8-2014

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education Collaborative Investigation to Increase Father Interest

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Recommended Citation

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Collaborative Investigation to Increase Father Interest

Action Research Project

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Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to improve ways in which I include parents in communication and student success strategies. The participants were 15 parents of young children currently enrolled in my program at an elementary school. The family form was designed to gather ideas and suggestions for improving parent-student-teacher communication and parent involvement. Five staff members were interviewed on their perspectives of techniques of communication with parents, ways they have tried to engage families, and ideas for creating lasting relationships with parents. In this work there was a focus on the understudied population of fathers in their children's education. The findings from this study support prior research in that there were several social and school factors that influence why and how both parents are involved in their child's education. Through analyzing, summarizing, and reporting my findings this study provides information for parents, teachers, and school staff attempting to design outreach initiatives for children and their fathers. This study was also used to gain understanding of factors that contribute to the development of partnerships between fathers and school.

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The role that parents play in children's education has a huge impact on the children's success in school. The role of fathers in their child's life is receiving more attention by researchers. Specifically, the role of fathers or father figures in early childhood programs is in the spotlight (Fagan, 2000). Some scholars point out that the conceptualization and practices of fathers, fatherhood, and fathering in different time periods have been tied to that period and have evolved over time (Lamb, 2000; Pleck 1997; Pattnaik & Sriram 2010). Our ideas of "fatherhood" have evolved over time from being viewed as the breadwinner with little impact on children's overall development to reflecting the importance of fathers. Research suggests father involvement increases playfulness, promotes risk taking, encourages problem solving, and provides a sense of security.

In the past many agencies that provided family programming focused on women and children. Research suggests parents who are involved and engaged with their child outside of the school setting promote their children's success in school. The focus of family programming has slowly changed to include paternal influences. Understanding and tracing these changing ideas is important. It is also necessary to understand why paternal involvement is needed in the lives of children (Pattnaik & Sriram 2010). Teachers are now asking both parents to become more active in their children's education.

Parental involvement has become a major topic of concern for schools and parents. Today's society operates on a fast track which leaves little time for parents to become involved in their children's education, creating a disconnect of desired parental involvement within the educational system. Although schools are providing parental support programs, there are barriers preventing parents from becoming involved such as: lack of communication between home and school, a lack of attendance at parent-teacher conferences, and a lack of time due to life stressors.

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Bloom (1980) argued that one of the major indicators of student success is parental involvement. Educational leaders must learn how to create a positive relationship between home and school in order to promote and maintain high parental involvement. Although there is much discussion around the topic of parental involvement there is a need for more documented strategies to effectively engage men in the educational programming. Joyce Epstein's (1990) model suggests five major types of parental involvement:

1. Basic obligations of parents refers to responsibilities of families for children's health and safety, preparing them for school, and building positive home conditions that support school learning and appropriate behavior.

2. Basic obligations of schools refer to communications home including memos, emails, conferences, and school events/ programs.

3. Parent involvement at school refers to parents assisting teachers, administrators, and children in the school setting. This comes in the form of supporting the student performances or attending workshops or programs for parental education.

4. Involvement in learning activities at home is parent-initiated, or student requested assistance, on coordinated classwork.

5. Governance and advocacy referring to PTA/PTO, advisory councils, and groups that work for school improvement.

The involvement parents want most is how to work on their own with their child at home in ways that can help student succeed and that keep parents as partners in their children's education across grades (Epstein, 1990). Typically efforts to involve parents in school decreases as the child gets older sometimes as soon as 2nd and 3rd grade. This model outlines ways to

design more effective forms of communication to reach parents, recruit parent help, and provides some ideas on how to help their child at home. In conjunction with this work is Epstein's (2001) theory of "overlapping spheres of influence." This theory has three major concepts school, family, and community. All three contexts can influence and be influenced by one another and can be brought closer or more separate. Educational programs can make efforts to bring all three influences closer together and see parents as partners. This way parents have a say on how they get involved and work as a team work to create the optimal learning environment for their child. Epstein's (2003) framework labels six types of involvement: 1. parenting, 2. communicating, 3. volunteering, 4. learning at home, 5. decision making, and 6. collaborating with community. In theory, the more collaboration between spheres will result in positive benefits for teachers, parents, and students (Epstein, 2001.) This framework links student academic and social success to a close connection between home and school. Teachers can learn from parents, parents feel more connected, and knowledge of how to increase involvement will emerge. Epstein's theory is helpful in understanding how educators can encourage greater father involvement. With special consideration to increase participation at home and in school educators can create opportunities for families that will lead to better outcomes for children. When educators reach out to fathers in their programs to learn more about them, they can engage them in special ways that meet their needs.

The power of our educational system is not in the separation of homes, schools, and communities but about the coming together of these forces for the common good of children. Parental involvement should begin at the beginning of the year and be practiced throughout to keep families informed on a student's growth. Family life, structure, and responsibilities have changed. Parents are working harder than ever, more children are in daycare than ever before,

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and this leaves both parents and children having little engagement before and after school. The research problem addressed in this study was a gap in desired parental involvement and their current levels of participation. I have found that parental involvement is low in my own setting. The issue could be that parent involvement is determined by the school's framework and not the parents' interests. The limitation could be that parents are involved in different ways that may not be recognized by school. Parental involvement decisions are influenced both by parent's perceptions of home-school relationships and invitations for parent involvement from children and teachers (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). I have discovered that not only is parental involvement low, but fathers participate at the lowest level. This is unacceptable because fathers have an important impact on their children's educational lives (Lamb, 2010). Pleck (2010b) offers "the important father hypothesis," which indicates that positive fathering is one factor that promotes positive child outcomes. This research validates the finding that children's outcomes are influenced by fathers independent of the mother's positive influences. Supportive and involved fathers who establish secure attachment relationships with their children will have a positive impact on children's attitude, emotions, behaviors, and educational outcomes including academic readiness, motivation, competence, and children's relationship with teachers (Amato & Rivera 1999). The quality of the father-child relationship is predictive of fathers' level of involvement within home and school, and both father-child relationship quality and father involvement predict school-related outcomes such as children's relationships with teachers, internalizing or externalizing behaviors, and school problems (Day & Padilla- Walker, 2009). Current research does show that fathers who encourage and scaffold their child's learning will promote positive outcomes including problem-solving skills and self-reliance (Newland, Chen, & Coyl-Shapard, 2013).

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School leaders want to know to what extent high expectations and communication can be taught and incorporated into family involvement programs. Looking at efforts that have led to greater involvement of fathers in other educational settings, I hope to contribute to increased involvement of fathers at my setting through engaging them in this participatory action research. New questions are being asked about this understudied population of father involvement and children's school outcomes. It is a time to embrace these developments in the view of father's role in education and examine the issue to apply any useful solutions.

The engagement of fathers in school with their children is a broader and more complex issue than most researchers previously believed. Schools can be active participants in this field, and engaged in helping fathers, schools, and children. Lamb (2010) suggests that researchers need to move beyond the uni-dimensional and universal role of fathers toward examining fathers' performance in multifaceted roles and considering the relative importance of this role in particular family/sociological context.

Bartlett and Vann (2003) draw out lessons learned from various programmatic initiatives. They emphasized that one must carefully listen to fathers' voices and perspectives to understand their contributions, difficulties, and barriers. Fathers also need ongoing programming such as that which currently focuses only on women, and to have a mix of men-only and gender-mixed services. Programs must address the multiple needs of fathers rather than focus on providing fathers with skills for care and communication with children. Educational institutions have many opportunities to influence the nature and direction of father involvement. I decided to target the understudied population of fathers of children in education. One reason for my research is that some studies report fathers still lag behind mothers in terms of quantity and

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quality of educational involvement, although fathers do seem increasingly involved in their

children's educational lives (Fatherhood Institute, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine parent/guardian perceptions of parental involvement

in school and home related activities, and to develop strategies that may improve parent/guardian

involvement and create a partnership between parents and school.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

To what extent can I increase the interest of fathers in participating in their child's educational

experience through collaborative investigation of the topic of paternal involvement in education?

The group that is my main focus is families in my educational program. Affected populations

that I will take into consideration are: children (students) and their fathers, mothers, and school

personnel who work in my setting.

Methodology

My program is a before and after school enrichment program geared towards ages 5-10.

It is a fee-based program offered out of local elementary schools across the district in line with

community education. This present study focuses on students who are currently enrolled for the

school year 2013-2014 and their parents in one particular setting. The school our program runs

through has a diverse population, varying socio-economic statuses, and struggles with low

student achievement.

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      The school embraces parental involvement with strategies including useful homework, PTO, and parent academy, but they have been disappointed in the results in terms of low parent involvement. Parent academy is a six week program offered at the school to build partnerships with school, parents, and the community. Topics include: building relationships, laying strong academic foundations, encouraging child's academic success, and finding resources. This service is free to all families but space is limited. Light meal, transportation, and childcare were offered, but limited and only available upon request. Even with program initiatives to build parental involvement women still greatly outnumbered men in their school presence. Therefore, the purpose of this present investigation is to examine efforts to involve fathers, determine program efforts, and collaborate with fathers/males to effectively engage them more frequently.

      As the researcher, I was integrated in the community to form a relationship among participants and researcher. This was a unique role in the district because I work with young children, and was the first teacher to work with the parents. The possibility existed to have a unique role in shaping parent's understanding of ongoing opportunities for involvement in their child's education. Also, I played a role in the district, doing outreach with families to involve previously uninvolved families in summer early childhood experiences. Reaching out to parents and communicating with them fell within the normal responsibilities for the district teacher licensed to do this work.

      Every attempt was made to minimize bias and increase validity because of the relationship the researcher had with the school. Observations, informal interviews, and document analysis provided for triangulation of data. The knowledge of general school culture and practices was gathered during informal observations and conversations.

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One member of the administrative team and five teachers participated in this study. All of the participants are well established within the school, have years of experience, and know the school's practices well. Only member of administrative team is male; the teachers are female. (See Appendix A, staff letter of participation)

Each teacher took part in a short 15 minute interview. The interviews took place in their classrooms before school. The administrator interview was 20 minutes long

The guiding questions were:

- What do you see, if any, as potential benefits of increasing father's involvement in our programming?
- What strategies have you tried in order to invite fathers to participate in their child's education?
- Did they work? Describe the outcomes in which you are aware.
- What do you feel are obstacles keeping fathers' from being more engaged in this setting?
- What are some new ideas for paternal involvement you would like to see implemented in an ideal school setting?

Active consent was gained from adults and they were informed of the use of their feedback.
Staff were all asked the same five questions in person and notes were taken on their responses (See appendix B). The notes on their answers were reviewed.

Active consent was obtained from families who are currently enrolled in the school setting. Parents were first contacted in person and given an informational letter and then provided with the informed consent form (See Appendix C). They were notified about the research in the letter and received another reminder at the header of the family form. The family form was provided online. The direct access was easy for them to provide feedback and not take

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too much of their time. The completion of the form provided consent from the parents to use

their aggregated feedback in the final report. This form was sent to families' emails and paper

copies were offered for those who did not have Internet access. Parent/ Guardians also had to

give consent for their student's artwork to be used as evidence in research. Mothers and fathers

completed the Family Form (see Appendix D) regarding, but not limited to, work schedule, time

at home, meals eaten with child, communication with student, connection to other parents,

feelings towards parenting, and preferences on time spent and fun activities. All responses were

anonymous, with only the gender of respondents as an identifying factor. The respondents were

not able to see any other results and I am unable to tie responses to a particular individual.

Analysis of Data

For the family form the first question identified whether the participant was a mother or

father of a student in the program. Out of those who responded to the family form 10 were

mothers and five were fathers.

The next question was about work schedules and when the parent works outside of the

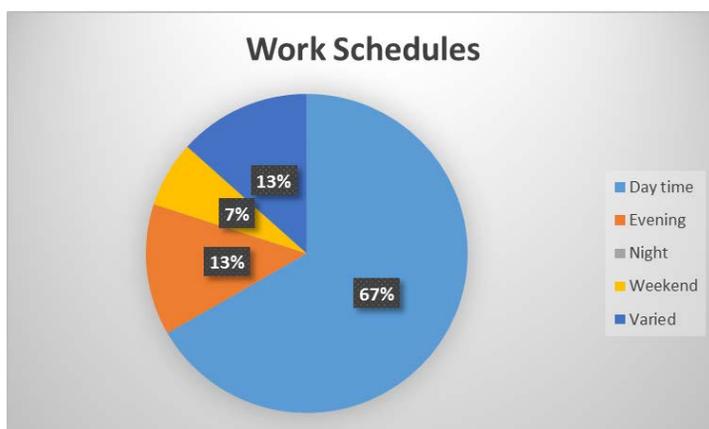home. Families were able to check any that applied.

Figure 1: Family Form results for when parents work outside of the home.

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The results showed most parents work during the daytime, making attendance at events during the school day more difficult. Currently most events offered to families take place during school hours to see student work, however, parents may benefit from the school offering more opportunities to participate on their own free time not solely based on the school schedule.

The third question pertains to the child's time spent in the home with the parent. The provided answers were never (0), 1-2 days (2), 3-5 days (4), and 6-7 days (6+).
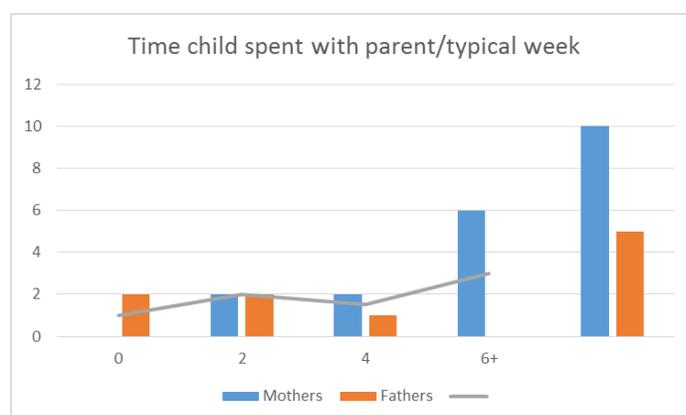

Figure 2: Results from Family Form

The results show that mothers spend more time with their child in a week. In this particular case, some families are single parent households and the role of main caregiver is the mother. The trend of data (gray line) also shows that most mothers spend the entire week with their child at their home. The horizontal numbers are the coded answers and the vertical numbers show the sum of data collected.

The fourth question asks: How often, if ever, do you eat meals with your child during a typical week? Only one response was needed for this question and the answers are never (0), 1-3 meals (3), 4-7 meals (7), and 8+ (8+). All respondents indicated they ate at least 4-7 meals with their child in a given week. Six parents checked 4-7 meals and the remaining adults selected 8+

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meals a week. This shows that family meal time could be a potential learning opportunity for

parents and their children to connect. Parents seem to value eating meals with their children and

set aside time each week.

The fifth question asked how often, if ever, do you communicate with your child? Only

one answer can be selected and they read as follows: never (0), 1-2 days a week (2), 3-5 days a

week (5), and 6-7 days a week (7). The parents unanimously selected the response 7 days of the

week. There was no outline of what "communicating" entails but the data shows that parents

attempt to talk with the child everyday out of the week. From assisting in daily tasks, preparing

children for their day, and discussing the happenings of the day, parents were open to

communicating with their child.

The sixth question is about how often, if ever, parents communicate with other families

for a support network. The responses options were never (0), once a week (1/WK), and once a
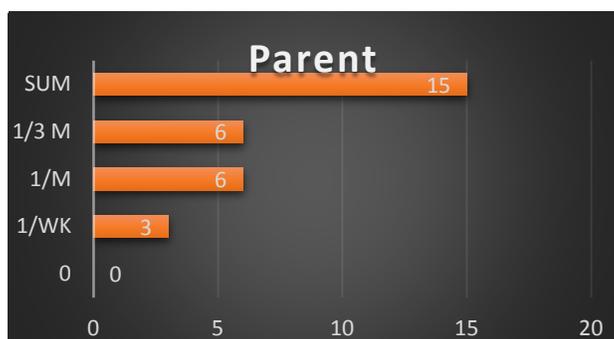
month (1/M), and other (1/3M).

Figure 3: Time between support from other parents

The top bar shows the sum of participants was 15. There was an equal amount of

responses that indicated parents numbered somewhere between one-three months between

gaining support through communication with other parents. Three selected that they had support

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from fellow parents atleast once a week. Parents understand what other parents are going through

the best and can relate on a level someone without children may not understand. This resource is

underutilized and parents would benefit from more opportunities to connect, share, and

collaborate with other parents.

Questions 7-10 are focused on parental feedback and gaining their perspectives. They

were able to check all the items that applied to their specific situations and lifestyle.

In question 7 families were given 12 words that had both positive and negative

connotations that were associated with their experiences with parental involvement. The words

were intermixed so that not all of the more "positive" terms were clustered and all "negative"

terms placed together. The list reads as follows: unnecessary (-), needed (+), interesting (+),

informative (+), upsetting (-), practical (+), frustrating (-), useful (+), important (+), unpleasant (-

), worthwhile (+), and inconvenient (-). The words inconvenient (-) and unpleasant (-) were not

selected by any parent in this study. The words frustrating (-) and upsetting (-) were the only

negative connotations that were present in the results. Frustrating in terms of parent-child,

parent-parent, or parent-school interactions is still unclear. Overwhelmingly the parents selected

the more positive terms. Worthwhile tops the list with the highest amount of votes. Followed in

close second needed (+), important (+), informative (+), useful (+), and practical (+).

Activities | Responses

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It was important to

HW	9
P	9
F	7
S	1
R	0
SE	9

validate that parenting is a busy time in life. Question 8 asked families when they find time to do so, which of the following are ways they enjoy spending time with their students around school work, if any. The included activities were: reading (R), helping with homework (HW), doing projects (P), meeting with school friends and their parents (F), practicing for spelling tests (S), going to school events (SE), and none of the above (NA). It was important to offer an "other" response so families could fill it in as they saw fit.

Table 1: Activities of interest

The results show assisting with homework, doing projects, and going to school events tops the list with 9 votes for each. Meeting with school friends and their parents was the next highest with 7. Practicing for spelling test had only one vote and reading had zero.

Table 2:   Methods of communication

Methods	Response
N	6
E	9
T	2
P	2
W	7
None	1

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In question 9 families were asked to select their top three preferences for communication to home from school. The choices were in no particular order note in student's backpack (N), email (E), text messages (T), phone call (P), weekly update (W), and none (NA). This was another area where parents needed an "other" option.

It was clear that parents prefer to hear from school through email. Weekly updates were second and these are sent electronically to parent email addresses. Notes in the child's backpack were also listed in the top three for communication between school and home. Text messages and phone calls were low on the list. One parent indicated they would like no communication.

The last question on the form includes ideas for fun activities that families may be willing to do with their student. They were able to select all that they would be interested in to provide insight for the researcher. Some of the ideas presented were dining with dads (DD), weekend age-appropriate free activities in the community (WA), reading suggestions (book bag=BB), talk about it (TIPS), and other (O).

Table   3: Activities of Interest

Activities	Response
DD	4
WA	10
BB	6
TIPS	8
Other	0

The highest ranked choice was weekend age-appropriate free activities in the community. The second highest was talk about it (TIPS) for engaging young children at home. The book bag with suggestions was a close third. The one receiving the lowest amount of interest was dining with dads (an opportunity for children to eat a meal at school with dad.)

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Themes

1. Parents want children to do well.

2. Parents understand their involvement helped their child's educational development.

3. Parents were involved in their children's education both at home and at school. In many ways, due to narrow vision of participation, are not recognized by school staff.

At Home

Parents provide verbal support and encouragement to do well in school. They give verbal support and encouragement with homework, most often providing, one-on-one help. Parents also participate in involvement outside of school time activities.

At School

Parents are involved by attending school events, informal visits to school, and communications with teachers. Through programs such as, Family School, they engage in informational sessions on providing support to their child both in and out of school; although many parents indicated that they are not in a position to attend the afterschool meetings. There are incentives for participation but often schedule conflicts, transportation, and child care can affect parents' attendance. The same goes for volunteering and participation in school committees; parent response indicated a conflict with schedules that prohibits them from engaging fully in this type of involvement.

External constraints

Involvement most often occurs within the home setting. Some factors that contribute to lack of engagement through school designed events include conflicting work schedules, lack of

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transportation, and childcare options. Typically families are pulling double duty caring for other young children or even their elderly parents. Employment, or lack thereof, also plays a factor in continuous involvement at school.

Staff Feedback

School staff explained frequent and specific communication as the primary parental involvement strategy. Weekly updates are one tool often used by teachers. These updates are weekly reports that are sent to parents email to let them know what the child did this week in school, what upcoming events are scheduled, and behavior reports (both good and areas for improvement.)

The administration and teachers also personally call all parents to remind and invite them to school events, such as Parent Teacher Organization meetings and conferences. There are times when parents will call the teachers just to check in and see how their student is doing or sometimes it will be because they were sent something that they did not like, or possibly did not understand.

In addition teachers explained they develop home learning activities to help parents meaningfully engage in their child's learning. Most of the work is a continuation of lessons during the week and build on the home connection using few resources. The teachers mentioned offering small workshops for families on how to best engage with their students on their school work, like using the five Ws (who, what, when , where, why.) When they provide the activity and the training, teachers provided parents with the skills to do these activities at home. At individual conferences teachers can customize or clarify information to specific students and their families.

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In spite of the efforts of the school, the level of involvement remained low. There was frustration with teachers that most of the families they wanted to hear back from weren't the families who often communicated with school. This could be that highly involved parents have children who do well in school. On the other hand, less engaged parents can result in less engaged children.

According to a teacher interviewed she explained, "There are students who struggle so I send extra work home with a note explaining a need to practice more, sign off, and return to school. Even if the child brings it back, it's often not signed or necessarily seen by the parent. Part of it is understanding repetition, completion, and turning in assignments will help the child so much" (Personal communication May 20th, 2014)

There is also a noted disconnect between parents' own experiences in school and their child's experiences. Asking questions like: Why are they doing this? Why aren't they doing it the way I learned? Teachers agreed it was hard to explain that's not how it is taught anymore and your child has to learn it this way. Frustrations didn't keep the staff from attempting to engage parents, but it seemed to impact the school's attitude towards parental involvement.

Although teachers engaged with families on some level, parents did not engage as frequently with other parents. This evidence is shown from question 6 figure 3; twelve parents noted they connected with other parent support as infrequently as 1-3 months. Only three responded that they had fellow parent support at least once a week.

Action Plan

The reality is parent and child experiences often do not match the curricular areas and expectations of school. In this study it was important to be interactive, collaborative, and

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sociable. The increase of varied and cooperative roles between parents, staff, and administration can increase student success.

Children's school outcomes were related to attachment within mother-child and father-child relationships. Family engagement outcomes were related to a variety of beliefs, involvement practices, and external constraints as shown by the family form results. Home-based and school-based involvement can be positively correlated with self-concept in and out of the school setting. Families that showed interest in sharing their perspectives are actively engaged in their child's education. Home-based and school-based involvement practices as well as home-school communications are related to children's school outcomes. When both sides, school and families, are held accountable movements towards change that may better student outcomes are increased.

There is a need for further investigation into the specifics of father involvement practices which may impact attitudes, behaviors, and achievement. This study has limitations and implications for future research. Other triangulated measures of school achievement (teacher reports, grading, and standardized testing) should be used in the future.

This study suggests that parents' involvement in their children's education is influenced by a school that values and works towards forming respectful relationships with families. Often schools think that creating programming for family involvement is enough to engage more families but lose sight of the importance of building continuous relationships between home and school. In this case one hired coordinator cannot organize family involvement for an entire school. The break down occurs without support and involvement of leadership from administration, teachers, and parent advocates.

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This study showed the impact of welcoming family responses and honoring the support and contributions of families. Connecting with families became easier in this process of gathering their insight. The lines of communication were broadened and parents took the opportunity to share their thoughts. Parents and staff came together around a goal that was meaningful and important to both--their children's development. It was expressed that their view and opinions would be taken into consideration when planning for future family engagement projects within the school.

Parents do care about their children's education and have an understanding of the importance of their involvement. However, it can be a challenge to form environments that create effective and lasting partnerships between parents and school.

One finding suggests that parents may be involved in their child's education is ways that may not be recognized by school. Besides fundraising, volunteering, and school directed activities often we overlook family involvement outside of school. The study suggests that the lack of options due to work schedules, transportation, and childcare impacts involvement over lack of interest.

Given that this study was performed in an elementary school, further research is needed to explore involvement in middle and high school. Do some of these same social and school factors influence parent involvement? Longitudinal studies at middle and high school sites would be necessary to see if similar or different factors influence parental involvement.

This study identified that the support and involvement of parents is key to creating a collaborative environment. Also indicated was that school leadership can foster and influence family involvement. The question raised in regards to building parental involvement now is:

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What skills are needed to create effective partnerships between schools and families? More research is needed to study what activities leaders could encourage that would support family involvement both in and out of school.

In addition to developing skills required of school staff, what do teachers need to know and be able to execute when creating lasting partnerships with families? Of great importance are fathers, who often are the minority group when it comes to parental involvement at school. Information is needed to prepare teachers in developing partnerships with fathers.

This study will affect my practice and I will incorporate new ways to aid in the education of young children by encouraging fathers to become more involved. Fathers are an important and understudied resource in promoting children to work towards their full potential. I will encourage fathers to be involved at home and in public settings by designing parent- child events. This could be reading a book, telling a story, or talking about their work or hobby. It is important to sponsor father-child activities such as free weekend activities in the community, book bag topics for fathers to read with their child, or even a Saturday morning programs for dads and kids.

I will send more information home and give fathers ideas for supporting children in their everyday environments. An idea would be to create a book list that feature fathers in positive roles. I will invite fathers to read stories at parent-child events, create bulletin boards featuring male role models, and support informal activities that connect to fathers' interests. It will be important to make men more visible, and display pictures of both men and women interacting with children.

This study was conducted based on current practices of the school, specific staff, and parents. The family form was used to find out what parents might want to do with their children

and also to find out when parents are available for events. The theory behind the practice is based off of what parents already do while supporting and building upon these activities. Sending personal invitations, notes in the student's backpacks, and valuing the positive impact of male roles models in children's development are three main components to consider in the future.

Parents seek out school-provided suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level. Workshops, videos, and tips for parents to engage with their students would be beneficial. Annual surveys can be made available to determine talents, times, and location for increased engagement. Calendars and weekly updates can have topics for discussion by parents and students.

Initially the question I was trying to investigate was: To what extent can I increase the interest of fathers in participating in their child's educational experience through collaborative investigation of the topic of paternal involvement in education? More studies are needed to help gain a more thorough understanding of the factors that influence fathers' participation in their children's program(s). This investigation examined strategies to involve fathers and decide on new ways to collaborate with fathers/males to effectively engage them more frequently. By listening to father's perspectives we understand their contributions, difficulties, and barriers. This may open the doors of communication for further paternal involvement school wide. The potential benefits could impact the overall community. Educational institutions have many opportunities to influence the nature and direction of father involvement. The potential benefits create an environment that fosters open communication with fathers about involvement. This research study allowed for continued support and programming for families in education.

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Appendix A

Staff Notification Form

Dear Staff,

As a teacher in Discovery Club, I am interested in learning more about fathers of children in Discovery Club. I want to understand what type of activities would be of interest to them and also make sure they understand how important their involvement can be to their child. I am working with a faculty member at St. Kate's and an advisor to complete this particular project.

I will be writing about the results that I get from this research, however none of the writing that I do will include the name of this school, the names of any persons, or any references that would make it possible to identify outcomes connected to a particular person. People will not know if your data is in my study.

When I am done, a summary of my study and findings will be electronically available online at the St. Kate's library in a system called Sophia, which holds published reports written by faculty and graduate students at St. Kate's. The goal of sharing my final research study report is to help other teachers who are also trying to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

There is an opportunity for educators to learn about involving fathers more in the educational process. A major benefit would be fathers having a voice in preparing activities, versus school designed events, that they would enjoy with their children.

I am seeking your feedback on five questions focusing on efforts towards including fathers, ways you have tried to increase involvement, and what ideally you would like to see. If you decide that you don't want to provide feedback for my study you do not have to do anything further. If you decide you do want to offer your input please note that on this form and return it by (date).

There is no penalty for not being involved in the study. All people will receive the same treatment, regardless of your decision on this matter. If at any time you decide you do not want your data to be included in the study, I will remove it to the best of my ability.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Opt IN

I do want my data to be included in this study. Please respond by XXXX.

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

_____   _____
Location and time for data collection   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Educator   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix B

Staff Questions

Standard form for data collection from staff:

What do you see, if any, are potential benefits of increasing father involvement in our programming?

What strategies have you tried in order to invite fathers to participate in their child's education?

Did they work? Describe the outcomes in which you are aware.

What do you feel are obstacles keeping fathers' from being more engaged in this setting?

What are some new ideas for paternal involvement you would like to see implemented in an ideal school setting?

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

Appendix C

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

Notification Form

Dear Parents,

As a teacher of your child in Discovery Club, I am interested in learning more about fathers of children in Discovery Club. I want to understand what type of activities would be of interest and also make sure they understand how important their involvement can be to their child. I am working with a faculty member at St. Kate's and an advisor to complete this particular project.

I will be writing about the results that I get from this research, however none of the writing that I do will include the name of this school, the names of any persons, or any references that would make it possible to identify outcomes connected to a particular family. Other people will not know if your data is in my study.

When the study is complete, a summary of findings will be electronically available online at the St. Kate's library in a system called Sophia, which holds published reports written by faculty and graduate students at St. Kate's. The goal of sharing my final research study report is to help other teachers who are also trying to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.   There is a major benefit of fathers having a voice in preparing activities, versus school designed events, that they would enjoy with their child.

If you decide you don't want your data to be in my study, you don't need to do anything.

If you decide you DO want to participate in this study, please complete the family form and return it to me by (date). By completing the family form you are giving consent for that data to be used in my report. There is no penalty for not being involved in the study.

If you decide you don't want your child's artwork included, please note that on this form and return it to me.
All families will receive the same treatment, regardless of your decision on this matter. If at any point in the research you decide you do not want your feedback to be included in the study, I will remove included data to the best of my ability.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Opt IN
I DO want to participate in your study. Please respond by XXXX.

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

_____   _____
Name of Child   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Parent   Date
_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix D

Family Form

Are you a mother or father of one of our students?

[dropdown]

Which of the following, if any, best describes when you typically work outside of the home? Check all that apply

- ☐ Daytime
- ☐ Evening
- ☐ Night Time
- ☐ Weekend
- ☐ Varied
- ☐ Non-applicable

How often, if ever, does your child/children stay with you in a typical week?

- ● Never
- ● 1-2 days a week
- ● 3-5 days a week
- ● 6-7 days a week

How often, if ever, do you eat meals with your child during a typical week?

- ● Never
- ● 1-3 meals a week
- ● 4-7 meals a week
- ● 8+ meals a week

How often, if ever, do you communicate with your child?

- ● Never
- ● 1-2 days a week
- ● 3-5 days a week
- ● 6-7 days a week

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

How often, if ever, do you connect with other parents?
For a support network

o ● Never

o ● Once a week

o ● Once a month

o ● Other: [_____]

Check each word(s), if any, that describes your experiences with parental involvement?

o ☐ Unnecessary

o ☐ Needed

o ☐ Interesting

o ☐ Informative

o ☐ Upsetting

o ☐ Practical

o ☐ Frustrating

o ☐ Useful

o ☐ Important

o ☐ Unpleasant

o ☐ Worthwhile

o ☐ Inconvenient

Parenting is such a busy time in life. When you find time to do so, which of the following are ways you like to spend time with your child around school work, if any?

o ☐ Reading

o ☐ Helping with home work

o ☐ Doing projects

o ☐ Meeting with other school friends their parents

o ☐ Practicing for spelling tests

o ☐ Going to school events

o ☐ None of the above

o ☐ Other: [_____]

Which of the following seem like a fun activity you would be willing to do with your student?

o ☐ Dining with Dads (a special day every month when dads are invited to join breakfast)

o ☐ Weekend, age-appropriate free activities in the community

o ☐ Reading suggestions (book bag)

o ☐ Talk about it (tips for engaging students)

Paternal Involvement in Children's Education

- ☐ Other: [_____]

Everyone has their own preferences for communication. Rank these ways of receiving communication from school about your child.
Select top three choices

- ☐ Note in student's backpack
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Text Messages
- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Weekly update
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: [_____]