

PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF  
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“Families and schools have been working together since the beginning of formalized schooling” (Hill & Taylor, 2004, p.161) to produce the best schooling for the children. However, the partnership has changed over the years. It began in the beginning as a partnership in which the families maintained a high degree of control over the schools because these families controlled the teachers that were hired and the apprenticeships or the teachers who are in training. Then the partnership took an extreme turn in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with schools and families becoming very separate. During this period, schools were in charge of academic topics, and the parents were responsible for “moral, cultural, and religious education” (Hill & Taylor, 2004, p. 161). Now the partnership again has changed because of the pressure put on families and schools to improve children’s achievement. This pressure on schools and families comes from the government, parents, and society. The partnership is now the closest it has ever been to a true partnership in which the families and schools have a shared responsibility for the education of the nation’s children (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Parent involvement is important for many different reasons, but at the top of that list is the fact that the involvement is mandated by several acts, including the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. This act mandates promoting parent involvement in school

activities, intensifying the parent-school-community partnerships, and having parent representation on state and local school improvement plans (Trotman, 2001). Parent involvement is now seen as a necessity for a child to succeed in school because of all the benefits it promotes such as fewer behavior problems and higher academic achievement (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Kelley-Laine, 1998; Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000; Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli, & Slostad, 1999; Lazar, & Slostad, 1999; Pelletier & Brent, 2002; Sheldon, 2002; Shepard, McKinney, & Trimberger, 1999). Also, there are eight National Educational Goals, and parent involvement is one of them (Osborne & Onis, 1999). Even No Child Left Behind (NCLB) “requires schools to develop ways to get parents more involved in their child’s education and in improving the school” (U.S. Dept. of Ed., n.d., term #7).

#### Description of the Problem

Parent involvement is a significant aspect of children’s schooling which should be looked at in more detail because it is mandated by the state, and there are still many aspects of parent involvement that have not yet been fully explored. Parent involvement has been looked at from the teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions but has not really been studied through the eyes of parents. Also, research is absent on comparing and contrasting parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of parent involvement.

Parent involvement was researched in early childhood classrooms, middle school, and high school classrooms, and researchers found that parent involvement usually decreased as children got older (Lazar & Slostad, 1999). The barriers that keep parents from being involved have been addressed in many studies. From those studies, other articles and research giving advice on how to involve the uninvolved parent have



developed. Teachers and students have been interviewed and surveyed to see what they think of parents' involvement. But out of all of these studies looking at different aspects of parent involvement, the parents are very seldom questioned about their own involvement or lack of involvement.

For example, Baker, Kessler-Skar, Piotrkowski, and Parker (1999) looked at the types of parent involvement teachers reported they knew about and the involvement they did not have knowledge of but did not ask the parents about their involvement. Also, Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, and Fendrich (1999) looked at parent involvement over time but again only judged this involvement by the teachers' perception. Then in 2002, Levine looked at teachers' perceptions of parent involvement and how the parents influence the development of children's literacy skills but she failed to ask the parents about their own involvement. A few studies have been conducted that involve the parents being asked questions, but they are few and small. These are described in detail later in the literature review.

In 2002 Levine looked at teachers' perception of parent involvement in relationship to children's literacy skills. In 1999 Baker et al. only reported on what teachers know about parent involvement. Drummond and Stipek in 2004 only examined parents' perceptions of parent involvement. Lawson in 2003 was one of the few to look at both parents and teachers perceptions of parent involvement and it was a very small sample size.

### Problem Statement

This paper is going to address the problem that little research exists to understand parents' perceptions of parent involvement.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to understand and compare parents' and teachers' perceptions of parent involvement and try to gain an insight into both parents' and teachers' understanding of parent involvement at school and home.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this paper, parent involvement will be defined by two categories; parent involvement in the home and parent involvement at school (Sheldon, 2002). Parent involvement at school is defined as activities done at school or for school such as parent teacher conferences, communicating with the teacher, attending PTA meetings, and volunteering at school (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Parent involvement at home is often more difficult to understand but is defined as "parents initiating learning activities at home to improve their children's performance in school" (Tinkler, 2002, p.6). It includes parents helping with homework, discussing school with their child, playing games, reading with their child, going to the library, visiting a museum, and getting their child to help with cooking, to name a few (Tinkler, 2002). Parent involvement at home includes any activity that involves one or more of the following skills: speaking/listening, reading, writing, and number concepts (Personal communication- Dr. Barbara Sorrels).

## Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study (The first two questions will be asked of parents and teachers, then the last four questions will be asked of the parents a similar question will be asked of the teachers.):

1. What are the different perceptions of parent involvement in education?

2. Can a parent be involved in a child's education without being involved in the child's schooling?
3. How are parents involved in their child's education at home?
4. Are parents satisfied with their level of involvement at home? If not, what are the barriers for them to be more involved?
5. How are parents involved in their child's education at school?
6. Are parents satisfied with their level of involvement at school? If not, what are the barriers for them to be more involved?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers had once commented that “parents’ role in their children’s education should only include choosing the school...creating a home atmosphere for social and emotional development...and shaping of their children’s values and morals” (Ramirez, 2001, p.1). Some would say parents are not even taking on the above responsibilities any more (Lawson, 2003), but others would say this is an out-dated way of looking at parent involvement that is inconsistent with the true meaning of parent involvement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Parent involvement now entails so much more for a parent. Parent involvement is now seen as a necessity for a child to succeed in school (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Kelley-Laine, 1998; Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000; Lazar et al., 1999; Lazar & Slostad, 1999; Pelletier & Brent, 2002; Sheldon, 2002; Shepard et al., 1999).

The reason for the change is the increasing research stating the importance of parent involvement. The vast majority of the literature on parent involvement suggests that it is beneficial in the following ways: increases children’s success in school, yields better test scores (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Kelley-Laine, 1998; Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000; Lazar et al., 1999; Lazar & Slostad, 1999; Pelletier & Brent, 2002; Sheldon, 2002; Shepard et al., 1999), improves morals and attitudes (Cordry & Wilson, 2004), positively impacts parent-child relationships (Trotman, 2001), reduces grade retention and special

education referral (Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004), increases attendance, increases achievement, and results in fewer behavioral problems (DeCusati & Johnson, 2004) and gives children a better work ethic (Lopez, 2001; Myburgh, Niehaus, & Poggenpoel, 2002). Because of all this research indicating the benefits of parent involvement, there is even more research being conducted concerning the best methods to get parents involved and what the biggest barriers are to parents getting more involved.

One problem with parent involvement is that teachers and parents have different views or perceptions on what parent involvement is (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000; Lawson, 2003); and culture is a variable that can change ideas on parent involvement (DeMoss & Vaughn, 2000). Because of the conflicting views on parent involvement, teachers may feel that a parent is not involved in his/her child's schooling, but if you talk to the parent, he/she would say they were involved because of items he/she is doing with his/her child that the teacher is not aware of or does not personally consider parent involvement.

### Definitions of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement means different things to different people. Epstein and Dauber (1991) break involvement into six categories; volunteering, decision making, parenting, learning, home-school communication, and community-school communication.

Another definition that seems to define parent involvement is from a survey Baker et al, conducted in 1999. In the 1999 study Baker et al. recognized 15 parent activities that teachers believed "promote children's skills and cognitive development and fosters high expectations for school success" (Baker et al., 1999, p. 371). They are

(1) calls the school, (2) discusses the child with the teacher, (3) shows respect for the school, (4) discusses the school day with the child, (5) oversees homework, (6) helps the child practice skills, (7) writes stories with the child, (8) reads with the child, (9) works on projects with the child, (10) takes the child to the library, (11) takes the child to cultural activities, (12) monitors the child's television viewing, (13) is interested in what happens at school, (14) responds to notes sent home, and (15) facilitates transitions to school (Baker et al., 1999, p. 371).

These 15 parent activities are another way to identify what parent involvement is in this day and age.

Parent involvement can also be looked at by dividing it into two categories; parent involvement that occurs in the home and parent involvement that occurs at the school (Sheldon, 2002). Parent involvement at home is defined by Sheldon, 2002 "as parent-child interactions on school-related or other learning activities and represents the direct investment of a parent's resources in her or his child's education" (p. 302). The second type of parent involvement is that which occurs at the school. This type of involvement can include but is not limited to volunteering at the school, attending PTA meetings, attending parent teacher conferences, reading one on one with children in a classroom, helping with a fund raising event, or communicating regularly with the child's teacher.

#### Importance of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is important because of the benefits it provides for children who have involved parents. According to Levine (2002), parent involvement at home and at school should be encouraged because: (1) a positive message is sent to children

about the importance of their education; (2) the parent(s) stay informed of the child's performance; (3) the school is able to accomplish more; (4) children's self-esteem is enhanced; (5) parent/child relationships are improved; (6) academic achievement is improved; (7) parents develop positive attitudes towards schools; (8) children are successful in school both academically and behaviorally.

Parent involvement is also important because parents are a child's first teacher (Cordry & Wilson, 2004) and the only teacher that will stay constant through the child's lifetime. Therefore, the parent will know a lot more about his/her child's interests, dislikes, and needs than a teacher, and can help a teacher better understand his/her child in order to provide the best curriculum possible (Levine, 2002). Parent(s) and teacher(s) need to be constantly communicating in order to be informed of what is going on at home and school. When crisis occurs at home or at school, it will most likely affect the other.

Although most studies praise parent involvement, there are a few studies which raise concerns. While not necessarily denying the importance of parent involvement, these studies state that the current research on parent involvement is "poorly" conducted and has many flaws in the design of studies. Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguer, and Kayzar, (2002) reviewed 39 articles about intervention programs and found the research that was conducted had many flaws such as: evaluation designs and data collection techniques were not sufficient, accurate evidence is not provided, and studies were inattentive to the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of families that participate in programs. Mattingly et al. wants more research to be conducted that is thorough, well designed and empirical to determine the true importance of parent involvement and how it should be mandated.

Mattingly et al. did research on 39 articles as an extension of the White, Taylor, and Moss (1992) research on early intervention and stated there was no convincing evidence that the ways parents had been involved in prior early interventions made a difference. White et al. (1992) was only concerned with early intervention programs that were designed to help children and families with a child who is handicapped, disadvantaged, or at risk. White et al. suggests current studies indicate no advantage of having parents involved but sees the need for more thorough research to specifically compare the costs and benefits of parent involvement. Drummond and Stipek mentioned, “empirical evidence on its effects on students achievement is inconsistent” (2004, p. 200).

#### Parents’ and Teachers’ Perspectives of Parent Involvement

In 1996, Griffith looked at different kinds of school environments and how satisfied parents were. School climate and being informed were strongly related to parental satisfaction, with empowerment close behind. Interesting enough, there was not a significant relation between parent involvement and parent satisfaction. Griffith found that “parents whose educational expectations for their children were high were also more involved in school activities than parents with lower educational expectations” (Griffith, 1996, p.1559).

In 2002, Levine looked at teachers’ perceptions of parent involvement and how parents influence the development of children’s literacy skills. One hundred percent of the teachers she surveyed agreed that parent involvement is critical but the parents’ perception was still not addressed. Levine asked teachers’ questions such as is it important to incorporate parents into the classroom and how are parents involved. The



teachers in this study felt that parents were the “child’s first and most important role model” (p.7) and that the students’ attitudes about school were identical to the parents’. Only 25% of the teachers interviewed said there was parent involvement in the classroom but 60% of teachers said more of their parents were involved in literacy activities at home. The literacy activities Levine was looking at were “checking homework, reading to and with their children, sharing time on the computer, trips to the library or bookstore, and simply discussing school with the child” (p. 8).

Baker et al, (1999) looked at the types of parent involvement teachers reported they knew about. Baker et al. had a sample of 190 kindergarten and first-grade teachers, but no parents were included in the study. Baker et al. asked two questions in their study, what types of parent involvement do teachers report that they do know about and what types of parent involvement do teachers not have knowledge about? “And, what family and child characteristics are associated with differences in the extent of teachers’ claimed knowledge of parent involvement?” (Baker et al., 1999, p. 369). The second part of the first question seems confusing as to what Baker is trying to look at. Baker et al.’s study revealed that parental characteristics interacted in a complex way with the amount of knowledge teachers reported knowing about parent involvement. The study also revealed that teachers reported not knowing about the amount of involvement in activities that were outside of the classroom or the teacher’s direct observation.

But then, in 1999, Brady did a study that was supposed to be a smaller scale of Baker’s and looked at the types of parent involvement teachers know about, focusing on literacy development. Brady, however, looked at 102 parents and eight teachers. Brady’s study stated, “the findings revealed that parent’s reported being more involved in

their children's literacy development than the teachers reported for these same parents" (p. 2). Most of the divergent responses for parents and teachers were on items the teachers could not observe. Brady suggested increasing the size of the sample and asking for quantitative responses for different, possibly better results.

Lawson (2003) looked at teacher and parent (12 teachers and 13 parents) perceptions of the meanings and functions of parent involvement and how teachers and parents perceive their individual and collective roles in facilitating parent involvement. Lawson's research questions were,

"what are the meanings and functions of parent involvement for teachers and parents in the same low-income, culturally diverse school community? How are these meanings culturally constructed? How do teachers and parents perceive their individual and collective roles in facilitating parent involvement?" (2003, p. 83).

Lawson interviewed a group of involved parents, a group of uninvolved parents, and a group of teachers.

His research revealed that teachers and parents have different perceptions of parent involvement. The reason for this different perception according to Lawson is

"teachers' and parents' theories of action run both parallel and in near opposition to each other simultaneously. They are parallel because both teachers and parents are child focused. They are also nearly oppositional because teachers' schoolcentric and parents' communitycentric frames of reference consistently put them at odds with each other" (2003, p. 122).

Another interesting finding was that both involved (those at the school daily) and uninvolved parents (parents who the researcher had to search out and that identify themselves as uninvolved) “considered themselves to be actively involved in their children’s education” (Lawson, 2003, p. 125). Izzo et al. (1999) looked at parent involvement over time but again only judged by the teachers perceptive.

Drummond and Stipek (2004) conducted a study which had three objectives: “(1) how much parents from diverse backgrounds value involvement in their children’s schooling; (2) what factors are associated with differences among parents in their beliefs about involvement; and (3) what parents say, in their own words, they should be doing to help their children succeed in school” (pp. 200-201).

Drummond and Stipek conducted this study through teacher questionnaires and parent phone interviews. Teachers were only asked about the child’s level of math and reading skills related to peers and if he/she had given any “special suggestions” (Drummond & Stipek, 2004, p. 202) to the parents of these children. All of the children who were involved in this study were also involved in a longitudinal study.

Parents were asked about their children’s skill level in math and reading and whether parents thought they should be involved in certain activities (but not whether the parent had ever been involved in that particular activity). Parents were also asked about “their involvement regarding math, reading, homework, and knowing what their children are learning” (Drummond & Stipek, 2004, p. 203). Lastly, parents were asked to think about the preceding week and what activities they had undertaken to teach their child in

math and/or reading, how they had helped their child with homework and if they had read to their child or listened to their child read to them.

The results of the studies found that most parents think involvement in their child's learning is important. Parents put helping with homework, reading, math, and knowing what their child was learning as the most important ways to be involved. Ethnicity did not make a difference in parents' beliefs about parent involvement but the study did find that parents of the younger children, second graders versus third graders said the importance of being involved is more important. However, the above studies suggest that parents often fall short of meeting the schools expectations for involvement. So, although these parents think these activities are important, the parents are not confirming that they are doing them.

#### Strategies for Increasing Parent Involvement

Many of the strategies for increasing parent involvement come from trying to overcome the barriers to parent involvement. One of the ways of increasing parent involvement is educating current teachers and prospective teachers on the importance of parent involvement and the best methods for getting successful parent involvement. According to Karther and Lowden (1997), there are certain ways to try and get at-risk families involved in school activities which include informal meetings with families at the beginning of the school year, regular family contact from the school and the individual teacher, home activities sent home from the teacher (which include all the items needed to complete the activity), and positive phone calls and notes more often than negative contacts.

Along the same lines of at-risk families are homeless families. Lucinda Post, 2001 would add to Karther and Lowden's list for teachers and school principals to "provide an atmosphere that welcomes parents" (p. 8). Schurr (1993) wrote about sixteen suggested ways to involve parents, some of the most interesting ones are: a parent lounge or resource room, a parent handbook of guidelines and tips, a parent/student exchange day, home visits, official parent proclamation efforts, school-wide communication plan, parent/teacher journal for communication, school wide homework policy, and a welcome program for new students and families. These are just a few examples of the strategies researchers are suggesting to get more parents involved. Next we will look at some programs that have chosen specific strategies to incorporate in their programs and see how successful the programs are.

Some schools and states are trying to increase their parent involvement through educating pre-service teachers on how to successfully involve parents. Blasi in 2002 did a study on pre-service teachers' ideas and beliefs about children and families that are "at risk." They were surveyed before and after taking course work. Blasi found that the students began with a narrow lens but finished with a much broader lens, proving education is changing perspective of teachers' views and beliefs.

Another program that has been established to try and increase parent involvement is interactive homework, which is not only said to increase parent involvement but also student achievement (Battle-Bailey, 2004). Interactive homework is a concept developed by Lora Battle-Bailey (2004) to get parents more involved in helping with homework and in turn helping students get more out of the homework. Interactive homework was designed to assist home-school connections based on the premise that, "students benefit

academically from consistency between home and school strategies” (Battle-Bailey, 2004, p. 37). This concept has guidelines and requirements for the teacher, student, and parents in order to be successful. It will be interesting to see if this interactive homework is successful in increasing parent involvement and student achievement.

### Barriers to Parent Involvement

There are several barriers researchers have discovered that stand in the way of parent involvement (Flood, Lapp, Tinajero, & Nagel, 1995; Johnson & Anguiano, 2004; Tinkler, 2002; Trotman, 2001). Table I was created by the researcher based on the works of Tinkler and Trotman, it illustrates typical barriers to parent involvement. The barriers include many different items related to the school environment, work schedules, and differing home and school cultures. Parent involvement barriers can be divided into five categories according to Tinkler (2002), “school environment, culture and language, educational level of parents, psychological issues, and logistical issues” (p. 8). School environment refers to barriers that the parents feel from the school environment. Culture and language barriers are due to the school and family having different cultures and/or languages. Educational level of the parents can also influence their amount of parent involvement. Psychological issues refer to personal mental/health problems. Logistical issues are issues that usually relate to money, time, and circumstances.

It is important to know the barriers to parent involvement so that when a teacher or school is trying to get parents involved, he/she can account for the barriers, and try to set up their system for parent involvement that will have the fewest barriers conflicting. Instead of designing meetings around what educators assume are the needs of their school population (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990) it would be best to design programs around the

actual needs of the families. For example, if a school system knows that its population has trouble getting childcare, speaks a different language than most of the school staff, is not able to attend meeting during the day, then the school will want to provide evening meetings with childcare and an interpreter.

### Summary

In summary, it seems that parent involvement is an important key to successful school experiences for most children according to most researchers (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Kelley-Laine, 1998; Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000; Lazar et al, 1999; Lazar, & Slostad, 1999; Pelletier & Brent 2002; Sheldon 2002; Shepard et al., 1999). Parent involvement research has been concentrating on providing teachers, administration, and sometimes parents with programs that encourage parent involvement and guidelines on how to promote parent involvement within a school or classroom.

Parent involvement research is an important topic to continue looking at in more detail and within more specific guidelines. At this point, it seems that most researchers agree that parent involvement is important for children to get the most out of their school experiences. There seems to be a lot of knowledge on the perceptions of teacher on parent involvement. However parents' perceptions of parent involvement have almost been forgotten or left out all together. It seems that parents' thoughts and opinions need to be looked at more closely to determine what parents see as important and if they are not involved, even though they consider it important, then what are the barriers holding the parents back. Another missing link in the literature of parent involvement is the concept of what parent involvement is. Parents, teacher, and even some researchers seem to have narrow views of what parent involvement means.

CHAPTER III  
METHODOLOGY  
Design of Study

The objectives of this study were to give the interested public more information about parents' perceptions of parent involvement, increase awareness of the barriers to parent involvement, and compare the parents' perceptions to teachers' perceptions. This study will give researchers a better understanding of what differences and similarities parents and teachers have when it comes to what parent involvement means, where it occurs, and what barriers hold parents back from being involved in their child's schooling.

This study is a qualitative study which was be conducted through surveys completed by parents and teachers within the same school. The researcher felt the best method to get the answers to the above objectives was to ask participants to fill out a survey consisting of six open-ended questions (see appendix A) and some basic demographic questions (see appendix B). Each survey included a letter of introduction and a consent (see appendix C), the demographic questions and the six survey questions. The letter of introduction and consent gave a brief explanation of the study and promise the protection of each participates identity. The six questions were chosen based on gaps discovered in the literature on parent involvement. Few studies have been conducted that actually ask the parents about their involvement, and even fewer studies have been done that inquire about involvement from both parents and teachers. Also few studies have



looked at what parents and teachers think is included in the words “parent involvement.” Lastly, barriers of parent involvement have been explored in a large number of articles, but parent involvement from the schools perspective is still lacking (Drummond & Stipek, 2004); therefore, barriers still need to be explored.

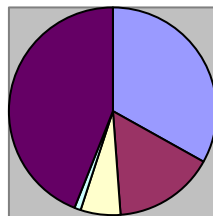
Open-ended questions instead of a Likert scale were selected as the best measure to assess parents’ and teachers’ thoughts and perceptions without giving the desired answers away. Open-ended questions also left room for the participants to give answers that the researcher may not have thought to include in a Likert scale. Some limitations still exist to this type of study.

One major limitation to a study, which consists of open-ended questions, is potential researcher bias. If the researcher has any bias, this could sway the way the researcher analyzes or categorizes the responses. Another limitation is that the researcher must trust the responses of the participants. In this type of study, like many others, the researcher has to believe or trust that the participants are giving truthful answers. The researcher is also not acquiring valid data when the questions are leading participants to answer questions a certain way which may not be the participants true answers. A third limitation is the questionnaire format itself. If a participant is confused or does not understand what a question is asking, then there is no one to help clarify the question. Lastly, it is difficult to make generalizations to the whole population from qualitative research. Qualitative research is often conducted using a small or limited population making it difficult to generalize the data to a larger population.

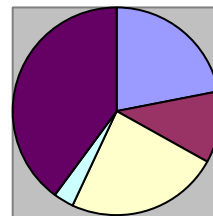
## Population of Sample

The samples were taken from a moderate sized Midwestern city. Two were public schools and one was a private Catholic school. The exact demographics of the private school, St. Cubbies was not available, however, the school consisted of mostly middle-to upper-class families who were predominantly Caucasian. St. Cubbies' School consisted of children from 180 families'; grades pre-K to eighth. However, the researcher utilized grades only up to third. A large percentage of the families consisted of two-parent homes that reside on the south side of the Midwestern city. The two public schools were Bear Elementary and Legal Eagle Elementary. Bear Elementary is located on the West side of the city and has about 235 children in grades pre-K through fifth grade. Bear has about 33% African Americans, 16% American Indian, 6% Hispanic, 1% Asian and 44% Caucasian. Furthermore, Bear has 80% of their children on the free lunch program. Legal Eagle Elementary is located on the East side of the city and holds about 646 children in grades pre-K through fifth grade. Legal Eagle has 22% African Americans, 11% American Indian, 24% Hispanic, 3% Asian and 40% Caucasian. Also, Legal Eagle has 60% of their children on the free lunch program.

**Demographics for Bear Elementary**



**Demographics for Legal Eagle Elementary**



The researcher chose those three different school populations in anticipation of acquiring knowledge about different groups, such as culture and socio-economic status, in order to compare and contrast their views. Also, the researcher wanted to have a variety of cultures, parents' education levels, income levels, and other factors in order to obtain the clearest understanding of parents' and teachers' beliefs about parent involvement.

#### How Data were Collected

The researcher sent a survey to every family in all three schools grade pre-K through third, and to every teacher in those schools, for a total of 780 surveys being sent out to parents and 57 surveys being sent out to teachers. The surveys were sent out on a Friday, and the participants were asked to return the surveys on or before the next Friday. The surveys were sent out mid January.

Each teacher in each individual class distributed the surveys to their students to be given to the parents on the Friday. The parents were asked to return the completed surveys to the teacher in a sealed envelope provided to them. When the teacher collected the surveys, he/she put all of them, including his/her own, in an envelope which the researcher collected from each teacher on the last day.

After the researcher collected the surveys, they were stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home when they were not being analyzed. The researcher needed to know which teacher surveys corresponds to which set of parent surveys and which classes came from which school. Therefore, when the surveys were collected, they were numbered and letter coded to protect the identities and allowed the researcher to recognize which sets belonged to which school and which teacher. Also, it should be

noted that participants and students of participants were not penalized for not returning the survey. Once the data was entered into the computer system, the surveys were then shredded.

#### How data were Analyzed

Data collected from this study were analyzed by looking for recurring themes and meaningful patterns. For the question about barriers, the researcher used a table based on Trotman 2001 and Tinklers 2002 studies (see Table I) to code the barriers parents and teachers state parents are facing. The data was analyzed by each question and the teachers' and parents' responses were compared and contrasted.

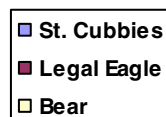
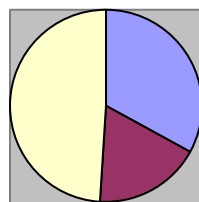
## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

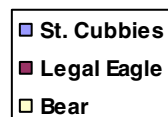
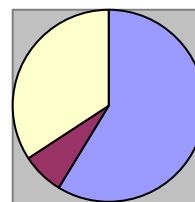
#### Demographic Information

Fifty-seven surveys were sent to teachers at three different schools and fourteen surveys were returned, for a return rate of 25%. The highest percentage returned for the teachers was 40% from Bear Elementary, then was St. Cubbies' with 27%, and Legal Eagle Elementary with 15%. Parent response rates were much lower, with 9% returned. Seven hundred and eighty surveys were sent out and only seventy-two returned. St. Cubbies' had the highest percentage returned (24%), Bear Elementary had 14%, and the largest student population of these three schools, Legal Eagle Elementary had the smallest return rate of 3%. The surveys at St. Cubbies and Bear Elementary were just handed out through the principal to the teachers. The surveys sent out to Legal Eagle Elementary however, were hand distributed by the research, accompanied by the vice principal to each teacher and explained. Legal Eagle had the lowest return rate even with this type of distribution.

**Distribution of Returned Teachers Surveys**



**Distribution of Returned Parents Surveys**



### Question One: Parents' and Teachers' Definitions of Parent Involvement

The first question of the survey “What does parent involvement in education mean to you?” received extremely varied responses but fell into three basic categories (a) general definitions, (b) identification of a specific activity (c) a statement of the importance of parent involvement.

Teachers' definitions of parent involvement were almost all school centric. It was about what the teachers and schools want the parents to do (see Table II for teachers' responses). Teachers generally defined it as some sort of partnership with the school and teachers. Many of the activities listed by teachers involve something the parent does with or at the school, such as helping with homework or volunteering. The last type of response was statements about the importance of parent involvement such as it is important in child's education.

Parents on the other hand, did include school centered involvement but they also include a variety of home and community activities giving a broader definition of parent involvement. This is discussed in more detail in the section on parent involvement at home. Parents gave definition type responses such as aware of what is going on at school and being involved in child's education. Many parents responded to this question by identifying certain activities that they involved in (see Table III). The activities parents associated with parent involvement correlated with Baker's definition of parent involvement, which is listed below.

- (1) calls the school,
- (2) discusses the child with the teacher,
- (3) shows respect for the school,
- (4) discusses the school day with the child,
- (5)

oversees homework, (6) helps the child practice skills, (7) writes stories with the child, (8) reads with the child, (9) works on projects with the child, (10) takes the child to the library, (11) takes the child to cultural activities, (12) monitors the child's television viewing, (13) is interested in what happens at school, (14) responds to notes sent home, and (15) facilitates transitions to school (Baker et al., 1999, p. 371).

Only three of the above fifteen parent activities were not mentioned by the parents of this study. The three that were not mentioned in this study were showing respect for school, writing stories with the child, and working on projects with child. It should be noted though that parents do respond to some of the other questions with "helping with projects." Engage in interesting activities, homeroom parent, PTA member, and volunteer are some additional ways the parents in this study stated they are involved.

Other parents responded to this question by stating why they think parent involvement is important. Some of these responses were: parent involvement means a lot; education is very important; and without it you are going nowhere. Teachers and parents both gave a variety of responses to this question but it was interesting that teachers only stated three of the fifteen parent activities Baker's (1999) stated but parents stated all but two of the activities. There are clearly some gaps between teachers' and parents' perceptions about what parent involvement means.

#### Question Two: Parent Involvement Without Being Involved at School

Question number two, "Can a parent be involved in a child's learning without being at the child's school?" reflects the work of Sheldon (2002) and Lawson (2003). Sheldon divided parent involvement into two categories parent involvement that occurs

in the home and parent involvement that occurs at the school. Lawson's (2003) research found both 'involved' and 'uninvolved' parents agreed that a parent can be involved in his/her child's education without being involved in a child's schooling. Seventy nine percent of the teachers who responded to this survey agreed that a parent can be involved in his/her child's education without being involved in a child's schooling. Eighty five percent of the parents who responded to this survey agreed that a parent can be involved in his/her child's education without being involved in a child's schooling.

Teachers' and parents' responded to this question by stating yes or no, and some elaborated on their responses by stating how parents can be involved in a child's education without being at the child's school. Because their explanations overlap with question three, their responses will be included in the next discussion.

#### Question Three: Parent Involved at Home

"How are you (your parents) involved in your child's learning at home?", was the third question of the survey. Again, teachers' responses were school centered, except for one. Only one teacher believed parents were involved at home in activities both school and home or community centered. Her responses included teaching morals and values, providing educational experiences, building a child's self esteem, providing basic needs of life, sharing faith, sharing a loving home, positive reinforcement, willing to work with teacher, read notes and news letters from school, and communicate with teacher.

Table IV lists activities teachers stated parents were involved in at home, broken down into activities related to school and activities related to home. Table IV looks misleading because six of the eight responses on the activities not related to school were stated by one teacher, the one mentioned above. Parents had a much broader scope of



ways they help their child's education at home, which included such activities as visiting the library or museums, traveling, playing games (educational games), working on letter knowledge, communicating with teachers/school, praising and encouraging children, doing flash cards, teaching values, doing activities such as art, music, and computer, and integrating learning with home activities. Parents' activities are listed in Table V.

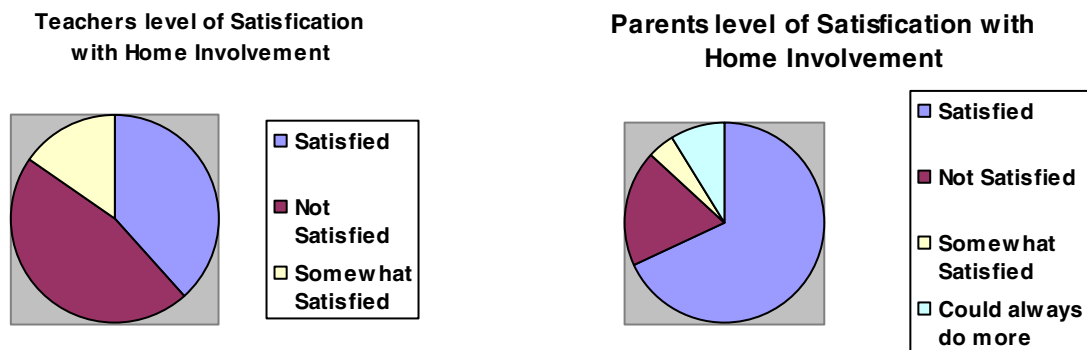
The involvement parents reported they have with children at home seem to fit together well with Sheldon's (2002) definition of involvement at home, "parent-child interactions on school-related or other learning activities and represents the direct investment of a parent's resources in her or his child's education" (p. 302). Most of the above examples are parent-child interactions that are educational in some sense that use some form or forms of the parent's resources, the most common resource being used is time.

When comparing parents and teachers ideas about parent involvement at home, teachers' ideas were much more limited to activities related to school even though the topic was parent involvement at home. Parents did include activities related to school but they also mentioned activities that were related to the community or home. Parents and teachers seemed to agree about the most commonly stated ways that parents are involved at home, which are helping/reviewing homework, reading with or to a child, and talking to the child. This agrees with Drummond & Stipek's findings in 2004, that parents believe helping with homework, reading, math, and knowing what children are learning are the most important ways to be involved. Parents have a much broader view of parent involvement at home, whereas, teachers have a narrow view that typically includes activities that are directly related to school.

## Question Four: Satisfaction with Home Involvement

### Home Satisfaction

Thirty eight percent of teachers were satisfied with their classroom parents' involvement at home, 46% were not satisfied, and 15% were somewhat satisfied with the level of involvement of parents at home. On the other hand, 68% of parents were satisfied with their level of involvement at home, 19% were not satisfied, 4% were somewhat satisfied, and 9% said they could always do more. Parents and teachers differ on their level of satisfaction with parental involvement at home. Brady's research in 1999 showed that parents reported a higher level of involvement than teachers reported for the same parents, which is equivalent with the results of this research.



### Home Barriers

Participants were asked what barriers parents were dealing with to be involved at home. The researcher used the work of Tinkler (2002) and Trotman (2001) to analysis the data collected on barriers. The most common barriers reported by teachers were logistically issues, such as long job hours for preventing home involvement, second was education level of parents. Teachers' perceptions of parents' barriers are listed in Table VI. Teachers did not mention any school environment or psychological issues.

The most common barriers parents listed were logistical issues such as work, siblings, and time. Table VII lists all of the barriers parents' state they face when trying to be involved at home. Parents also did not mention any psychological issues; however, they did state one educational and environmental issue and one culture or language issues.

#### Question Five: Parent Involvement at School

“How are you involved in your child’s education at school?” was the fifth question. Communication with the teacher and volunteering at school are the top two activities identified by teachers. They also mentioned such activities as serving on committees, going to conferences, making learning material, extra school activities, helping with homework, signing permission slips, inquiring about how to help at home, and bringing food for parties. Epstein and Dauber (1991) state six categories of parent involvement; volunteering, decision making, parenting, learning, home-school communication, and community-school communication. The teachers mention three of the types; volunteering, parenting, and home/school communication.

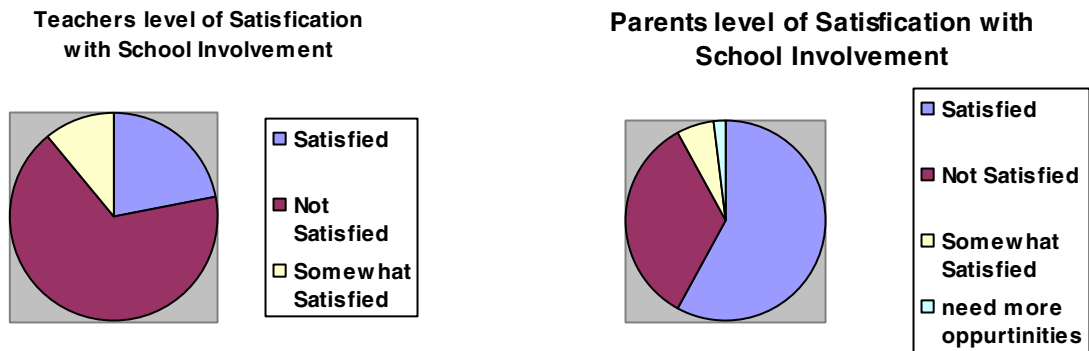
Parents agreed with teachers in that communication and volunteering in the classroom were at the top of the list; however, they also had being there for important events like assemblies at the top of their list. In the middle of parents list of ways they are involved at school are helping with homework, accompanying classes on field trips, attending conferences and other meetings, assisting with parties and doing cafeteria duty. Some other ways that parents mentioned being involved at school were coaching, being homeroom mom, aware of teacher expectations, fundraising, letting child know he/she is doing a good job and being on school board or PTA. It should also be noted that two

parents stated they have not been asked to help out at school. Table VIII shows a comparison of teachers' and parents' perceptions of how parents are involved at school. Next to each activity is the number of people who gave that response. Parents gave more ways they are involved but this could be because more parents responded to the survey.

**Question Six: Satisfaction with School Involvement**

School Satisfaction

Teachers reported that 22% of them were satisfied with the level of involvement at school from their parents, 67% were not satisfied with the involvement of the parents in their classroom and 11% were somewhat satisfied. In contrast, 58% of parents were satisfied with their level of involvement at school, 34% were not satisfied, 6% were somewhat satisfied, and 2% felt like there needs to be more ways to be involved at school. Parents and teachers do not agree at all about satisfaction with the level of involvement at school.



School Barriers

Participants were asked what barriers parents were dealing with to be involved at school. The most common response from teachers was again a logistical issue that of working parents. Teachers' perceptions of barriers parents face in being involved at

school are listed in Table IX. Teachers did not state any barriers related to educational level of parents but did give one psychological issues, which was “parents fear or bad feelings about school because of their own experiences”.

Parents had a larger list of barriers that keep them from being involved at school; the barriers are listed in Table X. Parents’ top responses for lack of involvement at school were logistical issues such as work as well as school environment issues, not feeling welcome at the school or in the classroom. Parents seem to paint a different picture of their barriers for being involved at school. Parents did not list any psychological issues, education level of parents, or culture or language barriers but they did mention a lot of school environment and logistical issues.

Some parents reported feeling unwelcome at the school and teachers seem to be very unaware of this barrier. An equal number of parents reported feeling unwelcome in the school or that they are not allowed at the school at all three schools. This research did not indicate a difference in this unwelcome feeling between the private school or the public schools. Both types of schools had parents report feeling unwelcome at their perspective schools. However, one parent and one teacher noted that parents are required to do forty hours of volunteering at this particular private school each year. There does not seem to be any such requirement at the two public schools.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### Discussion

This research shows that there is a gap between teachers' and parents' perceptions of parent involvement. According to this research teachers have a very narrow view of parent involvement. Parents on the other hand, seem to look at parent involvement with a broader scope. Parents and teachers both look at parent involvement in relationship to school but parents take it further and consider activities that occur at home or in the community to be parent involvement as well as those at school. The difference in view on parent involvement seems to be most apparent when looking at parent involvement that occurs at home. The results of this research validate Sheldon's (2002) definition of parent involvement that it can be divided into two different categories; involvement that occurs at school and involvement that occurs at home. This research clearly shows that parent involvement can be divided into two categories' and that teachers' and parents' perceptions on the involvement within those two categories can be different.

#### Implications for Schools

The implications for schools are similar to what the literature says to schools that are interested in getting parents involved. However, the most important implication is for schools to bring parents and teachers together for meetings and discussions to help both

groups better understand each others' ideas about parent involvement. It is especially important for teachers to understand and learn to accept parents' broader outlook on parent involvement. This implication comes from the finding that parents and teachers both agree parent involvement is important; however, there is a large discrepancy about what it looks like. Because of this discrepancy about what parent involvement looks like there is also disagreement between parents and teachers about the level of satisfaction each has with the amount and level of parent involvement that is occurring.

This discrepancy between parents and teachers could lead to tension between parents and teachers which in turn, could affect the children. Children may observe or feel the tension between their parents' and their teachers' and it could cause questioning or stress by the child. Also, if parents or teachers are dissatisfied with each other then one may talk badly to the child about the other, which would cause trouble for the child as well. Therefore, it is important for the teachers and parents to come to a better understanding about parent involvement.

Another implication is for schools and teachers to be aware of the barriers parents are challenged by to be involved. As seen in this study, teachers are not aware of all of the barriers the parents are facing. It is difficult to plan or judge when unaware of barriers. This research shows that parents face many logistical barriers, so the schools need to concentrate more on how to accommodate parents' logistical barriers. Schools should plan events and meetings around parents' schedules. Parent meetings need to be held at multiple times of the day, possibly on multiple days and child care needs to be provided at all meetings.

Also, it is important to keep parents well aware of opportunities to be involved and of the happenings in the school and classroom. This research seems to say that although a parent may not be visible at school they may still be active and interested in their child's education. Part of the job of educators is to make parents aware of what is occurring at the school and any/all opportunities to be involved. Parents should be reminded constantly through notes, phone calls, and daily conversations that they are needed and wanted in the classroom and school (if they are truly wanted) and what involvement opportunities there are in the school and classroom.

Lastly parents need to feel welcomed and needed. Parents need to feel welcomed and wanted in the school and classroom. If the parent feels comfortable and appreciated at school they are more likely to be there and be receptive to what the school is saying. Many schools have an open door policy, which makes parents feel they are able and invited to be at the school at any time for any reason. However, this research is clear that many parents still do not feel welcomed at their child's school and/or classroom, so schools need to brainstorm on ways to make parents feel welcomed at the school.

#### Further Research

One of the questions that needs further research is the concept of parents using resources when they are involved in their child's education at home. This concept comes from Sheldon's (2002) definition of parent involvement at home which mentioned that when parents are involved at home they are investing their resources into their child's education. It would be interesting to see if parents and teachers have ever thought about the fact that parents do use their resources to be involved in their child's education at home and at school and what resources parents invest when involved in their child's



education at home. Also, I would have look at what other resources parents perceived they need to help them be more involved. It is possible that the lack of consideration about the fact that parents do often have to use resources when being involved in a child's education is part of the reason that parents and teachers have different levels of satisfaction about parent involvement.

Parent involvement in relationship to school is a topic that has been examined in a variety of ways. However, parent involvement that occurs at home is an area that needs more inspection. I would suggest more research looking into what parent involvement at home truly means keeping in mind parent involvement at home can be any activity that involves speaking/listening, reading, writing, and number concepts (Personal communication-Dr. Barbara Sorrels). Also research needs to examine how parents and teachers can come to a better understanding of the meaning and importance of involvement at home.

Which lead to the next question, why is it that parents and teachers have such different levels of satisfaction about the parents' involvement at home and at school? According to this research parents and teachers both agree parent involvement is important and both see the meaning of parent involvement as fitting into three different categories. However, their level of satisfaction with parent involvement at both home and school are very different. It would be interesting to discover why they are so different, but it would be favorable to find a way to bring teachers satisfaction closer to the parents' level of satisfaction.

Lastly, how can schools bring parents and teachers together to better understand each others perspectives on parent involvement and help teachers to broaden their

perceptions of parent involvement? It would be interesting and possibly helpful to understand why parents and teachers have different perspectives on parent involvement. Nonetheless, it would be more beneficial for parents and teachers to come together to share their perspectives on what parent involvement looks like at a few meetings. Teachers need to broaden their concept for parent involvement and become learners in the understanding of parent involvement instead of tellers.

Table I  
Barriers to Parent Involvement  
 (Adapted from Trotman 2001; Tinkler 2002)

<b>School Environment</b>	<b>Culture and Language</b>	<b>Educational level of parents</b>	<b>Psychological Issues</b>	<b>Logistical Issues</b>
Believe that teaching is the teacher's job	Different values at home and school	Parents feel can not help child because of their lack of schooling	Depressed parents	Single parent families/Divorced families/Two parent working family
Feel unwelcome in School	Language barriers	Parents are unable to read	Overworked Parents	Have young children in the house
Poor scheduling of meetings				Lack of time or Busy schedule
Parent negative feelings about school				Difficulties with transportation
				No Phone
				No Childcare

Table II  
Teachers' Definitions of Parent Involvement

<b>General Definitions</b>	<b>Identification of specific activity</b>	<b>Statement of Importance of Parent Involvement</b>
"Supporting child in education by making sure their educational needs are met, setting goals and helping meet them"	engage in interesting activities	"Parent involvement is key to success in education and builds community"
"Parent Involvement should encompass all aspects a child's education, at home and school"	Read	"Parents are first and most important teachers in child's life" (2)
"Talk to child and teacher and see how they can help"	Helping child at home/ helping with homework (3)	"Child is better prepared when parent is involved"
"Partnership with school and teacher"	Homeroom parent and/or Volunteering	Important in child's education (2)
"Being aware and involved"	PTA member	
Parents take an interest in their child's education	Resource person for teacher	

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of teachers who gave that response.

Table III  
Parents' Definitions of Parent Involvement

<b>General Definitions</b>	<b>Identification of a Specific Activity</b>	<b>Statement of Importance of Parent Involvement</b>
Active/"leading role in educating their child" (3)	Communicate with teacher (notes, phone calls, etc) (11)	It means a lot (3)
Do what ever it takes to make your child successful at education (2)	Helping child learn /self directed learning / teach by example(5)	"Most important thing for a child to succeed in school"
Everything	Homework (11)	Very important (2)
Parents care about child	Support/ help teachers (5)	Important role in child's life
"Letting child know you care about their education"	Teachable moments- educational opportunities outside of school (3)	Education is very important, hard to make it without it
"Being involved in all aspects of child's life, hands on" (3)	Conferences/school functions/ meetings/ presentations (7)	"Without it you are going no where"
"Increase parents trust and responsibility in the school"	Provide input and encouragement (3)	
"We need teachers and teachers need us" (2)	Talk to child about day and other stuff/know child (4)	
"When parents are involved it makes children want to be involved"	Check backpack/ Being involved with daily education	
Participate in home/school learning	"Reinforcing educational plans at home"	
Parents should take an interest in classroom/ school activities (3)	Being involved in before and after school activities/ extracurricular activities	
Aware of what is going on/ being involved in child's education (8)	Work with child and teacher to get best academic help and environment (5)	
"Two go hand and hand"	Trips to the library	
	Field trips/class parties	
	Volunteer / Being visible in school (8)	
	"Teach child through play and activities"	
	Read (6)	
	"One-on-one time"	
	Know curriculum (4)	
	Going over school work (2)	

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of parents who gave that response.

Table IV  
List of Activities Teachers State Parents are Involved in at Home

<b>Activities related to School</b>	<b>Activities not related to school</b>
Review and sign homework (7)	Read (3)
Read programs or projects (2)	take an interest in the child's day
Reviewing school work (2)	Provide a loving home
Positive reinforcement	Various educational experiences
Read notes and newsletters from teacher	Sharing faith through example
Willing to work with teacher	Provide basic needs of life
Enthusiasm	Building child's self esteem
Reinforce and support teachers	Communication with child
Prepare materials for school at home	Teach morals and values
Communicate with teacher	
Visit school or classroom	
Bring food for parties	

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of teachers who gave that response.

Table V  
List of Activities Parents State Being Involved in at Home

<b>Activities related to School</b>	<b>Activities not related to school</b>
Review homework/spelling/practice (41)	Other/extra activities at home (2)
Reading programs (4)	Teaching values
Educational games/activities (6)	Library/museum visits/field trips (3)
Letter/number/shapes knowledge (6)	Cooking/cleaning/chores
Check back pack/notes from teacher (5)	"Encourage and model critical thinking"
Tutoring (3)	"Take interest in child's current passions"
Check assignments (online) (3)	Answering questions from children (2)
Studying/test studies/projects (3)	Communication with child (11)
Comprehension(3)	Reading at home (34)
Flash cards (2)	Music/Piano/art (6)
Motor skills/practice writing	Floor time activities/Gluing
Let child know education is important	Let child know they are important
Close attention to learning progress	Cub scouts
Praise and encouragement for learning	Routine/organization (3)
Parents being present at school	Play games
Integrate learning with home activities	Keep TV off
	Travel
	Computer/work book
	Work on things together
	Loving and nurturing environment

\*The number in parentheses is the number of parents who gave that response.

Table VI  
Barriers Teachers Reported for Involvement at Home  
 (Adapted from Trotman 2001; Tinkler 2002)

<b>School Environment</b>	<b>Culture and Language</b>	<b>Educational level of parents</b>	<b>Psychological Issues</b>	<b>Logistical Issues</b>
	“Language barriers”	“Edu. level makes parents unsure how to help”		“Leave children with little adult supervision”
		“Ignorance about needs of child”		“Work”/“long hours” (2)
				“Money”
				Time restraints

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of teachers who gave that response.

Table VII  
Barriers Parent Reported for Involvement at Home  
 (Adapted from Trotman 2001; Tinkler 2002)

<b>School Environment</b>	<b>Culture and Language</b>	<b>Educational level of parents</b>	<b>Psychological Issues</b>	<b>Logistical Issues</b>
“Unsure what school is teaching”	“Not knowing English very well”	Parent feel like they have forgot a lot since he/she in school		Time for other siblings and husband
				Husband travels
				Job hours/work full /both parents work (6)
				Extracurricular activities (2)
				household chores (4)
				Time restraints/ schedule/busy (15)
				Parent going to school
				Other siblings (10)
				Single parent

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of parents who gave that response.

Table VIII  
Comparing Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of How Parents are Involved at School

<b>Ways Teachers say Parents are Involved at School</b>	<b>Ways Parents say They are Involved at School</b>
Volunteer at school(3)	Volunteer at school(11)
Serve on committees	Serve on committees (3)
Attend conferences and meetings (3)	Attend conferences/meetings/assemblies (15)
Keep track of child's progress (3)	Keep track of child's progress (2)
Make learning materials (2)	Make learning materials ()
Communication with teacher (4)	Communication with teacher and families/sign report cards (12)
Help with school work/homework (2)	Help with school work/homework (7)
Sign permission slips	take child to school on time (2)
Helping individual students	Send needed items to school (3)
Helping in centers	Help with class projects
Ask how they can help at home	Try to participate in everything (2)
Shared reading	Shared reading/read with me program
Bring food for parties	Bring food for parties/assist with parties (3)
	Attend field trips/fundraisers (5)
	Child aware parent is concerned
	Let child know doing a good job
	Know and support school and community
	Aware of curriculum (2)
	Homeroom mom/coach/cafeteria duty (8)
	Be there for important things

\* The numbers in the parentheses are the number of people who gave that response

Table IX  
Barriers Teachers Reported for Involvement at School  
 (Adapted from Trotman 2001; Tinkler 2002)

<b>School Environment</b>	<b>Culture and Language</b>	<b>Educational level of parents</b>	<b>Psychological Issues</b>	<b>Logistical Issues</b>
	Language barriers (2)		"Fear or bad feeling about school b/c of own experiences"	Both parents working/full time jobs (4)
				Siblings at home
				Time

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of teachers who gave that response.

Table X  
Barriers Parent Reported for Involvement at School  
 (Adapted from Trotman 2001; Tinkler 2002)

<b>School Environment</b>	<b>Culture and Language</b>	<b>Educational level of parents</b>	<b>Psychological Issues</b>	<b>Logistical Issues</b>
“Need more ways to be involved at school”				Single parent (2)
“Active outreach by school would maybe help”				Multiply children at multiply schools
“Not enough info. from teachers”				Lack of time or Busy schedule (4)
“Feel unwelcome in classroom at time”				Transportation (2)
“Time in classroom not allowed at school at this time”				Working parent (11)
“Think school is a place for teachers to be in charge”				No extended family in town
				Parent going to school (3)
				Siblings (3)

\* The numbers in parentheses are the number of parents who gave that response.



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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A

#### Parent questions

What does parent involvement in education mean to you?

Can a parent be involved in a child's learning without being at the child's school?

How are you involved in your child's learning at home?

Are you satisfied with your level of involvement at home? If not what are the barriers for you to be more involved?

How are you involved in your child's education at school?

Are you satisfied with your level of involvement at school? If not what are the barriers for you to be more involved?

Teacher Questions

What does parent involvement in education mean to you?

Can a parent be involved in a child's learning without being at the child's school?

How are your classroom parents involved in their child's learning at home?

Are you satisfied with your classroom parents' level of involvement at home? If not what do you think are the barriers for your parents to be more involved?

How are your classroom parents involved in their child's education at school?

Are you satisfied with your classroom parents' level of involvement at school? If not what do you think are the barriers for your parents to be more involved?

Appendix B

**Who is filling this form out, please circle one:**

Mother      Father      Grandmother      Grandfather  
Guardian      Aunt      Uncle      Other relative

**Please Circle one** (if mixed please circle the two or more which apply best to you):

Caucasian      African American      Hispanic  
Native American      Asian      Other

**Your level of education:**

did not complete high school      high school diploma      GED  
some college      college graduate      masters      doctoral

**How many children do you have?**

1      2      3      4      5      6 or more

**What grade is your child in that you are completing this form for?**

Pre-Kindergarten      Kindergarten      First Grade  
Second Grade      Third Grade

**Is this your first child in this school?**

Yes      No

**Who is filling this form out, please circle one:**

Teacher                      Other please list \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Circle one** (if mixed please circle the two or more which apply best to you):

Caucasian                      African American                      Hispanic  
Native American                      Asian                      Other

**What is your level of education:**

did not complete high school                      high school diploma                      GED  
some college                      college graduate                      masters                      doctoral

**How many years have you been teaching?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What grade do you teach?**

Pre-Kindergarten                      Kindergarten                      First Grade  
Second Grade                      Third Grade

**How many year have you been teaching the above grade?** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C

Dear Parents,

My name is Jennifer Ladner and I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University in Tulsa. I am required to complete a thesis to complete my program of study. My field of interest is in the area of parent involvement. The purpose of my research is to compare and contrast teachers' and parents' perceptions of parent involvement. I will be asking parents and teachers at three different elementary schools to voluntarily fill out a survey expressing their views on the issue.

If you would like to participate in this research project, please read and fill out the attached survey. Please understand that by filling out and returning the survey, you are granting permission for your information to be included in my research. As you will note, no identifying information is required, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

A white envelope is provided for your convenience. Please place the completed survey in the envelope, seal it and return it to your child's teacher by \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions feel free to contact me, my supervising professor, or the university IRB office. Contact information is provided below.

For any questions or concerns, participants may contact:

Jennifer Ladner  
2725 E 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Tulsa, OK 74114  
(918) 798-3335  
[jennifer.ladner@okstate.edu](mailto:jennifer.ladner@okstate.edu)

Dr. Barbara Sorrels  
OSU-Tulsa  
700 N. Greenwood  
305 North Hall  
Tulsa, OK 74106  
(918) 594-8169  
[sorrelb@okstate.edu](mailto:sorrelb@okstate.edu)

**"For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676."**

Thank you for your time and help,

Jennifer Ladner

Dear Teachers,

My name is Jennifer Ladner and I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University in Tulsa. I am required to complete a thesis to complete my program of study. My field of interest is in the area of parent involvement. The purpose of my research is to compare and contrast teachers' and parents' perceptions of parent involvement. I will be asking parents and teachers at three different elementary schools to voluntarily fill out a survey expressing their views on the issue.

If you would like to participate in this research project, please read and fill out the attached survey. Please understand that by filling out and returning the survey, you are granting permission for your information to be included in my research. As you will note, no identifying information is required, thus your identity will remain anonymous.

A white envelope is provided for your convenience. Please place the completed survey in the envelope, seal it and return it along with the other surveys you get from parents in your classroom on \_\_\_\_\_. I will come to the each school that day and pick up all of the returned surveys.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me, my supervising professor, or the university IRB office. Contact information is provided below.

For any questions or concerns, participants may contact:

Jennifer Ladner  
2725 E 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Tulsa, OK 74114  
(918) 798-3335  
[jennifer.ladner@okstate.edu](mailto:jennifer.ladner@okstate.edu)

Dr. Barbara Sorrels  
OSU-Tulsa  
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305 North Hall  
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[sorrelb@okstate.edu](mailto:sorrelb@okstate.edu)

**"For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676."**

Thank you for your time and help,

Jennifer Ladner

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, January 03, 2006  
IRB Application No HE0630  
Proposal Title: Parent Involvement in Early Childhood

Reviewed and Exempt  
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 1/2/2007

Principal Investigator/s

Jennifer Ladner  
2725 East 22nd St.  
Tulsa, OK 74114

Barbara Sorrels  
700 N. Greenwood 304 N.  
Tulsa, OK 74106

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

## VITA

Jennifer Lynn Ladner

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PARENTS AND TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Major Field: Human Development and Family Science

### Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Jefferson City, Missouri, on October 26, 1980, the daughter of Thomas Ladner and Julia Meier.

Education: Graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma in May 1999; received Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Early Intervention from University of Tulsa in May 2003. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Early Childhood at Oklahoma State University, Department of Human Development and Family Science, May 2006.

Experience: A permit substitute with Tulsa Public Schools in a four and five year olds classroom the end of the 2003 school year. Then taught one year at the early childhood level at a private school in Tulsa, Oklahoma and a two-week summer school program for the private school. Currently teaching my second year at Head Start in Tulsa, under Community Action Project.

### Professional Memberships:

Name: Jennifer Lynn Ladner

Date of Degree: May, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma

Title of Study: PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Pages in Study: 53

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Human Development and Family Science

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast parents' and teachers' perceptions of parent involvement. The participants were teachers and parents at two public and one private school located in a moderate sized Midwestern City. Participation was voluntary. The data collected was analyzed using qualitative methods.

Findings and Conclusions: Parents and teachers were found to have different perspectives on the meaning of parent involvement. However, both responses could be categorized into three different types of definitions, general definitions, identification of specific activities related to parent involvement, and statements of the importance of parent involvement. Parents tended to have a broader concept of parent involvement, especially parent involvement at home; whereas, teachers have a narrower view of parent involvement that occurs at home and at school. Teachers have a more school centered view of parent involvement. Parents and teachers need to come together to share with each other their views about parent involvement at home and at school. Lastly, teachers need to be open to hearing parents' views and ideas about parent involvement.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Barbara Sorrels

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