My process for doing academic research changed since the beginning of the semester because I have become more detailed when discussing how the study was ran and when discussing the results of the study. I have also learned to proofread many times before presenting the results of the study and before sending out the surveys to the participants. One thing I have had trouble with during this research was wording the surveys and the final presentation correctly. The wording of the surveys had to be clear and simple for the people completing them, but the wording for the presentation had to be polished and informative. Proofreading helped me in verifying that someone outside of the study would understand clearly what the study was about and what we were asking the participants to do.

 In the beginning of the research study, the class had to complete a literature review. When selecting my sources for the research assignment, I made sure to choose a trusted website. I used the Longwood University library search engine where they provide links to peer reviewed journal articles. When I was reading through the journal articles, I made sure to select articles that were recent, peer reviewed, and related to the study. I did not use articles that were outdated, from an untrusted website, or unrelated to the research study. Taking the time to make sure I found the right articles for the study was beneficial because making sure it prevented me from having to change my sources for the final assignment.

 After completing the final assignment, I reflected on the challenges during the assignment and what I could do better for future research studies. The two major challenges that I encountered while working on the research study were the wording of the surveys and learning how to make a graph on excel. As stated previously, I struggled with switching between casual and simple wording for the survey, then complex and detailed wording for the presentation. To overcome this, I imagined the audience that I was writing for in my head during the assignment. Imagining the audience that I was writing for helped me focus on one specific moment rather than going back and forth between the two groups of people that would hear about the research study. The second challenge I had was making a graph of the final data. I have made graphs in the past and felt confident in my ability to make them, but the data for this study was not going into the graph correctly, which made the computer system graph the data incorrectly. I tried to type out the data in a different way, tried using a different graph, and tried using a different computer system, but none of those methods worked. Since this was an issue I have never encountered before and my methods of fixing it were not working, I asked a classmate to observe my data and how the system was graphing it. The classmate helped me type out the data correctly, which fixed the graphing issue. I learned that if my methods of fixing an issue are not working, it is acceptable to ask someone with more knowledge on the issue for help.

 My attitude and confidence towards research improved during the semester because of this project. Learning why we were doing this study and understanding how much it helped those in our community made the study personal. Knowing that we were helping families connect with each other and helping the children learn while doing a fun activity made me excited to work on the research study. My confidence has also improved because I feel as though my knowledge on how to run a research study has grown and I was able to overcome the challenges that I faced. I will take that passion and confidence with me to future research studies.

 While thinking about the research that was done during this semester, I learned what it means to think like a researcher. Thinking like a researcher means you are passionate and humble while conducting the study. It means that you stay consistent, even when the study is not going in the direction that was intended. Being a researcher is about collaboration and making sure everyone’s ideas are heard. A researcher consists of a variety of characteristics, and I plan to work on having all of those qualities to be a good researcher and teammate.