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## **ABSTRACT**

Teachers play a significant role in the socialization of children because, while teaching, they also transmit the socially and culturally appropriate behaviors and expectations for girls and boys. One of the responsibilities involved with teaching is disciplining, an area where teachers teach their male and female students in accord with their beliefs and expectations as to which behaviors are appropriate in which situations. The majority of the studies investigating gender socialization practices of teachers have measured teachers' behaviors toward male and female students. However, little is known about the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about gender issues, particularly in the discipline area. The main purpose of this study was to investigate early childhood teachers' attitudes toward gender roles and toward discipline and whether there was a relation between these attitudes. In an effort to find out what determines teachers' attitudes toward gender roles and toward discipline, the study examined the effects of two potentially important factors: teachers' ages and years of teaching experience. Finally, teachers' beliefs about the use of appropriate discipline philosophies for the misbehaviors of male and female students were explored.

To this end, the researcher developed three instruments, which were Attitudes Toward Gender Roles Scale, Attitudes Toward Discipline Scale, and Beliefs About Discipline Inventory. Participants were 130 prekindergarten, kindergarten and first grade teachers employed in public schools located in a mid-sized southeastern city.

The findings of this study indicated that teachers had a tendency to hold egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles and toward discipline, and these attitudes were related. The results also demonstrated that teachers' ages and years of experience had no significant effect on their gender roles and discipline attitudes. Finally, teachers seemed to have different beliefs with regard to the use of discipline philosophies for the misbehaviors of male and female students. More specifically, they appeared to favor discipline philosophies in which the teachers used more power for the misbehavior of male students as compared to the misbehavior of female students. The most significant implication of this study was that teacher training and education programs need to be reevaluated and geared at raising awareness toward gender issues and thus creating equal opportunities for boys and girls.