior management, self-regulation, building attention span, and appropriate conflict resolution. The interview with the preschool teacher informed the decision to design a pilot study combining art therapy, bibliotherapy, and play therapy techniques in order to explore the development of prosocial behaviors in an urban, Head Start, preschool classroom.

## Research Design

**Mixed methods intervention design.** Eight, four-year-old Head Start preschoolers served as the participant group in a four-week, mixed methods intervention design, testing the effectiveness of a puppetry art therapy intervention on improving prosocial classroom behaviors. A mixed methods intervention design aided in obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data over the course of the trial.

**Exploratory sequential core design.** Prior to the start of the study, the site was visited in order to collect qualitative data for exploratory sequential core design purposes. An interview with the Master teacher documented a need for intervention and developed an instrument for use in the trial. During the two-week observation period baseline information on participants was collected within the context of the site. Before the start of the study, the classroom teacher was asked to rate each participant's prosocial behaviors using Goodman's (1997) SDQ in a pre- and post assessment. The SDQ was chosen because of its prosocial behavior subscale. The assessment was completed by the classroom teacher on behalf of the participants. The teacher was an expert in the field of early childhood with 28 years of experience as an early childhood educator, and a master's degree in early childhood education from the Erikson Institute in Chicago.

**Convergent core design.** During the study, the intervention applied consisted of reading storybooks, making puppets, and practicing prosocial skills including empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness. Qualitative data was gathered by observing participants to understand how they responded to the intervention. In reflection on observations, the researcher engaged in an arts-based research reflective collage-making practice, compiling a journal reflective on participant behaviors observed over the course of the study. The collage

making consisted of art-making pre- and post session using magazine cut-outs, mixed media, paper, and cardboard.

The researcher also charted the participants' engagement with the art media, their ability and willingness to autonomously choose preferences within the construct of the intervention, as well as their social interaction with their peers using a provisional social skills tracking form modified by art therapists at the Institute for Therapy through the Arts from Rook et al.'s (2014) Music Therapy Social Skills Assessment (MTSSA). This scale has been used by music therapists but has been informally modified by art therapists at the Institute for Therapy Through the Arts (ITA) to use for art therapy assessment applications and behavior charting in session. The scale tracks progress in autonomy, attention, materials engagement, communication, and social engagement. At the end of the pilot study, the preschool teacher once again rated each participant on the SDQ follow-up. Each participant was given the opportunity to rate their weekly experience using an age-appropriate YCSRS assessment.

***Explanatory sequential core design.*** After the study, the researcher reflected on observations made during the convergent core design phase and how participants responded to the art therapy intervention. Through an art-making reflective practice, the researcher assessed variations in outcomes and how the context of the intervention may have influenced the results during the duration of the study.

### **Research Instruments and Data Collection**

In order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data throughout the four-week study, the following instruments were used to collect data:

**Strength and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ).** The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for ages 2-4 years old was designed for use with preschoolers. There was

also a version for parents, teachers, and a follow-up survey. However, the SDQ did not have a self-report version for early childhood. The SDQ measures 25 attributes, divided among five scales including emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity and inattention, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behaviors. This assessment was selected primarily for the prosocial behavior scale. The researcher made arrangements with the preschool teacher to complete Goodman's (1997) SDQ and SDQ follow-up for children ages 2-4 years old with regard to each of the participants for pre- and post assessments. For purposes of this study, the researcher was primarily focused on the prosocial behavior scale of the SDQ that consisted of the following five questions: (a) considerate of other people's feelings; (b) shares readily with other children, for example, toys, treats, pencils; (c) helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill; (d) kind to younger children; and (e) often offer to help others (parents, teachers, other children). Additionally, the SDQ follow-up for teachers was administered as a post assessment.

Several studies have examined the reliability and validity of the SDQ. Goodman (2001) reported a satisfactory reliability factor for the *Total Difficulties* score, *Impact* score, and five subscale scores. Additionally, Goodman further reported satisfactory interrater reliability and test-retest reliability. Conversely, Palmieri and Smith (2007) reported conflicting research with regard to internal consistency and cross-informant correlations. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Stone et al. (2015) regarding the use of the SDQ as a predictive measure of strengths and difficulties including prosocial behaviors, the researchers concluded that the SDQ was predictively valid as a screening assessment. In a longitudinal study conducted by Croft, Stride, Maughan, and Rowe (2015), the researchers concluded that satisfactory psychometric properties of the adapted preschool version affirm its utility as a



screening tool to identify emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties in 3-to 4-year-old children.

**Social skills tracking modified from the MTSSA scale.** The researcher used an adapted MTSSA tracking form to collect data after each session. During the study, the researcher charted each participant's responses to the weekly directive including autonomy, attention, materials engagement, communication, and social engagement. The MTSSA lacks psychometric properties. In its original context, the MTSSA was intended for use with clients spanning pre-kindergarten through high school and ideal for students that qualify for special education services (Rook et al., 2014).

**Young child session rating scale (YCSRS).** Duncan et al.'s (2003) Young Child Session Rating Scale (YCSRS) was appropriate for children under the age of five years old. The YCSRS served as a self-report assessment for the child participants. According to Campbell and Hemsley (2009), outcome assessments and session rating scales were an excellent method to standardize, practice-based evidence through the retrieval and communication of client feedback. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to capture feedback about the child's experience within the therapeutic alliance. The YCSRS lack psychometric properties but has been useful in engaging young children and their assessment of the therapeutic alliance (Duncan et al., 2003). Researchers have found that as young children become able to recognize and identify emotional facial expressions within themselves, they can then begin to associate these emotions in various situations (Bullock & Russell, 1986; Denham & Couchoud, 1990; Smiley & Huttenlocher, 1989). The YCSRS was used for collecting data directly from participants before and after each session during the study. This allowed the participants to provide timely feedback over the course of the four-week study. Additionally, the YCSRS gave participants

the opportunity to practice identifying and communicating their emotional expressions in relation to their participation in the study.

### Intervention

For four weeks, the researcher made weekly, two-hour visits, 9:00 AM-11:00 AM, to the preschool site and conducted a three-part intervention consisting of story-telling, puppet-making, and role-playing. In the months leading up to the study, the researcher coordinated with the preschool teacher in order to schedule times and plan routines that would best integrate into the classroom schedule and curriculum.

**Book selections.** The researcher worked with the preschool teacher to select storybooks that illuminated prosocial themes including empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness (Table 1). Each storybook emphasized a different prosocial theme every week. The preschool teacher did pre-reads of each book with the students several days prior leading up to the day of the study session. The researcher prepared for each week's reading by reading allowed in the mirror and making notes to emphasize different parts of the story that emphasized the identified prosocial weekly theme.

*Table 1.* Children's books aligned with prosocial themes.

Session	Books	Prosocial Theme
1.	<i>Last Stop on Market Street</i> by Matt de la Pena	Empathy
2.	<i>Pumpkin Soup</i> by Helen Cooper	Sharing
3.	<i>My Friend is Sad</i> by Mo Willems	Helpfulness
4.	<i>Strictly No Elephants</i> by Lisa Mantchev	Kindness

**Puppet-making.** Each week, participants were introduced to a prosocial skill including empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness through the use of a children's storybook. The participants then engaged in an art therapy intervention that consisted of

creating four different types of hand puppets including a hand-traced puppet, wooden spoon puppets, paper bag puppets, and sock puppets. A variety of age-appropriate art materials and techniques were considered for the study. Art materials included construction paper, wooden craft sticks, small wooden spoons, paper bags, socks, markers, tempera paint sticks, precut felt shapes, glue sticks, and sequins. In designing four different puppet-making interventions, the researcher explored different puppetry techniques including marionettes, hand-traced puppets, paper plate puppets, clay stick puppets, clothespin puppets, paintbrush puppets, paper bag puppets, sock puppets, and magazine cut-out puppets (Figure 1). The researcher then decided on hand-traced puppets, wooden spoon puppets, paper bag puppets, and sock puppets (Figure 2).

*Figure 1. Samples of different hand puppets.*



*Figure 2. Puppet styles for intervention.*



**Role-playing.** After puppet-making, participants engaged in a role-play activity to practice a the weekly prosocial behavioral skill that was reflected in the story and measured by the SDQ's prosocial behavior subscale. The researcher, teacher, and student participants

used their handmade puppets to act out different scenarios that targeted the weekly prosocial theme. The researcher and teacher initiated a scenario week to week that offered opportunities for participants to demonstrate words and actions associated with empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness. The role-playing sessions were best achieved through breaking the class into smaller rotating groups.

### **Observations**

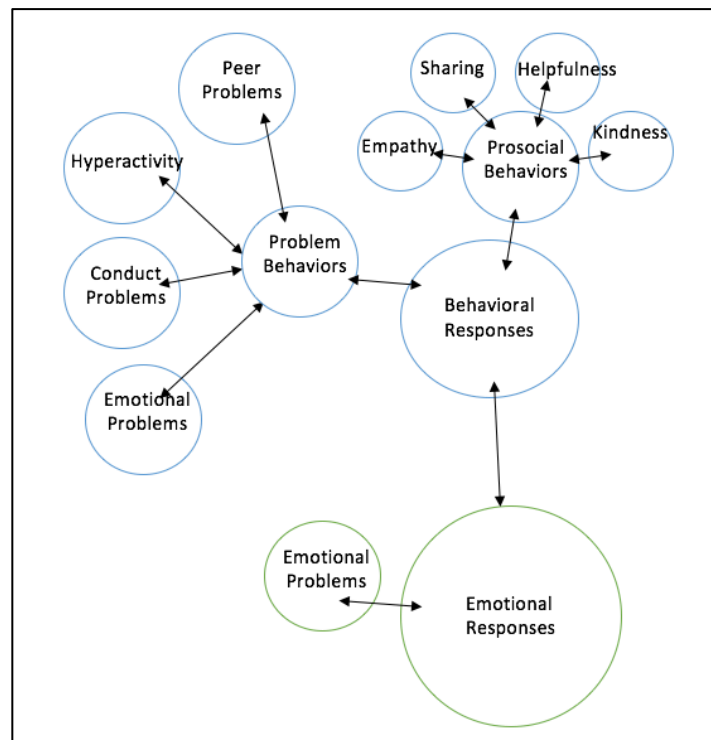
**Observation and reflection through art-making.** Leavy (2015) has postulated that the cultivation of empathy was one of the greatest strengths of arts-based research (ABR). In reflecting on observations made during each session, the researcher engaged in a collage making, art-based reflective practice. The reflective collages aided in the amalgamation of the researcher's data collected through observation of the participants during each weekly session. Chilton and Scotti (2013), incorporated the use of collage to understand Arts-Based Research (ABR) summarizing that collage techniques integrate and synthesize different kinds of knowledge and help to discover embodied knowledge through hands-on experimentation. According to Leavy (2015), employing collage-style artwork has provided artist-scholars a framework to address and explore macro and micro issues and their interrelatedness.

**Photos of participant artwork.** Photos of the participants' puppet creations were included in the data collected in order to document the process. Consent to photograph the artwork was obtained from the participant guardians through the guardian consent form. According to Leavy (2015), photographs can be used as a point of departure for interviewing participants in mixed method designs. The photographs of the artwork also helped the researcher to reflect on participant interactions during session.

## Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data was reviewed, analyzed, and interpreted. Results were merged and thematically analyzed. Two major themes emerged including emotional responses and behavioral responses that were further broken down into problem behaviors and prosocial behaviors (Figure 3). The researcher observed participant interactions with puppets in relation to the different weekly prosocial skills that were introduced. The social skills tracking form assisted with tracking thematic changes in the participants' responses to the weekly intervention with regard to autonomy, attention span, materials engagement, communication, and social engagement. Goodman's (1997) SDQ served as the pre- and post assessment indicating whether or not each participant has shown an increase in particular prosocial behaviors. Additionally, Duncan et al.'s (2003) YCSRS was used for pre- and post session for each participant to rate their session experience for the duration of the study.

*Figure 3.* Thematic analysis chart.



**Validity and Reliability**

According to Johnson and Christensen (2017) and Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006), mixed methods research has been known to emphasize knowledge and validity within the research process. Creswell and Creswell (2018) further stated that in order to heighten validity, different data sources need to be triangulated in order to examine evidence and build a coherent justification of themes.

**Bias and Ethical Considerations**

The researcher is a Caucasian, middle class, 35-year old woman. The study participants represented a minority, low-income population. As an art therapy graduate student, the researcher approached this study from an art therapy perspective. The researcher abided by ethical guidelines compliant with the American Art Therapy Association and the American Psychological Association. Additionally, the research conducted was HIPAA compliant. The researcher obtained written, informed consent, and ensured data privacy. Written consent for student participation was obtained from legal guardians. Participants' names and identifying information were also kept anonymous. A code was assigned to each participant and used for charting data. Additionally, the researcher obtained written consent to photograph the participants' artwork in addition to video record participant interaction. All documentation and data was kept safely locked space.

## CHAPTER IV

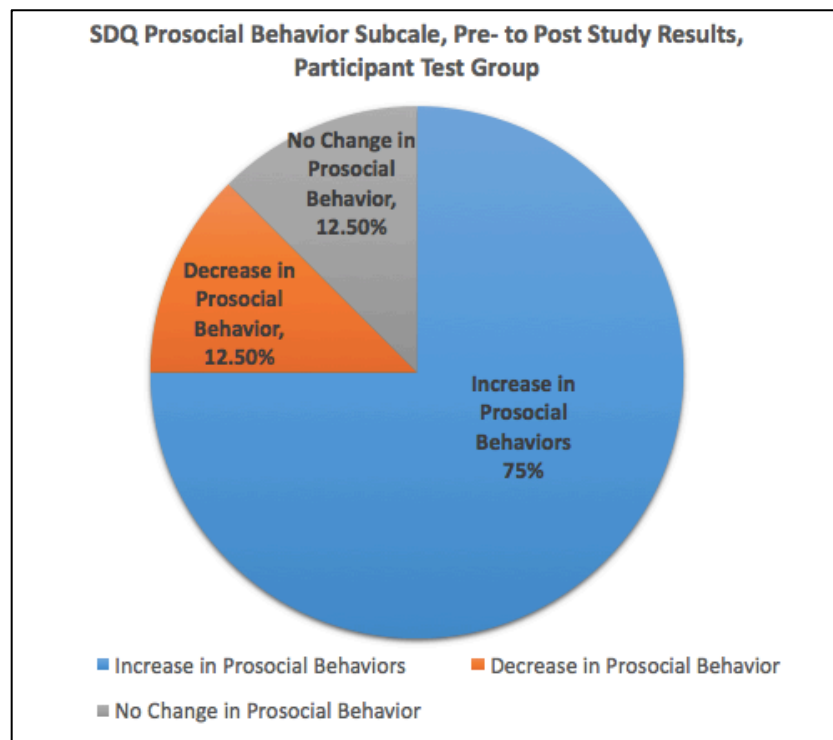
### Results of the Study

Data was collected over a six-week period. Data collection included two weeks of classroom observation and the four-week pilot study consisting of an art therapy intervention combining story-telling, art-making through puppetry, and role-playing. Art-making and the creative process were integral to the enhancement of prosocial behaviors. Empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness were witnessed primarily through the art-making process in creating puppetry and not so much as through the role-playing activity. Results were presented in two thematic compilations: a) behavioral responses and b) emotional responses. Data was collected through a) observations, reflective artwork, and photographs of participant artwork b) pre- and post Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) assessments completed by the preschool teacher on behalf of student participants; c) pre- and post session YCSRS, self-reports obtained directly from study participants; and d) social skills and material engagement tracked through a modified version of the MTSSA. Consent was obtained for all photographs and data presented as a result of the study.

#### Behavioral Responses

**Prosocial behaviors.** Prosocial behaviors manifested week to week through engagement in the weekly intervention. Through the art-making process, creating puppets as opposed to using premade puppets, the researcher observed that the participants were personally vested in the intervention as evidenced by the autonomous efforts to participate. Many prosocial behaviors overlapped among the sessions including kindness, sharing, and helpfulness. Among the eight group participants, the prosocial subscale data (Figure 4) from the SDQ reflected that 75% of the group experienced an increase in prosocial behaviors from the start of the study to the finish.

Figure 4. SDQ Behavior subscale, pre- to post study results.



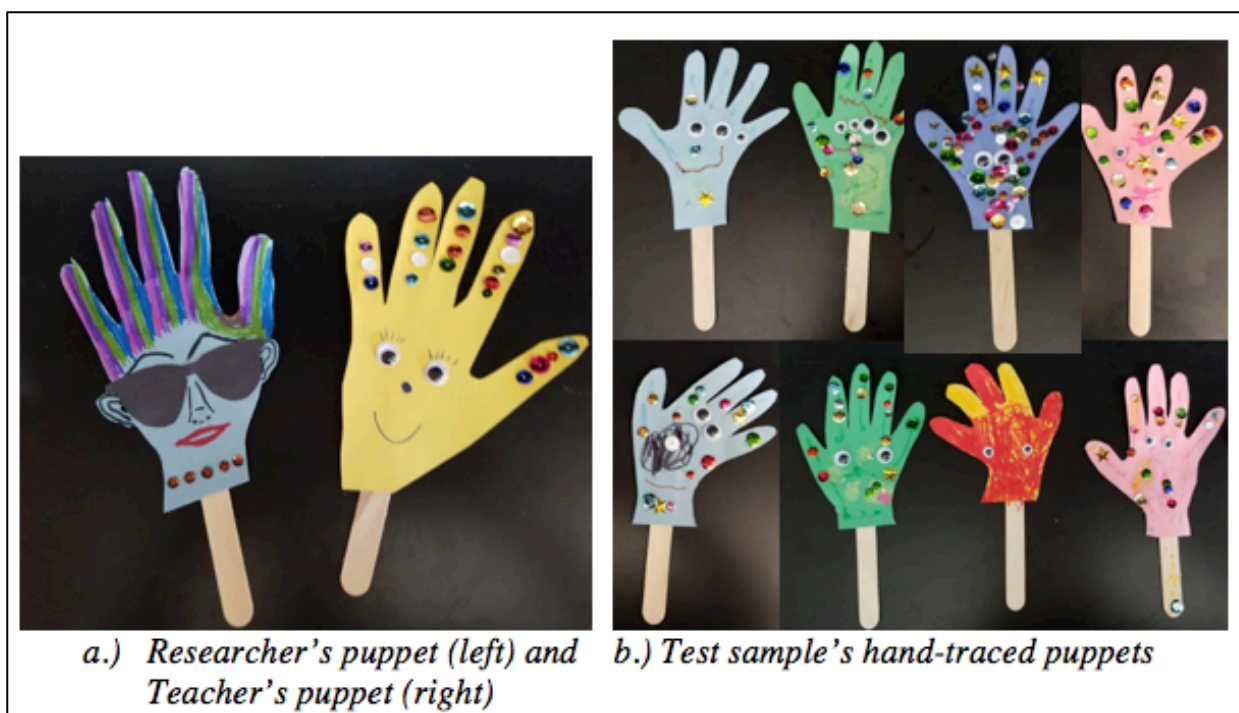
**Empathy.** According to the results of the SDQ prosocial behavior scale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that five out of the eight participants experienced no change in empathic behavior over the course of the four-week study. Additionally, two of the eight participants experienced an increase in empathic behavior.

Researcher observations reflected acts of empathy in form of making hand-traced puppets (Figure 5) and role-playing empathic scenarios. On the hand-traced puppets, many of the participants used an abundance of sequins in addition to stick-on eyes. Through post-session reflection and art-making and supervisory discussion, the researcher perceived the use of sequins as potential symbols for “eyes” as a subconscious act of empathy for those without sight. During the role-play portion of the “Empathy” session, the researcher and teacher introduced a scenario where the researcher’s puppet, named Carla, was blind and could not see who was in front of her,



but she could hear and sense people near her. The participant puppeteers asked Carla questions and announced that they were in front of her when they wanted to engage with her. The participants were also encouraged to imagine what it would be like if they could not see. Many of which closed their eyes to experience their surroundings without sight. Additionally, one of the participants picked the stick-on eyes off their puppet commenting that their puppet could no longer see.

*Figure 5. Study week 1: Empathy and hand-traced puppets.*



**Sharing.** According to the results of the SDQ prosocial behavior scale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that two of the six participants experienced an increase in sharing behaviors. Additionally, six out of the eight participants experienced no change in sharing behaviors.

Researcher observations reflected acts of sharing in the form of making spoon puppets (Figure 6), sharing art materials, and role-playing scenes that elicit sharing and turn-taking. The

participants were shown sample spoon puppets and were encouraged to create their own facial expressions on their puppets. During the art-making process, the researcher prompted participants with questions regarding moods or expressions that they wished to convey on their and how that might look on their individual puppets. The participants shared markers while designing their spoon figures. During the role-play portion of “Sharing,” the students took turns stirring pretend soup in a ceramic bowl. The participants interacted with the spoon puppets as characters in addition to actual stirring spoons. At first everyone stuck their spoon puppets in the bowls at the same time and bumped into each other clicking spoons which at times turned into mild battle scenes until redirected to turn-taking and sharing the bowl.

*Figure 6. Study week 2: Sharing and spoon puppets.*



***Helpfulness.*** According to the results of the SDQ prosocial behavior scale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that only two of the eight participants experienced an increase in sharing behaviors. Additionally, six out of the eight participants experienced no change in sharing behaviors.

Researcher observations reflected acts of helpfulness in form of making paper bag puppets (Figure 7) and role-playing out scenarios of helpfulness. Prior to the “Helpfulness” session, the researcher had prepped pre-cut facial expressions similar to the faces represented in the YCSRS. During the art-making portion of the session, the researcher offered each participant four different facial expression options for participants to select for their paper bag puppet. The participants then shared a set of tempera paint sticks, taking turns, and helping each other with color selections.

During the role-play portion of “Helpfulness,” the researcher introduced a scenario where the researcher’s puppet, Mary, lost her friends. Participants were invited to interact with Mary with their puppets. Mary was crying, and a couple participants identified that she was sad. Prompted by a staff member, the participants were encouraged to help Mary feel better while imagining what it would be like to lose their own friends. Another participant suggested that they could be Mary’s friend and gave the puppet a hug. Another puppet asked why her face was different than the other puppets since the majority of puppets showcased smiles on their faces. The researcher observed that the participant puppets became an extension of self. Many of the participants introduced their puppets as their own name.

Figure 7. Study week 3: Helpfulness and bag puppets.



**Kindness.** According to the results of the SDQ prosocial behavior scale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported no change in behavior demonstrating kindness for six of the eight participants. Additionally, one of the eight participants experienced an increase in behavior demonstrating kindness.

Researcher observations reflected acts of kindness in form of making sock puppets (Figure 8) and role-playing out scenarios of kindness. During the art-making portion of the

session, the researcher observed acts of kindness in the form of inclusion and sharing art materials. Additionally, the participants practiced identifying shapes and colors as they worked side by side in the creation of their sock puppets. Once the participants tried on their sock puppets, a few became more energized and excited, and a few delighted in showing each other their creations. During the role-play portion of the intervention, the researcher presented a scenario where the researcher's puppet was new to the play space and did not have any friends and wanted to be included. At first, many of the participants expressed kindness by welcoming the researcher's puppet and inviting the researcher as puppet to play a game of tag around the play table. Eventually, several of the participants began to try and consume the researcher's puppet by clamping their hands around the researcher's puppet-covered hand.

*Figure 8. Study week 4: Kindness and sock puppets.*





**Problem behaviors.** Problem behaviors were evident among participants despite five out of the eight participants experiencing a decrease in their SDQ Total Difficulties Score measuring peer problems, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and emotional problems (Table 2).

**Peer problems.** According to the results of the SDQ peer problems subscale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that three of the eight participants experienced a decrease in peer problems while another three of the eight participants experienced an increase in peer problems. During the “Empathy” and “Sharing” sessions, a few of the participants used their traced hand puppets and spoon puppets to swat at each other instigating problems when puppets became damaged. During the “Helpfulness” session, some of the participants used their bag puppets to lightly punch each other. Additionally, during the last visit, the researcher witnessed two participants verbally arguing and dueling with their black and brown tempera paint sticks as they aggressively confronted each other on paper.

**Hyperactivity.** According to the results of the SDQ hyperactivity subscale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that four of the eight participants experienced a decrease in hyperactivity while another three of the eight participants experienced an increase in hyperactivity. The researcher observed that the creation of puppets occasionally increased hyperactivity once participants were in the role-play portion of the intervention. In these instances, the puppets became weapons to swat and sword fight.

**Conduct problems.** According to the results of the SDQ conduct problems subscale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that four of the eight participants experienced a decrease in conduct problems while another three of the eight participants experienced an increase in conduct problems.

**Emotional problems.** According to the results of the SDQ emotional problems subscale on the pre- and post assessment, the teacher reported that four of the eight participants experienced a decrease in emotional problems while one of the eight participants experienced an increase in emotional problems. Occasionally, the creation of puppets caused emotional frustration when the finished product was not perceived to be aesthetically satisfactory.

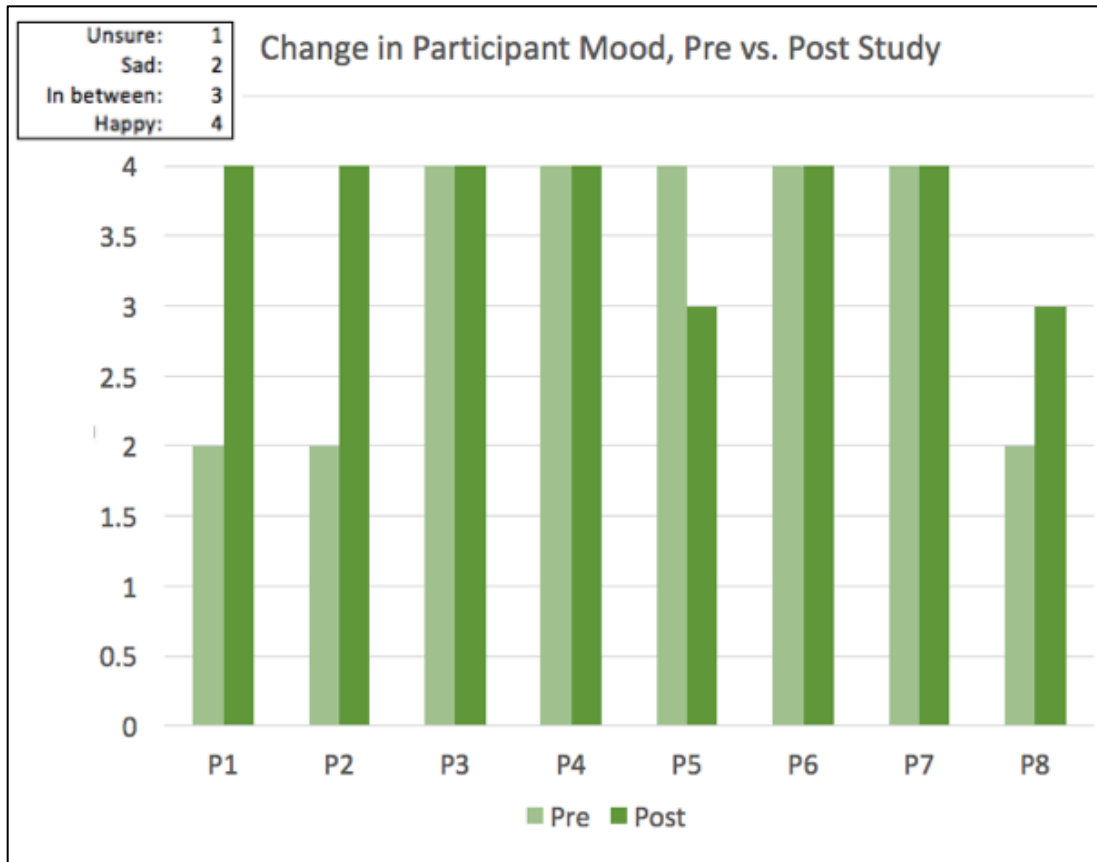
*Table 2.* Changes in participant, pre- and post SDQ results.

<b>Change in Pre- and Post SDQ Results</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>
Emotional problems scale:	-3	1	-1	-1	0	-3	0	0
Conduct problems scale:	-4	-1	2	0	2	-5	-1	1
Hyperactivity scale:	1	-2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	3
Peer problems scale:	3	1	0	0	-1	2	-1	-1
Total Difficulties Score:	<b>-3</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>3</b>
Prosocial scale:	3	1	2	1	1	1	-1	0

### **Emotional Responses**

From pre- to post study, emotional responses captured by the Young Children's Session Rating Scale (YCSRS) self-report reflected a 10% overall increase mood (Figure 9). The YCSRS reflected sustained happiness during Weeks 2 (Sharing-spoon puppets) and 3 (Helpfulness-paper bag puppets) of the study.

Figure 9. Change in participant mood, pre- vs. post study.



**Observations.** During Week 1, while the participants were making hand-traced puppets for the “Empathy” session, the researcher observed that a few participants drew mouths on their puppets to emphasize happy faces while others scribbled on the hand cut-outs with one or two color markers. During Week 2, while the group was role-playing a few participants expressed interest in the sad expression side of the researcher’s spoon asking why the spoon sometimes had a sad face. Additionally, during a class debrief one participant stated that she liked making the spoon puppets because she could “use different faces” on either side of the spoon to show happiness and sadness. During Week 3 of the study, the participants made paper bag puppets with different precut facial expression options reflecting different moods as represented in the YCSRS (Appendix G). There was also a blank face option for participants that wanted to draw their own facial expression. Two participants chose blank faces and drew happy faces using



tempera paint sticks. The other participant chose the pre-made happy face option. During Week 4 of the study, participants expressed joy and happiness as they looked at the socks. Many started contagiously laughing, holding their noses, and saying, “Piu!” as though the socks were giving off an odor. Furthermore, during the post study visit, the participants expressed feelings of happiness when interacting with the researcher during the visit. Additionally, several of the participants verbally expressed that they were sad when the researcher explained that they were done making puppets. The teacher reported the following observations on participant emotional responses:

Overall I felt this was a positive experience for the children. They enjoyed the puppet making. I don't know how much they understood the role play portion of the activity. I think that the role play was good for them and gave them a chance to explore social emotional roles but not necessarily the specific concepts and teaching points. As you know preschoolers often need many repeated experiences to understand and integrate concepts into their repertoire.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

*Making art assumes empathy. Making art is an act of sharing. It is by definition, an invitation to others to leave their isolation and meet others on the same road.*

Steven Holmes [Artist] (2017), *Huffington Post*

The study results reflected expressions of empathy, sharing, helpfulness, and kindness in the form of art-making through the process of story-telling, puppet-making, and role-playing. Study results garnered various themes related to prosocial behaviors, problem behaviors, and emotional responses with regard to moods and preferences. Story-telling featured prosocial themes. The participants then made puppets using different art materials and practiced the prosocial behavior in a role-play scenario using the puppets. The majority of the participants increased prosocial behaviors and decreased their total difficulties scores as reflected in the SDQ. Furthermore, the YCSRS reflected that the majority of the participants experienced an increase in mood from the beginning of the study to the end.

### Behavioral Responses

**Prosocial behaviors.** According to the SDQ results, six out of the eight test group participants experienced an increase in prosocial behaviors over the course of the four-week study. The results support research that has shown that only a minority of children do not outwardly show prosocial behaviors by 41 months of age (Baillargeon et al., 2011). Conversely, in a study investigating the continuity and discontinuity of prosocial behaviors in early childhood, Hay (1994) found a decrease in prosocial behaviors among four and five-year-olds. Hay's model of prosocial development postulated that prosocial behaviors became more regulated during the preschool years. As a result, these behaviors became exhibited on fewer occasions. Thus, the children became more inhibited.

***Empathy and kindness.*** The SDQ reflected that five out of the eight participants experienced no change in empathic behavior over the course of the four-week study with two of the eight participants having experienced an increase in empathic behavior. Additionally, the SDQ reflected that there was no change in behavior demonstrating kindness with regard to six of the eight participants with one of the eight participants having experienced an increase in behavior demonstrating kindness. The researcher's observations of the participants engaging in a less structured art experiential during the post study visit supported Barragan and Dweck's (2006) findings that determined that reciprocal interactions ignite children's kindness and other acts of altruism.

***Sharing and helpfulness.*** The SDQ reflected that two of the eight participants experienced an increase in sharing behaviors with six out of the eight participants having experienced no change in sharing behaviors. The SDQ further showed that only two of the eight participants experienced an increase in sharing behaviors with six out of the eight participants having experienced no change in sharing behaviors. The SDQ results for helpful behaviors were more consistent with Hay's (1994) model of prosocial development noting a decrease in helpful behaviors due to the discernment that every opportunity to assert helpfulness was not always worth the effort. The SDQ's results were contrary to Chernyak and Kushnir's (2013) findings that noted that giving preschoolers choice and autonomy increased prosocial sharing behaviors. The researcher's observations over the course of the study observed acts of sharing among the test participants through the sharing of art materials and space during the weekly puppet-making sessions.

***Disruptive behaviors.*** SDQ results reflected that five out of eight participants experienced a decrease in their SDQ Total Difficulties Score measuring peer problems,

hyperactivity, conduct problems, and emotional problems. The remaining three out of five test group participants reported an increase in disruptive behaviors. The results reflected high disruptive behaviors in the test group in comparison to research conducted by Egger and Angold (2006) having reported that disruptive behavior problems affect an estimated 9% to 15% of preschool-aged children. Study results produced the following themes related to problem behaviors:

***Hyperactivity.*** The SDQ results for the hyperactivity subscale reflected that four of the eight participants experienced a decrease in hyperactivity while three of the eight participants experienced an increase in hyperactivity. According to Charach et al. (2017), excessive impulsivity, hyperactivity and inattention may signal early ADHD. Wilens and Spencer (2013) reported that ADHD affects an estimated 4% to 12% of school-aged children worldwide. Study results reflected that 37.5% of the group reported an increase in hyperactive behaviors. Wilens and Spencer further reported that ADHD, if gone uninvestigated, could lead to academic and occupational underachievement, delinquency, motor vehicle safety, and interpersonal difficulties.

***Conduct and peer problems.*** The SDQ results for the conduct problems reflected that four of the eight participants experienced a decrease in conduct problems while another three of the eight participants experienced an increase in conduct problems. The SDQ results for the peer problems subscale reflected that three of the eight participants experienced a decrease in peer problems while another three of the eight participants experienced an increase in peer problems. Results are consistent with Haas et al.'s (2011) findings that children with conduct problems and tend to have increased peer problems.

### **Emotional Responses**

From pre- to post study, emotional responses captured by the Young Children's Session Rating Scale (YCSRS) self-report reflected a 10% increase in mood among group participants. The YCSRS reflected that the majority of the test group sustained a "Happy" mood during Week 2 (Sharing/spoon puppets) and Week 3 (Helpfulness/paper bag puppets) of the study. The participants in the study were all 4-years-old. Few studies reflect self-report results or efforts to administer self-reports with children younger than five years-old. This is inconsistent with the research findings of Varni, Limbers, and Burwinkle (2007), having reported that children as young as the 5-years-old can reliably and validly self-report.

**Emotional problems.** The SDQ results for the emotional problems subscale on the pre- and post assessment reflected that four of the eight participants experienced a decrease in emotional problems while one of the eight participants experienced an increase in emotional problems.

### **Limitations**

Data retrieved from the pilot study was limited to four weeks. Additionally, the test sample was limited to eight participants. Additionally, the SDQ lacks a self-report version for preschool-aged children. Reports on improved prosocial behaviors were solely reported from teacher and researcher observations and the preschool teacher's pre- and post SDQ assessments. Additionally, many of the published studies utilizing the SDQ have a limited sample size and are generalized to participants in the United Kingdom (Goodman, 2001). Additional limitations include the use of the Young Child Session Rating Scale (YCSRS) which currently has no psychometric properties. Additionally, this study was limited to four weeks toward the beginning of the school year when students are just beginning to acclimate to the classroom environment,

routines, and peer social interactions. The lack of a control group made it more challenging to determine if creating puppets increased prosocial behaviors or if group time and social interaction in general increased prosocial behaviors.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, the researcher has recommended that additional studies be conducted with Heat Start preschoolers with large test samples over longer periods of time. Use of the SDQ parent version in addition to the teacher version would have supported the triangulation of data analysis. Additionally, with regard to the mixed methods approach, it would have been beneficial to run the study with a control group in order to isolate puppetry in art therapy as an independent variable testing the nature of its effectiveness on increasing prosocial classroom behaviors. It is also recommended that the YCSRS be incorporated in future studies with young children in order to strengthen its psychometric properties as an assessment tool. In using the YCSRS has a self-report measure with young children, it is recommended that the assessment be used on an individual basis with the administrator taking the appropriate time to explain if necessary what is being asked on the assessment. Additionally, it is recommended that the social skills tracking scale adapted from the MTSSA be used in future art therapy related studies to further develop the assessment into a reliable assessment tool to measure social skills in an art therapy context.

With regard to the intervention process, the Master teacher made the following recommendations for future studies and adaptations for working with the students:

I think for them [the preschool students] to truly understand these concepts [prosocial behaviors] we might have needed to read and discuss the story in a small group setting. Then follow up on a different day reviewing the story and making a drawing,

then on a third day making a puppet, having teacher do a scripted role play and children could discuss the feelings of the puppets, then play with their own puppets in a small group setting.

### **Conclusion**

Creating puppetry in an art therapy context with elements of storytelling and play offered preschool students an opportunity to externalize emotions and practice prosocial behaviors in a safe and contained environment. Additionally, the SDQ was shown to be a useful tool and predictive measure of prosocial behaviors in addition to identifying problem behaviors with preschool children. Future studies are recommended in order to test the psychometric properties of both the SDQ and YCSRS for children under 5-years-old.

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## APPENDIX A

### PILOT STUDY SCHEDULE AND OBSERVATIONS

#### Wednesday, September 5, 2018

- Built rapport with preschool class and staff
- Observation in classroom

#### Wednesday, September 12, 2018

- Built rapport with preschool class and staff
- Traced hands of all study participants in preparation for week one session
- Teacher completed pre-assessment Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

#### Observations from September 5<sup>th</sup> and September 12<sup>th</sup> classroom visits:

The researcher observed the student participants in the classroom environment for two observations sessions over the course of two weeks in order to build rapport and integrate into the classroom community and routine. During this time, the researcher participated in the morning classroom routine for two hours each week. The classroom day started with students arriving to school, eating breakfast, and brushing their teeth. This was followed by Circle Time. Circle Time consisted of a warm-up song and dance that involved movement and body awareness as an agent to help increase attention and engagement in learning. The students then sat in a group on individual, numbered carpet squares and worked with the teacher and support staff to practice alphabet sounds, language, and counting techniques. Upon completion of Circle Time, the students were invited to participate in different free-time, activity stations including a dramatic play area, a manipulative table where students can engage in activities that support fine motor growth, and a block area offering different types of blocks for building and sequencing.

Over the two-session observation period, the researcher observed a myriad of micro adventures that were reflected in an arts-based reflection process (Appendix F). In the dramatic play space, girls wore different occupational costume hats, played with baby dolls and puppets, made pretend meals, and talked on pretend phones. A few boys assembled magnetic blocks into long, winding structures. Another boy worked with smaller kinetic blocks and created a gun-shaped block configuration. The teacher explained that guns were bad and reinforced that statement in Spanish by saying, “No Pistolas.” Another boy found a dead spider on the ground and carried it around in a portable bug terrarium, and a group of boys and girls curiously observed it through a magnified glass questioning its mortality and waiting for any movements. Occasional arguments erupted typically in relation to sharing and taking turns with the different activities. A few students engaged in painting at an easel station. Those painting explored big brushstrokes consuming the entire paper and were comfortable with the use of one color.

The researcher also observed verbal cues and developmentally appropriate language that the teacher used to communicate with the class. For example, “Look at me with your eyes,” or “Sit on your bottoms.” During a tornado drill, students and staff rehearsed protocols in the event of a tornado and filed neatly down to the basement and everyone had to crouch down with their heads against the wall. One could hear students and staff instructing the children to, “Make your body small.” These verbal cues supported the researcher in communicating with the class and generating developmentally appropriate questions and scenarios with regard to the intervention sessions.

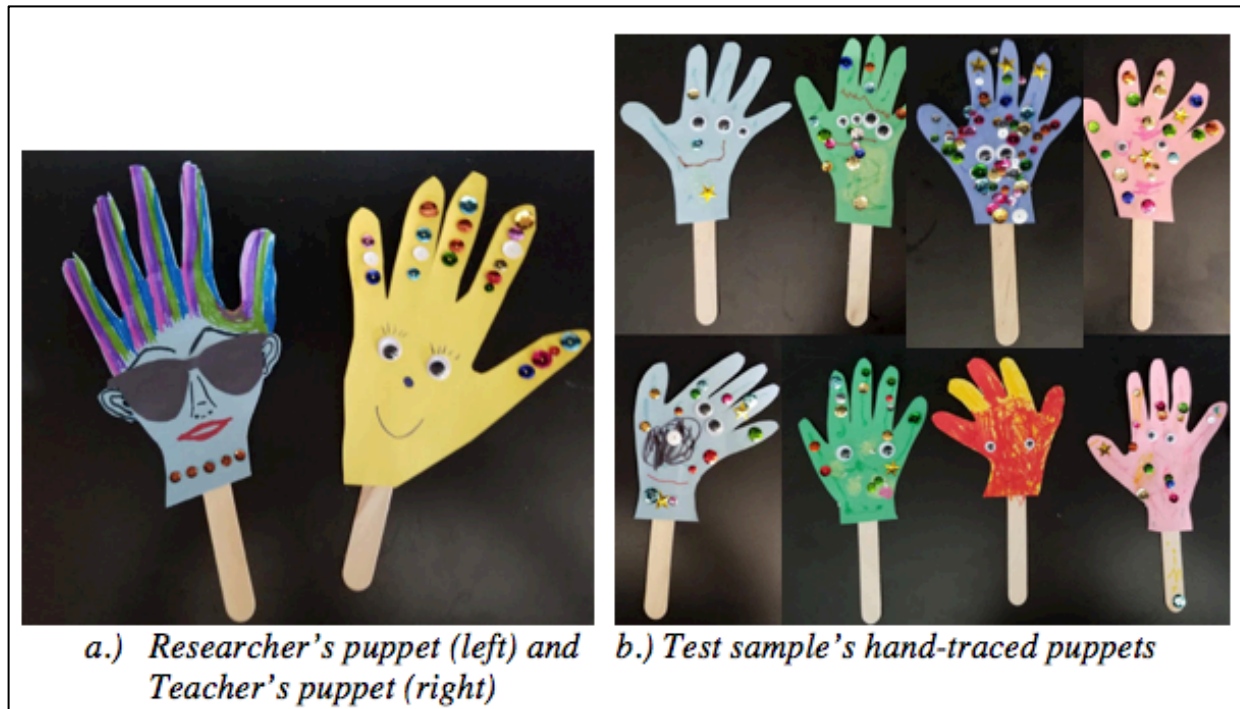
#### Wednesday, September 19, 2018

##### Week 1 session (Empathy):

1. Administered pre-session *Young Child Session Rating Scale* (YCSRS)
2. Read Storybook: *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña

3. Introduced prosocial behavioral skills: Empathy and generosity
4. Created hand-traced puppets using art supplies
5. Role-played with puppets incorporating skill guided by researcher and teaching staff
6. Administered post-session YCSRS

### Puppet-making:



### Observations from September 19<sup>th</sup> session:

During the first session of the pilot study, the prosocial focus was empathy. The researcher read, *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Pena, a story about a boy named CJ and his grandmother, “Nanna.” In the story, CJ’s grandmother imparts her wisdom through their everyday encounters on their weekly bus ride to a soup kitchen where they volunteer on Sundays. Empathy was emphasized in the part of the book where CJ and Nanna encounter a blind man who explains how he observes the world through his other senses including sound. As they are interacting with the man, a musician sitting across from CJ and Nanna on the bus starts to play a song. They close their eyes to understand and experience the music the way that the blind man would.

After the story, the participants made hand-traced puppets out of construction paper, craft sticks, markers, stick-on google eyes, and sequins (Figure 5). Hands were pre-traced and cut-out by the researcher the week before in preparation for the session. When hands were pre-traced, the researcher asked each participant to sign their name on the paper where their hand was traced. The researcher observed that three of the eight participants could write legibly, and that one of the participants was left handed. Participants chose which color paper that they wanted to use as well as the size of eyes that they wanted to use on their puppets. A few participants drew mouths on their puppets to emphasize a facial expression while others scribbled on the hand cut-outs with one or two color markers. The majority of the participants used glue sticks to adhere the sequins to the hands while a couple participants added sequins only to pick them off. Some participants carefully placed sequins in a very deliberate manner while others sped through the process to complete the task.

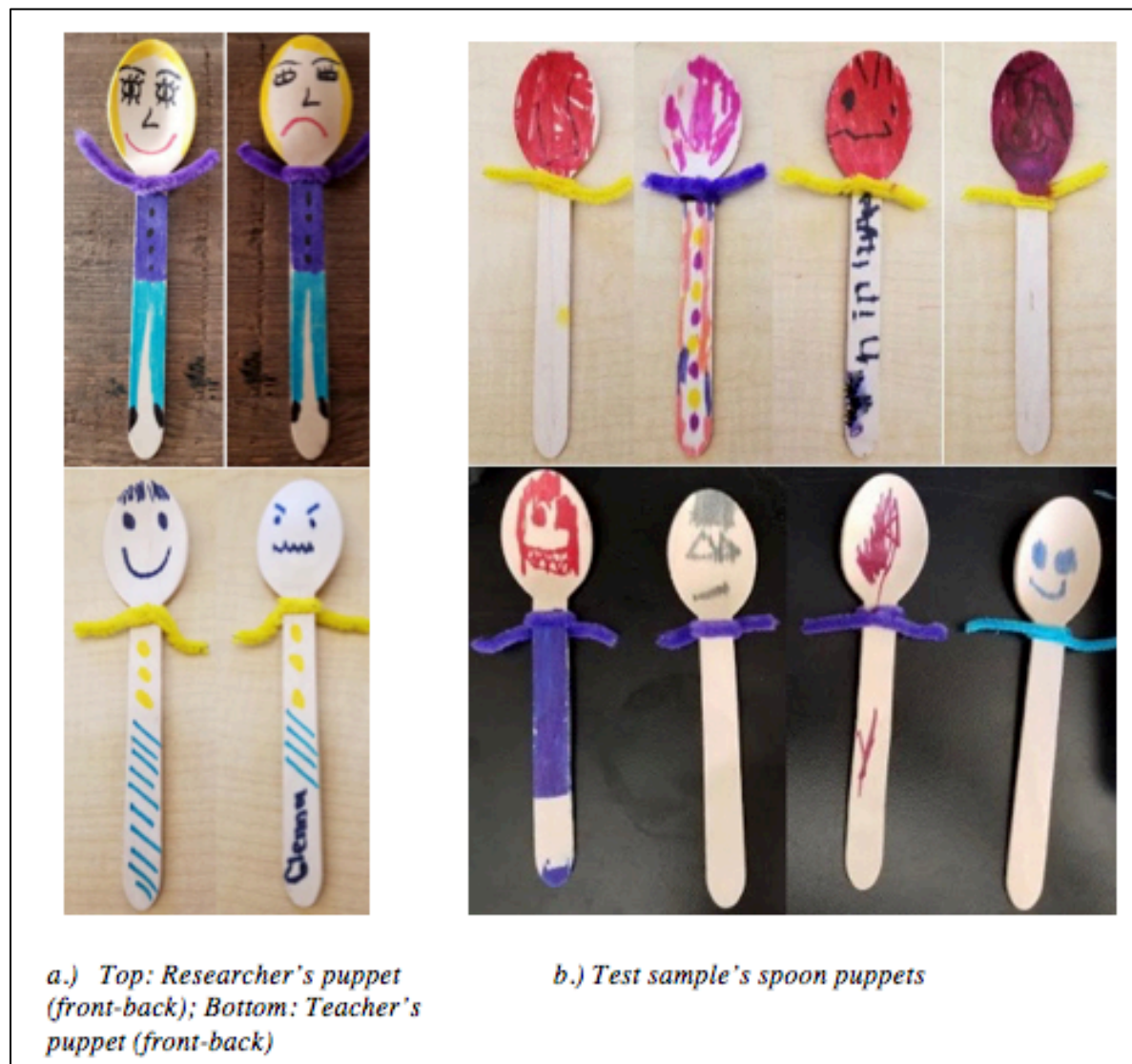
During the role-play portion of the “Empathy” session, the researcher and teacher introduced a scenario where the researcher’s puppet “Carla” was blind and could not see who was in front of her, but she could hear and sense people in front of her. The participant puppeteers asked Carla questions and announced that they were in front of her when they wanted to engage with her. The participants were also encouraged to imagine what it would be like if she could not see.

**Wednesday, September 26, 2018**

**Week 2 session (Sharing):**

1. Administered pre-session *Young Child Session Rating Scale* (YCSRS)
2. Read Storybook: *Pumpkin Soup* by Helen Cooper
3. Introduced prosocial behavioral skills: Sharing and generosity
4. Created spoon puppets using art supplies
5. Role-played with puppets incorporating skill guided by researcher and teaching staff
6. Administered post-session YCSRS

**Puppet-making:**



**Observations from September 26<sup>th</sup> session:**

During the second session, the prosocial focus was sharing. The researcher read, *Pumpkin Soup* by Helen Cooper, a story about three friends—a bagpiping Cat, a banjo-playing Squirrel, and a singing Duck. The three friends live together in an old white cabin in the woods and make pumpkin soup together. Everyone shares the responsibility of making the soup with their own specific job to do—Cat slices the pumpkin, Squirrel stirs in the water, and Duck adds the salt. Duck becomes dissatisfied with his role in the soup-making process and fantasizes about being the head cook and stirring the soup using Squirrel’s special spoon. Duck ends up taking Squirrel’s spoon to stir the soup which results in an argument. Cat and Squirrel minimize Duck’s role in the soup making and criticize him for his desire to stir the soup. Duck feels underappreciated and ends up running away. Cat and Squirrel become concerned about Duck and regretted the way that they treated their friend in addition to not allowing him to stir the soup. Duck eventually returns, and Cat and Squirrel agree to take turns in their roles for making soup and share the different tasks with Duck.

After the story-telling portion, the participants made puppets out of eco-friendly, wooden spoons, pipe cleaners, and markers. Each participant selected a preferred color pipe cleaner and the researcher assisted each participant with twisting it around the spoon for arms. A sample was shown during this session. Each side of the researcher’s spoon puppet featured a different expression. The sample was beneficial in demonstrating what a spoon puppet could personify in addition to modeling potential facial expressions in graphic form. Use of markers and color selections were mere preferences to certain colors and unrelated to the accurate portrayal of human figures or expressions. However, one participant expressed preference for an adult-made puppet, and benefitted from encouragement to create their own version. The researcher witnessed the sharing of materials in the puppet making process. Additionally, the researcher observed that many of the participants needed prompting to re-apply the caps once they were finished.

During the role-play portion of “Sharing,” the students took turns stirring pretend soup in a ceramic bowl. At first everyone stuck their spoon puppets in the bowls at the same time and bumped into each other clicking spoons which at times turned into mild battle scenes until redirected to turn-taking and sharing the bowl. The participants interacted with the spoon puppets as characters in addition to actual stirring spoons. A few participants expressed interest in the sad expression side of the researcher’s spoon.

**Wednesday, October 3, 2018****Week 3 session (Helpfulness):**

1. Administered pre-session *Young Child Session Rating Scale* (YCSRS)
2. Read Storybook: *My Friend is Sad* by Mo Willems
3. Introduced prosocial behavioral skills: Helpfulness
4. Created paper bag puppets using art supplies
5. Role-played with puppets incorporating skill guided by researcher and teaching staff
6. Administered post-session YCSRS

**Puppet-making:**



### Observations from October 3<sup>rd</sup> session:

During the third session the prosocial focus was helpfulness. The researcher read, *My Friend is Sad* by Mo Willems, a story about two friends—Gerald and Piggie. In the story, Gerald is sad, and Piggie in an effort to be helpful tries to cheer him up by dressing up like a cowboy, a clown, and a robot. Gerald, while mildly entertained, continues to be sad. He really just wants to see his friend, and does not realize that the different characters are actually Piggie dressed up.

During the puppet making portion of the intervention, the participants were presented with brown paper bags prepped with paper arms already attached. The participants were then given different pre-cut face options depicting different moods as represented in the YCSRS. There was also a blank face option for participants that wanted to depict their own facial expression. Two participants chose blank faces and drew their own happy face using tempera paint sticks. The others chose the pre-made happy face option. Once a face cutout was selected, the researcher assisted each participant with pasting it on the bag. The participants then used color markers and tempera paint sticks to personalize their puppets and explore a new art media.

During the role-play portion of “Helpfulness,” the researcher introduced a scenario where the researcher’s puppet, Mary, lost her friends. Participants were invited to interact with Mary. Mary was crying, and a couple participants identified that she was sad. Prompted by a staff member, the participants were encouraged to help Mary feel better while imagining what it would be like to lose their own friends. Another participant suggested that they could be Mary’s friend and gave the puppet a hug. Another



puppet asked why her face was different then the other puppets since the majority of puppets showcased smiles on their faces.

**Wednesday, October 10, 2018**

**Week 4 session (Kindness):**

1. Administered pre-session *Young Child Session Rating Scale* (YCSRS)
2. Read Storybook: *Strictly No Elephants* by Lisa Mantchev
3. Introduced prosocial behavioral skills: Kindness
4. Created sock puppets using art supplies
5. Role-played with puppets incorporating skill guided by researcher and teaching staff
6. Administered post-session YCSRS
7. Teacher completed SDQ Follow-Up for test group

**Puppet-making:**



**Observations from October 10<sup>th</sup> session:**

During the fourth session, the prosocial focus was kindness. The researcher read the book, *Strictly No Elephants* by Lisa Mantchev. In the story, the boy and his elephant struggle for acceptance in a Pet Club in their community. The club members have more traditional pets including dogs, cats, fish, and birds. The boy and his elephant attempt to attend the weekly club meeting and are denied entry at the door with a sign that read, “Strictly No Elephants.” As they begin their walk home after being turned away, they encounter a girl sitting on a park bench with her pet skunk. They too felt rejected from the Pet Club even though sign did not explicitly list skunks as animals not allowed in the club. The boy and girl bond over their rejection from the traditional Pet Club and agree to start their own club rooted in kindness. They find a spot for their new club, paint a sign that reads “All are Welcome,” and invite all their friends to join—many of which have atypical pets including a giraffe, a porcupine, a bat, a penguin, etc.

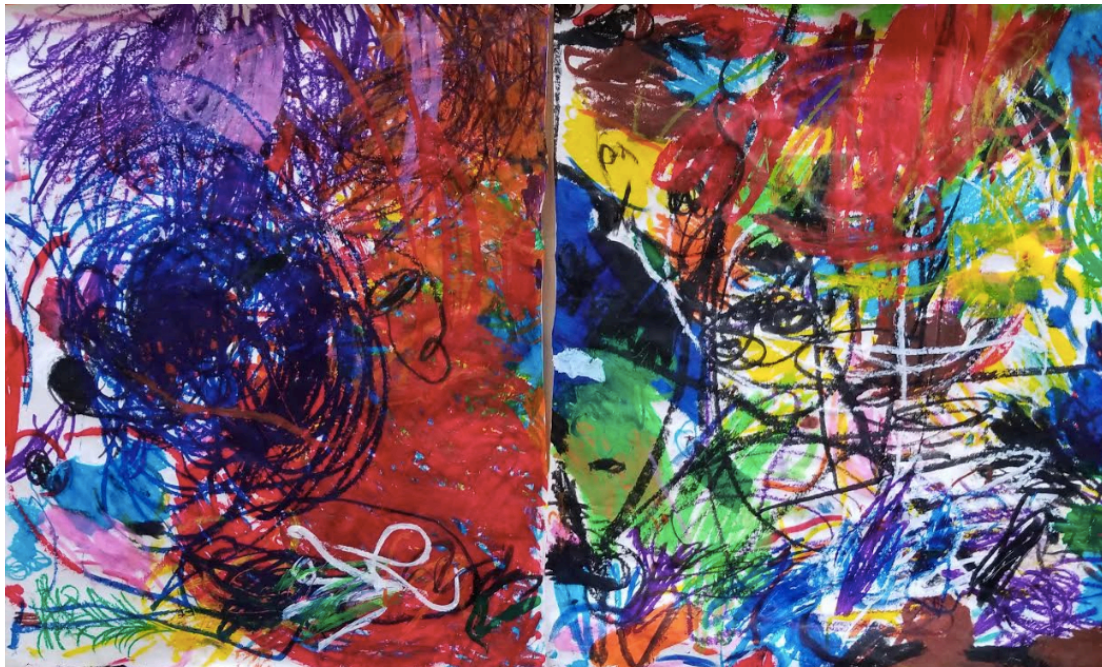
After the story-telling portion of the intervention, the participants were invited to create sock puppets out of white tube socks, markers, and different color felt shapes that could be applied as facial features or added as other design features. When the participants first sat down at the art table, they looked at the

socks and many started contagiously laughing, holding their noses, and saying, “Piu!” as though the socks were giving off an odor. I assured them that we were using brand new socks and that they did not smell as I held one up to my nose. Participants followed suit holding the socks to their noses to check for odor before starting the puppet-making process. Once puppet-making started, participants first used markers to draw faces and other designs on the socks. Each participant was offered different color felt shapes, and the researcher and staff prompted participants to call out the shapes and colors of their selections.

During the role-play portion of the intervention, the researcher presented a scenario where the researcher’s puppet was new to the play space and did not have any friends and wanted to be included. At first, many of the participants welcomed the researcher’s puppet and invited the puppet to play a game of tag around the play table. Eventually, several of the participants began to try and consume the researcher’s puppet by clamping their hands around the researcher’s puppet-covered hand.

**Wednesday, November 9, 2018**

Follow-up visit and art experiential using tempera paint sticks





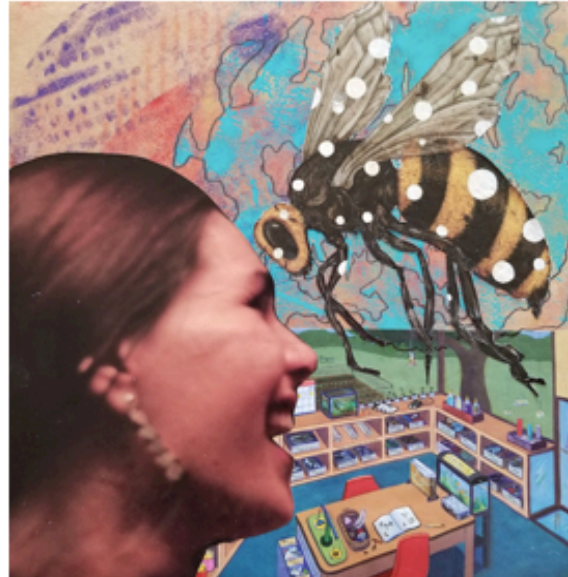
## APPENDIX B

## Arts-Based Reflections

## Classroom observations, week one:



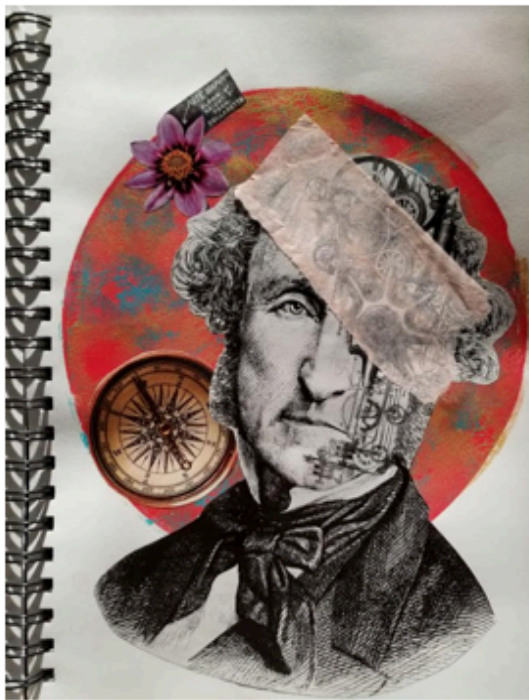
*a.) Before observation session 1*  
*Mixed media collage on paper*  
*11 ½" x 8 ½"*



*b.) After observation session 1*  
*Mixed media collage on cardboard*  
*10 ½" x 10 ½"*

**Impressions for future exploration:**

Awareness, alternative perspectives, white privilege, structure, routine, environment, active, earnest, hardworking, and democratic

**Classroom observations, week two:**

*a.) Before observation session 2  
Mixed media collage on paper  
11 ½" x 8 ½"*



*b.) After observation session 2  
Mixed media collage on cardboard  
10 ½" x 10 ½"*

**Impressions for future exploration:**

Awareness, sensory, direction, time, planting seeds, growth, transformation, guidance, wisdom, and trust

Pilot study, week one: "Empathy"



*a.) Before study week 1 session  
Mixed media collage on paper  
11 ½" x 8 ½"*



*b.) After study week 1 session  
Mixed media collage on cardboard  
10 ½" x 10 ½"*

**Impressions for future exploration:**

Abundance, analytical, guiding hand, and innocence



Pilot study, week two: "Sharing"



*a.) Before study week 2 session  
Mixed media collage on paper  
11 ½" x 8 ½"*



*b.) After study week 2 session  
Mixed media collage on cardboard  
10 ½" x 10 ½"*

**Impressions for future exploration:**

Guidance, nostalgia, mother, father, nurturance, support, giving, and containment

Pilot study, week three: "Helpfulness"



*a.) Before study week 3 session  
Mixed media collage on paper  
11 ½" x 8 ½"*



*b.) After study week 3 session  
Mixed media collage on cardboard  
10 ½" x 10 ½"*

**Impressions for future exploration:**

Contemplation, ordinary, friendship, sensory, conversation, guidance, and simplicity

Pilot study, week four: "Kindness"



*a.) Before study week 4 session  
Mixed media collage on paper  
11 ½" x 8 ½"*



*b.) After study week 4 session  
Mixed media collage on cardboard  
10 ½" x 10 ½"*

**Impressions for future exploration:**

Cosmic energy, illuminated pathway, comfort, nurturance, confrontation with self, warmth, and coming home