A SURVEY OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS CONCERNING PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILD’S EDUCATION

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the opinions and perceptions of teachers and parents concerning what parent involvement look like in their child’s education. The research includes findings that answer the questions, “Do parents and teachers have a difference in opinion when it comes to what parent involvement in schools should look like?”, “Would parents become more involved in their child’s education if they were personally invited to do so by a teacher?” and “Would parents become more involved in their child’s education if they were informed of what a teacher’s expectation of involvement was?”. There were two surveys conducted, both were conducted anonymously. One was conducted for parents via a paper survey distributed by classroom teachers during parent teacher conferences. The second survey was distributed via Survey Monkey to all teachers in the building. The findings were analyzed through Microsoft Excel and A Statistical Program (ASP) software. The results of the survey concluded that the majority of parents and teachers do agree on what parent involvement is and how important it is. There are some outlying parents who disagree with certain aspects of parent’s involvement and there is a need for teachers to continue defining and communicating with parents about what involvement is and what it should look like.
Introduction

Background, Issues and Concerns

Concerns have been expressed by the teachers of an elementary school in the Midwest regarding the involvement of parents in and out of school hours. In order for a student to be successful the student needs to be working on school work both at school and at home. It is important to ensure that students are supported both at school and at home with positive reinforcement and assistance when needed. This project will involve a survey of parents and teachers to help clarify communication and involvement expectations from both parties so that teachers in this building are able to provide the proper information to parents in regards to how they can help their student. If parents feel they need more information in order to support their child at home, teachers will be able to alter the information they provide and be more supportive of parents in the following years. If there is a difference of opinion between teachers and parents on what involvement is, teachers can alter their expectations to more realistic parental involvement goals and find ways to involve parents using parent definitions of involvement.

Practice under Investigation

The practice under investigation is parent involvement in an elementary school classroom and the amount of direction a teacher should give a parent on specific involvement.
School Policy to be Informed by Study

Teachers are expected to keep the lines of communication between themselves and the parents of their classrooms open throughout the school year. Teachers are expected to inform parents of what is going on in the classroom and to involve parents in any way possible throughout the year. Teachers are expected to report grades to parents on a quarterly basis and are often encouraged to send work home for students to complete in order to enhance their classroom knowledge. However, there is a lack of parent involvement with ensuring homework is completed and/or returned, a lack of return on communication and a lack of participation in the classroom from all parents in a specific class.

Conceptual Underpinning

Students are most successful when there is a three way partnership between a student, parent and teacher. We know that teachers support and encouragement in the classroom is important and vital to student success, but that isn’t always enough for student success. Motivation that comes from a parent is unique and can’t be replaced by other adult figures. When parents are involved in conversations with students about their learning they are showing their child they believe school is important. It is recognized that parents and teachers have a difference in opinion when it comes to what involvement is. The views of teachers and parents in regards to involvement don’t always match up. It is a goal of this project to find commonalities between parents and teachers in the area of involvement in order to improve the partnership between parents and teachers.
Statement of the Problem

There is a lack of knowledge about what parents and teachers consider to be involvement in a child’s education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to gain further knowledge about what makes parents become involved in their child’s school/classroom, what parents consider to be involved and what teachers can do to increase parent participation in each child’s education. This study will help teachers plan and prepare for the different ways they can involve parents in their classrooms in order to maximize student achievement.

Research Question(s)

RQ1: Do parents and teachers have a difference in opinion when it comes to what parent involvement in schools should look like?

RQ2: Would parents become more involved in their child’s education if they were personally invited to do so by a teacher?

RQ3: Would parents become more involved in their child’s education if they were informed of what a teacher’s expectation of involvement was?
Null Hypotheses

**Ho:** Parents and Teachers do not have a difference of opinion when it comes to what parent involvement in schools should look like.

**Ho:** Parents would not become more involved in their child’s education if they were personally invited to do so by a teacher?

**Ho:** Parents will not become more involved in their child’s education if they are informed of a teacher’s expectation of involvement is.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

This study will improve teacher’s understanding of what they can do to involve parents in their classrooms. The result of this student will provide teachers with more insight into why parents do or don’t become involved in their classrooms.

Definition of Terms

Communication: written note, e-mail or verbal conversation in person or via phone.

Involvement: participating with student in learning/progress or presence at school functions as well as communicating with teacher.

Summary
This research is designed to help define parents and teachers opinions of what it means to be involved in their child’s education. This research will also help compare the opinions of teachers versus parents regarding parent involvement. As a final point, this research will help determine if parents feel that there is a need for teachers to inform them on what parent involvement is and when it is needed for the students.
Review of Literature

There are many different ways parents choose to be involved in schools. There are also many ways teachers expect parents to be involved with their child’s education. These two views don’t always match and these parties don’t always hold equal expectations. There are barriers of involvement in relation to family demographics, but there are also strategies that can increase parents’ self-efficacy and comfort level. These strategies can increases parent’s willingness to participate and understanding of how to be effectively involved with their child’s learning. There are many ideas that stem from research with Epstein’s Model for Parental Involvement. (C. Kuzin, K. Pedro, J. Smith & P. Wohlstetter. 2011).

Involvement benefits children, school, staff and family. The benefits and challenges of parent involvement in the classroom can vary. Epstein’s framework for parent involvement places the majority of responsibility on teachers to provide families with a multitude of opportunities for parents to be involved in the classroom. There are many ideas and suggestions that teachers can implement to support their families involvement in the classroom. (J. Morrison, P. Storey, & C. Zhang. 2011).

There is a study that evaluates the success of students in comparison to their student involvement. The writers of this study believe the motivation that comes from parents is unique and can’t be replaced by other adult figures. They based this study on the idea that children want to gain student approval through their academic successes which heightens their engagement in class. The study showed that when parents are involved in conversations about school, help with homework, conversations with teachers and events at school, they are showing their child that
they believe that school is important, an belief that is then passed on the student. (C. Cheung & E. Pomerantz. 2012).

It is difficult to define what parent involvement is as well as determine if teacher or parent perceptions can predict the amount of communication or involvement that takes place. Another study took data from parents and teachers to help define what these things are and the study found that neither teacher nor parent perceptions can predict involvement or communication. The result of this study provided the conclusion that parent involvement is defined as a parent’s direct participation with their children on educational pursuits. This could be attending events, helping with homework or having conversations with their children about school/academics. (P. Nimisha, & S. Sharon, 2009).

Parent involvement is an effective tool used to increase student achievement. Schools struggle with how to effectively involve parents each and every year. There is often a struggle of how to involve parents of low economic status. Parent involvement requires additional time and money which are resources that aren’t as readily available to parents of low economic status. The Epstein Model is frequently put in place as a way to increase parent involvement in urban elementary schools. There was yet another study which showed that Epstein’s Model is a beneficial model to follow to increase parent participation, particular with low income families. One of the biggest successes of this model in regards to this study was the parent groups that were put in place so parents could offer each other support. (H. Bower & D. Griffin. 2011).

One specific school that is implementing the steps of Epstein’s Model for the first time focused on the partnership between teachers and parents in regards to
early literacy instruction. They recognize that parent involvement comes in different forms and the partnership between the school and parent is an essential piece of student success. They implemented workshops for parents and teachers to attend together to work toward student success. This was their first attempt with implementing Epstein’s Model and they found great success with it. (B. Heng, W. D. 2008).

In another research study, the goal was to dig deeper into what makes parents become involved with their child’s learning and in what ways can this involvement be improved. This study focused on two title I middle schools. Parent Involvement and Teacher communication practices were measured via a survey. Parent and teacher perceptions of student ability were also measured to decipher if this had any effect on involvement. Results found that parent perception did not predict involvement and teacher perception did not predict involvement. (S. Sharon, & P. Nimisha. 2009).

Social workers are a key piece of the parent involvement puzzle, particularly in low income districts. Social workers should implement programs with community based partnerships that empower parents. Social workers who implement these programs have the most success in bridging the gaps between schools and families because parents are provided the opportunity to build their self-esteem and feel more confident about their role as a parent. (T. Alameda-Lawson, M. Lawson., & H. Lawson (2010).

The relationship between parent participation and academic performance with their students can and does directly impact student success. A questionnaire of parents compared to student test scores in core areas to found correlations between
achievement and involvement. Four districts in particular were surveyed. This study found that there was a significant positive impact on student achievement when parents were more involved in school and at home. This study states that parent involvement is a key factor in student success. (S. Lenka, & R. Kant, 2012)

Another study explores how parents describe the roles of teachers, the roles of parents and what they consider to be communication between the two parties. This piece also discusses parents’ levels of involvement at home and at school by specifically defining what involvement is at both places. The authors evaluated the activities parents participate in with their children as well as dissected the amount of communication parents had with teachers. They found that parents often take a passive role in their relationships with teachers and won’t often dig deep with teachers during conversations regarding their students. This study did not have a definitive solution or answer to why parents take a passive role with teachers. (A. Tveit, 2009).
Research Methods

Research Design

A one-time survey served as the design for this research. The alpha level was set at 0.25 for all tests included in this research. The independent variable was the status of respondent as either a teacher or a parent. The dependent variable was the results of the survey, the answers provided by the respondents. The purpose of the survey is to measure several dependent variables related to parent involvement. Tests run will include a chi square.

Study Group Description

This survey was taken from teachers and parents from an elementary school in a title 1 building in the School District. The survey was offered to 32 teachers within this building and to the parents of all students in this elementary building (approximately 600 parents). There are 23 regular classroom teachers responsible for their own classroom and curriculum. There are 2 pre-school teachers who are responsible for their own classrooms and feed into the elementary school. There are two special education teachers, two speech and language teachers, one hearing impaired teacher, one visually impaired teacher and one title one reading teacher included in this survey.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The survey given was distributed to teachers via Survey Monkey. The same survey was distributed to parents by paper to be returned through their classroom teacher.
All results for both groups were anonymous. This survey included ten questions, one question to clarify respondent status, four questions specific to both groups, and five of the questions being the same for both groups. Results were combined into Excel for review.

Statistical Analysis Methods

Data will be evaluated using a Chi Square Analysis. Statistical Package (ASP) software was used to calculate the Chi Square. Microsoft Excel was also used to calculate totals and create graphs.
When you look at the frequency plot for the status of respondents, respondents at point 1 are teachers and respondents at point two are parents. There were 27 respondents who were teachers and 244 respondents that were parents.
RQ #1

RQ1: Do parents and teachers have a difference in opinion when it comes to what parent involvement in schools should look like?

When looking at the frequency plot for survey question number two one represents strongly agree and two represents agree. Out of the total 271 respondents, 246 responded that they strongly agreed. 25 respondents agreed.
Table 1

Chi Square Analysis for Question #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Str. Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>100% (27)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>89.7% (219)</td>
<td>10.3% (25)</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant = or < 0.24

When looking at table 1, (Chi Square =3.04, p-value = .8) Alpha is .24 the degree of freedom (df) is 4. Since the p-value (.8) is less than alpha (.24), the null hypothesis is not rejected. There is not a difference between the opinions of teachers and parents within this question. There were 27 teachers who strongly agreed that if a parent is involved with their child’s education, that child will be successful. There were zero teachers who disagreed. 100 percent of the teachers strongly agreed with this statement. There were 219 parents or 89.7% of the parents surveyed who strongly agreed with this statement and 25 parents or 10.3% of the parents surveyed who agreed with this statement. Although there are many more parents than teachers, the general consensus between both groups is that when parents are involved with their child’s education their child will be more successful. Moving forward teachers should encourage parent involvement and keep lines of communication open between parents and the classroom.
A parent who is involved with their child's education will read to their child at home.

When you look at the frequency plot of survey question number three data at point one represents respondents who strongly agree, point two represents respondents who agree, point three represents respondents who aren’t sure, point four represents respondents who disagree and point five represents respondents who strongly disagree. There were 234 respondents who strongly agreed. Thirty three respondents agreed, two respondents weren’t sure, one disagreed and one strongly disagreed.
When looking at table 2, (Chi Square = 1.51, p-value = .82) and the Alpha is .24 the degree of freedom (df) is 4. Alpha .24 is greater than p. The hypothesis is not rejected. There is not a difference between the opinions of teachers and parents in regard to this statement. There were 22 teachers or 81.4 percent of teachers who strongly agreed, 5 teachers or 18.6 percent of teachers who agreed, 212 parents or 86.8 percent of parents who strongly agreed, 28 parents or 11.8 percent of parents who agreed, 2 parents or .9 percent of parents who weren’t sure, one parent or .5 percent of parents who disagreed and one parent or .5 percent of parents who strongly disagreed. The overall consensus between parents and teachers is the same. Both parties believe that if you read with your child at home your child will be more successful. Moving forward teachers in this building should encourage parents to continue reading to their child at home to increase student success.
A parent who is involved with their child's education will show up and participate in school functions.

When looking at the frequency plot for survey question number four data located at point number one represents respondents who strongly agree, point two represents respondents who agree, point three represents respondents who aren’t sure, point four represents respondents who disagree and point five represents respondents who strongly disagree. There is one respondent who strongly disagrees, 9 that disagree, 31 respondents that aren’t sure, 81 respondents that agree and 149 respondents that strongly agree.
### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Str. Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>Dis. Ag</th>
<th>St.DA</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>70%(19)</td>
<td>25.9%(7)</td>
<td>.37%(1)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>53.2%(130)</td>
<td>30.3%(74)</td>
<td>12.2%(30)</td>
<td>3.6%(9)</td>
<td>.04%(1)</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant = or < 0.24

When looking at table 3, (Chi Square = 4.12, p-value = .38) and the Alpha is .24 the degree of freedom (df) is 4. P-value is greater than alpha meaning the hypothesis is not rejected. There is no difference between teacher and parent perspective on this question. There were 19 teachers or 70 percent of teachers who strongly agreed, 7 teachers or 25.9 percent of teachers who agree, one teacher or .37 percent of teachers who didn’t know, 130 parents or 53.2 percent of parents who strongly agree, 74 parents or 30.3 percent of parents who agree, 30 parents or 12.2 percent of parents who didn’t know, 9 parents or 3.6 percent of parents who disagreed and 1 parent or .4 percent of parents who strongly disagreed. When looking at the graph the spread of parents opinions is varied, there are many parents who aren’t sure if parents who show up and are involved in a child’s education. Teachers should continue discussions with parents to ensure there is a mutual understanding of what is expected of a parent who is involved with their child’s education.
A parent who is involved with their child’s education will communicate regularly with their child’s teacher.

When looking at the frequency plot for survey question number four data located at point number one represents respondents who strongly agree, point two represents respondents who agree, point three represents respondents who aren’t sure, point four represents respondents who disagree and point five represents respondents who strongly disagree. 190 respondents strongly agree, 77 respondents agree, 2 respondents weren’t sure, one respondent disagreed and one strongly disagreed.
When looking at table 5 (Chi Square = 2.02, p-value = .73) and the Alpha is .24 the degree of freedom (df) is 4. Alpha .24 is less than the p value of .73, therefore the hypothesis is not rejected. There were 22 teachers or 81.4 percent of teachers who strongly agreed. There were 5 teachers or 18.5 percent of teachers who agreed. There were 168 parents or 68.8 percent of parents who strongly agreed, 72 parents or 29.5 percent of parents who agreed, 2 parents or .8 percent of parents who weren’t sure, 1 parent or .4 percent of parents who disagreed and one parent or .4 percent of parents who strongly disagreed. There is not a strong difference between the opinions of parents and teachers in regards to this statement. Due to these results it is suggested that teachers continue to maintain the lines of communication with parents.
A parent who is involved with their child’s education will discuss school with their child at home and encourage student success.

When looking at the frequency plot for survey question number four data located at point number one represents respondents who strongly agree, point two represents respondents who agree, point three represents respondents who aren’t sure, point four represents respondents who disagree and point five represents respondents who strongly disagree. There were 215 respondents who strongly agreed and 35 respondents who agreed. There were 20 parents who weren’t sure and one parent who strongly disagreed.
When looking at table 6, (Chi Square =2.74, p-value = .43) and the Alpha is .24 the degree of freedom (df) is 4. P-value is not less than Alpha, therefore the hypothesis is not rejected. There is no difference between the opinions of teachers and parents in regards to this statement. There are 24 teachers or 88.8 percent of teachers who strongly agree and 3 teachers or 11.1 percent of teachers who agree. There are 191 parents or 28.2 percent of parents who strongly agree 32 parents or 13.1 percent of parents who agree 20 parents or 8.1 percent of parents who aren’t sure and one parent or .4 percent of parents who strongly disagree.
**RQ2**: Would parents become more involved in their child’s education if they were personally invited to do so by a teacher?

**Teacher Question #8**
I communicate with parents only when there are behavior issues.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

When looking at the graph there are 20 teachers who strongly agree with this statement, six who agree and two who were not sure. There were no teachers who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
Parent Question #7

I would be more involved in my child’s classroom if my child’s teacher asked me personally to help.

When looking at this graph, there were 88 parents who strongly agreed with this statement, 66 parents who agreed, 53 who weren’t sure, 33 who disagreed and one who strongly disagreed.
Parent Question #9

I only want to hear from my child’s teacher if there is a behavior issue.

When looking at this graph there are 48 people who strongly agree with this statement, 12 parents who agree, 12 parents who aren’t sure, 97 parents who disagree and 74 parents who strongly disagree.
**RQ3:** Would parents become more involved in their child’s education if they were informed of what a teacher’s expectation of involvement was?

Teacher question #7

I let parents know specifically what they can work on with their child at home to help their child succeed.

![Bar chart showing the number of teachers agreeing with the statement.](image)

When looking at this graph there were 13 teachers who strongly agreed with this statement, 12 teachers agree and two who weren’t sure.
Teacher question #9

I explain to my students’ parents each year what they can do to be involved with their child’s education both at home and at school.

When looking at this graph there are 3 teachers who strongly agree with this statement, one who agrees 16 teachers who aren’t sure and seven teachers who disagree.
Parent question #8

I would be more involved in my child’s success if I knew what to work on with my child at home

When looking at this graph there were 131 parents who strongly agreed, 76 parents who agreed, 22 parents who weren’t sure, 10 parents disagreed and 4 who strongly disagreed.
Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall findings of this research conclude that parents and teachers both believe in some basic aspects of student success. In regards to research question #1, both parents and teachers agree that parents who are involved with their child’s education have students who are more successful. Parents and teachers also agree that parents who are involved with their child’s education will read at home with their child. Parents and teachers agree that parents who are involved with their child’s education will show up to school events and participate in school functions. Parents and teachers agree that regular communication with school and home leads to increased student success. Parents and teachers also agree that parents who are involved will discuss school with their student at home and encourage students to want to do well. Due to the results of this survey it is suggested that teachers should continue on their current paths of parent communication. When communicating with parents, teachers should make it clear that involvement includes things like reading at home, attending school events, discussing school with their child, encouraging success and communicating with the teacher. Although parents who took this survey agree with all these points, a teacher’s classroom is a revolving door of parents and students each year. To ensure that each year parents understand the expectations.

In regards to research question number 2, this survey has found that parents strongly agree that they would be more involved if teachers communicate with them about the specifics of what an involved parent can do. Parents have admitted that they would participate if asked. Due to these findings teachers need to make an effort to ask for help when it is needed in the classroom. Parents may not always know what to do in
order to help their child; a teacher reaching out to a parent could make a big difference. Parents also made it clear in this survey that they want to hear from their teacher more often than when their child has a behavior issue. Teachers made it clear that they often don’t contact parents unless there is a behavior issue. Teachers need to ensure that they are reporting more information that negative behaviors alone in order to provide parents with information and foster positive relationships.

When looking at the results from research question number three, parents want to know what they can and should do to help their child each day. Teachers also admitted that they do not freely offer up ideas to parents about what they can do at home to help. Teachers in this building may need more instruction or professional development about how they can support parents at home. Although teachers admit they notify parents about what they can do to help their child, they don’t include the piece about what parents should do at home. Teachers need to remember that parents may need more assistance than what they ask for at times.
References


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http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/publications.php


