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Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools

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Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools
Katherine Razza
Dr. Abeel
EDCI 589
July 16, 2013

"I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work."

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Introduction

Problem Statement

While educational settings provide time and opportunity to learn and practice content, there is still a need for parental involvement in and out of the elementary school setting. A lack of parental involvement can affect a child's educational motivation, engagement and achievement (Olender, Elias & Mastroleo, 2010). Every family is different and so are the barriers that prevent parents from being more involved in their child's education. These barriers include language, culture, economic, emotional, and the perceptions of both teachers and parents. Teachers can use this knowledge about various barriers parents face to increase parental involvement. Any degree of parental involvement is beneficial for students' educational success throughout their schooling. Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein (2005) look into the relationships of parental involvement and various variables including the amount of student achievement, the rate of attendance, and attitudes students have toward school. If teachers do not learn about and try to reduce the barriers preventing parental involvement in elementary school then some students could have lower academic success than their peers, or see less value in their education when they get older due to lack of support or help at home.

Rationale

During my time in educational settings I noticed that some parents were extensively involved, while others were completely hands-off with their children's education. Although parents still care about their child's education, they may not be involved because of a variety of barriers. The reactions I have seen from teachers about this topic is that some parents are more involved through volunteering, parent conferences, or homework, while some cannot due to work or other circumstances. Teachers try to get parents involved in their child's education one

way or another; however, sometimes the traditional initiatives to increase parent involvement are unsuccessful (Karther & Lowden, 1997). Once teachers understand the different barriers of parental involvement they can use that information to encourage and implement more involvement. Students need their parents to be a part of their education. Parental involvement provides students with the home support they need, I believe, to succeed throughout their education. Through parental involvement, parents lay a foundation for their children. With that continued support from parents, children gain views, hopes, and determination about their education from an early age that will follow them throughout their schooling. As a soon-to-be elementary school teacher I need to recognize the barriers to parental involvement that could be present in my classroom, and use that knowledge to find effective strategies to increase parental involvement for the diverse group of parents I will encounter. As a result my students will get the most out of their education and the content that I present to them.

Research Questions

This paper will discuss the benefits of parental involvement for elementary students, the barriers of parental involvement, and ways to increase involvement in elementary schools through the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of parental involvement in an elementary-aged child's education?
2. What causes some parents to be less or more involved with their child's education than other parents?
3. How can teachers and schools increase parental involvement?

Literature Review

Teachers support and continue students' educational development while they are at school, but students still need support from their parents at both school and home. Parental involvement

can be a difficult obstacle for teachers, especially in a diverse classroom where families encounter circumstances that do not allow them to be as involved as some teachers might like. However, it is an obstacle that teachers need to face and overcome for their students. If teachers are aware of the barriers that prevent parents from being involved in their children's education then they can find ways to diminish the barriers to benefit their students, in both the short and long term. Parental involvement has shown to be beneficial for students both academically and behaviorally.

Benefits of Parental Involvement in an Elementary-Aged Child's Education

Parental involvement includes more than just helping their child with homework or asking how school was. It involves parents participating in their child's educational process and experiences (Jeynes, 2011). Several aspects of a child's education can benefit from parental involvement.

Achievement. Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling (2011) found that parental involvement had a positive effect on academic achievement of students. Despite the differences that students might have, all races and ethnicities saw gains in academic achievement due to parental involvement (Ferland & Hammond, 2009; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Although almost all types of parental involvement are beneficial for students, parental involvement at school produces more academic benefits than parental involvement that only occurs at home (Larocque, et al, 2011). Hornby (2000) and Gonzalez-DeHass, et al (2005) all agree that there is increased academic achievement for students when their parents are more actively and directly involved in their education. This increase in support of efforts occurring at both home and school relating to a child's education creates an effective parent-teacher relationship, in which teachers and parents can set educational goals and expectations for the student (Olender, et al, 2010). When teachers

and parents develop educational goals for a student, it is more likely to ensure cooperation and agreement between both groups. More support of the teacher's efforts by the parents results in an increase of benefits for students.

Reading. A student's reading motivation and achievement is positively affected by parental involvement in their education. When parents were involved with their child's reading at home teachers positively rated and observed improvement in their students' reading development and how students self-assessed their reading skills (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Gonzalez-DeHass, et al (2005) described the results of a Summer Reading Program (SRP), where parents worked on various reading skills with their children, and saw students' motivation, confidence, and interest in reading increase. Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal (2010) agree that students' reading achievement, in terms of literacy growth and motivation, benefited when parents are involved. Another program that showed the effectiveness of parental involvement is the Fast Start program. Through this program, parental involvement is especially important and has the most success for student literacy when started in the emergent reader stage (Padak & Rasinski, 2006).

Motivation. Researchers have found that increased student motivation is a benefit of parental involvement. Gonzalez-DeHass, et al (2005) completed extensive research into the relationship of student motivation and parental involvement. Based on the type of involvement parents engaged in with their children, students either developed more or less intrinsic and extrinsic motivation relating to school. Gonzalez-DeHass et al (2005) found that intrinsic motivation was greater for students whose parents were involved and communicated with their teacher on the weekly basis. There are different views about whether parental involvement directly improves motivation. Nokali, et al (2010) suggests that parental involvement indirectly promotes motivation and persistence among students as a result of parental interest and influence

in their child's education. While the research might be slightly different, parental involvement positively affects motivation, whether it is directly or indirectly.

Behavior. Parental involvement can also increase positive behaviors of students. Nokali, et al (2010) found positive relationships between parental involvement and student behaviors based on reports given by students, parents, and teachers. When students develop behavior problems, teachers and parents need to work together on the issues present. In order for this to happen, it is essential that parents and teachers have an open and trusting line of communication, because it allows for parents to be more receptive of what the teacher has to say about any student behavior problems. An effective parent-teacher relationship, with constant communication, allows teachers and parents to find solutions and set boundaries that are consistent for students through reinforcing positive behaviors (Olender, et al, 2010). Nokali, et al (2010) supports this notion saying that parents are able to reinforce more positive behaviors at home while teachers reinforce behaviors at school. An increase of positive student behaviors through parental involvement is a benefit not only for the students, but also for parents and teachers.

Barriers Preventing Parental Involvement

Parents do not always want to be uninvolved in their child's education. There are barriers that could be preventing parents from being more involved with their child's education, both in and out of the school setting. Being knowledgeable and understanding about the different barriers parents face can be used to increase parental involvement in schools.

Cultural and linguistic barriers. A family's culture or language can prevent parents from being involved due to beliefs or miscommunications. With schools becoming increasingly diverse it is more likely that teachers will encounter these barriers. Parents' cultural views can

also prevent involvement in their child's education. Larocque et al (2011) mention how some cultures believe that questioning a teacher or their efforts in school is disrespectful. Teachers should understand that the families in their class might have cultural norms that are preventing parental involvement (Larocque et al, 2011). Similar to cultural norms, a society's norms can affect parental involvement. If a school's staff is not accustomed to having parental involvement then efforts to increase parental involvement may not be as effective (Hornby, 2000). Like culture, language is also a barrier to parental involvement. When students have different primary or home languages parents may not be able to communicate in English with the teacher, which could create misunderstandings and confusion for the parents (Olender, et al, 2010). Parents who do not speak English face a barrier when it comes to being involved in their child's education from home. This is due to the difference in the language of homework assignments and lack of instruction for these parents on assignments sent home to aid their children (Faires, Nichols & Rickelman, 2000). The language barrier can be especially threatening to the parent-teacher relationship when teachers use students to translate parent-teacher conferences (Olender, et al, 2010).

Economic barriers. A child's socioeconomic status could create difficulties for parents when trying to be involved in their child's education. These barriers include socioeconomic status and employment. Parents who have low socioeconomic statuses may encounter problems of finding transportation or babysitters to go to parent-teacher conferences or school events (Karther & Lowden, 1997; Larocque et al, 2011). While physical barriers can prevent these parents from being involved, past experiences could also be a factor. Faires, et al (2000) say that parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds often have negative memories of their school experiences. Since schools are geared towards the middle-class with mostly middle-class

volunteers, parents from low socioeconomic statuses may also feel uncomfortable or self-conscious due to their economic situation (Karther & Lowden, 2011). Employment could also be a big factor preventing parental involvement. There are jobs that prevent parents from taking time off to be involved at school or home, due to long hours (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). When a child is from a single-parent household or from one where both parents work it prevents high involvement among parents (Hornby, 2000). Working parents have less time to attend school events or meet with teachers (Olender, et al. 2010).

Emotional barriers. Emotional barriers can consist of mistrust and low educational levels. If parents have had bad educational experiences themselves or with their children it may promote their mistrust in the educational system (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Larocque, et al, 2011). Karther and Lowden (1997) agreed and go one to say that bad educational experiences for parents can create anxiety when they are directly involved or they may feel intimidated by teachers. Low educational levels could also limit parental involvement. When parents feel inadequate because of their educational level, they will prevent being in situations that may provoke criticism of themselves or their children by teachers. (Karther & Lowden, 1997). Low educational levels can limit parental involvement in their child's education from home, like helping with homework, because of lack of confidence in their abilities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) say the educational level of parents could influence how they perceive their skills and knowledge when being involved in their child's education at home or school.

Attitude and perception barriers. The perceptions and expectations that teachers have can affect the amount of parental involvement in classrooms. The same can be said for the perceptions that parents have of the amount and type of parental involvement. Schools that are

focused on parental involvement during the traditional times, parent-teacher conferences or school events, do not always consider circumstances for parents and may just assume that parents are able to make school events, when this may not be the case (Karther & Lowden, 1997). Teachers are often the facilitators and leaders of parental involvement in their classroom. However, sometimes teachers do not explicitly state how parents could become involved in their child's education. Parents may not be sure of how to be involved or think that their involvement is wanted or valued (Hornby, 2000; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Larocque, et al, 2011). If teachers and schools do not explicitly tell parents how they can be involved or make a point that they want parental involvement, then parents may assume they are not wanted or needed.

How Teachers Can Increase Parental Involvement

Teacher interactions with parents. The way teachers approach or interact with parents can have an effect on parental involvement. To increase parental involvement teachers need to actively encourage it in their classroom (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Along with encouraging parental involvement, Hornby & Lafaele (2011) say teachers should also be welcoming and have positive attitudes in order to increase the amount and the effectiveness of involvement. Hornby (2000) explains that when teachers have a negative attitude while working with parents their involvement could decrease. Bergmann, Brough, and Shepard (2008) state that teachers should be friendly when interacting with parents. When encouraging parental involvement, teachers should provide their parents with specific ways to be involved in their child's education, which allows clear expectations to be set (Larocque, et al, 2011). During interactions with parents, teachers should show parents that their input is important in their child's education (Larocque, et al, 2011). One-way to show parental input is important is by discussing the learning and educational goals of the student with their parents at the beginning of the school year (Karther &

Lowden, 1997). Working with the parents to establish and aid them in helping their children reach the established goals is another way teachers can keep parents involved and know their input is important (Bergmann, et al, 2008).

Communicating with parents. Keeping an open line of communication with parents can help increase parental involvement. Teachers can vary the type of communication they have with parents and find ways to best accommodate each parents' scheduling needs in their class, which makes involvement easier for parents. In order for parents to find convenient times to meet with the teacher, teachers should provide parents with a contact schedule (Olender, et al, 2010).

Teachers also need to take in consideration the language parents speak when speaking or trying to communicate with them. With that in mind, teachers should translate newsletters, information, and all written communication for parents that speak different languages (Larocque, et al, 2011; Olender, et al, 2010). Teachers need to be considerate when speaking in person with parents who speak another language. This includes the use a school translator instead of using a student to act as a translator for the parent (Larocque, et al, 2011). Although it is not always easy or possible to speak to these parents directly, Olender, et al (2010) say that it should be done as much as possible. Being aware of these possible communication obstacles when speaking with parents can help a teacher create an open line of communication with parents.

Teachers should use oral communication to interact with their parents, which includes phone calls or in person. Teachers can use phone calls to conference with parents, to share good news, or just to inform parents (Davis & Young, 2005; Hornby, 2000; Larocque, et al 2011; Olender, et al, 2010). Another way of communicating with parents is through writing, which includes email and notes home. Technology is an easy and accessible way for parents to remain in contact with their child's teacher. Emails can also be used for communication between parents

and teacher, to send newsletters, or to send class information to keep the parents updated (Bergmann, et al, 2008; Davis & Young, 2005; Olender, et al, 2010). Teachers can have students keep a communication notebook that goes between home and school. This allows parents and teachers to write notes back and forth or communicate information between the two places (Hornby, 2000; Olender, et al, 2010). Bergmann, et al (2008) and Davis and Young (2005) all agree sending good news notes home can increase parental involvement. This is one example of a way that teachers are able to communicate with parents regularly, without only communicating negatively about a student.

Meeting parents can be a difficult task for teachers due to the barriers that parents encounter. In order to interact with parents who do not have the means or the time to visit the school, teachers can meet with them face-to-face in a few ways. Teachers should accommodate parents who work long hours by making parent-teacher conferences early in the mornings, late at night, or even on the weekends (Olender, et al, 2010). For parents without transportation or babysitting, teachers can have home-visits or meet the parents in the community (Bergmann, et al 2005; Hornby, 2001; Karther & Lowden, 1997). Having a variety of options for meeting times and places increases the likelihood that parents will be able to meet with the teacher.

Parental involvement at home. Parents may find it difficult becoming involved with their child's education as a result of not knowing exactly how to be involved. Teachers can make this easier for parents by providing them with a variety of ways they are able to participate at home and school (Larcoque, et al, 2011). Teachers can make home involvement easier by having a homework hotline for parents if they encounter problems when helping their children with homework assignments (Bergmann, et al, 2008; Karther & Lowden, 1997). Providing websites for parents to help their children with homework or to find out class information is a good way of

keeping parents involved from home (Bergmann, et al, 2008). If teachers are able, they should use a school or class website to keep parents aware of what students are learning at school. Another way teachers can keep parents involved with what their child is learning is through exit slips. These exit slips contain questions and information about a topic learned that day for parents to talk with their children about at home (Davis & Young, 2005). Other ways that teachers can increase parental involvement is through assisting their child with homework and providing them with reading materials (Bergmann, et al, 2008). Working parents may not be able to be involved within their child's classroom even if they want to. That is why teachers still need to try to include these parents as much as possible and give them the chance to be involved around their work schedule. Working parents can type up information for the teacher, research resources and field trip locations, or volunteer with students in the evening or weekends (Bergmann, et al, 2008).

Parental involvement at school. School involvement among parents seems to be the most noticeable type of parental involvement in education. Parents can be involved in the school setting in a number of ways that range from simple to more extensive involvement. In order for parents to understand their roles when they are volunteering in the classroom, teachers should provide parents with a handbook of their roles and expectations (Bergmann, et al, 2008; Davis & Young, 2005; Larcoque, et al, 2011) To increase parental involvement, teachers can have parents come into their classroom to read to students or give a presentation to the class on a topic they are knowledgeable about (Bergmann, et al, 2008). For more extensive parental involvement, parents are able to chaperone field trips or attend school events (Bergmann, et al, 2008). Sometimes schools have sponsored days that encourage certain family member to attend. Examples of these days include students having breakfast with their father or inviting

grandparents or other relatives to lunch (Karther & Lowden, 1997). Other school events or programs geared towards parents are workshops and education sessions (Bergmann, et al, 2008; Karther & Lowden, 1997). These provide parents with opportunities to share concerns and to learn how to help their children educationally outside of school. Larocque, et al (2011) and Bergmann, et al (2008) all agree that parental involvement can be increased if schools have parent support groups. The amount of parental involvement at school can vary, but without encouragement and help from teachers parents may not know how to be involved or understand the expectations that teachers have of them.

Conclusion

Parental involvement may not be an easy task for some teachers, but working with the parents is worth the effort. Parental involvement is beneficial to all students; however, there are more benefits depending on the amount of involvement. The benefits for students can range from improved behaviors, reading, and motivation, to an increase in academic achievement. The majority of parents want to help their children succeed in their education and will do the best they can to be involved. However, some parents have a harder time being involved because of barriers preventing their involvement. Teachers need to be aware and ready to battle the barriers that parents face. When teachers break down the cultural, linguistic, emotional, economic, and perceptions barriers that many parents face, there is a greater chance for parental involvement in their classroom. To break down the barriers preventing parental involvement teachers need to be welcoming of all parents that walk into their classroom and allow the parents to help plan educational goals for their children. The type of interactions teachers have with parents can increase or decrease parental involvement, depending how parents perceive the teacher. In order to keep parents involved in their child's education, teachers need to remain in continuous contact

through oral or written communications. Teachers need to encourage parental involvement and interactions between themselves and parents. This can be done by providing ways for parents to be involved at home and school and allowing them to choose a way that best fits their schedule. Although increasing parental involvement may seem like a daunting task for teachers who already have a great deal to do, it is something that needs to be done for their students.

Introduction to Application

I created a website, called [Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools](#), for teachers to use as an aid to increase parental involvement in their classrooms. Each page includes documents that teachers can give to their parents or modify and fit the needs of their classroom. The first page “Why?” explains why parental involvement is important and the benefits it has on student achievement, reading, motivation, and behavior. The next page that teachers can view is “Get to Know Parents.” This page contains explanations and actual resources for teachers to use to get to know their parents including contact information and a questionnaire. I also included a volunteering sheet for parents to fill out who have hectic schedules. Each of the volunteering options on “Volunteering with Busy Schedule” accommodates parents who do not have an abundant amount of time to volunteer at school or home. The last resource on this page for teachers to use is the “Volunteering Guidelines,” which they should give to parents before they volunteer that explains teacher and school expectations of volunteers. The next page, “Involvement,” includes two forms that should be completed by parents at the beginning of the school year and kept by the teacher as a record of which ways each parent would like to and can be involved at both home and school. The last page, “Communication with Parents,” includes tips for teachers to use when communicating with their parents face-to-face, verbally, and

through written communication. Overall, this website is meant to aid teachers and encourage parental involvement in elementary schools and serves as a guideline for teachers to do so.

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Appendix A

Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools

 Search this site

- [Home](#)
- [Why?](#)
- [Get to Know Parents](#)
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- [Communication with Parents \(Tips for Teachers\)](#)
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Home



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Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools

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Why?

Parental involvement benefits students' academic achievement, reading, motivation, and behavior.

Achievement:

- All races and ethnicities see gains in academic achievement.
- Greater benefits for students who receive involvement from parents at home.
- Students benefit when parents and teachers discuss student goals and expectations and when there is an effective parent-teacher relationship.

Reading:

- Increased motivation, confidence, and interest in reading.
- Benefits literacy growth among students.

Motivation:

- Aids in the development of intrinsic motivation through involvement and communicating with teachers.
- Promotes persistence

Behavior:

- Allows for an open and trusting line of communication between parents and teachers, which allows for parents to be more receptive of what the teacher has to say about any student behavior problems.
- Consistent reinforcement of positive behaviors at both home and school.

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Get to Know Parents

Parent Contact Information:

Print out and give to parents/guardians to fill out at the beginning of the school year. The parent contact information form contains parent/guardian phone numbers and email addresses. It also contains the best method and time to contact the parent/guardian, if needed by the teacher. It also allows the teacher to become aware if the parents/guardians speak any other languages. This can be used to translate information or get a translator, if needed.

Parent Questionnaire:

Hand the parent questionnaire at the beginning of the school year to get an idea about how and when parents are able to volunteer. The Questionnaire has questions relating both volunteering and parent-teacher conferences. Teachers can keep these after they are filled out to refer back to when they have any questions about which parents can volunteer or details regarding parent-teacher conferences.

Volunteering Around a Busy Schedule:

If there are working parents who would like to volunteer, but are not sure if they have the time, present to them various ways they can volunteer. Have the parents mark which ways they would like to volunteer (that are convenient and can be done around their work schedule).

Volunteering Guidelines:

The expectations and responsibilities of volunteers or volunteering guidelines is given to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. It provides information regarding the various types of involvement and provides clear expectations for parents set by the teacher.



Parent Contact Information.docx (58k)	Katherine Razza, Jul 6, 2013, 6:22 PM	v.1	
Parent Questionnaire.docx (14k)	Katherine Razza, Jul 6, 2013, 6:14 PM	v.1	
Volunteer Guidelines.docx (140k)	Katherine Razza, Jul 7, 2013, 5:29 PM	v.1	
Volunteering Around a Busy Schedule.docx (92k)	Katherine Razza, Jul 8, 2013, 5:44 PM	v.1	

Comments

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School Involvement: A list of ways parents can volunteer at school. This list can be given to parents to fill out or mark involvement options they would prefer or be interested in based on their availability or schedule.

- Help make decisions about your child's education
- Be a classroom or school helper
- Help raise money for the school
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Be a resource for the teacher by providing new knowledge about topics

- Organize classroom events
- Create and send out newsletters
- Type up class information
- Create and update class website
- Attend class events or school-sponsored days
- Go into school regularly
- Share your culture, skills, or job with the class
- Give a presentation or read to the class
- Volunteer
- Chaperone on field trips
- Be on the parent-teacher association (PTA)
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Donate materials to your child's classroom
- Reach out to local businesses to donate materials
- Mentor an at-risk student with similar interests or job aspirations as you
- Tutor students
- Help with a beautification project at the school

If you have any other suggestions or ways to be involved at school please feel free to write them below:

Home Involvement: A list of ways parents can volunteer at from home. This list can be given to parents to fill out or mark the involvement options they would prefer or be interested in based on their availability or schedule.

- Helping with homework and school projects
 - Have reading materials at home for your child to read
 - Read to and with your child and have your child read you to regularly
 - Read all items sent home by the teachers to stay informed through letters, notices, newsletters, etc.
 - Regularly check class and school websites
 - Help set academic goals for child
 - Discuss with your child about what happened at school each day
 - Talk about the exit slips your child receives from school
 - Donate materials for your child's classroom
 - Regularly check the homework hotline
 - Call or check in on your child regularly at school
 - Look and sign all report cards and progress reports
 - Inform the teacher if you notice your child struggling with a topic or subject
 - Speak with the teacher often regarding your child's progress, strengths, weaknesses, and how you can help them
- If you have any other suggestions or ways to be involved from home please feel free to write them below:

**Keeping these lists allows you to refer back to it when you are looking for a parent to volunteer for something in particular.



Home Involvement .docx (80k)	Katherine Razza, Jul 8, 2013, 5:44 PM	v.1	
School Involvement.docx (82k)	Katherine Razza, Jul 8, 2013, 5:44 PM	v.1	

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Communication with Parents (Tips for Teachers)

Teachers should communicate with parents through either face-to-face or verbally through phone calls as much as possible. If getting in contact with a parent by phone or meeting with them is difficult, teachers should use written communication. Having a variety of options for communication with parents is ideal, because of circumstances that may prevent parents from coming to the school or speaking on the phone. Communication between parents and teachers creates effective and positive parent-teacher relationships that will benefit all children. Even though any amount and type of communication with parents is beneficial, communication is the most effective when it is done on a regular basis and also contains positive notes and messages about children. If you have non-English speaking parents avoid using a translator when directly speaking with them and translate written communication when it is possible.

Face-To-Face Communication

In-person informal conversations
 Parent-teacher conferences
 Meet with parents early mornings, evenings, or on weekends
 Home visits or meeting parents in the community

Verbal Communication

Speak directly with parents as much as possible, especially non-English speaking parents
 Phone calls

- Positive news
- About school activities or sponsored days
- Concerns

 Phone conferences
 Homework hotline

Written Communication

Message or bulletin boards
 Newsletters (biweekly or monthly)
 Letters or notes home

- Good news

 Send emails with information for parents
 Communication notebook or journal sent between home and school
 Surprise postcards for parents to share good news or something special about the student
 Exit slips
 Weekly work folders
 Send home samples of student work weekly to share with parents
 Invitations to class or school events
 Signs or fliers in the school or classroom
 Progress reports
 Daily contact sheets (contains behavior, attention, and effort)

*Translate any of the above written communication for non-English speaking parents

Appendix B

Why?

Parental involvement benefits students' academic achievement, reading, motivation, and behavior.

Achievement:

- All races and ethnicities see gains in academic achievement.
- Greater benefits for students who receive involvement from parents at home.
- Students benefit when parents and teachers discuss student goals and expectations and when there is an effective parent-teacher relationship.

Reading:

- Increased motivation, confidence, and interest in reading.
- Benefits literacy growth among students.

Motivation:

- Aids in the development of intrinsic motivation through involvement and communicating with teachers.
- Promotes persistence

Behavior:

- Allows for an open and trusting line of communication between parents and teachers, which allows for parents to be more receptive of what the teacher has to say about any student behavior problems.
- Consistent reinforcement of positive behaviors at both home and school.

Appendix C**Parent Contact Information:**

Print out and give to parents/guardians to fill out at the beginning of the school year. The parent contact information form contains parent/guardian phone numbers and email addresses. It also contains the best method and time to contact the parent/guardian, if needed by the teacher. It also allows the teacher to become aware if the parents/guardians speak any other languages. This can be used to translate information or get a translator, if needed.

Parent Contact Information

Mother/Guardian's Name: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Best Method of Contact: _____

Best Time to Contact: _____

Do you speak any other languages? If so, what?

Father/Guardian's Name: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Best Method of Contact: _____

Best Time to Contact: _____

Do you speak any other languages? If so, what?

Parent Questionnaire:

Hand the parent questionnaire at the beginning of the school year to get an idea about how and when parents are able to volunteer. The Questionnaire has questions relating both volunteering and parent-teacher conferences. Teachers can keep these after they are filled out to refer back to when they have any questions about which parents can volunteer or details regarding parent-teacher conferences.

Parent Questionnaire**Volunteering**

Would you like to volunteer?

How often would you like or can volunteer?

Would you rather volunteer at school, from home, or both?

If you can volunteer at school, are there times or days during the week that would best for you?

Do you have any interests or skills that would be beneficial when volunteering?

Would you like to volunteer during certain times or subjects (reading, math, history, science, or language arts)?

If you would like to volunteer, does your job prevent you from volunteering at school?

Are there any circumstances preventing or limiting your involvement?

Parent-Teacher Conferences

What times are you available to meet for parent-teacher conferences?

Does your work schedule prevent you from volunteering at school or attending parent-teacher conferences?

If so, would you be able to attend parent-teacher conferences if there were available times early in the morning or late in the evening?

If you are not able to make it to the school for parent-teacher conference, could we meet at your home or in the community, if it was possible?

Volunteering Around a Busy Schedule:

If there are working parents who would like to volunteer, but are not sure if they have the time, present to them various ways they can volunteer. Have the parents mark which ways they would like to volunteer (that are convenient and can be done around their work schedule).

Volunteering Around a Busy Schedule

School Involvement:

- Research possible field trip locations that go along with curriculum
- Research academic resources for students and parents
- Type up information, newsletters, fliers, etc.
- Reach out to local businesses to donate materials
- Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)
- Pick up and drop off books from the local library relating to topics being covered in class
- Mentor an at-risk student with similar interests or job aspirations as you
- Make a presentation for students to learn about your job or any special skills you may have

Volunteering after school with students or on weekends:

- Homework aid
- Tutor
- Academic workshops for students and parents
- Attend or help with school sponsored events that are help on evenings or weekends

Organize special classroom activities:

- Parties
- Cultural days
- After school activities

Help with a beautification project at the school on the weekends:

- Pick up trash
- Plant flowers and trees
- Build benches

Home:

- Have books at home to read with and to your child
- Spend a certain amount of time with your child on their homework or reading each night
- Question your child about school and what they are learning about each day
- Speak with the teacher often regarding your child's progress, strengths, weaknesses, and how you can help them

If you have any other suggestions please feel free to write them below:

Volunteering Guidelines:

The expectations and responsibilities of volunteers or volunteering guidelines is given to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. It provides information regarding the various types of involvement and provides clear expectations for parents set by the teacher.

Volunteer Guidelines

Checking-in: All volunteers must present a photo I.D. and check-in and out with the office staff each time they volunteer.

Dependability: All volunteers should be prompt and dependable. They should coordinate with the teacher what day and time they will be volunteering, arrive on time, and inform the teacher when they are not able to make it so they can plan accordingly.

Flexibility: Volunteers need to be flexible and willing to complete various tasks. There will often be a variety of tasks the teacher will need assistance with will or ask you to complete on your own while you are volunteering. If a task is new to you just question the teacher about how to go about completing the task.

Questions and concerns: You may not want to ask teachers questions regarding what or how to do something, but please ask. All teachers are welcoming to any questions or concerns you may have about a task you are completing or aiding with. Teachers may also ask for your opinion or ask you questions.

Confidentiality: Volunteers should remain confidential about what they hear or see when it comes to children other than their own.

Questioning teacher about your student: Volunteers should not question or conference with the teacher about their student while they are volunteering. Volunteers should wait until after they finish volunteering, before or after school, or when the teacher does not have students around.

Attitude: Volunteers should have a positive and encouraging attitude while working with students. Volunteers should not yell, put down, discriminate, or label students for any reason. School should be a positive learning environment and negative actions or attitudes may discourage and create anxiety for students.

Dress: Volunteers should dress appropriately. We ask that parents follow the same dress code that we expect from our staff and students. That means no cleavage, showing midriff, or shorts, skirts, and dresses that are shorter than your fingertips.

Code of conduct: We ask all of our volunteers to read the code of conduct sent home at the beginning of the school year. We expect the same, if not better conduct, from our volunteers that we expect of our students. Adults and school staff are often role models for students. Therefore, we want to remind all of our volunteers to set an example for the students and to be positive role

models. If you have any questions about the code of conduct please ask any of the school staff.

Discipline: Volunteers should be informed about the school's discipline policy. If you are not or you are not sure about something please speak with the teacher directly with whom you are volunteering. If you encounter a more serious discipline problem inform the teacher so they can handle the situation immediately.

Appendix D

School Involvement: A list of ways parents can volunteer at school. This list can be given to parents to fill out or mark involvement options they would prefer or be interested in based on their availability or schedule.

- _____ Help make decisions about your child's education
- _____ Be a classroom or school helper
- _____ Help raise money for the school
- _____ Attend parent-teacher conferences
- _____ Be a resource for the teacher by providing new knowledge about topics
- _____ Organize classroom events
- _____ Create and send out newsletters
- _____ Type up class information
- _____ Create and update class website
- _____ Attend class events or school-sponsored days
- _____ Go into school regularly
- _____ Share your culture, skills, or job with the class
- _____ Give a presentation or read to the class
- _____ Volunteer
- _____ Chaperone on field trips
- _____ Be on the parent-teacher association (PTA)
- _____ Attend parent-teacher conferences
- _____ Donate materials to your child's classroom
- _____ Reach out to local businesses to donate materials
- _____ Mentor an at-risk student with similar interests or job aspirations as you

____ Tutor students

____ Help with a beautification project at the school

If you have any other suggestions or ways to be involved at school please feel free to write them below:

Home Involvement: A list of ways parents can volunteer at from home. This list can be given to parents to fill out or mark the involvement options they would prefer or be interested in based on their availability or schedule.

____ Helping with homework and school projects

____ Have reading materials at home for your child to read

____ Read to and with your child and have your child read you to regularly

____ Read all items sent home by the teachers to stay informed through letters, notices, newsletters, etc.

____ Regularly check class and school websites

____ Help set academic goals for child

____ Discuss with your child about what happened at school each day

____ Talk about the exit slips your child receives from school

____ Donate materials for your child's classroom

____ Regularly check the homework hotline

____ Call or check in on your child regularly at school

____ Look and sign all report cards and progress reports

____ Inform the teacher if you notice your child struggling with a topic or subject

____ Speak with the teacher often regarding your child's progress, strengths, weaknesses, and how you can help them

If you have any other suggestions or ways to be involved from home please feel free to write them below:

**Keeping these lists allows you to refer back to it when you are looking for a parent to volunteer for something in particular.

Appendix E

Teachers should communicate with parents through either face-to-face or verbally through phone calls as much as possible. If getting in contact with a parent by phone or meeting with them is difficult, teachers should use written communication. Having a variety of options for communication with parents is ideal, because of circumstances that may prevent parents from coming to the school or speaking on the phone. Communication between parents and teachers creates effective and positive parent-teacher relationships that will benefit all children. Even though any amount and type of communication with parents is beneficial, communication is the most effective when it is done on a regular basis and also contains positive notes and messages about children. If you have non-English speaking parents avoid using a translator when directly speaking with them and translate written communication when it is possible.

Face-To-Face Communication

In-person informal conversations

Parent-teacher conferences

Meet with parents early mornings, evenings, or on weekends

Home visits or meeting parents in the community

Verbal Communication

Speak directly with parents as much as possible, especially non-English speaking parents

Phone calls

- Positive news

- About school activities or sponsored days

- Concerns

Phone conferences

Homework hotline

Written Communication

Message or bulletin boards

Newsletters (biweekly or monthly)

Letters or notes home

- Good news

Send emails with information for parents

Communication notebook or journal sent between home and school

Surprise postcards for parents to share good news or something special about the student

Exit slips

Weekly work folders

Send home samples of student work weekly to share with parents

Invitations to class or school events

Signs or fliers in the school or classroom

Progress reports

Daily contact sheets (contains behavior, attention, and effort)

*Translate any of the above written communication for non-English speaking parents