

**WHAT ARE THE PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF DAILY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS  
WITHIN A KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM?**

by

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CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

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**ABSTRACT**

With the increasing educational demands and homework assignments within primary grade levels, it is important to understand the different structures and supports, or lack of structures and supports, that parents/guardians implement during homework completion. This study examined the views, beliefs opinions and practices of the parents/guardians in regards to daily homework assignments within a kindergarten classroom and the overall home to school connection/relationship. Data for this study was collected from a parent/guardian survey that asked the participants to reflect on their parental involvement during their children's homework completion. Findings indicated that parents/guardians established homework routines, offered support and assistance as necessary during homework completion and valued the homework assignments as a useful tool for children to understand how and when to complete homework as they become older. Findings also showed that that parents/guardians were made aware of all important happenings within the classroom, curriculum and school and felt comfortable engaging in open means of communication with their children's teacher as necessary.

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## Introduction

Daily homework assignments across different grade levels have been of great debate within our nation for a significant amount of time, especially the amount of homework assigned within primary grade levels such as a kindergarten classroom (Kralovec, 2007). *The Wall Street Journal* highlighted the idea of schools across the country banning homework, forbidding it on certain days and not grading it all together in response to concerned parents due to the overload amount being assigned (Hobbs, 2018). According to Hobbs, “The goal of the changes is to give students more time to read, sleep and spend time with family, especially at the elementary level” (para. 2). With significant push back against elementary homework assignments, I am eager to further understand the different parent perspectives in regards to daily homework assignments within a kindergarten classroom and the overall home to school connection/relationship. In the following chapter, I will I will discuss the rationale and describe my personal interest for conducting my research study of the perceptions of parents/guardians related to daily homework assignments within the kindergarten grade level.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, on average, kindergarten students are spending between 6 and 8 hours a day in a school based setting (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Within that 8-hour period the five and 6-year olds are being exposed to and learning a wealth of social skills and academic curriculum. From learning ways to express their feelings using words to counting objects to 20, fluently adding and subtracting within five and segmenting and blending decodable words, their growing brains are working to the maximum degree. With so much new information being introduced on a daily basis it is crucial that students receive another opportunity that allows them to revisit the topics and concepts taught during the day (Bas, Sentürk & Cigerci, 2017). The authors noted that, “Teachers usually

give their students assignments for several purposes. These purposes can be classified into instructional and non-instructional purposes” (p. 32). In the following chapter, I will outline the problem of mixed parent/guardian perceptions in regards to daily homework assignments within the kindergarten grade level.

### **Parent Involvement in Homework Completion**

Parents who pose negative concerns and beliefs about homework assignments could potentially be negatively influencing their children’s educational careers. Daily homework that is designed around taught language and mathematical concepts and skills could potentially allow kindergarten students to refresh their memories from the day’s learning, practice the focus skill and offer an opportunity for their parents and/or care givers to be engaged and involved in their children’s learning experiences. Without offering mathematics and language homework at the elementary level, specifically kindergarten, the US Department of Education (2005) argued that students will experience a disadvantage due to the lack of a home to school connection, as well as, the lack of reinforcement of the skills and concepts taught within the school day.

Dettmers, Trautwein, Ludtke, Kunter & Baumert (2010) noted that, in order for homework to be an effective approach to strengthening a student’s understanding of a topic, homework needs to be well designed and to offer students the opportunity to navigate through the problems rather than having a consistent cognitive challenge. According to Dettmers, et al.,, “High homework quality thus requires the careful selection and preparation of appropriate and, to some extent, interesting tasks that reinforce classroom learning” (p. 468). Homework assignments need to be thoughtfully designed and implemented in order to reflect the practice from the school instruction, while being clear and concise enough to understand the task once at home (Von Voorhis, 2011). Students at the kindergarten level will solely rely on their parents

and/or care givers to read the directions to them and to offer support and guidance in the completion of the tasks. If parents are unable to understand the homework, this could potentially lead to confusion among the students and to a decrease in homework completion.

Another important aspect to homework assignments within the elementary grade levels revolves around the type of support and guidance that parents and/or caregivers offer their children. According to Gonida and Cortina (2014), parents who are just willingly giving their children answers to problems and not discussing the thinking processes behind the tasks produce detrimental approaches to student learning. The authors commented: “Theory and research suggest that parent involvement in children’s homework is beneficial for learning and achievement only under certain conditions and for particular groups of individuals” (p. 377). When parents are given an opportunity to voice their concerns, provide feedback and evaluate the homework process and completion, they tend to spend more time discussing the homework and problems with their children and offering guided support rather than just answers (Fox, 2016).

In order to further promote parent involvement in the completion of homework practices in hopes of learning more about different parent perspectives, it is ideal for the school/classroom to create a positive home to school relationship with students’ families to the best of their ability Aslan (2016). According to Dettmers, et al. (2010), successful homework implementation revolves around appropriate amounts, thoughtfully and accurately designed formats, meaningful tasks and parent support.

### **Personal Interest**

My interest within this study stems from my own experience as a kindergarten teacher and the desire to fully promote, encourage and support each student’s individual learning ability

through daily homework assignments while also using the assignments as a strengthening component for the home to school connection/relationship. Day after day, the same students are returning thoughtfully completed homework assignments while, on the other hand, others' homework has not been removed from the folder or handed in within days/weeks. This is of particular importance when trying to determine the underlying factors of this behavior. Even though homework design can consist of both instructional and non-instructional purposes, the mixed perspectives from parents in regards to accommodating daily homework assignments versus the push back on daily homework assignments is something that needs to be further understood and addressed.

The main purpose of my study is to further understand parent perspectives on daily homework assignments within a kindergarten classroom. I am interested in understanding the amount and different types of supports parents offer their children during homework completion, if any, and the ways in which their ideas and beliefs in regards to homework shape students' efforts toward homework completion at home. Assigning homework at such an early primary level, the focus of completion relies heavily on parent involvement to read directions, explain the directions to the student and then offer appropriate amounts of support and scaffolding to promote accuracy and completion. My research would reflect and build upon the research of multiple scholars who have also studied the perspectives of parents in regards to daily homework assignments and the general home to school connection/relationship. The difference between past research and my current research will be the setting in which I conduct the study, a kindergarten classroom. Data for this study will be collected through surveys that gather parent feedback in regards to the structure of homework implementation.

The challenge lies within requesting parents to be open and honest about certain components of their child's education. Data for this study was collected through parent surveys in which they will be prompted to answer questions about the different amounts and types of support they offer their children during homework completion, established/non-established routines at home to complete homework and their own personal ideas and beliefs in regards to the home to school connection/relationship and how involved/informed they feel. The next chapter will review the relevant literature in parent perspectives of daily homework assignments and the overall home to school connection/relationship.

## **Review of the Literature**

In the previous chapter, I introduced the desire to further understand the different views parents have in regards to daily homework assignments at a primary level and the overall home to school connection/relationship. My research study will consist of parents/guardians responding to an open-ended survey consisting of 15 questions that will ask each participant to comment on different routines and levels of involvement during homework completion and the different communications between the classroom teacher and parents that are in place. This chapter is intended to review the literature on this topic and see what kind of research has already been done.

## **Parent Perspectives on Daily Homework Assignments at a Primary Level**

Many researchers have investigated the different views and perspectives of parents and guardians and the overall home to school connection/relationship (Froiland, 2011; Madjar, Shklar, and Moshe 2016; Von Voorhis, 2011). In a study conducted by Aslan (2016), a case study design that consisted of 6 teachers, student portfolios, homework assignments, minutes of parent-teacher meetings and semi-structured interviews was implemented in order to assess the different perceptions of parents and the teacher-parent relationship. The results revealed that most parent-teacher relationships had a negative aspect that was reflected in homework effort/completion and that there was a lack of high quality dialogue during parent-teacher conferencing. According to Aslan, “In order to establish a positive and healthy dialogue between teachers and parents, there is a need to supply the family with sufficient information with view to fostering positive results as concerns the surveys of their child, while also gaining their interest and support through elicitation of their desires and expectations” (p. 131). It is evident that without a strong parent-teacher relationship and an understanding of the purpose behind a given

assignment, it will be more difficult to create an established home to school connection/relationship that will be poorly reflected in the parents' attitudes and beliefs in regards to daily homework assignments. In a study conducted by Fox (2016), parent perspectives were evaluated based on different talking points related to homework. The topics included the rate and length of homework, completion time, support offered to the student during completion, homework grades, as well as, types of feedback given by teacher and an overall comment from the parent in regards to assigned homework. 6 families from the same school participated in this study, which represented a total of 6 adults and 13 children. Fox collected data through semi-structured interviews that took place both within an afterschool program and home visits based on the mothers' preferences. Fox reported, "When no teacher feedback was given, homework was seen as a negative use of the child's time and a deterrent to progress" (p. 228). Findings from the interviews indicated that most parents viewed, shared, discussed, handled and completed homework in ways that did not reflect the recommendations given by the teacher. In the following study, Saam and Jeong (2013) examined homework issues from student and parent perspectives with an overall goal to establish a conceptual and applicable model for evaluating homework practices in local schools. Data collected came from a well performing middle school located in the Midwestern state in the United States of America. Data was collected in the form of student/parent surveys, teacher homework philosophies, sample homework assignments and hallway homework charts. Three hundred and thirty nine students and their parents were included in the data survey along with homework information gathered from 34 teachers within the middle school. Upon analyzing the data, Saam and Jeong found mixed perceptions of homework from teachers, parents and students. The teachers displayed a strong need for homework as it serves as an extension to classroom instruction and a form of feedback to

students addressing student knowledge, retention of knowledge and mastery of skills and concepts. Students perceived homework as very to somewhat helpful while there was a mixture of parent perspectives that were both in support of homework policies and practices, while others disagreed with the homework policies. Saam and Jeong noted: “Some parents and students perceived demanding homework assignments as a frequent source of grievance, particularly for those high performing students who want spare time for independent study and cultivation of talents through extracurricular activities” (p. 119). They concluded that, “This study offered the prescription and practices used by teachers in a middle school that proved to be successful on the academic side of cognitive student performance as well as on the affective side of collegiality among teachers, parents and students” (p. 123). This study is a perfect examination of the mixed parent perspectives of homework policies based on each individual home to school connection/relationship and the different routines and practices that are implemented in order for a child to complete his or her homework.

Some investigations unveil positive perceptions of parents in regards to daily homework assignments. Van Voorhis (2011) conducted a two-year longitudinal intervention of Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) homework program within elementary mathematics, middle school language arts and middle school science. Teachers at each school were selected at random in order to implement either the TIPS interactive homework assignments along with other homework or to serve as control teachers and only assign non-interactive homework. TIPS activities, regardless of subject included four common components: a letter to a family partner, various student-led interactions, home to school communication and parent/guardian signature. The completed sample included 575 students in 9 different schools. According to Van Voorhis, “Two-way communications are encouraged in home-to-school communication that invites the

family partner to share comments and observations with teachers about whether the child understood the homework, whether he enjoyed the activity, and whether the parent gained information about the student's classwork" (p. 228). Each year, teachers administered surveys to students and families on attitudes on homework in general and TIPS homework in specific subjects. Van Voorhis concluded that TIPS helped students and family engage positively over homework. Van Voorhis also noted that when students and families reported their attitudes about homework, TIPS students and families reported more positive interactions than did the control group. The following study by Worrell, Roth and Samuels (1999), focused on surveying parents of gifted children who attended a summer program. Using a modified version of the Homework Problem Checklist (Anesko, Schloick, Ramirez, & Levine, 1987), the survey consisted of questions that were related to types of homework, amount of time that was spent on homework, students' attitudes/responses towards the homework given and the amount of time the parent spent assisting the child with homework. Participants consisted of 577 parents of students in kindergarten through Grade 6 who attended a summer program for the academically talented. Parents were also asked to provide an estimate of the amount of homework that should be assigned within a summer program. Data collected from the survey indicated that students were completing homework assignments with few negative comments, a majority of parents supported the program's homework implementation and that parents willingly assisted their children as needed throughout homework completion. Parent involvement was a consistent and constant measure within the primary grade levels but did not seek any adjustment even though the homework load increased as the children grew older. In their study, Madjar, Shklar, and Moshe (2016) included surveys adapted from The Patterns of Learning Scales in order to collect data in regards to homework related roles and attitudes from parents and students. As a result, 110

students and 110 parents, one parent of each student, participated in this study. Surveys for parents included measures of parental goal structure, either mastery goals or performance goals, and demographic information, while student surveys assessed personal achievement goals and perceptions of parents. Through path analysis using structural equation modeling, the researchers concluded that parents' emphasis on mastery goals was associated with student mastery goals, which in turn linked with positive parent perspectives in regards to homework assignment tasks, focus and involvement along with higher achievement in school and a stronger home to school connection/relationship. Parents whose emphasis was placed on performance goals also was associated with student performance goals but had a higher sense of dissonance between home and school. Madjar, et al. noted, "Parents, educators, and researchers should be aware that parental attitudes may directly contribute to children's motivational orientation, in addition to the effect mediated by children's perceptions of their parents" (p. 183). Scott and Glaze (2017) were able to highlight the beliefs from parents that were based around the need and support for traditional homework assignments. This study consisted of parent surveys, teacher focus groups, student interviews, observations, and student work samples in order to understand the views and practices of the new homework implementation of student choice within a Montessori Elementary Charter School. The parent survey questions were modeled after a Likert-type scale for parents to rate the frequency of homework related behaviors and their perceptions of the homework policy on a scale of 1 to 5. A total of 46 parents and guardians responded to the survey. While parent perceptions were generally favorable of the new student choice of homework, some parents were concerned that the new practice delayed their child. In the additional comment section on the survey, parents noted that the new policy lacked the structure and routine their children needed for success. Data also indicated that parents also preferred

teacher assigned homework because it allowed them to better help their child and gave them an inside look at daily instruction. Scott and Glaze's (2017) study found the following:

Although many parents appreciated the freedom of the new homework policy, they also struggled. Many were unsure of what was expected of their child, and some expressed concern about not knowing how their child was performing in school. Several factors contributed to this uncertainty: (a) a lack of communication from the school, (b) differing opinions among teachers regarding what constitutes acceptable homework (e.g., Do after-school activities count?), (c) a lack of communication from teachers regarding overall student progress, and (d) a change from the structured work of the traditional public school setting. (p. 10)

Scott & Glaze's findings indicated that there were mixed feelings among parents in terms of those who supported the new homework style implementation and those who were in support of the previous structure and routine of homework.

In conclusion, this literature suggests that there are mixed results coming from studies of parent perspectives regarding daily homework assignments and the overall home to school connection/relationship. Research indicates that a percentage of parents do not favor daily homework assignments, which is reflected through their role/involvement in their children's homework, along with, their overall perception of the home to school/connection relationship. Research also shows that parents understand the importance of homework assignments and value the different support/routines implemented in order to help their child complete their homework. Research also indicates that parents who are involved in their child's educational career through homework routines and completion tend to have a stronger home to school connection/relationship with their child's teacher. Although there is significant research that

reflects the perceptions of parents who have students in the middle school and high school grade levels, there is not significant data that solely focuses on the early elementary grades such as kindergarten grade level. This gap that still exists in the literature, along with the increasing demand and amount of homework in the primary grade levels had furthered my interest to explore the different perceptions of parents/guardians in regards to daily homework assignments within the kindergarten grade level.

### **Conclusions**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine 12 parents/guardians in the Western New York area and their different perspectives, beliefs and ideas in regards to daily homework assignments at the primary grade level and their overall thoughts about the home to school connection/relationship that reflects within homework assignments. This study is going to narrow the sample and only study parents/guardians of students who are in kindergarten as a specific focus within the primary grade levels. Data will be collected through an open-ended survey that will be administered to the parents/guardians. The primary research questions guiding this study are: What are the ideas, beliefs and perspectives of parents in regards to daily homework assignments within a kindergarten classroom? Do parents feel as if their ideas, beliefs and perspectives are addressed appropriately within their children's education? Along with this, do parents feel well informed and prepared enough to help their children complete daily homework assignments? The next chapter will describe the methods with which the study was conducted, the participants, setting and a description of the data collection and analysis procedures.

## **Methodology**

My proposed study is based on understanding the different perceptions, views and beliefs parents and guardians from a kindergarten class have in regards to daily homework assignments. I based my review of the literature on finding parent perspectives in regards to different types and amounts of homework, as well as, home to school connections/relationships. Overall the research gave both positive and negative perspectives from parents towards homework assignments and home to school connections/relationships.

The following chapter will detail the different procedures for my study. During this research, I surveyed 12 parents/guardians from a kindergarten class that reflected the different perspectives pertaining to daily homework assignments and the home to school connections/relationships. This study aimed to build a stronger understanding of the different attitudes and beliefs from parents towards daily homework assignments within a specific primary grade level, kindergarten. This study also allowed a closer look at the different depths of home to school connections/relationships and the positive/negative reflections from each surveyed parent.

## **Research Frameworks**

The research curiosity acknowledged above appealed for a project design constructed on the foundational principles of qualitative research. As Johnson & Christensen (2016) stated, “Qualitative research uses a wide- and deep-angle lens, examining human choice and behavior as it occurs naturally in all of its detail” (p. 35). In order to further understand the different parent perceptions towards daily homework assignments in the kindergarten setting, it was beneficial to model the Grounded Theory approach in order to collect and reflect on the data gathered from the survey that was built into the study (Johnson & Christensen). The qualitative approach to this study allowed me as the researcher to understand the opinions and motivation experienced by

families as they developed a routine, or lack of routine, for helping their child complete daily homework assignments. A quantitative approach would not have been suitable for this study due to the underlying reason of the study, which was to further understand the different parent perspectives towards daily homework assignments and the home to school connections/relationships within the kindergarten grade level. There was not any data from the surveys that was quantitative in nature.

### **Research Setting**

In order to research parent perceptions of daily homework assignments within a kindergarten setting, I knew that I would need to base my study on a school that had multiple kindergarten classrooms in hopes of having one class allow the research to take place. The school I used for my investigation has a total of 551 elementary students, with 72 of those students being kindergarten students. My research survey was distributed within one kindergarten classroom from an elementary school in a rural village in Western New York State.

The school I used for the research project has about 71% female students and 29% males (NYSED Report Card). When it comes to the ethnicity, 71% of students are white, 8% of them are Hispanic/Latino, 14% American Indian, and 7% multiracial (NYSED Report Card). In the entire school, approximately 55% percent of the students are eligible for free lunch and 7% eligible for reduced lunch. I chose to research one kindergarten classroom that consisted of 10 girls and 6 boys (NYSED Report Card).

### **Sampling Procedures**

The school I used for my research project has four kindergarten classes and one transitional kindergarten class. In order to determine the class that I wanted to use, I had to consider the class size of each classroom and the willingness of each teacher to allow the

research to be conducted. I also used purposeful sampling methods in order to determine participation. I wanted the classrooms to be diverse in terms of lengths of the times that parents/guardians had been involved with this school, different combinations of parents/guardians, as well as, multiple, differently structured families in order to gather data from multiple different viewpoints. For this study, multiple, differently structured families refers to parents, guardians, single mothers, step mothers/dads, etc.

The kindergarten classroom that participated in my study was chosen because it contained the largest class size and the teacher had no hesitations about granting permission for the survey to be distributed to the families' of the students within her classroom.

My participants included 12 parents/guardians of students who were receiving daily kindergarten homework assignments. Out of the 12 participating families, responses were gathered from four families consisting of biological parents, four families consisting of biological mothers and step dads, two families consisting of biological fathers and step moms, one family consisting of a single mother and one family where the grandparents are the legal guardians for the student.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

There was one main data point collected for this study – an open-ended survey that was sent home to the families within the chosen kindergarten class that were willing to participate in the study. Surveys were a great tool to implement for this data collection as they are designed to gather information that reflects the characteristics of a population which can then be further analyzed and understood (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). This survey contained questions that were related to the parents'/guardians' beliefs about homework implementation at the kindergarten grade level, their opinions on the effectiveness of the homework, the type of

support they offered their child to complete homework, description of the daily homework routine, if any, and any frustrations or success they witnessed during homework completion (see Appendix A for the survey protocol).

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The data from the survey mentioned above was analyzed through the process of open coding (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). Within this analysis, I repeatedly reviewed the survey responses in order to segment the data into meaningful terminologies and describing them in short words and/or phrases. The codes were created using highlighters, sticky notes, concepts maps and general notes in margins in order to help create a connection within the data for myself as the researcher. After these codes were established they then were further segmented into reoccurring themes, language, opinions, beliefs and suggestions (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This process of further analyzing the information and codes helped to create an outline for the presentation of the collected data, as well as a cohesive manner in which to present the data. The described data collection, coding rationale, incorporation of categories, and extraction of data and construction of theory represent characteristics of the research framework, Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as stated in Johnson & Christensen, 2016). The data collected from the survey offered an opportunity to continually learn about the different parent/guardian perceptions as it was continually examined to formulate different ideas and categorizations among the responses to develop a tentative grounded theory.

### **Alternative Approaches**

During the process of creating the proposed study, I examined multiple different ideas for data collection and further investigation. For example, I initially thought to conduct observations of families during their homework completion routines after school. After further thoughts, I

realized that this approach might lead towards skewed data as the families might purposely conduct their routines in a specific way knowing that a kindergarten teacher, who also implements the daily homework and proposed the study, was there observing the interactions and completion process. By collecting data through a survey, parents/guardians had the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns in a private manner without any outside influences controlling or limiting their responses.

### **Conclusion**

By engaging the proposed data collection components and analysis strategies related to the qualitative framework of Grounded Theory, I hoped to further my understanding of the different parent/guardian perceptions related to daily homework assignments within the kindergarten grade level. In the next chapter I will discuss the results of this research study. My survey data indicated whether parents had a generally negative or positive perception of daily homework assignments in the kindergarten grade level. I also used the results from the surveys from each parent/guardian in order to further understand the different routines, or lack of routines, that were established for homework completion and the degree to which a home to school connection/relationship was established/present within survey responses.

## **Results**

The previous chapter discussed the methods taken to obtain the results for my study. I administered an open ended survey to each parent/guardian within a kindergarten classroom in order to further understand parent perceptions in regards to daily homework assignments and the overall home to school connection/relationship. This chapter will establish the results gained from the parent/guardian survey.

## **Surveys**

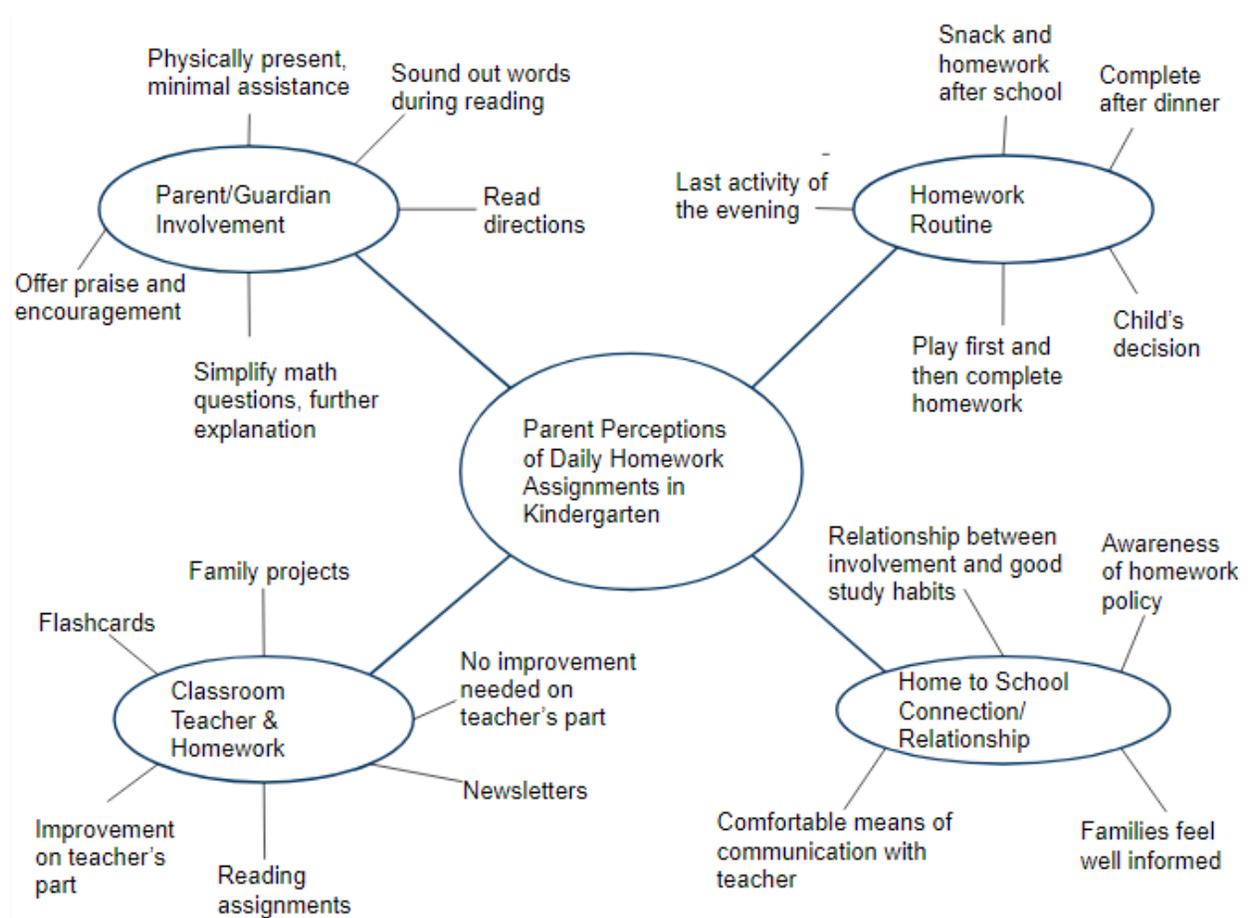
Each parent survey was thoroughly reviewed and analyzed through open coding in order to establish common themes among the responses. Upon return of each survey, I read through responses in order to generate initial thoughts on the organization of data. I first noted portions of responses that were directly related to the question asked and crossed off information that did not fully reflect the question asked. This first step allowed me to focus on responses that were specifically related to not only the question asked, but also my personal stated research questions.

After initial noting of all surveys, I then went through all responses and wrote within each margin the key ideas presented in each response. Key ideas referred to words and phrases that I felt best summarized the response for each question throughout each survey. These words and phrases allowed me to develop the first set of codes that were used to identify reoccurring opinions and similarities in parent responses. After further identification and classifying of codes, I then relied on different color highlighters in order to group responses based on similarities/differences for each question. These highlighted responses were then copied into an Excel spreadsheet in order to present all responses for each question in a grouped and organized manner according to specific codes.

I then used the grouped data within the spreadsheet in order to create multiple graphic organizers that clearly outlined the parent perceptions in regards to daily homework assignments within the kindergarten grade level and the overall home to school connection/relationship.

This process of open coding and further analyzing responses resulted in the development of four different themes that were present in the survey responses. Below in Figure 1, is the final version of the graphic organizer that displays the classification and categorization of the four different themes with further explanation in the text that follows.

**Figure 1**



### **Homework Routine**

All parents/guardians were able to identify a routine that was clearly established and described within each response. Although routines were established, the characteristics of the routines varied greatly from household to household. Some parents/guardians, for example, allowed their children to play first before completing homework, while some waited until after dinner to tackle homework assignments. Some parents/guardians described routines in which the children would come home, grab a quick snack and complete homework assignments before participating in any other activity, while others responded that homework was completed at the end of the evening after all other activities had taken place. P/G 11, for example, noted, “ Student A will come home after school and grab a snack from the pantry and then sit down at the kitchen table with her school folder. She will take out important papers and start homework.” More than one parent/guardian also stated that they let their children decide when they were ready to start/finish homework assignments as long as it was within a reasonable time frame. P/G 7 stated that, “My child will come home from school and feel out the rest of the evening for himself. If he is tired after school, he waits to do homework until a little later. But, if he is in a good mood and eager to play or watch a movie then he decides to get it done and over with right away.” Although as expressed above, children were exposed to a variety of different structured homework routines, each survey response indicated that a homework routine was existent and implemented daily within their household.

One perception that was unclear involved what the parents were actually considering to be counted as homework assignments. One question on the survey asked parents to identify the amount of homework their children received every night. Responses varied from just one sheet

of mathematics homework as the only assignment to one to two sheets of mathematics homework along with sight word flashcards and two “steps” of reading, which refers to the number of books read each night.

### **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

Parents/guardians presented responses that indicated that they were involved in their children’s completion of homework in a variety of ways and degrees. One parent/guardian noted that she is physically present during homework time, but most of the time her child does not rely on her for any help other than reading directions. Other parent/guardian involvement consisted of simplifying mathematics questions, helping their children sound out words during reading homework, offering encouragement and praise to keep working, working through a problem step by step with their children and offering assistance and clarification as needed. For instance, P/G 8 said that, “With my kindergartener is a lot of ‘Sound it out.’ He needs no help with math unless it involves drawing objects/shapes. We are very present during homework time but our children don’t necessarily need us. We also talk about our day(s) while at the table doing homework.” Parents/guardians also noted that different types of homework required more or less support than others. All parents/guardians were able to note that their help and assistance during homework completion would help their children to develop good study habits in one way or another and promote general success within their educational journeys. P/G 12 specifically stated that, “We sit in a quiet area, free from distraction and keep working until the assignment is finished. I think that our routine will help him learn how and where to get his homework done when he is older.” Parents expressed their different levels of involvement during homework completion and noted the many supports and strategies that they utilized in order to help their children complete their

homework. Every parent who participated in this survey was physically present during homework time and actively involved in one form or another.

### **Classroom Teacher & Homework**

The survey consisted of multiple questions that reflected on the types of opportunities the classroom teacher provided for parent involvement during homework assignments and the ways in which the teacher could improve parent involvement in homework assignments. Parents commented on Family Homework Projects that consisted of fun activities that their family worked on together such as “Disguise the Turkey” and “Leprechaun Trap,” nightly reading assignments that required the student to read a book at their personal reading level and then for the child to pick a story for the parent to read aloud and flash cards. Along with weekly newsletters that are sent home to families with an overview of the week to come, and the different aspects of kindergarten students not being able to fully read/understand directions independently yet, which automatically involves the parent/guardian in the completion process. Below are a few specific responses from parents that were included in the surveys when asked to comment on opportunities for parent involvement during homework.

P/G 1 stated that, “We are assigned as the support reader. We are engaging in books. I get to help read his math and complete it together.”

P/G 2 stated that, “Incorporating projects-like the Leprechaun Trap. It required family help and was fun and engaging for both my child and our family”

P/G 3 stated that, “Gives us a newsletter at the start of each week telling us what they are doing.”

One parent/guardian noted that she did not believe that it was the teacher's responsibility to create opportunities for involvement during homework assignments. As the parent/guardian, she felt that if their children had homework, it was their job to involve themselves.

When asked for the ways that the classroom teacher could improve her efforts of parent involvement in homework assignments, a lot of responses were focused around mathematics homework completion. Parents/guardians recommended sending home examples of certain problems in order for the problem/task to be understood by the parent and to be able to offer the appropriate support to their children and provide more interactive homework assignments that require two people such as a memory or guess/clue game. Some responses did indicate that the teacher is already doing a great job of providing multiple opportunities and guidelines for parental involvement during homework completion:

P/G 4 stated that, "Provide interactive assignments that require parent involvement, like a game or something that involves two people."

P/G 5 stated that, "I think she does great for their grade level."

### **Home to School Connection/Relationship**

Several questions within the survey targeted different aspects of the general sense the parents/guardians felt in regards to the home to school connection/relationship. All parents/guardians were able to note that they were aware of their children's homework policy to a certain extent. Some knew specifics, while others noted just to be sure everything was completed and turned in by the weekend. If there was a question on homework, most parents/guardians felt comfortable enough to contact the teacher first with any questions pertaining to homework assignments or to connect with another parent of a child within the class. In terms of communication, families felt well informed of weekly topics/activities due to

newsletters and were able to comment on the relationship between their involvement within their children's homework completion and good study habits. P/G 6, for example, stated that, "Weekly newsletters help to keep us inform of upcoming activities at the school, important dates and provide information about what he students will be learning/working on throughout the week." Parent/guardians were able to express that they were well aware of events and curriculum taking place within their children's classroom due to various communication pieces put in place by the classroom teacher.

Overall the parent/guardian surveys provided me with a great deal of information in regards to the different attitudes, beliefs, routines and opinions that were related to daily homework assignments within a kindergarten grade level. Survey responses also gave me a sense of the general home to school connection/relationship that was established and the ways in which it was implemented through various assignments, activities, newsletters and other means of communication from the teacher.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter shows the results collected from the parent/guardian perception surveys. The responses from the surveys gave me insights into the different perceptions that parents/guardians had in regards to daily homework assignments within the kindergarten grade level. It also presented me with an overview of parent attitudes towards the general home to school connection/relationship.

In the next chapter, I will analyze and discuss my results. I will also mention disclaimers as to the limitations of my study and the dynamics that could have altered the results of my methods.

## Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to further understand the different parent perceptions in regards to daily homework assignments within a kindergarten classroom and the overall home to school/relationship. The present findings showed that parents/guardians were able to identify and explain their children's homework routine in which they completed homework and offered diverse amounts of assistance to their children based on the amount of needed support for different homework tasks. The present findings also indicated that parents/guardians were well informed of activities and curriculum taking place within the classroom and had comfortable open means of communication with the teacher if/when necessary. Although parents/guardians were well informed, they did offer responses that requested modifications to homework assignments to include tasks that required two people to complete, such as games and other activities in order to increase parent/guardian involvement and examples to go along with various mathematics homework problems. These results are rather consistent with previous research that highlighted parents/guardians (a) valuing daily homework assignments (Garn, Matthews, & Jolly 2010; Madjar, Shklar, & Moshe 2016; Worrell, Roth & Samuels 1999), (b) offering support and guidance as needed during completion (Samm & Jeong 2013), (c) commenting on an established home to school connection/relationship (Aslan, 2016; Von Voorhis, 2011) and (d) offering suggestions for modifications to homework practices (Fox, 2016; Scott & Glaze 2017). Current findings extend the perceptions of daily homework assignments in a new parent/guardian population, geographic location, and grade level (i.e., kindergarten). In the next chapter I will examine the significance of parent/guardian perceptions in regards to daily homework assignments and the overall home to school connection/relationship.

### **Homework Routine**

Within survey responses, I was able to conclude that all parents/guardians had a homework routine in place for their children that consisted of a few different structures. As all households are very diverse and dynamic, it is important to note that parents/guardians were making sure all components of homework were completed on a nightly basis. Whether homework was completed directly after school, after dinner or as the last activity of the evening, children were being exposed to a constant and consistent method of homework completion. One conflicting response was in regards to the amount of homework the students received on a daily basis. I am curious as to whether parents/guardians considered some elements of homework, such as reading; for example, if it took place before bedtime in order to account for their required two steps a night, part of their daily home life routine rather than homework routine and did not include that within the number of homework assignments per night. Even with the varied responses and structures of routines, these different methods provided children with a sense of responsibility for completion, time management skills and exposure to routines and expectations, which are important qualities to display throughout the duration of any and all educational journeys (Ramdass and Zimmerman, 2011). With a big emphasis on routines, it was evident that homework was valued within each child's household due to the time and methods that were set aside for completion.

### **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

Parent/guardian involvement was another component that varied within each perception. The variance most likely occurred due to the different supports and assistance each individual child needed rather than to meet the sole objective/task of the homework assignment. While some parents were consistently providing clarification and prompts, others were simply waiting

until the children acknowledged that they needed assistance. The main takeaway from the different levels of involvement was the presence of the parents/guardians during homework completion and the support that they offered in order to help their children successfully complete the assignment/task. As kindergarten students are still learning to navigate the amount of homework and improve their basic reading and comprehension skills, it is important for parents/guardians to be involved and engaged in order to read directions, provide clarification and offer support/guidance as needed, as their kindergarten student are likely to be unable to independently complete all assignments. Parent/guardian involvement within the primary grade level for homework completion was rather consistent and constant (Worrell, Roth & Samuels 1999).

### **Classroom Teacher & Homework**

Multiple parents/guardians commented on the implementation of Family Homework Projects as great opportunities to be involved. I believe this was rather common among responses due to the “fun side” of homework these projects entailed. Projects where children were able to display their creativity, engage in conversations, brainstorm with family members during completion of the tasks and take a break from homework that was repetitive in nature, such as mathematics worksheets received the most positive feedback from parents/guardians (Von Vooris 2011).

Comments in terms of areas of improvement were targeted around mathematics worksheets in which parents seemed to be needing more clarification as to the ways to go about solving the problem or displaying the answer as they requested examples to follow. If the children were unable to explain to their parents/guardians the steps that they took in school during mathematics in order to answer the problem or display their thinking process, this could

become rather confusing for the parents to try and help formulate correct responses. It did seem odd that parents would find mathematics homework to be confusing or challenging at this grade level, but the requests for examples to follow indicated that it was probably the representation of the answering or solving process they needed clarification on, rather than the actual comprehension of the problems. Allowing parents to voice their concerns and comments in regards to improved efforts pertaining to homework assignments can allow the teacher to self-reflect on previous practices. Recommendations and comments could then be taken into consideration for future tasks and assignments in order to meet the needs of parents/guardians and students (Scott & Glaze 2017).

### **Home to School Connection/Relationship**

Overall, there seemed to be a very positive and ongoing home to school connection/relationship that was implemented within this specific kindergarten classroom. From the teacher providing the classroom families with newsletters and offering open means of communication, families in turn were well aware of activities taking place, different topics of learning that were going to be covered, and were provided with contact information for the teacher if there were any questions/concerns. This positive relationship was also reflected through the comments that indicated completion of daily student and family homework assignments. These specific survey responses gave further insight into the different benefits that can be associated with establishing and implementing different components of home to school connections/relationships for not only the children, but the families as well (Crosnoe, 2012; Aslan, 2016).

## **Limitations**

Although present findings were closely related to previous research findings, enlightening and thought provoking, there are a few imperative limitations to take into consideration when interpreting these findings. First, the study was only conducted within one kindergarten class in one specific geographic location. This constraint limited diverse responses that would have been represented through various parents/guardians within a wide range of kindergarten classrooms.

Secondly, this study was conducted for a short duration of time and only one data point was collected during this study. The short time frame represented perceptions of parents/guardians within a two-week time frame, rather than perceptions that were formulated and obtained over a longer period of time, for example, from the start of the school year to the very end. Therefore, it is not appropriate to conclude that the same perceptions would have been obtained over a longer duration of time.

Thirdly, including only one point of data collection through an open ended survey could have portrayed misleading responses due to parents/guardians not fully understanding the stated questions or the formulation of responses. Also, including another data point, such as an interview, would have allowed for another opportunity for clarification of responses and a cross reference of responses.

Finally, study implications were masked by the fact that the investigator could not verify that all responses were completely accurate in regards to truthful comments and descriptions in regards to homework routines, parent/teacher areas of improvement and the different types and amounts of supports that each parent/guardian noted they offered.

### **Further Investigation**

Therefore, further research should include a wide range of geographic locations. As homework policies and assignments change from district to district and classroom to classroom, it would be interesting to see if any negative/positive correlations were to arise between the amount of homework and negative/positive perceptions. Multiple kindergarten classrooms should also be surveyed upon further investigation in order to compare the different components of curriculum that are being assigned as homework, as well as, noting the different ability levels that are present within the homework assignments. A longer duration of study would be ideal upon further investigation in order to get a broader scope of the homework assignments throughout an entire school for example rather than a few weeks. The degree and amount of homework can easily vary from the start to the end of the school year and it would be interesting to note whether parent/guardians perceptions remained the same or also fluctuated as the assignments fluctuated. More than one collection of data should also be taken into consideration for further investigation, such as an observational component, in order to prompt further validation of responses and to include a “hands-on” approach within the study. The modifications noted above for further investigation would help to account for diverse perceptions and multiple data points to analyze and cross reference.

### **Conclusions**

In summary, this study examined the different parent/guardian perceptions in regards to daily homework assignments within a kindergarten classroom and the overall home to school connection/relationship in a rural school district in Western New York. Current findings indicated that parents/guardians established homework routines, offered support and assistance as necessary during homework completion and valued the homework assignments as a useful

tool for children to understand how and when to complete homework as they become older. Current findings also indicated that parents/guardians were made aware of all important happenings within the classroom, curriculum and school and felt comfortable engaging in open means of communication with their children's teacher as necessary. With the ever increasing demands of elementary education, this study provides a lens for teachers to develop a better understanding of the different attitudes, beliefs and concerns parents/guardians have in regards to daily homework assignments in the kindergarten grade level and the overall home to school connection/relationship. This further insight could then be targeted towards implementing strategies and techniques in order to provide parents with appropriate amounts of involvement and information within their children's homework assignments and overall education to continue to promote a positive and engaging learning experience for all.

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11. How could your child's classroom teacher improve their efforts of parent involvement within homework assignments?

12. How could your help and support during homework completion promote your child's general success within school?

13. If your child makes a mistake on their homework, please explain your efforts, if any, you would go about in correcting the mistake.

14. Do you think you can improve your efforts and support during your child's homework completion? If so, how?

15. Do you have any other questions or comments you would like to express?

## Appendix B: Consent Form

**Informed Consent****Protocol Title:**

What are the parent perceptions of daily homework assignments within an elementary classroom?

*Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.*

**Purpose of the research study:**

To explore the different perceptions of parents/guardians of kindergarten students in regards to daily homework assignments. The investigator of this study plans to distribute surveys to a group of current parents of kindergarten students to gain insight on their perceptions of daily homework assignments and their involvement levels in completing the homework assignments.

**What you will be asked to do in the study:**

To respond to a survey that is composed of open ended questions.

**Time Required:**

Time required to complete the survey is individual to each participant. Surveys will be collected two weeks after distribution.

**Compensation:**

There is no compensation for participating in the study.

**Confidentiality:**

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by the law.

**Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no disadvantage for not participating.

**Right to withdraw from the study:**

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

**Potential Benefits and Risks:**

The main risk proposed by this study is asking parents to candidly speak about their experiences with Silver Creek Elementary. Following this investigation, participants will be allowed to read the research and discover the different views, opinions, concerns and

routines from other parents within their child's class in relation to daily homework assignments. This investigation will add to the growing research of parent perceptions in regards to daily elementary homework assignments. It is possible that the survey could serve as a means of reflection on daily homework assignments and connections could potentially be made between the amounts of parent involvement during homework completion to positive/negative perceptions. Only survey responses relevant to the research question will be included in the final research paper. Comments made about other classrooms, students, teachers or schools will not be a part of the final paper.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**

Jessica Vara

Email: [jvara@silvercreekschools.org](mailto:jvara@silvercreekschools.org)

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**

Dr. Judith Horowitz

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Research and Faculty Development

Maytum Hall 805

[Judith.horowitz@fredonia.edu](mailto:Judith.horowitz@fredonia.edu)

(716) 673-4708

**I have read the procedure outlined above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and have received a copy of this description.**

---

*Participant's signature*

---

*Date*

---

*Principal investigator's signature*

---

*Date*

**Recruitment Letter Script:**

Dear Participant: I am a student in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at SUNY Fredonia. In preparation for my final thesis project, I am gathering data on the experiences and opinions of kindergarten parents and guardians in regards to the daily homework assignments. I would like to invite you to participate in a survey that will address questions on your comments/concerns regarding daily homework assignments, the routine in which you have established for your child to complete their homework, as well as, the amount and type of support you offer your child during homework completion. While the survey may be filled out on your own time at your convenience, I do ask that they be completed and returned within two weeks of distribution. Your participation is solely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, no form of compensation will be available. Your confidentiality during the project is guaranteed.

## Appendix C: IRB Human Subjects Approval



19 January 2019

Jessica Abendschein  
c/o Robert Dahlgren, Ph.D.  
Curriculum and Instruction  
College of Education  
Thompson Hall  
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Re: Abendschein —What are the Parent Perceptions of Daily Homework  
Assignments Within an Elementary Classroom

Your research project using human subjects has been determined Category 1, Exempt, under the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, 46.101, Subpart A (b) (1) and/or (2). This document is your approval and your study titled "What are the Parent Perceptions of Daily Homework Assignments Within an Elementary Classroom" may proceed as described, beginning on **February 1, 2019 and ending February 15, 2019.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith M. Horowitz".

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs  
and Faculty Development  
Human Subjects Administrator

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Appendix D: Citi Human Subjects Training

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS\***

\* NOTE: Scores on this [Requirements Report](#) reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Jessica Abendschein (ID: 7002276)
- **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- **Institution Email:** aben0798@fredonia.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Education
- **Phone:** 716-673-3111

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Group 1.
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 26222560
- **Completion Date:** 16-Feb-2018
- **Expiration Date:** 16-Feb-2020
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score\*:** 87

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives (ID: 14080)	16-Feb-2018	3/3 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	16-Feb-2018	3/4 (75%)
Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
SUNY Fredonia State College (ID: 587)	16-Feb-2018	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: [www.citi-program.org/verify/7k21d58480-1943-4aa1-9f72-da30aa398668-26222560](http://www.citi-program.org/verify/7k21d58480-1943-4aa1-9f72-da30aa398668-26222560)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)  
 Email: [support@citi-program.org](mailto:support@citi-program.org)

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**

**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2  
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\***

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Jessica Abendschein (ID: 7002276)
- **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- **Institution Email:** aben0798@fredonia.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Education
- **Phone:** 716-673-3111

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Group 1.
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 26222560
- **Report Date:** 22-Feb-2018
- **Current Score\*\*:** 87

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
SUNY Fredonia State College (ID: 587)	16-Feb-2018	No Quiz
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	16-Feb-2018	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	16-Feb-2018	3/4 (75%)
Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives (ID: 14080)	16-Feb-2018	3/3 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)	16-Feb-2018	4/5 (80%)

**For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.**

Verify at: [www.citi-program.org/verify?k21d58480-1943-4aa1-9f72-da30aa398668-26222560](http://www.citi-program.org/verify?k21d58480-1943-4aa1-9f72-da30aa398668-26222560)

**Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)**  
 Email: [support@citi-program.org](mailto:support@citi-program.org)  
 Phone: 888-529-5929  
 Web: <https://www.citi-program.org>