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The relationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE
READING ACHIEVEMENT OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS

By
Scott M. Dailey

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Science in Teaching Degree in the
Graduate Division of Rowan College
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Approved by

M.S.T Advisor

Date Approved

June 22, 1995

ABSTRACT

Scott M. Dailey, The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and the Reading Achievement of Third Grade Students, 1995, Dr. Randall S. Robinson, Master of Science in Teaching.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a corelationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

The subjects in this study were 22 third grade students attending an elementary school in southern New Jersey. The elementary school was located in an urban area.

Each of the subjects were given a parental involvement survey to take home to their parents. It questioned parents about daily reading habits at home with their child. The survey was scored on a scale of 1-4, with a four indicating the highest degree of involvement.

The researcher then collected the reading scores of the students. The scores were then combined to find an average for the first, second, and third marking periods. A Pearson R correlational analysis was used as a method to analyze the relationship between parental involvement and the reading of achievement of third grade students.

A significant correlation was found between parental involvement and reading achievement ($r=.71$). Therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Scott M. Dailey, The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and the Reading Achievement of Third Grade Students, 1995,
Dr. Randall S. Robinson, Master of Science in Teaching.

The reading achievement of United States students has declined in recent years. This means that our students need more support in developing reading skills. This study investigated the relationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

The results of the Pearson R correlational analysis ($r=.71$) indicated a positive significant corelationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

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I would like to thank God for giving me the courage and ability to complete this thesis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	iv
CHAPTER	
I. SCOPE OF THE STUDY.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Hypothesis.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	3
Limitations.....	4
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	5
History of Parental Involvement.....	5
Early Parental Involvement.....	7
Parental Influences.....	11
Summary.....	13
III. PROCEDURE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY.....	14
Introduction.....	14
Sample.....	14
Instrument.....	14
Collection of Data.....	15
IV. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.....	16
Introduction.....	16
Data Analysis.....	16
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	20
Summary of the Problem.....	20
Summary of the Hypothesis.....	20
Summary of the Procedure.....	21
Summary of the Findings.....	21
Conclusion.....	22
Implications and Recommendations.....	22
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	24
APPENDIX.....	27
Parental Involvement Survey.....	28
VITA.....	30

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables	Page
1. Parental Involvement and Reading Achievement	18
2. Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement and Reading Achievement Scores	19

Figure	Page
1. Scatterplot of Parental Involvement and Reading Achievement Scores	20

Chapter I

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

For many children the period of learning to read can be a complex process. Children need much guidance and assistance from their parents in order to become a successful reader. However, too many students do not get this support, and consequently are not reaching their potential as emerging readers (Gove, Vacca, & Vacca, 1991).

Parental involvement can encompass many aspects in the area of reading achievement. The initial aspect of parental involvement is during the preschool years. During initial involvement home influences have a significant impact on a child and his reading development (McKeown, 1974). Parents should encourage conversation, the enjoyment of books, the invention and telling of stories, and the development of rhymes and songs. Children should also be placed in a print rich environment which includes many trade books, pencils, and paper. These initial influences will lay the foundation on which reading will develop and expand (Gove et al., 1991).

In the early elementary years parents should continue to build upon this foundation. Involvement of the parents with reading development continues, but now with the support

of educators and a school district. The parents are expected to augment and reinforce what is being developed in the school. The degree of involvement that a parent adopts may ultimately determine the reading development of their child.

Past research has shown that the home environment in which children develop has substantial influences on their literacy growth. Students spend more time at home than at school, consequently, educators should encourage parents to promote reading in the home. Influences in the home environment can contribute support for those children learning to read (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990).

The task of teaching reading is not the sole responsibility of educators. Parents, as well as educators, have an important stake in the achievement of children. Every parent must be involved in meeting the goal of literacy. In 1991 President Bush said that by the year 2000 all children will start school ready to learn. This included, "Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need" (Bush, 1991). President Clinton stated that he would continue with this educational strategy (Garrahan, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

The ability to read is essential in the world today. Individuals read every day, in a variety of settings, often

without being aware that they are engaged in the act itself. Reading is the foundation for most learning and educational experiences.

The reading achievement of United States students has declined in recent years. The National Assessment for Education Progress found that 60% of the 17-year-olds who were assessed did not have basic reading skills. These students were thought to be at risk as they became "adults in a society that depends so heavily on the ability to extract meaning from various forms of written language" (Mullis & Jenkins, 1990). This means that our students need more support in developing reading skills. Research shows that parents who involve themselves in the reading development of their children will have a significant impact on their growth in reading.

This study will determine if a corelationship does exist between parental involvement and reading achievement.

Hypothesis

There will be a positive correlation between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

Definition of Terms

Parental involvement- The extent to which parents, guardians, or the custodial adults are involved with their child in the development of reading skills and motivation to read, primarily in the formative preschool and early elementary grades. Involvement includes: reading to and with

the child, encouraging the child to investigate the written world, stressing the importance of reading, and giving the child assistance with classwork.

Reading achievement- The mean score in reading. The mean includes the numerical grade for the first, second, and third marking periods.

Limitations

There were some limitations which may have influenced the scope and outcome of this study.

1. The sample size was restricted to a small urban school and is therefore not representative of all third grade students.
2. The sample was not a random selection of third grade students and was not a representative sample.
3. Two classes of 15 students were available for participation.
4. There was little control over the size and diversity of the subject pool, therefore the sample should not be generalized to the entire population.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

If a student reaches their highest potential in reading, it appears to rest on whether their parents are involved in their education. Parents can make vast differences in their child's reading ability. Children acquire knowledge before they start school. They learn about certain objects, places, and how to express their ideas and experiences. Parents therefore play a critical role in laying the foundation on which reading will develop and expand. Past research has shown that parents can supplement and even enhance the learning that takes place in the school. Consequently, the potential for parents to help their children in learning to read is immense (Gove et al., 1991). The purpose of this study was to determine if a correlation exists between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

History of Parental Involvement

During prehistoric times parents were seen as the most important educators of their children. As civilization developed, children continued to receive their first education in their home. The first formal education outside the home

emerged, even as early as 3787-1580 B.C. Greek society was the first to see children as the future carriers of their culture. During the Middle Ages, from 400-1400 A.D. formal education was kept alive by the church. By the seventeenth century in Western society, the recognition of the importance of children's interaction with their parents and other caregivers emerged (Berger, 1991).

In the United States, parental involvement in the education of children is a fairly recent phenomenon. Early in the twentieth century men such as John Dewey and Edmund Huey believed that home influences were very important for reading development. Huey suggested that children who had a "good home" and parents who could give them a little time everyday would benefit by staying home until age eight, rather than entering school at six (Sturtevant, 1993).

Parents' roles in the schools have really changed during the past thirty years. Some of this change can be traced to legislative policy and research in the 1960's on poverty. Head Start evolved from this and led the way for lower income parents to be involved in educating their children (Berger, 1991).

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, teacher education requirements also increased. Some scholars believe that the increase in teachers' professionalism caused the parent involvement to decline. Parent-Teacher Associations flourished during this time, but just for major events like raising funds. This continuing evolution and the movement of

control from the local to state level has weakened the home-school relationship even more (Berger, 1991).

This trend has slowly been changing. During the 1980's parental involvement grew vastly. In fact, this interest has continued to increase and appears to be growing even stronger during the 1990's. The challenge that parents and school face has become rather distinct and apparent. Consequently, parent and teacher collaboration is needed for the success of the children. This new union between home and school comes from the recognition that not only are schools important to parents and families, but that schools also need the support of parents in order to succeed with the education of their children (Sturtevant, 1993).

The direction that parent involvement takes will be influenced by the past and changes in the future. Society has come to realize that children are our future and carriers of our culture. The direction of our nation now rests on the acknowledgement by schools and society that parents must be involved with their children's education (Berger, 1991).

Early Parental Involvement

In the report, Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), the National Commission on Reading suggested ways a parent could help their child become a successful reader. The importance of parental interaction with their children was highly stressed. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement supported those suggestions, which focused on reinforcing

students reading skills at home. They emphasized that parents should read aloud to their children, talk to them about their experiences, take them places, limit their television watching while encouraging them to watch television programs that have educational value, and take an interest in their reading progress.

Many researchers hold the belief that reading should be started as early as possible. Mason thinks that the earlier a child shows an interest in reading the better it is for him/her. Most children do not exhibit an interest in books, consequently, the parents are the ones that must set the example for them. When the child gets to school he should already enjoy books, and more importantly reading. Parents then have a tremendous amount of influence over their children because they will mold the child's ideas about reading before school starts. Parents should then use their influence and let the child know through words and actions that reading is important.

Margarete Dix compiled a 36-item questionnaire which she sent to 213 parents of children in the Students Are Reading Right (STARR) in Neshah, Wisconsin. After gathering the parents responses she divided them into two groups: parents of good readers (children who had at least 1.5 grade levels in total reading during one school year) and parents of poor readers (children who had less than 1.5 grade levels in total reading during one school year). The scores from the Gates

MacGinite Reading Test for vocabulary and comprehension were used to determine the groups. Dix discovered that good parents were found to: 1) be good readers themselves; 2) present themselves as good readers; 3) use television selectively; 4) encourage creativity; 5) read to their children; and 6) give their children a wide variety of background experiences.

Mole (1982) did a synthesis of research studies involving parent practices with students reading achievement from 1978-1982. The most used practices by parents were: 1) listening to the child read and praising the child's reading; 2) discussing television programs together; and 3) playing educational games that related to school learning. In 1985 Silvern did a study to identify parental practices that increased children's reading achievement. The study discovered that students achieved higher when parents read to the child 8-10 minutes daily. Second, parents who allowed children to talk about and ask questions during the reading of the story achieved even higher. Children whose parents initiated talk with them about a story had the greatest achievement of all three.

Reading aloud by parents and children has been determined to aid in the development of a child's literacy. Parents can help their children see that print is also represented by oral words. Many educators and researchers have also noted that reading aloud is one of the most effective activities parents

can do with their young children to aid in the development and enjoyment of reading (Rasinski, 1992).

A research study was reported in 1980 by Hewison. He conducted two separate studies. They focused on the mother's interaction with their children and the effect on reading attainment of seven and eight year old children (first to third graders) from homogenous white working class families. The Southgate Reading Test was administered to obtain reading scores. The results of the first study showed that children whose mothers read to them scored higher than children whose mothers did not read to them. The second study found that the 47 children whose mothers listened to the children read scored higher than the 53 children whose mothers read to them. The difference was 36 percent of the variance in scores. Listening to the child read was more effective than when the parent did the reading. Two years later in London, England, Tizard finished his two years of research involving parents listening to their children read. He tested three groups: Group 1 - pupils who took books home and read to parents 2-4 times a week; Group 2 - pupils who did not read to their parents; and Group 3 - pupils who received extra reading instructions in school in groups of 4-5 pupils. The scores on the Southgate Group Reading Test, Carver Wood Recognition Test, and Spooner's Group Assessment for word recognition, reading comprehension and phonics showed Group 1 with a highly significant improvement in reading achievement. The other two

groups showed no such improvement.

Parental Influences

Reviewing the research on the effects of parental influence and parental involvement on children's reading achievement clearly indicates that when parents involve themselves actively in their child's education the results are beneficial for the young student (Nebor, 1986). Studies show that parental role modeling will enhance a child's reading ability because the child sees reinforcement on the value of reading. Parents who read for pleasure are more likely to have children who have a high degree of interest in books and reading. Nebor concluded that the more support a child receives from his parents the better the child's reading achievement.

A study to determine the effects of parental influence on a child's reading achievement was conducted by Clark (1976). Clark found that all of the parents studied, especially the mothers, were avid readers. He made the conclusion that it was important for the child to see his parents reading in order to acquire for himself a desire to read. He also stated that this was important because the child had to have a motivation to read before he would acquire any substantial skill at it.

In 1986 Susan Kontos did a study that supported the findings of Clark. Kontos added that young children must have an environment where they see adults read and write, only then

will they become good readers.

Helping students at home can also benefit reading ability. Shuttleworth (1986) notes that an improvement was realized by students when they were helped at home. His study consisted on monitoring the progress of eighteen children once parental tutoring began. Shuttleworth found that 50% of the students made a significant improvement once the tutoring began. This finding supports the belief that parental influence has an impact on a child's reading ability.

The following year in 1987 Jack Hourcade and Cynthia Richardson did a study that supported the findings of Shuttleworth. Their study examined thirty children. Each subject took the Woodcock Reading Test and then received a new list of words every two weeks for eight weeks. The students were to study these random word lists at home with their parents assistance. Initially the child was learning on the average of 9.5 words for each two week period without parental help. After the tutoring began the children were now learning at the rate of 12.7 words for a two week period. The outcome of this study indicated that a relationship exists between time spent with parental help and time spent studying alone.

A third study by Gary Bates took fourteen children and randomly assigned them to two different groups. Each group then received parental tutoring in reading three hours a week for seven weeks. During the seven weeks, one group's parents were counseled about how to give reading assistance while the

other group's parents were not. At the end of the seven week period the group whose parents had received the additional training did much better with their reading achievement. This study indicates that parents must also know how to tutor in order to get the best possible results from their children.

Summary

The literature shows that a correlation between parental involvement and a child's reading achievement does exist. Many indicators suggest that the more help a child receives from his parents the better that child will do with regard to reading achievement.

Chapter III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Learning to read can be a very complex process for a child. The literature on the effects of parental influence and involvement emphasis the importance of parents in the education of children. Parent involvement begins at birth but continues through the education of the child. The early years are the most significant. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a corelationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

Sample

The sample in this study consisted of students in a third grade class, in a public elementary school in an urban school district in southern New Jersey. The sample group was composed of 22 students from two third grade classes in the school (n=22). The subjects were between 8 and 11 years of age. The group consisted of 10 boys and 12 girls.

Instrument

Each of the 30 third grade students was given a parental involvement survey to take home to their parents in February. It questioned parents about their daily reading habits at home

with their child. The survey also questioned home environmental factors such as: mothers who worked outside the home, television/media viewing and discussion with their child, the verbal interaction in the home between parents and the child, and the educational level of the parents. The survey was scored on a scale of 1-4, with a four indicating the highest degree of involvement (See appendix A).

Collection of Data

The surveys were collected as the students returned them. Twenty-two of the 30 were returned. The researcher then collected the reading scores of the students. The scores were then combined to find an average for the first, second, and third marking periods. To find the relationship between parental involvement and reading scores a Pearson R correlation analysis was used.

Chapter IV
Analysis of Findings
Introduction

Many students do not reach their highest potential in reading because they need additional support from their parents. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a correlation between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students. The study was conducted in an urban public school district in southern New Jersey. The hypothesis tested was:

There will be a positive correlation between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

There was a total of 22 (n=22) subjects in the sample. Each student took home a parental involvement survey to their parents. The surveys were collected as the students returned them. The researcher then collected the reading scores of the students to find the average. To find the relationship between parental involvement and reading achievement a Pearson R correlation analysis was used.

Data Analysis

The range of scores on the parental involvement survey were 65-87. The mode, mean, and median were all 78 which

indicated a normal distribution. Standard deviation was 6.7. The mean for reading achievement was 83 with a standard deviation of 6.2 (See table 1).

table 1

Parental Involvement (PI) and Reading Achievement (RA)

		PI	RA
STUDENT	1	65.000	81.000
STUDENT	2	67.000	71.000
STUDENT	3	67.000	74.000
STUDENT	4	71.000	81.000
STUDENT	5	73.000	85.000
STUDENT	6	74.000	84.000
STUDENT	7	75.000	79.000
STUDENT	8	75.000	78.000
STUDENT	9	76.000	80.000
STUDENT	10	78.000	82.000
STUDENT	11	78.000	84.000
STUDENT	12	78.000	87.000
STUDENT	13	79.000	70.000
STUDENT	14	80.000	91.000
STUDENT	15	82.000	87.000
STUDENT	16	83.000	85.000
STUDENT	17	84.000	87.000
STUDENT	18	85.000	88.000
STUDENT	19	86.000	91.000
STUDENT	20	86.000	90.000
STUDENT	21	87.000	90.000
STUDENT	22	87.000	89.000
TOTAL OBSERVATIONS:		22	

The skewness and kurtosis of the distribution were very close to 1. This indicated a normal distribution that was not skewed positively or negatively (See table 2).

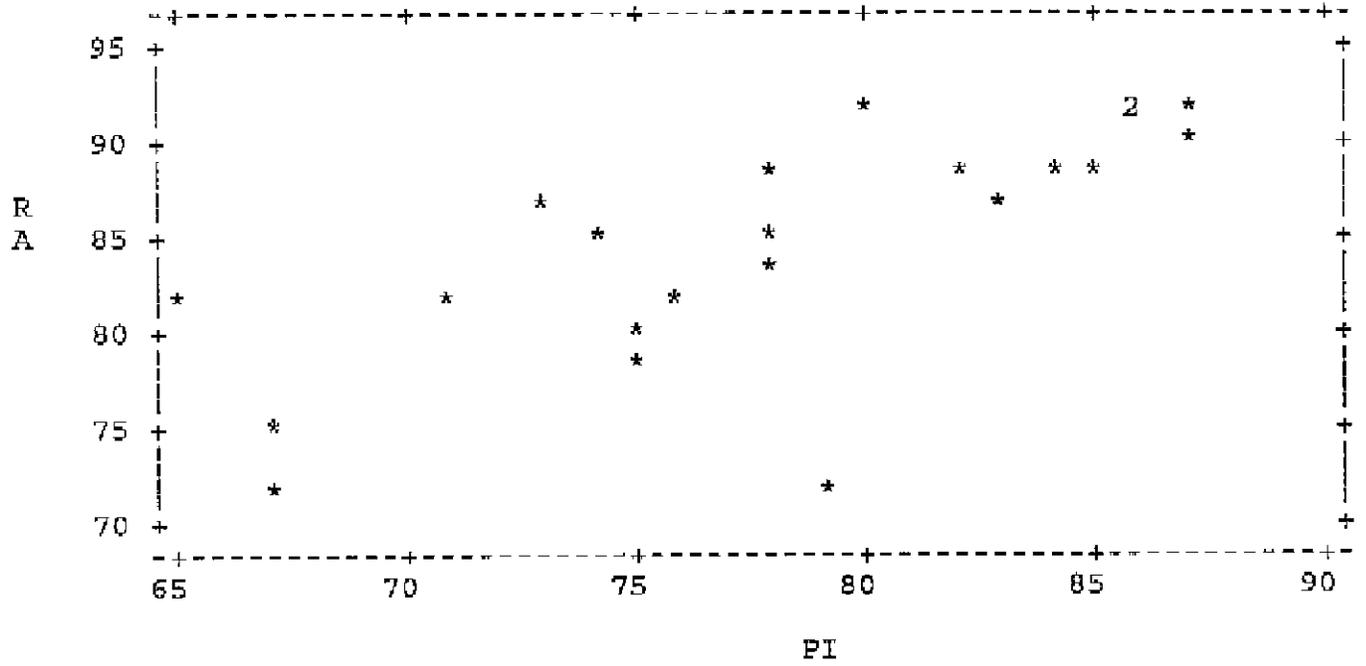
table 2
Descriptive Statistics for PI and RA

	RA	PI
N OF STUDENTS	22	22
MINIMUM	70.000	65.000
MAXIMUM	91.000	87.000
RANGE	21.000	22.000
MEAN	83.364	78.000
VARIANCE	37.861	44.952
STANDARD DEV	6.153	6.705
SKEWNESS (G1)	-0.731	-0.358
KURTOSIS (G2)	-0.320	-0.847
SUM	1834.000	1716.000

Pearson R was calculated to test the hypothesis and the result was $r = .71$ ($df = 20$, $\alpha = .05$) which was significant. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported and it was concluded that there was a significant correlation between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students. The results were placed on a scatterplot (See figure 1).

figure 1

Parental Involvement (PI) and Reading Achievement (RA)



Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Problem

The ability to read is essential in the world today. If a student is to succeed in education he must be able to read and retain information. Reading is the most important subject because it is the foundation for most learning and educational experiences. This means that our students need support in developing reading skills. An extensive review of the literature has shown that parents who involve themselves in the reading development of their children will have a significant impact on their growth in reading.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a significant correlation between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

Summary of the Hypothesis

This study investigated the relationship between parental involvement and reading achievement of third grade students. The **Research Hypothesis** stated:

There will be a positive correlation between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

Summary of the Procedure

The research design of this study was post hoc correlational design. The subjects involved in the study were 22 third grade students who attended a public elementary school in southern New Jersey. Each of the students was given a parental involvement survey to take home to their parents. It questioned parents about their daily reading habits at home with their child. The survey was scored on a scale of 1-4, with a four indicating the highest degree of involvement.

The surveys were collected as the students returned them. The researcher then collected the reading scores of the students. The scores were then combined to find an average for the first, second, and third marking periods. To find the relationship between parental involvement and the reading scores a Pearson R correlation analysis was used.

The study was limited because of geographical constraints, economic constraints, the non-randomization of subjects, and the actual number of subjects. As a result of the limitations, this study cannot be generalized to the general population of students.

Summary of the Findings

The result of the Pearson R correlation indicated a positive significant correlation between parent involvement and reading achievement ($r=.71$). It was concluded that a child who has parents that are involved in their education he/she will achieve higher reading achievement as a result of their

parents' involvement.

Conclusion

After a close analysis of the findings of this study, the correlation coefficient was found to be statistically significant. The research hypothesis stated: There will be a positive relationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students. The research hypothesis was accepted based on the significant correlational coefficient. This study has shown that in this specific case, there was a relationship between parental involvement and the reading achievement of third grade students.

Implications and Recommendations

This researcher attempted to find the relationship between parental involvement and reading achievement. The findings indeed suggest that parents can play a significant role in the development of reading skills. However, this does not mean that the variables would have a significant relationship in a population, or a randomized sample.

In this study the sample was limited to one grade and school. Geographical concerns limited the study in that using only one location reduced the range of students possible for the study. The parents and students were limited to those found in a small urban, lower class, relatively blue-collar town. The non-randomization of students could have severely effected the results of this study.

To obtain parent involvement information, it is suggested

that a larger random sample be used to measure reading achievement. It would be interesting and more significant if a researcher were to follow a sample of students in a cross-sectional longitudinal study from birth to the end of third grade.

Unfortunately many parents do not know how to help their child build a foundation for later learning. This does not mean that they lack love, but they do lack education. Therefore, this researcher would like to provide a list of ten items that are important for the literacy growth of a child.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

It is recommended that:

1. Parents read to their children.
2. Parents listen to their children read at least 15 minutes a day.
3. Parents be good reading models to their children.
4. Parents give their children a wide variety of background experience.
5. Parents allow the children to ask questions during the reading of a story.
6. Parents view and discuss television programs with their children.
7. Parents encourage talk about everyday events.
8. Parents play educational games with their children.
9. Parents take their children places and let them explore the world around them.
10. Parents cooperate with teachers on matters of reading.

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Appendix
Parental Involvement Survey

The purpose of this study is to help understand parent involvement in education. Your time and input are appreciated. Circle the letter that pertains to your situation.

A=Always
B=Frequently
C=Occasionally
D=Never

- A B C D 1. I read daily to my child as a preschooler.
- A B C D 2. After reading a story to my child a I related the story to life experiences.
- A B C D 3. After reading a story to my child we discussed its meaning.
- A B C D 4. I allowed my child to select his/her favorite books to read.
- A B C D 5. My child and I visited the library.
- A B C D 6. I allowed my child to select books and then I bought them.
- A B C D 7. Writing materials were available for use by my child.
- A B C D 8. I enjoy talking and encouraged my child to talk with me.
- A B C D 9. Before school I helped my child learn their ABC's.
- A B C D 10. I volunteered at the school in the cafeteria, library, or through the PTA.
- A B C D 11. I assisted my child in their homework.
- A B C D 12. I gave my child at least 15 minutes of undivided attention each day.
- A B C D 13. I took classes to better educate myself.
- A B C D 14. I had high expectations for my child in school.
- A B C D 15. I encouraged my child to do well in school.
- A B C D 16. I kept in contact with my child's teachers to see how I could possibly help.

- A B C D 17. I appreciated when teachers gave me suggestions on how to best help my child learn.
- A B C D 18. Parent/Teacher conferences were helpful.
- A B C D 19. I requested to be informed if my child is struggling in school.
- A B C D 20. I allowed my child to discuss television shows with me.
- A B C D 21. My child saw me reading for pleasure/fun.
- A B C D 22. I took my child places and let him/her explore the world around them.
- A B C D 23. I tried to answer any questions my child had about the world.
- A B C D 24. I played logical/educational games with my child.

Parent's Signature _____

Child's Name _____

VITA

Name: Scott M. Dailey

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