The State University of New York
At Potsdam

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Education
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Masters in Curriculum & Instruction

Potsdam, New York
June, 2010
This thesis entitled

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

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Has been approved for the
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Abstract

Parental involvement has been shown to be an important part of a student’s life. In our study and research, we found that the amount of participation that parent’s give can drastically improve a child’s social and psychomotor skills, creating a positive effect on student’s academic and social success. By connecting both the school and home, students receive the message that their parents are concerned about their education, resulting in continued motivation and self-confidence. Establishing a positive relationship between parent and teacher is important to ensure that the best interests of the students are being met. On the other hand, educators do realize that there are obstacles that prevent parents from being more involved in their children’s education, such as time and lack of education. However, there are ways to get around these issues and strategies that may be used more today than in the past. These strategies that we acquired were obtained by research and by personal experience.
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CHAPTER 1

Statement of the Problem

In our society today there seems to be a lack of parental involvement in children’s education. This lack of involvement can affect children’s social, behavioral, and academic development. Although there have been many studies conducted on how to involve parents in their child’s education, there is still a tremendous lack of involvement on the part of parents and other family members.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find new ways in which educators can get parents involved in the education of their children. This will help educators gain a new perspective on the steps they can take to get their students’ parents more involved in their children’s education. The information gained from this study will be used to promote greater parental involvement in the achievement of children in schools.

Research Question

The following research question will guide this study:

What are some ways in which parents can get more involved in their child’s education?
Rationale

There have been many studies conducted on ways to promote parental involvement in the classroom. Parental involvement provides teachers with the support and assistance necessary from parents in order to enhance children’s development and learning. This study will be conducted through action research, as defined by Mills (2007). Through action research the teacher develops the area of focus, the research design, gathers the data, analyzes the data, and develops an action plan based on the study findings. Through action research the teacher is the research instrument. This is beneficial because teachers are always looking for new ways to improve and gain knowledge about their teaching effectiveness.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made throughout this study:

1. The achievement of students is a goal that all teachers want.
2. Student’s achievement will improve with parental involvement.
3. All teachers want to know more about how to involve parents in their child’s education.

Definition of Terms

1. Parental Involvement—“Parental involvement is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving students’ academic learning and other school activities.” (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee retrieved 6/27/09 from http://eoc.sc.gov/CmsPortal/AgencyHomePageTemplate.aspx?NRMODE=Pu
2. **Social Development**—“is a process which results in the transformation of social structures in a manner which improves the capacity of the society to fulfill its aspirations.” (Wikipedia the free encyclopedia retrieved 6/27/09 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_development)

3. **Emotional development**—“the development of a full range of emotions from sad to happy to angry, and learning to deal with them appropriately.” (ITS Tutorial School retrieved on 6/27/09 from http://www.tuition.com.hk/psychology/e.htm)


**Limitations**

This investigation was limited by the following:

1. The researchers will be limited by their knowledge and experience of parental involvement.

2. Since the researchers are the research instrument, they will be limited by personal bias.
3. The researchers will be limited by their skills in communicating with parents and other family members.

**Delimitations**

This study is further defined by the following delimitations:

1. This study will exam parental involvement based on researchers such as Joyce Epstein (2008), E.G. Guba (1981), E.H Berger (1987), and others.

2. This study should benefit everyone involved, from the teachers to the students and parents.

3. In this study we will try different methods to see which works the best. A few of those methods are letters to parents, family days, and cooking activities in the classroom.

4. This study will only look at the effects of parental involvement in two elementary classrooms in Upstate Northern, NY.

**Summary**

Through this study we hope to discover more information about the benefits of having parents involved in the education of their children. Parental involvement is a way in which you can have your parents involved in the education and extra curricula activities with their children. This study will be conducted through action research as defined by Mills (2007). Through action research the teacher is the researcher. The teacher/researchers will look at the results from conducting this study in two pre-k
classrooms from Calcium Primary Central School. The researchers hope to
answer the question on ways in which parents can get more involved in
their child’s education.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The following review of literature will look at how parental involvement affects children in a classroom. There have been many studies done on parental involvement. This study will look at how technology affects parental involvement, activities in the classroom, and communication among teachers and families. There is an abundance of literature that addresses the lack of participation from parents and what could be done to help. Many of the findings are positive and they outweigh the possible negative effects. These are all findings that may be supported in our studies.

Parental Involvement

As both parents and educators, we both agree that parental involvement in children’s education is important. So what does parental involvement entail? It requires general participation on the part of the parents towards their children’s education. Hartas (2008) explains that parental involvement is not just the parents doing all of the work to get involved, but rather it is “parents working together with a range of professionals” (p. 140). The teachers and staff need to help to make parents feel welcomed and wanted in their classrooms. Everyone who is involved needs to work together with the interest of the child in mind. We as teachers see that some students’ achievements are hindered by not having proper parental participation. Therefore, we will explore ways in which parents can be more knowledgeable
through communication with teachers and their children. Ramey and Ramey justify that “Learning is a way of life-not just something that happens in a classroom” (1999, p.50). Ramey and Ramey explain that children from the age of eight and under learn through observation and imitation. Children who succeed in school have parents who are actively engaged in reading, acquiring new skills, and taking on new challenges. “If children see their parents eagerly and actively learning, then children are more likely to feel comfortable in taking on new challenges themselves” (p.50). Ramey and Ramey suggest seven essentials that have been proven to help your child everyday: “encourage, mentor, celebrate, rehearse, protect, communicate, guide and limit” (p.18). These were based on studies with children in the first five years of their lives.

How Can I Get Involved

Some useful ideas for parents who would like to be more involved with their children’s education are “to bring school subjects into home life, communicate with your child’s school, and encourage extracurricular activities” (Ramey and Ramey, 1999, pp.52-55). Families must enforce rules such as scheduled homework times and routine bed times for adequate amounts of sleep. While doing this, parents are enforcing their authority while supporting their children to get the necessary amount of sleep needed to learn. Families with good workable routines also have children whose school performance is better. Ramey and Ramey highlight that parent participation involves more than just cognitive development. It creates development for children at all levels: physically, emotionally, socially, morally, and culturally. They continue by breaking these developments up into categories or domains:
“Domain 1: Physical Development (Meeting basic needs for survival, such as food, clothing and housing.) Domain 2: Emotional Development and Well Being (Encouraging constructive ways to deal with emotions, and self-regulation.) Domain 3: Social Development (Developing positive interaction skills, and acquiring the ability to avoid and/or resolve social conflict.) Domain 4: Cognitive Development (Fostering intelligence and academic skills.) Domain 5: Moral and Spiritual Development (Helping family members acquire beliefs and values about ethical behavior and a philosophy of life.) Domain 6: Cultural and Aesthetic Development (Fostering an appreciation of cultural heritage, folklore, and traditions. Developing a personal sense of beauty and art.)” (Ramey and Ramey, 1999. p.98)

Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement

There have been many different researchers that have tried to show why parental involvement is so important and what they think educators need to do to help parents become more involved. One such researcher is Joyce Epstein from John Hopkins University. She states that “the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life” (p.1). Epstein has created six different types of involvement: “parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community” (pp.1-2). Through Epstein’s research she goes on to explain exactly how this type of involvement can be achieved.

Parenting is a way to assist families in creating a home environment that enhances a child’s learning. This can be accomplished through education for the parents, support programs, and home visits during “transition points” for the child.
These transition points are for pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school. The support programs will help families with their health, nutrition and any other service that may benefit the whole family.

Communicating is established when the families and teachers work together to discuss what is going on in the classroom with both activities and developments. Some different ways in which you can achieve communication is through parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, phone calls, memos, and other communications. Parent-teacher conferences should be held at least once a year. You may need to do more than one if needed. There are also many families that do not speak English and these families may need a translator to help them as needed (Constantino 2003).

Volunteering is the third type of involvement Epstein (2008) discusses. Volunteering is a way for the families to take their own time to help and support in any way they can. Some ways in which families can volunteer are in the school, classroom, parent room, family center, and also by creating postcard surveys. The families may come into the classroom or school and help the teacher, school staff, or students with anything in which they can help. In the parent room, or family center, families may be able to set up meetings or resources for other families to use. The postcard surveys are a way in which you can recognize all “available talents, times, and locations of volunteers” (p.2).

The fourth type of involvement is learning at home. Learning at home is a way in which educators can give families the information they need to help their children with schoolwork, other school activities, decisions, and other social, emotional, and cognitive development. This can be done by providing families with
information on required skills for the grades to follow or subjects that they are taking. Teachers also need to inform parents of what is expected from their children. School policies should be given to parents and also need to be examined, also schools need to show parents ways in which they can keep track of and talk about school at home. It is also important to make sure the families are involved in setting goals for their children. Goals such as what they would like to accomplish this year as well as future goals.

The fifth type of involvement is decision making. This is where the families are included in the decisions made in school. Through decision making the teacher would ask someone to be a representative and a parent leader in their class. PTO and PTA are both part of the decision making process. Constantino (2003) states that the national PTA standards for parent and family involvement include “an emphasis on regular two-way and meaningful communication between home and school, promoting and supporting parenting skills; and parents playing an integral role in assisting student learning” (p.20). There are other groups such as “parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees” that families can join. These groups’ help the school and classrooms fight for the improvements and changes needed.

Collaborating with community is the last type of involvement that Epstein (2008) discusses. It is with collaboration that families and educators discover the resources in their community. These resources or services are used to help build stronger programs in the school, family practices, and children’s learning. Many of these services are for families to better understand what is available to them for their health and other needs. There may be groups to help with adjusting to a culture,
services that show what there is to do as a family, social groups, or any other program that may be of assistance. Some schools may have summer programs and there may be resources out there to better explain these services and how to utilize them.

**Advances in Technology**

For a modern stylistic approach, the use of technology can play a significant role in parent involvement. Villano (2008) discusses how there are schools using a tool called “TeleParent” today. This tool is a way in which the school can send a text message to the parent notifying them about their child’s attendance, behavior, and development. In this article there is a mother who states that when she gets home and tries talking to her daughter about her school day her daughter’s answers are very limited and without much detail. Teleparent is a way for her, as a single mother, to make sure that her daughter is doing alright in school. This tool will notify the parents to let them know if their child is on time, if they participated in class, completed their assignments or any behavior problems that may have occurred. The school staff has stated that a parent contact process which used to take a long time to do now can take just a few minutes. All teachers have to do is to click on a few names like emailing and off it goes in just minutes. There are even new tools that are used that are designed for different language messaging. This is good because students come from families who speak English as a second language. This tool can help many working, busy families who do not have as much time as they would like to be with their children. Having a school web page is useful for parents to see newsletters, important events, and even present grades. Constantino (2003) reported that high school students admitted that the system had helped them improve their levels of
achievement, but readily admitted that they did not like the fact that their parents had this type of access at any time. Students also reported that the system was the stimulus for the educational dialogue between them and their families. However, not all schools have this option, nor do all parents have access to a computer or cell phone.

Negative Views to Parental Involvement

Although there are some positive links to these studies, there are some contrasting views on the subject. Single parents that work full time, with possibly multiple children, would not have much time to spend on each child’s education. Schneider & Coleman (1993) state that nearly half of all American children under 18 will be raised in single parent homes. Anderson (2002) showed how that there are many children growing up without fathers. “About half of American children will spend part of their childhood in a single-parent family, and most of these children will be living without their father” (p.348). DeBell (2008) showed that the children who did not grow up with fathers actually did worse academically, had bad health, lower well being, worse educational experiences, and also had less parental involvement in school. One very large weakness is that of immigrant children in the United States. Turney and Kao (2009) state that immigrant families are going to be less involved in their children’s education compared to that of “native-born parents”. There can be such a huge barrier for immigrant parents, which makes it very difficult for them to become involved. Another weakness would be administration or teachers enforcing rules for parents, such as coming to school unannounced. Constantino (2003) writes that many schools have guidelines about
family communication. Some of these guidelines list rules such as not being able to visit the school during the day, or you may not call the teacher during the day because teachers are busy teaching, etc. Some parents may find this very unsettling, and of course unwelcoming. However, there are some underlying reasons for these guidelines such as problems with separated parents etc. A way of solving this problem even if schools have or do not have these guidelines is to create a policy for family involvement and make sure it is part of the schools’ mission statement. Another negative aspect of involvement is that some parents may feel threatened at school (such as inner city-higher violence school districts). Lastly, Families may have crisis that can also effect their involvement such as substance abuse, physical/emotional abuse, financial difficulties, or mental health issues (Ramey and Ramey, 1999).

History of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in education has been present since the early Egyptians, Sumerians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans; parents were actively involved in the selection of teachers and education (Berger, 1987). Berger also states that families provided children’s first informal education through modeling, teaching, praise and discipline. An important figure in parent involvement was Johann Heinrick Pestalozzi (1747-1827). He is known as the first modern theorist, and hailed as the “Father of Parent Education.” Pestalozzi quotes “As the mother is the first to nourish her child’s body, so should she, by God’s order, be the first to nourish his mind” (p.34). Modern parent education movements began in the 1880’s. Leading women founded associations such as the National Congress of Mothers (PTA), the Child Study
Association, and the American Association of University Women. These were not established into parent education programs until the 1920’s. At that time in history, twenty-six parent education organizations were formed (Berger, 1987).

Wolfendale (1983) presents some of the projects/studies that were set up in the wake of the EPA (Educational Priority Areas) in London. Wolfendale refers to a study at the Froebel Institute. In this was a study that took place within a nursery in South London in 1973-1978, twenty experimental and twenty controlled children were selected for observation. Parental participation was categorized into four types. The results were positive, and cognitive gains were upheld. Throughout the 1900’s, parents were traditionally viewed and dealt with as “clients” (Wolfendale, 1983, p.15). Just roughly in the last 20 years have parents been viewed as “partners”, mainly in part from the effect of the Education Act of 1980 and 1981. Wolfendale proceeds to explain that parents with client characteristics were dependent on experts’ opinions, passive, perceived as inadequate, deficient, and in need of redirection. However, “partners”’ characteristics involved being active and central in decision-making, perceived as having equal strengths, equal expertise, and shared responsibility. (p15)

Wolfendale points out that her book was prepared during a time when parents and their place in children’s development and education had been the object of scrutiny and a focus for politicians and child services. She discusses that parents’ rights to be closely involved in educational and child care services was
a debated issue politically and ideologically in Britain and other countries (Wolfendale, 1983).

Where Can Parental Involvement Occur

Schneider & Coleman (1993) explains “parent involvement in a child’s education is also affected by the opportunities made available by the school” (p.2). Parental teaching does, without question, make a difference in what young children know and what their skills are (Ramey and Ramey, 1999). There are many places for parent/child learning that can take place other than in a school setting. Places such as the library, parks, zoos, history and art museums, botanical gardens, playgrounds, science centers, planetariums, and observatories. Ramey and Ramey (1999) also suggest that there is learning in simple everyday destinations such as the grocery store, shopping malls, restaurants, parent workplaces, government offices, post offices, banks, etc. All of these places set up a plethora of questions from children that families could partake in, and general social and life skills as well. Ramey and Ramey asked several faculty, administration, and graduates of The School of Education at Samford University in Alabama, what they would recommend to parents of children ages three to eight years old and this is what they advised:

- turn off the television and video games on school nights, read to your child nightly, be a mentor, become involved, create time and a place for schoolwork, give lots of interesting experiences and family outings,
- learning games (such as cards and scrabble), ask positive questions about school, buy books or go to the library, keep schedules, make and serve
breakfast, get to know your child’s teacher, promote responsibility, and

READ, READ, READ! (Ramey and Ramey, 1999, p.274-275)

Conclusion

We had both come to realize while conducting this review of literature, that using the word “family” instead of “parent” is more suitable. This is because it is not just parents taking care of children today. As we see through this research historically parental involvement has been an issue and it continues to be an issue in present education. It started many years ago and educators are still finding new ways in which it can be stronger. The literature has indicated that parental involvement is an important aspect in the lives of children. Not only does it help the child academically but also physically, and emotionally. Parental involvement has been shown to create better and more successful lives for children.
Chapter 3

Statement of the Problem

In our society today there seems to be a lack of parental involvement in children’s education. This lack of involvement can effect children’s social, behavioral, and academic development. Although there have been many studies conducted on how to involve parents in their child’s education, there is still a tremendous lack of involvement on the part of parents and other family members.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find new ways in which educators can get parents involved in the education of their children. This will help educators gain a new perspective on the steps they can take to get their students’ parents more involved in their children’s education. The information gained from this study will be used to promote greater parental involvement in the achievement of children in schools.

Research Question

The following research question will guide this study:

What are some ways in which parents can get more involved in their child’s education?
Participants

Participants in this study will include two pre-kindergarten classes from Calcium Primary Central School. The students and parents participating in this study from Calcium Primary Central School include students from a military base along with local children and their families. The school is composed with

- 71% white students
- 17% black or African American students
- 10% Hispanic or Latino students
- 2% Asian or Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander students
- 45% of the students receive reduced lunches
- 9% are limited English proficient

(Great Schools retrieved 7/18/09 from http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/ny/other/1238#students)

Criteria for Selection of the Participants

A letter will be sent home before the beginning of the study to families asking them for their child’s involvement in this study along with their own involvement. All participants will be required to fill out a survey at the beginning of the study and also one at the end of the study. They will also be required to attend the parent teacher conference that will be held halfway through the study. Since all the students that will be involved in this study are below the age of eighteen they will require permission slip granting them the right to be involved in this study.

Each of the classes involved in this study have a wide range of abilities. The classes have students from all over the world and many English as a second language families. Over the time of this study the teachers will work with the students and their families in collecting surveys/questionnaire’s asking about their involvement. As
pre-kindergarten students do not receive grades they will be observed on their behavior changes, if any.

Parents and teachers will complete two surveys. The first survey will ask for families to volunteer their time and what they think parental involvement entails. The second survey will be given at the end of the study to ask families if they saw a difference in their children after they became more involved.

Methodology

Action research is the methodology chosen for this study. Action research is defined as:

any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. (Mills, 2007, p.5)

There are four steps that follow the action research process. These four steps are to “identify an area of focus, collect data, analyze and interpret data, and develop an action plan.” (Mills, 2007, p.5)

Rationale for Methodology

Action research is done by teachers for themselves in order to improve instructional approaches and improve student performance. This study is going to be used by two teachers in order to better understand the effects of parental involvement in a classroom. Through this study we hope to find new and old ways for parents to become more involved and better the lives of their children.
Procedure Used for Data Gathering and Analysis

The data collection techniques will use qualitative methods as the primary research method. Teachers will be both privileged active, and active participant observers in the classrooms. Teachers will collect student achievement scores, and or observe student behavior as a result of family involvement. Families will periodically complete surveys that identify their child's learning based on their involvement. Teacher researchers will survey parents through systematic surveys for the duration of two months. Teacher researchers will also take on the role of passive observer to watch the student’s behaviors.

Timeline

- Phase I-Identify an area of focus: June-August 2009
- Phase II-Collect Data: August-October 2009
- Phase III-Analyze and interpret data: November 2009
- Phase IV-Develop an action plan: December 2009

Data Management Procedures

The data collected will be stored in a secure location in the teachers locked filing cabinet in her classroom at Calcium Primary. All information including the names, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, journals, and field observations will remain confidential to ensure the privacy of the participants. Audit trails will be kept to date and on file throughout the study.
Data Analysis

The definition of data analysis according to Mills (2007) is “data analysis is undertaken when researchers want to summarize and represent data that have been collected in a dependable, accurate, reliable, correct, and “right” manner” (p.138). The data collected will be analyzed and categorized, and the data will be recorded using index cards that are coded. The information collected will be done using different data collection techniques such as surveys, questionnaires, assessments, strategies, and student behaviors. Informal ethnographic interviews will be conducted using question strategies such as the “5 Ws and H.” A concept map will be used to visualize the major influences that affect family involvement. Another form of mapping that may be used is antecedents and consequences. These data collection techniques will be analyzed, summarized and shared with colleagues.

Data Management and Validity

The quality of the researcher’s data collection and interpretations will be subject to the concepts of validity, reliability, and generalizability. The validity of the research in this study refers to “how we know that the data we collect accurately gauge what we are trying to measure.” (Mills 2007 p. 84) Data management techniques will include measurement of the qualitative research based on credibility and dependability. The factual accuracy of the research determines which aspect of validity is involved such as descriptive, interpretive, democratic, outcome, process, and/or dialogic validity.
Role of the Researcher

The role of the teacher is to use both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to conduct this study. “These techniques include using direct observation, interviews, questionnaires, attitude scales, new and existing records, artifacts, teacher-made tests, standardized tests, and school-generated report cards.” (Mills, 2007, p.50) The researcher will ask families for their participation in this study and will follow the guidelines used through action research. The researcher being the teacher will collect all information starting with the permission slips up to the final survey. All information will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of this study. The researcher needs to be an active member in the study in creating newsletters, memos, activities and letters to parents in order to get them involved. The researcher also needs to be active in observing the effects on the families and students involved in the study. The researcher will use triangulation for this study. The three data collection types that will be used are questionnaires/ surveys, observations, and interviews/parent-teacher conferences. Other techniques that may be used are report cards, audit trails, and daily communication with the families.

Reliability

Reliability is defined as “the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures.” (Mills, 2007, p.94) As stated before we will use triangulation to ensure reliability. This means that we are going to be using at least three different means before making a conclusion to the study. The information we collect will be done through surveys, questionnaires,
observations, interviews, communication, an audit trail, and parent-teacher
conferences. Using these different techniques will help to make sure our
findings are accurate and reliable.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility of Analysis**

Trustworthiness “refers to the reliability and authenticity of records.”
Guba (1981) stated that “the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry could be
established by addressing the following characteristics of a study: credibility,
transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (as cited in Mills, 2007,
p.85). Credibility means that the researcher acknowledges the difficulties they
may encounter in the study and learn how to deal with them. Transferability is
when you collect the information and you make descriptions of it.
Dependability is how reliable your information is. This will be done by using
more than one type of collection technique. Lastly, confirmability will be done
through triangulation without using any assumptions.

**Audit Trail**

An audit trail is “the process that makes it possible for an external
“auditor” (maybe a critical friend, principal, or graduate student) to examine the
process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.” (Mills, 2007, p.86) This
will be accomplished by adding to it daily and keeping track of all the
information handed to families and students. All the information should be in a
place for someone to come in and look at it to show that it is accurate.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

Statement of the Problem

In our society today there seems to be a lack of parental involvement in children’s education. This lack of involvement can effect children’s social, behavioral, and academic development. Although there have been many studies conducted on how to involve parents in their child’s education, there is still a tremendous lack of involvement on the part of parents and other family members.

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The data collected will be stored in a secure location in the teachers locked filing cabinet in her classroom at Calcium Primary. All information including the names, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, journals, and field observations will remain confidential to ensure the privacy of the participants. Audit trails will be kept to date and on file throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The definition of data analysis according to Mills (2007) is “data analysis is undertaken when researchers want to summarize and represent data that have been collected in a dependable, accurate, reliable, correct, and “right” manner” (p.138). The data collected will be analyzed and categorized, and the data will be recorded using index cards that are coded. The information collected will be done using different data collection techniques such as surveys, questionnaires, assessments, strategies, and student behaviors. Informal ethnographic interviews will be conducted using question strategies such as the “5 Ws and H.” A concept map will be used to visualize the major influences that affect family involvement. Another form of mapping that may be used is antecedents and consequences. These data collection techniques will be analyzed, summarized and shared with colleagues.

Survey 1

In both classes the first parental involvement survey was handed out on Monday, February 8th, 2010. Families were each given one survey through their
child’s mailbox found in the classroom. Families were asked to return the surveys by the end of the week inside the envelopes provided without any names written on them so that they would be anonymous. At the end of the week I had only received a total of three surveys back and decided that I would hand them out again on Monday, February 22, 2010 once we returned from our mid-winter vacation. After receiving all of the first set of surveys the researchers compiled all of the information and the results are listed below.

At the top of the first survey parents had to answer the question of how many children they had in their family. The results of that question are as follows: five families have only one child, one family has two children, one family has three children, one family has four children, and two families have five children in their families. Parents also had to answer what school and grade level their child was in that they were doing this for which is the same for everyone, Calcium Primary Mrs. Hanni’s pre-kindergarten classroom. Lastly, parents put the date they filled out the survey and that ranged within the three weeks that the first survey was given.

The first actual question on survey one that parents had to answer was: “The best way to communicate with you and/ or family is?” Parents had to check the boxes that applied to them and were given these four choices: personally, memos, e-mail, and by phone. Out of ten surveys five people said that the best way to communicate with them is personally. This is made possible as all families are made to self transport their child to and from our program. Six parents said that the best way to communicate with them is
through email, and lastly four people said that the best way to communicate with them is by phone. Surprisingly no parents choose memos as a way of communication.

The second question on this survey was: “What are some ways in which you would feel more comfortable getting more involved?” The theme for this question was that parents would feel most comfortable getting involved through specific activities and also by sending things home for them to do with their child or for the classroom. One parent said that “Having the teacher ask for help, I feel funny asking as if I would mess up their routine”, another parent said that they would get involved through “field trips, classroom activities.”

The third and final question on this survey asked: “Do you think that parental involvement makes a difference in your child’s achievements?” There was a resounding theme of “Yes, Parental involvement is important for their child’s achievements.” The theme for this question was that parental involvement seems to help the child’s self esteem. As the researcher, I noticed that there was a huge improvement in the student’s behavior as well as self-esteem when the parents were in my classroom as well as when they just asked their child questions about their day. Showing that they seemed to be truly interested in the lives of their child was also extremely helpful.

The overall results for the first survey were that all parents found it very important to be involved in their children’s education. The parents of this particular study would rather not be contacted through memos but rather be contacted personally or with the use of technology like phone and email.
Survey 2

In both classes the second parental involvement survey was handed out through the students mailboxes inside the classroom on Monday, April 19, 2010. Parents were asked to have the surveys completed and returned by Friday, April 30, 2010. After receiving all of the second set of surveys the researchers compiled all of the information and the results are listed below.

The first question asked: “In what ways do you think the study has affected your child?” The overall theme for this question was that parents think that this study affected their child’s language development. Parent one stated that “My son can now speak good English and he speaks more at home and very very active.” Parent eight stated that “He can spell some words, count 1-20, and can read A-Z.” Also for question one on the second survey parent four stated “I hope it make my child aware that their parents are very much concerned about this schooling even at a young age. Lastly parents also claimed that the child and the school are both important.

Question two on survey two was a yes or no question and then parents had to state why they thought yes. The question asked: “Did you notice any difference in your child behaviorally?” Five parents stated yes they saw a difference in their child’s behavior as three parents’ state that they did not see a difference in their child’s behavior. The overall theme for question two was that yes they saw a difference and they saw a difference in their child’s language development. Parent one stated that “He was more verbal about his school day.” Parent two stated “He has been very active and can say a lot of words.”
Parent three stated that “He is much better at playing with friends.” Another theme for question two on survey two was that they could see a difference in their child’s behavior through their social interaction. Parent four stated “I believe my child has benefited most by social interaction.” Parent five stated that “He plays with his little sister at home and try to teach his little sister some of the things you or he learnt at school.” Lastly one parent that stated that they did not see a difference in their child behaviorally went on to say “Not really a change behaviorally but you can certainly tell that he has made new friends.” Both researchers feel that this is a change in the child’s behavior and felt that it should be included.

Question three on survey two asked: “Did you notice any difference in your child academically?” Again this was a yes or no question and parents were asked to explain their reasoning. Six parents answered yes they noticed a difference in their child academically and two parents stated that they did not see a difference in their child academically. The overall theme for this question was that parents felt that there was a difference in their child’s cognitive development through this study. Parent one stated “He has improved a lot.” Parent two stated “He recalled songs and routines more clearly.” Parent three explained “He can write his name, hold scissors.” Parent four said “I believe he has learned more and has become more excited about learning new things.” Parent five stated my child seems to catch on quick since starting school.” Parent six wrote “He can read some story books himself and try to spell.”
Question four was the last question for the second survey and it asked:

“Have you changed your opinion about parental involvement?” This was a yes or no question and then parents needed to explain their answer. The beliefs about parental involvement were that parents believe that parental involvement is, and was critical and valuable to their child. One of the best answers we found for question four was given by parent three which stated that “I believe as a parent you are your child’s first teacher and as that you should be involved in every aspect of your child’s life.” What a great way to state parental involvement.

SUMMARY

Through this study the researchers have learned some of the best ways in communicating with parents and just how important parental involvement is to children. We were able to see that when parents were involved in their child’s education it improved the child’s self esteem, cognitive development, social interaction skills, and overall academics. After collecting all the information from the study we were able to look at the information and come up with themes that best fit our study. That theme is that most parents feel that parental involvement is important to them and that they want the teacher to show them or give them things that they can do with their child at home or as an activity in the classroom.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Parent Involvement Survey #1

School: _______________________________ Date: __________________

Number of Children: ________________ Grade level: ___________

We are working to strengthen partnerships between schools and families in order to help children perform better in school. In order to continue to do so, we would like to collect some information regarding your involvement of your child’s education. There are no right or wrong answers. Please return this survey even if you do not wish to participate. Simply return it in a sealed envelope in the return mailbox in the classroom. Please do not put your name or any other identifying marks on the survey to keep them anonymous.

** Your answers will be kept completely confidential**

1. The best way to communicate with you and/or your family is:

   _______ Personally
   _______ Memos
   _______ E-mail
   _______ Phone

2. What are some of the ways in which you would feel more comfortable getting more involved?

   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

3. Do you think that parental involvement makes a difference in your child’s achievements?

   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
APPENDIX B

Parent Involvement Survey #2

We are greatly appreciative of your cooperation in our survey. We are now closing our study and would like to know your opinion regarding your involvement. Please return this survey even if you did not participate. Simply return it in a sealed envelope in the return mailbox in the classroom. Please do not put your name or any other identifying marks on the survey in order to keep them anonymous.

**Your answers are completely confidential**

1. In what ways do you think this study has affected your child?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

2. Did you notice any difference in your child behaviorally?

Yes___ No____

If so, explain:

____________________________________________________________________

3. Did you notice any difference in your child academically?

Yes___ No____

If so, explain:

____________________________________________________________________

4. Have you changed your opinion about parental involvement?

Yes___ No____

If so, explain:

____________________________________________________________________
Survey 1: Question 2

What are some of the ways in which you would feel more comfortable getting more involved?

- Involved Already
- No Spare Time
- Volunteering/Field trips/Classroom Activities
- Anything
- Parent Invitation From Teacher
- Homework
Survey 2: Question 2

Did you notice any difference in your child behaviorally?

** Most common explanation of the difference in the change of behavior to S2 Q2 was the social benefit, and language development.
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<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8/09</td>
<td>Completed chapter 2-review of literature &amp; Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/28/09</td>
<td>Completed thesis PowerPoint</td>
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<td>9/15/09</td>
<td>Met with Dr. Valentine to go over IRB paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23/09</td>
<td>Surveys completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1/09</td>
<td>IRB approved our thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/4/10</td>
<td>Handed out Parental Consent Forms</td>
</tr>
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<td>1/4/10</td>
<td>Discussed with pre-k students about parents coming into classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/12/10</td>
<td>Handed out Parental Consent Forms Again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/8/10</td>
<td>Parent Survey 1 handed out to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22/10</td>
<td>Handed Parent Survey 1 out again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/19/10</td>
<td>Parent Survey 2 handed out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/10</td>
<td>All surveys completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/10/10</td>
<td>Meet with Dr. Valentine to compile all information</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX E

Parental Consent Form

Parental Involvement in Children’s Education

You and your child are invited to be in a research study of how parental involvement affects children’s education. You and your child were selected for this study as you are families in my pre-kindergarten classroom. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by Dr. Kathleen Valentine, Dana Marie Hanni, and Heather Phippen, students in the Curriculum and Instruction Masters program of SUNY Potsdam.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to find new ways in which educators can get parents involved in the education of their children. The information gained from this study will be used to promote greater parental involvement in the achievement of children in schools.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, we would ask you do the following things: sign a consent form agreeing to participate, complete a survey at the beginning of the study as well as the end, attend one parent/teacher conference in the middle of the study, and volunteer as usual in the classroom. We will ask your child to sign an assent form agreeing to be part of the study. The study will be conducted starting at the end of November and running through the end of February. You will not be required to do anything additional in the classroom during your regular visits. Please continue to work and interact with your child as you would normally.

Benefits of being in the Study:

The benefits to participation are for the instructors to better understand the benefits of your presence in the classroom with your child. Everyone involved in this study will benefit from the information obtained by using it in ways that work best for their child.

If you or your child at any time, feel uncomfortable, you may withdraw from the study without any punitive action.
Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only myself, my partner, and the Principal investigator, Dr. Kathleen M. Valentine will have access to the records. All data will be kept in a locked file at all times.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your current or future relations with SUNY Potsdam, CAPC of Jefferson County, or Calcium Primary. If you and your child decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The principal investigator and co-researchers conducting this study are Dr. Kathleen M. Valentine, Dana M. Hanni, and Heather Phippen. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions later, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Kathleen M. Valentine, Principal Investigator by mail (112 A Satterlee Hall, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676) telephone (315-267-3314) or email (valentkm@potsdam.edu). Dana M. Hanni, Teacher/Researcher by mail (Calcium Primary Central, 25440 Indian River Drive, Calcium, NY 13616) telephone (315-777-3582) or email (dhanni@mail.ircsd.org). You may also contact Heather Phippen, Researcher by mail (736 County Route 56, Potsdam, NY 13676) telephone (315-268-0026) or email (phippe21@potsdam.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you are encouraged to contact Maureen McCarthy, Chair of the SUNY Potsdam Institutional Review Board by mail (Department of Community Health, 100 C Dunn Hall, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY 13668) telephone (315-267-2919) or email (mccartma@potsdam.edu).

Approval by the Provost of SUNY Potsdam and the Institutional Review Board attests only that appropriate safeguards have been included in the research design to protect human participants. This approval does not imply that the College endorses the content of the research or the conclusions drawn from the results of the research.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.
Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow myself and my child to participate in the study.

Child’s Name: ________________________________________________________

Parent’s Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

Signature of Investigator: __________________________ Date: __________
Minor Assent

Parental Involvement in Children’s Education

Your parent or guardian knows we are going to ask you to participate in this project. We want to know how kids are affected by having their parents or guardians in their classroom. It will take three months to complete our project. All that we ask you to do is to come to class and participate in your normal daily schedule. Your parents or guardians may come into our classroom to help us out with projects or other activities and we would like to know if you are alright with that. Your name will not be written anywhere on any surveys or questionnaires that we may give to your parents or guardians. No one will know these answers came from you personally.

If you don’t want to do this, you can stop at any time. There will be no bad feelings if you don’t want to do this. You can ask questions if you do not understand any part of the project.

Do you understand? Is this OK?

Name (Please Print):

___________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Investigator’s Signature: __________________ Date: ________________
Dear Parents,

In a couple of weeks I will be sending home a consent form to ask for your participation in a research study that I will be conducting. I am currently completing my masters program through SUNY Potsdam in Curriculum and Instruction. Through this program we are required to write a thesis. I choose to write my thesis on Parental Involvement in Children’s Education. I would like to gain new information to help me better understand the benefits of having parents involved in their child’s education. I would like to discover new ways in which families can get involved and how the families feel it affects their child from their perspective. I will also have another researcher helping me with this study. Her input will be invaluable since she is an experienced educator in St. Lawrence County and can provide an objective and informed analysis on the study.

Through this study I will not be asking you to do anything more than just coming into our classroom and becoming involved, as you normally would. We will meet at the beginning of the study and discuss ways to become involved in your child’s program and then start the study. There will be a parent/teacher conference in the middle of the study but every family will be asked to sign up for a conference to discuss their child’s development, even if you are not in the study. This study is completely voluntary and all information gained from the study will be kept confidential.

I am hoping that we will discover important insights from this study, and see your child’s development blossom. Please feel free to come to me and ask any questions you may have now or once you receive the consent form.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dana Hanni
APPENDIX H

Parental Involvement Flyer

Parental Involvement: What is it and why should I get involved?

*Parental Involvement*—“Parental involvement is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving students’ academic learning and other school activities.” (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee)

Ramey & Ramey believe that learning is a way of life—not just something that happens in a classroom. “If children see their parents eagerly and actively learning, then children are more likely to feel comfortable in taking on new challenges themselves.” (p. 50)

References


Constantino, S. (2003). *Engaging all families: Creating a positive school culture by putting research into practice* (pp. 9-97) Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.


