THE EFFECTS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT ON THE LEARNING OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

by

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ABSTRACT

The Effects of Parent Involvement
on the Learning of Kindergarten Children

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of parents' involvement in the kindergarten program as receivers of information, volunteer assistants, and teachers of their own children outside the school setting, on their children's performance on the McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities (MSCA), measuring language and readiness skills. The study compared the performance scores of 32 kindergarten children whose parents volunteered their assistance in the classroom and/or conducted home teaching tasks for a period of 34 weeks, with the scores of 32 children whose parents were not involved in their kindergarten program. The data were analyzed for possible differences as a result of treatment, sex, and attendance in the morning or afternoon kindergarten sessions.

A three-way analysis of variance on the kindergarten children's mean scores revealed there was a statistically significant difference ($p = .0004$) as a result of the parent involvement treatment. The mean test scores showed the greatest improvement when parents were involved in their children's kindergarten program as both classroom volunteers and teachers of their own children using the home teaching tasks. There were no statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) revealed in the mean scores as a

result of the the variants of sex or attendance in the morning or afternoon kindergarten sessions.

Parents taking part in the study were asked to report their perceptions on the value of their involvement on two questionnaires. A descriptive analysis of the information from the questionnaires revealed that parents perceived their involvement as helpful in learning about the way their children learn, in developing techniques for teaching their children, and in providing information about what their children were learning in kindergarten. The educational implications of the findings and some suggestions for further research were discussed.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Dedication	ix
Chapter	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Background of the Study	2
Rationale for the Study	9
Approach to the Study	11
Summary	14
Chapter	
II REVIEW OF LITERATURE	15
The Historical Perspective of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education	16
The Importance of Early Environment and Parent Involvement	22
Parent Invovlement in Head Start Programs	23
Parent Involvement in Public Schools in Britain	31
Types of Parent Involvement	35
Parent Involvement Today	36
Summary	41
Chapter	
III DESIGN AND PROCEDURES	43
The Population and the Sample	44

	Page
Measuring Instruments	48
Needs Assessment	49
Standardized Measure of Kindergarten Children's Ability	49
Evaluation of Parents' Participation	51
Parent Involvement Procedures and Materials	51
Treatment I	53
Treatment II	54
Evaluating Kindergarten Children's Performance	60
Organization of the Data	60
Method of Analysis	61
Summary	62
Chapter	
IV DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	63
Analysis of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire	65
Statistical Analysis	67
Equivalency of groups	67
Effects of treatment	68
Descriptive Analysis of Classroom Assistance	72
Descriptive Analysis of Home Teaching Tasks	74
Summary	83
Chapter	
V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	85
Summary of the Background	85

	Page
Summary of Design and Analysis	86
Limitations	87
Conclusions	89
Educational Implications	92
Suggestions for Further Research	94
Summary	96
References	98
Appendix A	106
Appendix B	110
Appendix C	112
Appendix D	114
Appendix E	116
Appendix F	118
Appendix G	160

List of Tables

		Page
Table 3.1	Description of Samples' Sex and Age Characteristics	46
Table 3.2	Description of Samples' Ethnic and Language Characteristics	47
Table 3.3	An Overview of the Home Teaching Task's Specific Skills	58
Table 4.1	Parent Involvement Activities	66
Table 4.2	One-Way Analysis of Variance on the MSCA Scores for Parent Involvement vs. No Parent Involvement	68
Table 4.3	One-Way Analysis of the MSCA Scores for Treatment Type	69
Table 4.4	Three-Way Analysis of Variance of the MSCA Scores	70
Table 4.5	Parents' Perceptions of Home Teaching Tasks	75
Table 4.6	Favoured Home Teaching Tasks	79

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Dedication

To my mother and father, Millie and Robbie Robertson, for their patience and love always. To my husband, Tom, without whose encoragement and fortitude I would not have been able to complete this study. Thank you, you've earned an equal share in whatever is to come from this thesis.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Parent involvement has become a popular concept in early childhood education. This concept is not a new strategy in the educational process: from the beginning of human life, parents teach their children by modelling behaviors, customs, rules, values, language, and laws acceptable to their cultural groups and by telling and demonstrating the skills necessary for survival. Throughout history parents have worked in partnership with the church, government and schools to provide an education for their children (Berger, 1981). Research data suggest the experiences encountered in the early years enhance the development of the child (Hunt, 1961; Bloom, 1964). Therefore those involved in the child's early experiences may be the most influential in the child's development.

As society changes and the family adapts to these changes; parents are faced with situations that may hinder their influences on the child. In these times of family breakups and economic concerns, parents are concerned with wanting to help their children and to have an influence upon their children's education. Many parents involved in the work force must provide someone else to care for their children for varying periods of time (National Day Care Report, 1984). The extended family that might have

provided the care in the past, has diminished, moved apart, and may also be involved in the work force themselves. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to providing an appropriate environment with appropriate experiences during this critical time in the children's development. To be beneficial a plan for parent involvement must consider the needs of both parents and children.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether involvement of parents in a kindergarten program as receivers of information, volunteer assistants, and teachers of their own children outside of the school setting will make a statistically significant difference in kindergarten pupils' development of language and readiness skills. Specifically, this study will investigate the question: Does parent involvement affect kindergarten children's scores on a standardized test at $p < .05$ when compared to the scores of children whose parents were not involved in their kindergarten program? In addition, parents' responses on questionnaires will provide feedback on parental attitudes toward parent involvement.

Background of the Study

In the mid 1960's, the knowledge that both parents and the environment affect the child's development (Hunt, 1961; Bloom, 1964) and that compensatory educational opportunities provided in the early years could improve the academic achievement of culturally disadvantaged children

(Deutsch, 1964) helped establish the Project Head Start and the Project Follow Through intervention programs in the United States. The success of programs involving parents such as Mother-Child Home Program (Levenstein, 1977), Early Child Stimulation Through Parent Education Program (Gordon, 1969), Mother Training Program (Karnes & Zehrbach, 1977), and the Appalachian Educational Laboratory Home-Oriented Preschool Education Program (1972) resulted in the United States federal government mandating parental involvement for Head Start programs as a precondition for receiving financial support.

Some programs involved parents in centres, some instructed parents in their homes, and some brought parents together to further their understanding of common concerns about child care, nutrition, health, child development and management. Zigler (1979a & b), the director of Head Start, stressed the benefits resulting from parents becoming involved in their children's education did not end when their children entered school. There was a real need for parent involvement to continue throughout the children's education.

In Great Britain, the Plowden Committee (1967) examined the question of why so many children in grammar school did not complete their schooling and instead became involved in expensive and socially devient activities such as delinquency, family breakdown and long term dependence on public services. The Plowden report stressed

(a) the importance of school experiences, based on the assumption that there was a relationship between intelligence and development; and (b) the need for a partnership with parents and the teaching profession, based on the assumption that parent's attitudes and support were crucial for children's development and achievement (Smith, 1980). Subsequently, as in the United States, a financial commitment was made toward improving relationships between schools and parents.

Many early childhood educators were recognizing the positive effects of parent involvement on children's educational success (Evans, 1975; Berger, 1981). A broad base of research was providing evidence that there was a positive relationship between parents' interest in and involvement; and their children's achievement in school (Katkovsky, Preston, Crandall, 1964; Collins, 1977; Nedler & McAfee, 1979; Honig, 1979). However, there were some investigators who questioned this link between parents' attitudes and their child's learning behavior (Moss, 1967; Stolz, 1967; Yarrow, Campbell & Burton, 1968).

Whether there is a positive effect on children's learning or not, Nedler and McAfee (1979) found having parents involved as assistants in the classroom promoted a better understanding of the program and a better attitude toward school and awareness of the value of school. In addition, they found the other advantages of enabling parents to contribute directly to their children's

education, and increasing the resources available to the children.

In the United States, many new programs were developed encouraging and involving parent assistants, the Birmingham Model for Parent Education, the Brookline Early Education Project, Saturday School, the Family Oriented Structured Preschool, and the Follow Through and Title I programs (Nedler & McAfee, 1979). Generally parents were encouraged to share talents, tutor individual children, instruct and monitor educational games, read to children, print children's stories, help supervise centres, as well as establish and direct learning centres (Brock, 1976; Robison, 1977; Nedler & McAffee, 1979).

Though there has not been a clear cut consenus as to what features of the programs produced the higher achievement results, it seemed that the interaction between children and parents created the increased and/or sustained achievement results. It also seemed that the achievement gains were promoted when this interaction involved cognitively oriented activities, but the evidence has not been definitive (Rich, 1977).

Early childhood programs with a parent component vary in their approach and degree of involvement. Gordon (1970) proposed five types of involvement that are comparable to those proposed by other sources (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Early Childhood Council, 1971; Goodson & Hess, 1975; Nedler & McAfee, 1979;

Berger, 1981). In Gordon's Florida Parent Education Program parents were involved as: (a) receivers of information about the program, (b) teachers of their own children at home or outside the school setting, (c) volunteer assistants in the classroom, (d) trained and paid assistants in the classroom, and (e) members of advisory or policy-making boards.

In British Columbia, the importance of parent involvement is recognized, but as yet, is only a partially tapped resource. The Resource Book for Kindergarten (1973) stated that "education should be a continuing parent-teacher partnership and that getting involved in the school and and its activities can be richly rewarding for everyone concerned" (p. 92). In cooperative preschools, the most common form of nursery school in British Columbia, parents are involved in teacher selection, choice of activities, and style of the program. In addition, parents help plan the day's activities, assist during the day, attend meetings and are involved in construction and maintenance of classroom equipment.

The British Columbia Ministry of Education's Kindergarten Needs Assessment (Mayfield, Dey, Gleadow, Liedtke, & Probst, 1981) reported that when children attend kindergarten, parent involvement often lessens as compared to previous preschool involvement. The parent involvement in kindergarten consisted most frequently of occasionally providing assistance with cooking

activities and supervising on field trips. Information about the program and how the children are progressing was gained most typically through parent-teacher conferences, informal visits, newsletters and telephone contacts.

The British Columbia Needs Assessment (Mayfield, et al,1981) addressed the question of parent involvement and found that the majority of parents desired more involvement. They wanted an orientation to the program expectations and courses on parenting, and reported a willingness to assist in the classroom preferring direct contact helping children in small groups or one-to-one situations.

However, this assessment also identified some obstacles to parent involvement. Asked to respond to possible blocks to parent participation, parents reported younger children at home needing care, and transportation restricted their involvement. Teacher's and administrators' responses differed from those of parents. They believed working parents presented the greatest obstacle to parent involvement.

Other problems have been cited by Almy (1975) and Berger (1981). They noted other factors needing to be considered when planning for parent involvement programs included: (a) preparation time and energy required, (b) cost rstraints, (c) accommodation of a wide range in children's needs and abilities.

Assisting in the classroom during the school day

has not been feasible for an increasing proportion of parents who are part of the work force (National Day Care Information Centrer, 1979). To become involved in their children's education beyond the level of recievers of information, these parents need another form of involvement. Goodson and Hess (1975) in their review of early childhood education intervention programs pointed out the impact of the family during the early years is not overcome by later schooling. They stressed the importance of the home environment and its interacting members in the provision of stimulation. According to Goodson and Hess it is the effective use of the time spent with their children outside the school setting that is the overriding purpose of parent's involvement in providing educational benefits in the home.

White and Watts (1973) observed that the most effective mothers designed a physical world full of manipulative materials that encouraged exploration and motor development. As the children interacted with the environment, interchanges with parents usually were oriented around the children's interest of the moment. These interchanges were optimal situations for parents to teach their children. Effective and clear communication during these optimal situations were found to increase competency of children's intellectual and social abilities (Baumrind, 1967). Many home involvement programs, for example, Mother-Child Home Program (Levenstein, 1977),

Parent-Child Toy Library Program (Nimnicht, 1977), and the United States Government Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Home Start Programs (1976) suggested and even provided toys, books and activities for parents to use with their children.

A Canadian example of a home teaching program conducted by Waksman (1975) included tasks using household items to develop visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, memory, directionality, and concepts of number, colour, letter, classification and conservation. These teaching activities were presented so that they could be comprehended easily by mothers and their children. Waksman reported statistically significant gains in the area of cognitive development of the treatment group as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Metropolitan Readiness Test. In addition, the results from a Child Observation Questionnaire designed to measure the degree of the children's classroom teachers' awareness of any changes in the classroom behavior, indicated the home training program had some statistically significant effects on the treatment group's cognitive pereformance in the classroom. Because the parents were successful using Waksman's home teaching tasks, the general content and format was used in the development of the home teaching tasks for this study.

Rationale for the Study

The experiences in the early years, infancy

through age nine, are considered by educators to be crucial to later development (Fowler, 1972). The early years are the period of maximum language development (Callaway, 1974) and development of readiness for other learning (Bloom, 1964). Parents play a primary role in their children's development in these early years. It is hypothesized that when children enter the school setting the parental role in their children"s education should not end.

With the knowledge that in these times of economic restraint kindergarten teachers may be ultimately responsible for more and more children, the question of of the effects of parents as volunteers has gained importance. The new British Columbia Kindergarten Curriculum/Resource Book (1984) has stressed this growing importance of parent involvement and provided a resource section with suggestions for kindergarten teachers.

In addition to suggestions for classroom involvement, the identification of obstacles to involvement for a large proportion of parents needs to be considered when planning an approach for involving parents in their children's education. For many parents, home-based programs might be more feasible. Both the home and school setting are important learning environments for children (Colangelo & Dettman, 1981).

This study seeks to investigate possible effects of three types of parent involvement on the progress of kindergarten children, in a public school in British

Columbia. The dependent variable has been limited to the measures of language and readiness skills because these are two of the seven educational components of the new kindergarten curriculum for which suitable standardized measures are available. Studies have shown that the standard measures of language development and readiness skills are also considered to be predictors of later school achievement (Goodwin & Driscoll, 1980).

Approach to the Study

This study will compare information gathered on the progress of kindergarten pupils whose parents were not part of a parent involvement program and the progress of kindergarten pupils whose parents were involved in:

1) receiving information and having the opportunity of responding to and making suggestions concerning the kindergarten program and their children, and

2) home teaching tasks that enhanced and extended their children's development of kindergarten skills as prescribed by the British Columbia Curriculum Guide and Resource Book, and

3) assisting in the classroom.

Information was also collected through two questionnaires: (a) a Needs Assessment Questionnaire which identified the needs of and determined the type of parental involvement best suited to the parents taking part in the study, and (b) an Evaluation of Parents' Participation Questionnaire to evaluate the home teaching activities. In addition,

a logbook was kept to record the reactions of parents to their in-class assistance, and anecdotal records of parent and child behaviors (e.g., attendance at meetings, responses to queries sent home, parent intiated contacts, incidence of participation, teacher ratings of participation, reactions of parents and children to activities, and incidental comments from both parents and children) were kept by the teacher.

The data collected will be analyzed to investigate the following questions:

1. Are there statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences in the mean on a standarized test between kindergarten children whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program and the control group whose parents were not involved in the kindergarten program?
2. Are there statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences in the mean scores on a standardized test between kindergarten children whose parents were involved in the classroom as well as at home and those kindergarten children whose parents were involved at home only?
3. Are there statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences in the mean scores on a standardized test between boys and girls whose parents were involved in the kindergarten program?
4. Are there statistically significant ($p < .05$)

differences in the mean scores on a standardized test between the children's sex and the two parent involvement treatments?

5. Are there statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences in the mean scores on a standardized test between the children attending the morning kindergarten session and the children attending the afternoon session whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program?

6. Are there statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences in the mean scores on a standardized test between the children attending the morning session and children attending the afternoon session and the two parent involvement treatments?

Other data will be analyzed descriptively to provide information to the following questions:

7. What are the parents' perceptions of their involvement in working with children in the classroom as recorded in the logbook and from discussions with the teacher?

8. What are the parents' perceptions of their involvement in working with their children on the home teaching as assessed by questionnaires?

9. What are the parents' perceptions of the effects their involvement had on their children as assessed by questionnaires, recorded observations in the logbook, and from discussions with the teacher?

Summary

The purpose of this study, as presented in this chapter, is to investigate the effects on the progress of kindergarten children when their parents are involved in the kindergarten program as receivers of information, volunteer assistants, and teachers of their own children outside the school setting. Research has shown there is a positive effect on children's progress in Head Start and Follow Through preschool programs involving parents. The desirability of continuing this parent involvement into the kindergarten program has been emphasized in both the British Columbia Kindergarten Needs Assessment and the recently revised British Columbia Curriculum Guide and Resource Book. Implementing a parent involvement program and investigating its results may provide ideas and materials that may be used easily by both teachers and parents to benefit the kindergarten child.

In the remaining chapters of this study a review of related literature, the design and procedures of investigation, and the results of the data analysis will be presented. The results will be summarized presenting conclusions, limitations, implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of the literature pertinent to this study. The literature and research reviewed is divided into the following sections:

1) the historical perspective of parent involvement in early childhood education,
2) the importance of the early years and parent involvement,
3) parent involvement in Head Start programs,
4) parent involvement in public schools in Britain,
5) types of parent involvement, and
6) parent involvement today.

Over the past two decades, parent participation in the educational process has gained in popularity with educators and researchers. This popularity had its beginnings in the United States with the War on Poverty and the establishment of Project Head Start. In Great Britain, interest in parent participation was stirred by the investigations of a government committee chaired by Lady Plowden and its subsequent report on primary education. The research findings and educational implications from these two major projects caused early childhood educators in other parts of the world to consider the part parent participation played in the educational process and in their own programs.

Educators and researchers posed many questions

about parent participation. There was an ambiguity as to what was meant by parent participation, what were the objectives of involving parents, and how could a program for parent participation be devised and implemented. Much of the ambiguity stemmed from the different ways parents had been involved in their children's educational development throughout history. A review of these historical developments is important because many of our modern views of child development and the part parents play in their children's development have their beginnings in the changing social thoughts of 18th and 19th century theorists like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel.

The Historical Perspective of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education

In Emile, Rousseau directed mothers to "cultivate, water the young plant ere it die; it will one day bear fruit delicious to your taste. Set up a fence betimes round your child's soul, others may mark its circuit, but you must build barriers" (as cited in Archer, 1964, p.56). Pestalozzi, using Emile as a guide, taught and cared for poor children in his home and recognized the effects of the parents and home environments on those he taught. He wrote "for children, the teachings of their parents will always be the core, and as for the schoolmaster, we can give thanks to God if he is able to put a decent shell around the core" (as cited in Berger, 1981, p.40).

Froebel also recognized that mothers were the first

educators of their children, and wrote a book, Mother Play and Nursery Songs With Finger Plays, for mothers to use with their children. Many of these verses, such as "Pat-a-cake", are still used today. In his development of a kindergarten curriculum, he "considered parents to be an integral component of early education, and the kindergarten movement involved parents from its inception" (Berger, 1981, p.47).

The first kindergarten in the United States was founded in 1856 by Mrs. Carl Schurz based on Froebel's curriculum. The first kindergartens in the United States were established as a means to alleviate the suffering of young immigrant children and a way to reach parents with information about child rearing.

The Industrial Revolution (approx. 1760-1860), brought about a severe social crisis inflicting great misery and suffering among the poor. In Great Britain, in an attempt to remedy the dire plight of the children of the poor, one of the earliest school-based parent involvement programs was established by Robert Owen in his Manchester factory. Believing the early environmental influence had an effect on children, he kept young children out of the factory until they were seven and provided day care and educational programs. Owen believed untrained parents were a bad influence on their children so he also provided a program to educate the adults working in his factory.

In Europe during the 18th century, along with this change of views toward a child-centred education, there was

a change in view that families of all classes needed to have time together. Until this change in view, it was only the wealthy class that had an active family life, talking, reading and playing together; the poor laboured for such long hours there was little time for the family to be together. In the New World, the importance of family life continued to evolve, fed by necessity. Children were regarded as contributing members of their families. At first, strong family patterns developed with appropriate and often rigid guidelines set down by religious teachings brought with the colonists, settlers, and immigrant groups. By the ninetenth century, there was a movement away from the dictates of the clergy. Many original works concerning child-rearing were published and readily available.

Parents were meeting in groups to discuss proper moral training and responsibilities of child rearing as early as 1815 in Portland, Maine (Brim, 1965). By 1897, organizations concerned with children and parents numbered over four hundred throughout the United States (Berger, 1981). Among these were the Women's Christian Temperance Union and Free Kindergarten Associations. These two organizations established settlement houses and free kindergartens for lower socio-economic groups and new immigrants. Middle and upper class mothers formed and joined clubs concerned with the education of their children. Among these organizations were the Congress of Parents and Teachers, now the American Parent Teachers Association

(PTA), and the American Association of University Women which implemented diverse educational programs involving the study of children and parent education. The PTA was concerned with parent-school relationships and it was through the action of the PTA that "parent education and involvement became an institutionalized part of school" (Berger, 1981, p.49). These last two organizations are still involved in education today.

Another source adding to the growing emphasis on child-rearing and parent education was the professionals in the field of the social sciences. For example, G. Stanley Hall in 1889 involved both teachers and parents in research projects: parents were asked to observe and record their children's speech and behaviors and answer questions. This activity of observing their children was a learning experience for the parents as well as a way of collecting data. Although the recommendations that Hall and his associates compiled from the data were questionable (Schlossman, 1976), the child study movement had begun and continued into the 1900's with the research of others like Thorndike, Cattell, and Watson.

Two other organizations, the American Home Economics Association and the National Committee on Mental Hygiene, added their specific contributions to the parent education programs. The American Home Economics Association was concerned with the nutritional environment of children and emphasized home management such as food preparation and nutrition. The National Committee on Mental Hygiene was

concerned with improving the mental health of children. These organizations benefited from financial support from the United States federal government which recognized that the needs of dependent children could be met only by effecting change for the whole family, and disseminated information on child care, homemaking, improved nutrition, and child health. Parent education flourished. Child study centres received financial support, and research in the development of the normal child and recognition of the capabilities and limitations of the mentally retarded child increased. Information and support for parents of exceptional children became part of the parent education movement.

In North America, the twentieth century began an era of great interest in parents, children and education. There was a growth in the number of parent education organizations and increased membership in these organizatons. There was a movement to include not just help for immigrants and free kindergartens for the underprivileged, but as well to include groups of middle class parents concerned with their own enlightenment and involvement in their own children's education.

The aims and objectives of the parent education programs showed a trend toward environmental considerations including the entire family as a major contributor to the environment and education. In 1935, the aims of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction reflected these ideals:

1. To aid parents to interpret the findings of specialists in regard to various aspects of child and family life.

2. To give parents an opportunity to modify or change their attitudes toward their children and their behavior.

3. To serve as a device for personal adjustment.

4. To give an opportunity to consider civic problems affecting family living, and the relation of these problems to social and economic life in the community.

5. To provide a forum in which parents may verbalize their conceptions of the morals and attempt to adapt them to present conditions and trends.

6. To help develop a better understanding of the functions and purposes of education of various types and needs for these services.

(p.15)

World War II increased the demand for child care services and emergency-relief nursery schools for workers in the war effort. Parent education continued to prosper in the United States, but research and training in child development declined (Brim, 1965).

At the end of the second World War, though parent groups continued, there was a change in attitude. Parents were involved in establishing families that had been delayed by the war and parent education programs stressed family life. Parents were involved in the public schools as room parents, fund raisers, viewers of special presentations but there was a recognition that there was much more about children that they did not know. Parents were encouraged by the PTA to "send your child to school, let the teacher who

is more knowledgeable, do the teaching. Your responsibility as a parent is to be supportive of the teachers and schools" (as cited in Berger, 1981, p.62). Because many of the parents of our children today were raised with this attitude it is one of the problems parents and teachers must consider when planning parents involvement programs.

The Importance of Early Environment and Parent Involvement

In the 1960's, Piaget's theories on cognitive development influenced professionals working with children and parents. In a review of Piaget's developmental sequence, Hunt (1961), wrote about the importance of active involvement of the children with their environments. Bloom (1964) supported Hunt's work and concluded from his investigation of child development, that the early environment has the most profound effect on a child's intellectual development and that this effect was most profound in the early years of the child's development. Bloom stated it is clear "that in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, about 50% of the development takes place between conception and age 4, about 30% between ages 4 and 8, and about 20% between ages 8 and 17" (1964, p.88). Both Hunt and Bloom were in agreement that "it might be feasible to discover ways to govern the encounters that children have with their environment, especially during the early years of their development, to achieve a substantially higher level of intellectual capacity" (Hunt, 1961, p.363).

This recognition of the importance of the early

years and the environment on future learning encouraged research and program development in early childhood education. The success of programs like the one implemented by Deutsch (1964) for disadvantaged children in New York promoted optimism about the possibilities of education changing poverty and inequality. Deutsch found that children having the experiences that are provided in pre-school programs scored higher on intelligence tests than the children without such experiences.

There was also a renewed interest in the work of Maria Montessori during the 1960's. She had been able to raise the I.Q. scores of mentally deficient and underprivileged children in Rome and it was thought that her methods and materials could be appropriate to educate disadvantaged children in the United States (Mayfield, et al., 1981).

Once intelligence was viewed as being modifiable, educational intervention to change children's chances in life was seen as a possibility. The works of Hunt, Bloom, Montessori and Deutsch pointed to compensatory education as a possible solution for the section of the population suffering from cultural deprivation and poverty: "if children could be given equal environmental opportunities; the cycle of poverty could be broken" (Berger,1981, p.65).

Parent Involvement in Head Start Programs

A political push for equal opportunity in the United States was the major contributing force behind the

Office of Economic Opportunity's establishment, in 1965, of Head Start programs providing a comprehensive compensatory program for disadvantaged children which included education, social services, health services, career development, administration and parent education. Though the programs varied in how the services were organized and disseminated, the overall objective was to increase children's educational performance.

The first extensive evaluations of Head Start programs by Westinghouse Learning Corporation (1969) reported initial gains in achievement and I.Q. scores for children enrolled in the programs, but these gains were not sustained. It was hypothesized that the decline in scores resulted because the programs were not begun early enough, were discontinued too early, and/or some programs were too child-centred (Schaefer, 1970).

Although the early evaluations were disappointing as far as providing support for the early childhood education experiences being the antidote to poverty and disadvantaged environments for children, there were some positive results reported in the changes in parental attitudes. Parents who were involved in the programs were: (a) more positive in their views toward school as a valued experience, (b) more comfortable in a school setting than prior to the involvement, (c) more optimistic about increased goals for their children, (d) more aware of their role in teaching their children, and (e) more confident in their ability to affect change

(Gordon, 1976; Gray, 1971; Slaughter, 1982; Zigler, 1979a).

Fifteen years into the operation of Head Start programs the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (Lazar & Darlington, 1979) shed new light on the gains of the intervention programs:

> early education pograms for low-income children apparently had lasting effects on children's school performance, with less grade failure and need for remedial education, and also on children's own confidence and self-image of themselves, and their parents' aspirations for future education and employment (Smith, 1980, p.28).

Lazar and Darlington's conclusions pointed to program effectiveness being related to factors such as parent involvement, home visits that involved both parents and children, specific goals for working with and the inclusion of parents in their children's education. Their analysis did not reveal one program of parent involvement as more effective than any other.

The parent involvement components of the Project Head Start programs were based on three curriculum models: the Academic/Preacademic model, the Cognitive Discovery model, and the Discovery model (Mayfield, et al., 1981). Each of these had a different focus on parental involvement. The Englemann-Becker/Distar centre-based program, an example of the Academic/Preacademic model asked parents (a) to attend four meetings, (b) to ensure children attend regularly, punctually, and well-rested, (c) to encourage children to speak in full sentences, (d) after pre-service training to act as teacher aides, and (e) to work at home with children on "Take

Home" worksheets. Parents were also involved in a child management program to help them become more effective teachers of their children.

Following a two year evaluation study the children enrolled in the Englemann-Becker program compared with a control group, showed a gain of 9.34 points in the first year and 11.57 points in the second year on the Stanford-Binet Mayfield, et al., 1981). These gains quickly diminished unless the program continued beyond preschool (Miller, 1972).

The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum Program, an example of the Cognitive Discovery model and a combination of a centre and a home based program, provided for home visits by the teacher. The teacher provided weekly activities to meet the child's level of development by demonstrating the activities and answering the mother's questions about these activities and her child's needs. Parent meetings dealing with common topics of concern were conducted to help modify the parents' child-rearing practices. Parents were encouraged to volunteer and to observe in their child's classroom. This program was continued into the primary grades as part of Project Follow Through.

The original program, the Perry Preschool Project (1962-1967) directed by Weikart, collected data from the Stanford-Binet, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and Leiter International Performance Scale every year. In addition, the Ypsilanti Rating scale was used to measure non-academic factors and a pupil behavior inventory was kept to assess

classroom contact motivation, and the social and emotional state. Chow Elmore (1973) reported the differences on the intellectual measures in favour of the experimental group disappeared by grade 2. However, the "social-emotional adjustment factors and achievement differences in favour of the experimental group persist" (p.42-43). Evans (1975) reported a lower rate of remedial placements and incidents of social deviance and dependency of the original group compared to the control group.

The home teaching program reported that mothers were enthusiastic about participating in the project and that the home teaching program had a positive impact on the children's intellectual development (Weikart & Lambie, 1968). Data collected showed that:

> the mothers in the program which emphasized an interactive relationship between adult and child in his exploration were more likely by the end of the program to ask their children questions and give them information than they were at the beginning. Weikart and his colleagues suggest that the most effective programs are those which combine school based and home based elements (Smith, 1980, p.30).

From the evaluations of the Follow Through program, Abt Associates (1974) reported success in the development of achievement, motivation, internal locus of control and verbal ability. Although I.Q. scores were not sustained past grade 3, scores on reading, vocabulary and mathematics measures were more than one full grade higher than the control group's scores by grade 8. By grade 4 only 17% of the experimental group had failed a grade or had been assigned to a special

class compared to 38% of the control group. In adulthood, fewer of the experimental group were on welfare and fewer were unemployed and the children were motivated to attend school longer and acquire marketable skills (Hohmann, Banet, & Weikart, 1979).

The Responsive Education program, another example of the Cognitive Discovery model, provided a centre-based program of weekly meetings for parents to learn to use educational toys with their children, after which they could check out the toys from the Parent/Child Toy Lending Library. Parents were also involved as trained aides and volunteers in their child's classroom. In addition, weekly meetings were held to familiarize parents with the program, provide information, and discuss possible improvements for the program. Chow and Elmore (1973) reported that the Responsive Education program produced favourable academic results and positve parental responses.

The Education Development Centre Open Education, an example of the Discovery model and a centre-based program, involved parents in observing in the classroom, helping as aides or resource persons, and participating on the policy advisory board. The evaluation of the program was mainly descriptions of observable data noting a positive impact on certain children in both achievement and motivation (Abt Associates, 1974). The process of learning was valued more than the product and therefore the development of independence, creativity, positive school attitudes and self esteem were

considered to be important measures of the program's effectiveness.

Whether centre-based or home-based, Project Head Start's intervention programs took into account the importance of the early years, the environment, and the participation of parents. Evaluations of the programs recognized the increased I.Q. scores were not sustained but that these were not the only indicators of success or failure of the programs. Changes in attitudes and motivation toward school produced long term effects of improved achievement, fewer children retained in a grade fewer special class placements, and higher rate of employment as adults.

Gray and Klaus (1970) included in the evaluation of their combination home and centre-based parental involvement, tests to determine the influences on younger siblings. Their Early Training Project was a combination of a home visiting program, a Saturday morning preschool class and monthly newsletters for parents. The home educators initial visits supplied activities for the parents to use with their children for the entire week. As the program progressed, parents were "expected to add activities and supply their own to complete the week, thus increasing the parents' responsibility for their child's education" (Berger, 1981, p.268). Siblings of families involved in the program scored 13 points higher on the Standford-Binet Intelligence test than those who had not been involved in the program. Gray and Klaus also reported both vertical

and horizontal diffusion of program effects. Not only were younger siblings in the family affected but the effects also spread from one family to another in the community.

Radin (1972) described a maternal involvement preschool project including a combination of centre-based activities and home visits. Mothers were taught to positively reinforce and motivate their children's attempts while playing developmental games during routine housekeeping chores. He described changes in the children's performance. He reported an actual increase in mothers' I.Q. scores as well as improved confidence in handling their children, a better understanding by mothers of their children's development, and an improved perception by mothers of their ability to change and educate their children.

From a review of these early intervention programs, Bronfenbrenner (1974) suggested family involvement was crucial to the effectiveness of intervention programs and the intellectual gains were less likely to wash out if the programs involving the parents continued. Bronfenbrenner concluded that the family was the means by which intervention was translated into sustained impact:

> the family is the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child . . . The involvement of the child's family as an active participant is critical to the success of any intervention program . . . Without such family involvement, any effects of intervention, at least in the cognitive sphere, appear to erode fairly rapidly once the program ends . . . The involvement of the parents as partners in the enterprise provides an on-going system which can reinforce the effects of the program while it is in operation, and help to sustain them after the program ends (p.55).

Project Head Start's and Project Follow Through's emphasis on parent participation changed from the concept of intervention to one of partnership as the programs continued into the 1970's. The success of programs involving parents spurred the United States federal government to mandate parent components in federally funded programs; e.g., Title I and Title IV C (formerly III). To continue the educational goals of Head Start into the public schools, the Follow Through Programs were implemented for children in kindergarten through Grade three.

Parent Involvement in Public Schools in Britain

The optimism of the Head Start programs as a force for social change was investigated in Britain by a committee chaired by Lady Plowden (1967). The Plowden committee explored the questions of (a) why some children were more successful educationally than others, (b) if under-achievement could be lessened by improving school programs, and (c) if change was needed in the ways schools

related to other influences on the child's development outside of school. Analyses pointed to a connection between he educational climate in the homes, the child's development, and the schools. Little and Smith (1971) reported that poor communication of aims between home and school resulted in homes that did not support the children's learning, that under-achievement was the result of deficits in the learners' experiential background, and that differences were found in how parents interacted with their children.

Studies of how parents interacted with their children showed differences in language and communication styles used with children, differences in parenting techniques in the development of stategies for problem solving, and differences in social class. Bruner (1972) cited studies of mother-child interaction and the relationship to strategies for problem-solving in early learning and later educational attainment. He reported that both the use of language and communicative style and the strategies for problem solving were linked to the mother's self-confidence. Mothers' sense of control over what happens in their lives affected the children's early learning style and the children's own sense of confidence and competence in their ability to learn.

In two longitudinal studies for the National Survey of Health and Development, Douglas (1964 & 1968) found a close and consistent relationship between social class, children's educational achievement, and parents'

attitudes. Parents' interest in their children's development was linked to their children's attainment, good examination results and staying in school. These results were found to hold in the population as a whole and within each class group. Douglas concluded that the influences of home are crucial in both the preschool years and throughout the school career, and that the effects on achievement of home and school are interactive. He believed deficiencies of interest and ambition in the home may be offset by good teaching, but enthusiam and support on the part of the parents alone may not be sufficient to counter school deficiencies.

Psychologists investigating the factors of social class affecting children's intelligence and achievement found the differences between privileged and underprivileged children was evident even by three years of age (Ainsworth, 1962). In addition to parents' interest, the variables of parental communication style, parental attitudes, self-confidence, and resources in the home and community were found to be interrelated with the social class differences. The interactive nature of these variables affecting children's achievement at school were a central concern of the research conducted by the Plowden committee. Their report identified six associated clusters of parental attitudes and behaviors:

1. the extent to which parents took responsibility and initiative for their child's education . . .
2. the relations between parents and teachers . . .
3. fathers' interest and support . . .
4. the extent to which mothers devoted time and attention to their children's development . . .
5. parents' interest in and knowledge of the child's work at school . . .
6. the level of literacy in the home

(Smith, 1980, pp.20-21).

The committee concluded that:

> one quarter of the variation in parental attitudes can be attributed to variation in home circumstances, and that variation in parents' attitudes has a greater effect on children's achievement than does the variation in home circumstances. The committee's conclusion was that attitudes could be affected in other ways . . . than (by) parents' occupation, material circumstances, and education . . . and could be altered by persuasion (Smith, 1980, p.21).

The optimism in the conclusion of the Plowden Report led to the more difficult consideration of how to affect parental influence and participation in children's early education. The Plowden Report's official endorsement for parent participation was outlined in the booklet Parent/ Teacher Relations in Primary Schools (1968). The booklet provided practical suggestions for winning the cooperation of parents and encouraging support from the home. The minimum program included a welcome to school for new parents, a changed report format, proposals for home visits, out-of-school activities, and school facilities open to the community. Parents were encouraged to experiment with school equipment and learn new methods, help staff, fund raise and make equipment. The practical help led to parents learning about and understanding how schools work and how to help their children more

effectively (Smith, 1980).

Types of Parent Involvement

The literature reviewed to this point has described parent involvement in terms of being educational and participatory. In both the United States and Britain, parents have been involved in their children's early education programs learning about their children, learning how to teach, and teaching their own children. Parents have also been involved in gaining information, in organizing programs, sitting on committees, deciding on policy, as well as being consumers of the programs.

In an attempt to define more specifically the types of parent involvement encompassing both the educational and participatory approaches, Gordon (1969) set out a five point scale. In Gordon's definition of parent involvement , the five points outlined increase in the degree of involvement, Gordon described parents as supporters giving service, clerical, custodial, fund raising and being involved in informal and social gatherings concerning the school e.g., family nights, mother's teas, etc. At the next level, Gordon described parents as learners receiving information about their children's health, nutrition, and development; and child-rearing practices. At this level, parents were also involved in observing their children participating in the program and receiving an explanation and information about the program.

At the third level, Gordon described parents as

being involved directly as teachers of their own children in their home and outside the school setting. Parents are provided with and taught to use toys, books, and activities with their children at home to enhance their development.

At the fourth level in the increasing degree of parent involvement, Gordon described parents as trained aides and/or volunteers in the classroom. Parents prepared materials, read stories, and worked directly with children. In the last of Gordon's levels, the one with greatest degree of responsibility and parent involvement, parents are involved as policy-makers and partners making decisions concerning staffing, curriculum, and the financial management of the program.

Parent Involvement Today

Today parent involvement can take the form of any one or a combination of these roles. Parent involvement varies with the interest and flexibility of both parents and school personnel, especially the teacher.

In Yakima, Washington a home based project was adapted from Gordon's model (Berger,1981). Paraprofessionals (parents trained to make home visits) visited homes to teach parents how to teach their own preschool children. Parents were taught to use activities with specific goals to meet the individual needs of the children, through role playing and developing materials for learning from found sources (e.g., wood scrapes, flannel cut-outs, homemade play dough, cans, plastic containers,

measuring spoons). The parents were encouraged to: (a) elicit questions from their children, (b) ask questions of their children requiring more than one correct answer and more than one word answers, (c) use praise when the child did well, (d) allow time for the child to think out a problem rather than guessing, and (e) provide qualified assistance, only when needed and what is needed, for the child to continue thinking out a solution to a problem without becoming frustrated.

To evaluate the program, a set of objectives was established and measured. Mothers taught their children at least 83.6% of the tasks presented to them. Mothers increased their use of desirable teaching behaviors when teaching their children. Children performed between 90.4% and 92.5% of the tasks taught to them by parents. On the Educational Testing Service's Preschool Inventory exam, the average score of the children involved in the program was 87% compared to an average score of 55% for children not involved in the program.

A similar home-based approach to combat the difficulties faced by lower socioeconomic status children in the Toronto public school system was introduced by Waksman in 1975. Recognizing the important contribution the environment makes on the child's successes and/or failures at school, Waksman proposed a program focusing on the possibility of enhancing material teaching strategies in order to affect a change in the children's learning patterns and school

performance. Paraprofessionals visited the homes of an experimental group of kindergarten children, training the mothers in how to conduct weekly teaching tasks. The children continued to attend school regularly and to participate in all the scheduled school activities along with the control group. Pre and post measures of parental teaching styles and child achievement were administered to both the experimental and control groups. Following a twenty week treatment period, an analysis of the differences between the two groups indicated significant gains for the experimental group on (a) the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, (b) the Metropolitan Readiness Test and (c) several variables on the Mother-As-Teacher Tasks. The teaching strategy variables which were found to be significant were improved introductions to tasks, increased use of praise, increased percentage of child talk, increased total talk, and increased length of teaching sessions.

In a follow-up study conducted with a smaller sample four months after the termination of the home teaching program, only maternal teaching behaviors were examined. Waksman reported that "the results from the follow-up study confirmed the earlier findings which indicated that the experimental group maintained the significant gains which they had made on a variety of maternal teaching behaviors" (1975, p.vii).

Waksman's findings suggest some possible

educational implications: "many children from lower S.E.S. homes are able and willing to improve their cognitive skills if only given the direction, instruction, and enough stimulation" (1975, p.216). Waksman also suggested:

> the mothers who took part in this study demonstrated their abilities and willingness to teach their children at home. The school and the classroom teacher should make use of the available potential of the parents as teachers of their children. Learning which takes place in the home, supported and nourished by the strong emotional ties between parents and their children, surpasses any other form of available teaching mechanism (p.217).

Significant findings were also reported by Poy (1985) with middle class parents and children involved in an educational games program. Over a period of twelve weeks, the teacher sent home twelve different educational games, which parents played with their children. The results of the Metropolitan Readiness Test showed the children who took part in the games program attained a mean score of 62.25 compared to a control group's mean score of 51.75. These results were statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

Poy concluded that the games program involving parents, positively affected the readiness test scores of kindergarten children. Also from the data collected in parent questionnaires, Poy reported that parents found the games program to be both enjoyable and beneficial for their children.

In addition to involving parents in teaching their children at home, having parents involved in the

classroom has also produced many positive results (Honig, 1979). Obstacles to classroom involvement were described in Chapter 1. Parents want to be involved in their children's education and the home teaching tasks meet the needs of those parents not available for classroom assistance. However many parents who were involved in their children's preschool experiences are available and want to be involved in the public school kindergarten program.

In order to better meet the needs of parents so that classroom involvement is possible for more parents, Wicken (1981) developed Parent Participation in Kindergarten: A Guide for Implementation. The first phase of this plan was a parent volunteer questionnaire to assess the needs of parents in respect to volunteering in the classroom. The information from this questionnaire provided the direction to be taken in involving parents in all aspects of the kindergarten program, developing objectives, planning and setting up activities, and evaluating the activities in which they participated.

Wicken's project did not have as its goal an investigation into specific gains that parent involvement produced. Instead she gathered information from questionnaires, analyzed this information descriptively, and presented some suggestions to be considered for effective involvement. She noted that parents had great concerns about their children's education and wanted to be involved in their children's education in the public school system.

She stated that "if accustomed to having a voice in their children's earliest years, then they will want to relate to the public schools in a different way than they have done in the past" (1981, p.97). Wicken also noted the importance of recognizing parents' contributions, "the success of a parent volunteer program often depends on whether the volunteer feels that their efforts are appreciated and whether they feel needed and helpful in the classroom" (p.88). Wicken suggested it is important that professional educators recognize that education is a shared responsibility and emphasized this with a quotation from Nash (1981) on the purposes of volunteer programs:

> The purposes of volunteer programs have nothing to do with altering pupil-teacher ratios or providing a 'cheap' education. They are intended to improve education, in the short run by adding human resources to the classroom, and in the long run by enhancing parents' attitudes and skills. In both phases the pupil is the one who gains most; however, in a successful volunteer program, the volunteer receives recognition and satisfaction to compensate for service rendered. Unless a program recognizes and to some degree satisfies the motivations of volunteers, it is unlikely that they will continue to donate their services. (p.179)

Summary

Today parent involvement has evolved from views of historical educators. Parents are involved as supporters of the educational process, teachers of their own children, policymakers, and receivers of knowledge. Parent involvement has grown from being restricted to participation in non-educational activities to taking part

in all aspects of their children's education. Researchers in the 1960's provided evidence for the importance of the child's environment in the early years. Their conclusions led to the establishment of early intervention programs with parent components that aimed to improve the total development of the child. Children and parents benefited from these programs socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. What parents learned at the centres from teachers, from other parents, and directly from their experiences, influenced the learning environment for the whole family. Once parents had been involved successfully in their children's preschool education, there was a real concern on both the part of parents and educators that this involvement be continued into the public school system.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of parents' involvement in the kindergarten program on their children's performance as measured by a standardized test evaluating language and readiness skills. In addition, this study investigated parents' and children's attitudes on the appropriateness and effectiveness of parent involvement activities. The study followed a quasi-experimental design comparing the performance of the treatment group and the control group on a standardized post test.

The basic procedure of investigation consisted of: (a) assessing the willingness and ability of the parents to get involved both in the classroom and outside the school setting, (b) organizing and setting into motion parent involvement procedures, and (c) assessing the effects of parent involvement on the students by comparing performance scores of children whose parents volunteered their assistance in the classroom and/or conducted home teaching tasks, with children's performance scores whose parents were not involved in their children's kindergarten program. Two questionnaires were used to survey parents' attitudes toward the home involvement activities; and an on-going logbook was kept eliciting parents' reactions to the classroom activities.

In this chapter, a description of the techniques used in gathering the data to be used in answering the

research questions asked in Chapter I will be presented. This information is organized under the following sections: (a) the sampled population, (b) the measuring instruments, (c) the parent involvement procedures and materials, (d) the organization of the data, and (e) the method of analysis.

The Population and the Sample

The subjects of this study were 32 kindergarten pupils from an intact class in an inner city school in the Greater Victoria School District, and their parents. These children were randomly assigned to the morning and afternoon kindergarten sessions. The scores on the short form of the McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities, MSCA, (1972), of 32 pupils from the previous year's kindergarten class in the same school (matched as closely as possible by sex and age to the subjects) were used for comparison. Results from the Canadian Achievement Test over a period of five years had shown that the demonstrated ability of the students of the whole school had remained consistent across the grade levels (Anderson & Taerum, June 1982). According to school records the demographic character of the school relative to the socioeconomic level and cultural diversity the students had also remained constant over the same period of five years. The school population according to the statistics of Health and Welfare Canada (1985) was considered to be of low socio-economic status. School records showed approximately 35% of the students were from families earning subsistence level incomes; and approximately 47% were from families

who were recipients of welfare. Approximately 70% of the children were from single parent families.

The school population was made up of at least eight different and diverse cultural groups. The most common cultural groups included Anglo-Canadian, Native Indian, East Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish. School records showed 41% of the children spoke a language other than English in their homes.

The specific characteristics of the kindergarten classes used in this study are summarized in Tables 3-1 and 3-2.

Table 3.1

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES' SEX AND AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Sample Characteristics	1984 (n=32)	1985 (n=32)
Number		
Boys	8	19
A.M. Session	6	8
P.M. Session	2	11
Girls	24	13
A.M. Session	12	7
P.M. Session	12	6
Mean Age (at time of testing)	yr.mo.	yr.mo.
Total Sample	5-10	5-10
Boys	5-10	5-10
Girls	5-10	5-08

There was an observable difference in number of boys and girls between the comparison (1984) and the experimental (1985) groups. The mean age of the children in both groups was five years and ten months; however, there was a difference of two months between the mean age of the girls. These differences were analyzed for statistical significance (see Chapter 4).

Table 3.2

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES' ETHNIC AND LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS

(Entries are in percentages)

Sample Characteristics	1984 (n=32)	1985 (n=32)
Ethnic Group		
Anglo-Canadian	50.0	46.9
Oriental	12.6	34.4
Native Indian	15.6	9.4
East Indian	15.6	3.1
Polish	3.1	3.1
French Canadian	3.1	3.1
English as a Second Language	34.4	43.7

The observable difference between the Anglo-Canadian and non-Anglo-Canadian students between the 1984 and 1985 groups, was 3.1 percent and the difference between the percentages of students having English as a second language was 9.3. These differences were also analyzed for statistical significance (see Chapter 4).

According to the 1984 and the 1985 school records, 47% and 58% of the kindergarten children respectively were from families receiving welfare. Forty-one percent and 38% respectively were from families employed as store clerks, delivery truck drivers, dish washers, cook's helpers, agricultural workers, chambermaids, apartment caretakers, janitorial workers, gardeners, and typists earning a subsistence income of $10,238 - $29,197 (Citizens Advisory Body to the Minister of Health and Welfare, March 1985). Of these 62% and 63% respectively were employed on a full time basis and 38% and 37% respectively were employed on a casual basis. Forty-seven percent of the 1984 kindergarten class and 50% of the 1985 kindergarten class were from single parent families. Thus the two profiles for 1984 and 1985 seem to be similar in characteristics of culture diversity and socioeconomic status for comparison. A test for significant differences on the charactertistics was conducted and the results included in the analysis of data.

The parents of the 1985 kindergarten class made up the sample of parents involved in their children's kindergarten program. Thirty-eight percent of the parents volunteered in the classroom. At least one parent of all 32 kindergarten children took part in the home teaching activities.

Measuring Instruments

In this study the data were gathered by two means:

1) formative evaluation, and

2) summative evaluation using a short form of the

McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities.

The formative evaluation included: (a) a needs assessment, and (b) two evaluation questionnaires.

Needs Assessment

A questionnaire adapted from one developed by Wicken (1982), was used to identify the needs of and recruit the types of parental involvement required (see Appendix A). The Needs Assessment questionnaire surveyed parents' interest to become involved in both home teaching and classroom assisting activities.

Standardized Measure of Kindergarten Children's Ability

A short form of the McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities, MSCA, (1972) was administered to both the 1984 and 1985 kindergarten classes as a post-test measure of the children's achievement in verbal performance, quantitative understanding, and memory. Taylor, Slocumb, and O'Neill (1979), through a forward stepwise regression analysis, determined that the subsets used in this short form were good predictors of kindergarten children's general cognitive growth. They selected (a) Counting and Sorting, where the child is asked to count and sort blocks into equal groups; (b) Pictorial Memory, where the child is asked to recall names of objects pictured on a card; (c) Number Questions, where the child is asked questions involving number and basic arithmetical computation, (d) Verbal Fluency, where the child is asked to name articles in a given category within a 20 second period of time; (e) Numerical Memory, where the child is asked to repeat

series of digits in order and their reverse order; (f) Tapping Sequence, where the child is asked to copy a sequence of notes tapped on a xylophone; and found a correlation of 0.96 between the children's performance on these six subtests and the subjects' general cognitive index score on the full length MSCA. This short form's administration time was 15 or 20 minutes per child, which was a reasonable length of time for children of this age. The Kaufman formula (1979) was used to convert the short form scores to a general cognitive index.

The MSCA standardization sample included at least 100 children at each of 10 age groupings, from two and a half to eight years, for a total of 1,032 children. This sample was stratified to approximate the 1970 United States census population percentages for race, geographic region, and father's occupation. Bilingual children who understood and could speak English were included in the norming sample.

Reliability coefficients of the General Cognitive Index for both internal consistency and stability over a period of one month were 0.93 and 0.90 respectively and the standard error of measurement for the General Cognitive Index was four points (Hunt, 1978). The correlation coefficient comparing the General Cognitive Index of the MSCA to the Stanford-Binet I. Q. was 0.81, and to the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence Full-Scale I.Q., it was 0.71 (Hunt, 1978). Significant correlations were also found between the Metropolitan Achievement Tests and the General Cognitive

Index of the MSCA but caution in the interpretation of these results must be used due to the small number of subjects (Krichev, 1978).

Evaluation of Parents' Participation

Following a 34 week treatment period a questionnaire evaluating the home teaching activities was distributed, asking parents to report on the use and their attitudes, as well as their children's attitudes, toward the activities (see Appendix B & G). A logbook was kept with a prepared form asking parent assistants to record information concerning their in-class assistance (e.g., the activity, duration, and a rating as to whether or not they liked doing the activities, see Appendix C). In addition, a record was kept by the teacher of incidental comments and related behaviors of both the parents and the children toward the home teaching and classroom activities (e.g., attendance at meetings, responses to queries sent home, parent initiated contacts, incidence of participation, teacher ratings of participation, reactions of parents and children).

Parent Involvement Procedures and Materials

Following permission being granted by the Greater Victoria School Board and the Committee on Research or Other Studies Involving Human Subjects, the kindergarten pupils registered at Blanshard Elementary School for the school year ending in June 1985, and their parents, were asked to participate in the experimental treatment of parent involvement in the kindergarten program. The parents

were invited to a kindergarten orientation meeting (see Appendix D). In conjuction with the orientation meeting, parents were introduced to the study. A teacher's aide, two former kindergarten parents, family relatives, and two senior students acted as interpreters for those parents who did not speak English. Two involvement treatments were proposed to the parents. Following the explanation of the two treatments, parents' written permission was obtained for their children to be involved in the study and for their own participation in the study through their response to the questions "Are you willing to participate in the study of the parent involvement program, and have your child participate in the study of the parent involvement program? Do you understand that information will be obtained from parents through questionnaires and from the children through a screening test appropriate for kindergarten aged children?" (see Appendix E). It was explained to the parents that responses from both parents and children would be kept confidental and that they were free to withdraw from the program at any time.

Treatment I was defined as "parent involvement as assistants in the classroom." In order for this involvement in the classroom to meet the needs of the pupils, parents, and teacher, parents were asked to complete the Needs Assessment Questionnaire. From the information provided, the volunteer assistants' schedule and the method of recording information about classroom assistance were

established. Parents assisting in the classroom were asked to take part in supervising learning centres, and helping children on a one-to-one basis or in small groups to develop the necessary skills and concepts as suggested in the new Kindergarten Curriculum Guide/Resource Book (1984). Following the initial orientation meeting, two other meetings were held with parents at more convenient times for them, to insure all parents had the opportunity to take part in the study.

Treatment II was defined as "parent involvement as teachers of their own children in their own home." It was explained that every two weeks an activity, that corresponded to the theme and kindergarten curriculum skill being worked on in school at that time, would be sent home for the parent and child to work on together. It was also explained that after each activity a survey in the form of a questionnaire would be sent home to elicit parents' and children's reactions to the activities. In May another questionnaire would be sent home to survey parents' overall reactions to the home teaching tasks.

Treatment I

Parents assisted in the classroom three days a week (e.g., Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays). This schedule was revised monthly to accommodate parents' changing needs. At the same time, all parents were invited again to visit and volunteer in the classroom whenever possible. Parents were involved in directing and supervising the listening centre and computer activities; assisting children in cooking activities, (e.g.,

helping them to measure ingredients, count, and follow a recipe); reading to children; helping children choose books from the library; discussing books and pictures in books; putting children's words into print; supporting and encouraging children's attempts to print and read for themselves; providing individual assistance for children not able to print their own names, and/or recognize letters and numbers; playing games to reinforce skills and teach game strategies of taking turns, remembering, and problem-solving; and talking with the children to encourage them to expand their use of the English language.

Parents were asked to record their reactions to the classroom assistance in the logbook. Some parents preferred to discuss the classroom activities verbally rather than write their thoughts in the constraints of the logbook. The verbal exchanges were recorded by the teacher.

Treatment II

Seventeen home teaching activities prepared by the teacher/researcher, and similar to those used by Waksman (1975), were sent home with the kindergarten children for parents to use with their children. Parents were asked to work on the assigned tasks that correlated with the topics under study in the kindergarten classroom, and the readiness skills that are described in the British Columbia Kindergarten Curriculum Guide and Resource Book (1984). The home teaching tasks focused on reinforcing the following skills:

1. Language development - extension and use of vocabulary to include using language to express oneself,

describe, ask questions, and give directions.

2. Auditory discrimination - hearing and identifying sounds.

3. Auditory memory - hearing, identifying and remembering specific characteristics of sounds.

4. Visual discrimination - seeing and identifying similarities and differences, patterns, etc.

5. Visual memory - seeing, identifying and remembering similarities, differences, patterns, etc.

6. Mathematical readiness - developing an understanding of the use of number.

7. Problem solving - anticipating, establishing a plan, using alternate ways if necessary.

8. Writing and reading awareness - recognizing that writing is thought written down in letter symbols and reading is the translation of the thought from the written symbols.

9. Printing readiness - developing small muscle control and eye-hand coordination.

10. Reading readiness - developing visual and auditory discrimation, an awareness and understanding of the reading process.

11. Concept development - structuring in the mind of knowledge.

12. Classification - organizing materials, events, and phenomena into logical groupings according to common attributes or relationships.

13. Social responsibility - awareness and acceptance of responsibility of our social being, ie., developing a feeling of self-worth, sharing, contributing cooperatively to solutions.

Curriculum materials were provided when other than household items were needed. The home teaching tasks followed a regular format and each activity was piloted with a group of parents who had children in kindergarten prior to 1984, to check clarity and parents' ability to conduct the lessons.

Every other week, for 34 weeks including Christmas and Spring vacations, each child in the experimental group took home a home teaching task. The activities included:

1. All About Me - an activity to help teach children some pertinent information about themselves, ie., birthdate, address, telephone number.

2. Fruits and Vegetables - a classification activity of fruits and vegetables.

3. Counting Junk - a counting activity to help teach sets of objects 1 to 10 and their corresponding numeral symbols.

4. Colour Recognition - an activity identifying and grouping objects by their colour.

5. Name Printing - an activity tracing over the letters in the child's name.

6. Egg Carton Colour Cups - a colour identification and classification activity.

7. Hot and Cold - a classification activity.

8. Can You See A Difference - a visual discrimination activity of differences and similarities in shapes.

9. Shapes - visual identification activity matching shapes.

10. Concentration - a visual memory game identifying pictures first, shapes re-using activity 9, and later letters using activity 11.

11. Letters - a visual identification of upper and lower case letters.

12. Words - an activity to develop the concept that words are made up of a combination of letters.

13. Clocks - an activity to introduce time as displayed on a clock.

14. Rhyming Words - an auditory discrimation activity with rhyming words.

15. Listen to Identify - listening to identify sounds of common objects.

16. Directions - an activity requiring children to draw pictures from step by step directions.

17. Finding and Matching - an activity extending classification to objects which go together for a specific use, etc., ie., brush and comb.

(See Appendix F for the 17 Home Teaching Tasks).

Each activity provided for reinforcement of more than one skill. Table 3.3 is an overview of the specific skills that each home teaching task was designed to help children develop.

Table 3.3

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HOME TEACHING TASK'S SPECIFIC SKILLS

	Language Development	Auditory Discrimination	Auditory Memory	Visual Discrimination	Visual Memory	Mathematical Readiness	Problem Solving	Writing & Reading Awareness	Printing Readiness	Reading Readiness	Concept Development	Classification	Social Responsibility
1. All About Me	X		X										X
2. Fruits and Vegetables	X								X				X
3. Counting Junk					X	X							
4. Colour Recognition	X			X						X			
5. Name Printing								X					X
6. Egg Carton Colour Cups	X			X					X			X	
7. Hot and Cold	X										X	X	
8. Can You See A Difference	X			X									
9. Shapes	X			X							X		
10. Concentration					X		X						
11. Letters				X				X					
12. Words				X				X		X	X		
13. Clocks	X					X					X		
14. Rhyming Words	X	X								X			
15. Listen to Identify		X					X			X			
16. Directions	X		X				X						
17. Finding and Matching	X						X				X	X	

Parents were encouraged to ask for help and clarification from the teacher when needed. Parents who did not read English had a contact person (e.g., older siblings, relatives, friends, neighbours, and the school teacher's aide) to interpret the home teaching tasks and answer questions. The questionnaires to evaluate the home teaching tasks were sent home after each activity (see Appendix B). Parents were asked to comment on their attitude toward each activity, their perception of their children's attitude toward each activity, if other children were involved in the activity, and their attitude toward the appropriateness and benefit of the activity. In addition, space was provided for parents to suggest ways in which to improve the activity to better meet their own or their children's needs. There were no limits set on the time spent or the number of times the activities were repeated.

The final questionnaire was sent home with two additional pages to survey parents' overall reactions to all the home teaching tasks at the completion of the seventeenth home teaching task (see Appendix G). Parents were asked to recall the activities they and their children liked best and least and to comment on the reasons for their attitudes. They were also asked to comment on possible teaching techniques, understandings of the kindergarten program, and information about their children that they had learned through the use of the home teaching tasks. A total of 544 questionnaires were sent home.

Evaluating Kindergarten Children's Performance

In April 1985 the six subtests of the MSCA were administered individually in two sessions of approximately ten minutes each to the kindergarten children. One session of testing was conducted by the Learning Assistance teacher and the other session was conducted by the classroom teacher. The children were tested in random order over a period of five days. The same six subtests of the MSCA had been administered in two sessions by the same two people the previous April to the 1984 kindergarten class so that the performance scores of the two groups could be compared.

Organization of the Data

The general organization of the data from the post tests and the questionnaires was determined by the quantitative procedure of the test and the qualitative scoring of the questionnaires. The kindergarten children's performance scores on the six subtests were weighted and combined following the MSCA procedures for calculation to produce composite scores of verbal, perceptual, and quantitative performance. These three scores were added together and the sum was substituted into a conversion equation appropriate for each child's age, to compute an estimated general cognitive index. The general cognitive index for each child was used to compare (a) differences in children whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program with those whose parents were not, (b) differences between the the two treatments, (c) differences between

sexes, and (d) differences between children enrolled in kindergarten in the morning session and children enrolled in the afternoon session.

Qualitative data provided both formative and summative evaluation. On-going evaluation of both home and in-class involvement activities provided suggestions that were used in the preparation of future home teaching tasks and the specific activities for parents to assist with in the classroom. Summative evaluation of the parents' and children's attitudes toward the involvement activities were organized into the following categories: (a) Did the children benefit from the activities? (b) Did the parents develop a technique for teaching their children? (c) Did the parents gain information about the kindergarten program? (d) Did the parents gain information about their children?

Method of Analysis

A test of significant initial differences between the comparison and experimental groups' characteristics was conducted to determine if these differences needed further consideration in the interpretation of the results. An analysis of variance was used to determine if the differences between the scores on the MSCA short form were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Analysis of data from the control group and treatment group was done to discover possible statistically significant differences (a) in performance between those children whose parents were involved in the kindergarten program and those whose parents were not; (b)

between Treatment I and Treatment II; (c) between boys and girls; and (d) between attendance in the morning session and the afternoon session of kindergarten.

The information gathered in the questionnaires and logbook was analyzed for possible trends in the amount and kind of participation, parents' awareness about the program, and parents' and children's attitudes toward the involvement. The analysis of the descriptive information separated the data from the two treatments.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the design procedures of this study. The sample used in the study was an inner city group of 32 low socioeconomic and culturally diverse kindergarten children and their parents. Parents were surveyed as to their needs for and attitude toward two types of parent involvement. The kindergarten children were post-tested and their performance scores were compared to performance scores of children whose parents were not involved in the kindergarten program. A three-way analysis of variance was done on the quantitative data from the test of children's ability; and a qualitative analysis was done on the data from three questionnaires. The results of these analyses are presented in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

This chapter includes a description of the analysis of the data collected and a discussion of the findings. In an attempt to determine the effects of parent involvement on the kindergarten children's achievement scores the following questions were investigated:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on the McCarthy Scale of Children's Abilities (MSCA) between kindergarten children whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program and the control group whose parents were not involved in the kindergarten program?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on the MSCA between kindergarten children whose parents were involved in the classroom as well as at home and those kindergarten children whose parents were involved at home only?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference in the language development and readiness scores as measured by the MSCA between the boys and the girls whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program.
4. Is there a statistically significant difference in the language development and readiness scores as measured by the MSCA between the children's sex and the two parent involvement treatments?
5. Is there a statistically significant difference between

attendance in the morning or afternoon kindergarten session of those children whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program?

6. Is there a statistically significant difference between attendance in the morning or afternoon sessions and the two parent involvement treatments?

In addition to the effects on the kindergarten children's achievement, parents' responses on questionnaires dealing with their involvement in their children's kindergarten program were descriptively analyzed to investigate the following questions:

7. What did parents perceive were their needs to become involved in their children's kindergarten program?

8. What were the parents perceptions of parent involvement in the classroom?

9. What were the parents perceptions of their involvement in working with their children's kindergarten program at home?

10. What did parents perceive were the effects of their involvement in working with their children in the classroom?

11. What did parents perceive were the effects of their involvement in working with their children's kindergarten program at home?

The findings will be organized into the following sections:

1. A descriptive analysis of responses to the Needs Assessment,

2. Statistical analysis of the data including a statisical test to assess the equivalency between the treatment and control groups; and a three-way analysis of variance used to analyze the data in terms of the two treatments, sex, the two treatments by sex, attendance in the morning and afternoon sessions, and the two treatments by attendance in the morning or afternoon sessions.

3. A descriptive analysis of the responses from parents collected in the log book and anecdotal records from the teacher on parent involvement in the classroom.

4. A descriptive analysis of the responses from parents on questionnaires evaluating involvement in teaching their own children at home.

5. Additional information from children, parents and teachers from anecdotal records kept by the teacher.

For the purpose of this study $p < .05$ was considered an acceptable level of significance. Where appropriate the findings reported will be related to similar findings of studies reported in the review of literature in Chapter 2.

Analysis of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Of the 32 Kindergarten Needs Assessment questionnaires, distributed at the orientation meetings, 22 or 69% were returned. In the completed Kindergarten Needs Assessment questionnaires, 86.4% of the parents expressed the desire to receive information about what their children were doing and what was expected of their

children in kindergarten. Seventy-three percent of the parents indicated they would like to work with their children at home and 38% of the parents indicated they would like to work with the kindergarten children in the classroom.

From the list of suggested activities for involvement, parents most often selected the following activities presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES
(more than one choice was allowed)

Activities	% of Parents (n=22) Participating in Each Activity
Photography	36.4
Story reading	36.4
Working with children one-to-one	31.8
Assisting with cooking	31.8
Assisting on field trips	31.8
Sharing another language	27.3
Collecting items for kindergarten	27.3

These suggestions were consistent with the findings of the British Columbia Kindergarten Needs Assessment where parents indicated they would like to be involved in working with

young children on a one-to-one basis; and were most often involved in their kindergarten children's programs assisting in cooking activities and on field trips (Mayfield, et al., 1981).

When asked to consider the frequency of classroom assistance that would be convenient, the responses were varied indicating the need for a flexible scheduling of classroom assistance on a individual basis to meet each parents' particular needs. Responses to the question concerning meeting times were also varied. Because there was no convenient meeting time indicated, it was concluded by the teacher/researcher, that several meetings would have to be set up in order to contact the majority of parents.

Other responses to questions concerning suggestions for topics of study, field trips, and community resources provided many ideas but did not identify any clear consensus. The following suggestions were mentioned more than once: the Provincial Museum, a children's theatre, the Observatory, the Wax Museum, Beacon Hill Park, and a farm.

Statistical Analysis

Equivalency of groups. A test for significant differences between two percents (Garrett, 1958) was used to compare the equivalency of the number of boys, number of girls, number of non-Anglo-Canadians, number of Anglo-Canadians, and the number having English as a second language between the 1984 and 1985 kindergarten students. There were no significant differences at the $p < .05$

found in any of the characteristics of comparison. Therefore it can be concluded that the two groups were statistically equivalent for testing characteristics and no adjustment in subsequent analyses was needed for comparison.

Effects of treatment. The results of the analysis of variance on the mean scores of the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 4.2. There was a statistically significant difference ($p = .0004$) between the mean scores of the combined treatment group and the control group.

Table 4.2

ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE ON THE MSCA SCORES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT VS. NO PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Source of Variation	DF	Mean Square	F	p
Combined Treatment				
Between Groups	1	2648.39	14.07	0.0004
Within Groups	62	188.28		

Table 4.3 presents the results of the analysis of variance considering the possible differences between Treatment II (Home Teaching Tasks), and Treatment I and II combined (Classroom Assistance plus Home Teaching Tasks). There was a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.002$) between the mean scores of those children whose parents volunteered in the classroom as well as took part in the home teaching tasks and the children whose parents took part in the home teaching tasks only.

Table 4.3

ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF THE MSCA SCORES FOR TREATMENT TYPE

Source of Variation	DF	Mean Square	F	p
Treatment Type				
Between Groups	2	1358.55	7.14	0.002
Within Groups	61	190.24		

A summary of the results of a three-way analysis of variance is presented in Table 4.4. The F ratio for the sex variable, attendance in the morning or afternoon session variable, and the interaction of these variables with each other and the two treatment types were not statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 4.4

THREE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE MSCA SCORES

Source of Variation	DF	Mean Square	F	p
Sex	1	108.62	0.54	NS
Time	1	13.72	0.07	NS
Treatment Type	2	850.23	4.22	.02
Sex by Time	1	1.18	0.006	NS
Sex by type	2	11.42	0.06	NS
Time by type	2	438.81	2.18	NS
Sex by Time by Type	2	102.11	0.51	NS
Within Cells	52	201.47		

In summary, analyses showed that based on the mean scores on the MSCA from this sample of kindergarten children, the children's sex did not make a statistically significant difference in the scores of the children whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program in

either involvement treatments. Also, attendance in the morning or afternoon sessions of kindergarten did not make a statistically significant difference in the scores of the children whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program in either involvement treatments. However, there was a statistically significant effect on the language and readiness skills as measured by the MSCA of the children due to parent participation in their children's kindergarten program.

These results are consistent with the findings of the Head Start evaluations of centre and home based programs involving parents. The Parent/Child Toy Lending Library program produced favourable academic results (Chow & Elmore, 1973). The Perry Preschool Project findings noted that the most effective programs combined school-based and home-based elements (Smith, 1980).

The gain in test scores was consistent with the significant gains made on two readiness tests by kindergarten children from lower socioeconomic status following a program of home teaching tasks as reported by Waksman (1975). The conclusion that improved test scores resulted from parent involvement was consistent with the Yakima, Washington home-based project where parents were taught to teach their own children (Berger, 1981). Poy (1985) also found that significant gains were made in children's test scores as a result of parents' involvement in a home-based games program.

Descriptive Analysis of Classroom Assistance

The logbook evaluation forms initially provided feedback about the parents' classroom assistance. Parents responded to statements concerning whether or not the activity was a new experience for them, and whether they found the activity in which they were assisting enjoyable. They responded to statements concerning whether they perceived the activity kept the interest and was beneficial to the children with whom they were working. In addition, the evaluation form provided the parents with the opportunity to respond to questions about how their own children reacted to their assisting in the classroom; whether or not they learned anything about their own child, about the teacher's methods of teaching, and about their own method of teaching while assisting in the classroom. One parent, for example, responded, "I do quite well at a structured activity but find it difficult to relate during a 'free play' session".

The information was used in an on-going basis of assigning parents to the type of activities they enjoyed, in which they felt most comfortable about their ability, and in which they felt the children benefited. Concerns parents had about activities and teaching methods were discussed and and cooperatively resolved with the teacher. As parents became more comfortable with assisting in the classroom and communicating with the teacher they chose not to use the logbook to evaluate their classroom assistance, and instead, an open line of verbal communication developed between the

parents who were assisting and the teacher.

Initially the logbook provided the information that the classroom assisting was a new experience for 87.5% of the parents volunteering in the classroom. The parents reported that they enjoyed assisting the children and felt the children benefited from their assistance. This was reaffirmed during parent/teacher discussions. The logbook also provided the teacher with information about how parents perceived their children handled their being in the classroom and that led to some group problem solving sessions with both the parents and children.

Parents commented on seeing a "different side" of their children in the classroom. They found out how much responsibility their children could handle at school and subsequently added to what the children were responsible for at home. They became aware of the importance of the children feeling sucessful and the progress the children made over a period of time.

Parents commented on the teacher's positive methods of handling the children. Specifically they noted how the teacher's displeasure was aimed at the pupil's actions and not the pupil themselves; and how the teacher helped the children use effective communication when dealing with conflict. Again, parents commented on trying these techniques at home. Similar effects have been reported by other programs with parent involvement (e.g., Radin, 1972; Bruner, 1972; Waksman, 1975).

Descriptive Analysis of Home Teaching Tasks

A total of 368 out of 544 home teaching evaluation questionnaires were returned following each of the home teaching tasks (mean return rate = 67.5%). The return rate ranged from 17 to 26 questionnaires for each home teaching task. Of the returned questionnaires 153 were from the parents who also assisted iin the classroom (mean return rate = 75%). The responses from these questionnaires yielded information about the parents' perceptions of the activities, of their children's reactions to the activities, of the activity's benefit on learning, and if other children in the family joined in the activity. Table 4.5 presents a summary of the tallied results.

Table 4.5

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOME TEACHING TASKS
(entries are in percentages)

Activities	Parents liked working with the activity	Children liked working with the activity	Siblings liked working with the activity	Children benefited from the activity
All About Me (n=26)	88.5	96.2	53.9	96.2
Fruits and Vegetables (n=26)	88.5	88.5	46.2	88.5
Counting Junk (n=20)	75.0	90.0	40.0	75.0
Colour Recognition (n=19)	78.9	94.7	52.6	78.9
Name Printing (n=17)	82.4	82.4	52.9	82.4
Egg Carton Colour Cups (n=23)	43.5	65.2	30.4	47.8
Hot and Cold (n=24)	83.3	100.0	50.0	87.5
Can You See A Difference (n=19)	78.9	94.7	47.4	89.5
Shapes (n=23)	78.3	87.0	43.5	82.6
Concentration (n=23)	78.3	87.0	43.5	73.9
Letters (n=22)	86.4	100.0	45.5	77.3
Words (n=20)	85.0	95.0	45.0	85.0
Clocks (n=21)	76.2	76.2	42.9	66.7
Rhyming Words (n=22)	86.4	81.8	50.0	77.3
Listen to Identify (n=18)	83.3	88.9	55.6	72.2
Directions (n=20)	80.0	75.0	30.0	60.0
Finding and Matching (n=24)	83.3	87.5	54.2	75.0

In addition to the tallied responses (presented in Table 4.5), parents were asked to comment on how their children benefited from the activities and how the activities could be changed to make them better. Most often parents who had also assisted in the classroom provided this information. Parents mentioned that their children;

1) improved in the ability to remember sequences
2) improved in concentration
3) learned to discriminate
4) learned different ways to organize things
5) started to measure things with the eye
6) needed more practice
7) became involved in discussions about likes and dislikes
8) learned to count better
9) learned nutritional information, and
10) reviewed home safety rules

They reported 'not doing' some activities, for example 'Name Printing' and 'Colour Recognition', because they felt their children had already developed the skills. They also commented on their use of the 'What Else' extension sections of the home teaching tasks. One parent noted that 'Concentration' introduced her child to a similar game they had at home. Another parent specifically commented on 'Shapes', "Sarah loved this and we are still playing other matching games." The same parent commented on 'Directions', "I have already added three more direction sheets for Sarah."

Consistent with the results of the parent involvement in the classroom the majority of the parents liked the activities, and thought their children liked and benefited from the activities. Children in the family, other than the kindergarten children, participated in all the activities with a high of 59% joining into the activity of Finding and Matching, and a low of 30% participating in the Egg Carton Colour Cups activity. One parent commented about her kindergarten child working with her little brother on the Finding and Matching activity: "big sister helping; brother is learning also". This was consistent with the influence on younger siblings that was reported by Gray and Klaus (1970) in their evaluation of the Early Training Project.

Accompanying the last home teaching task evaluation parents were asked to respond to a final summative questionnaire. Seventy-five percent of these questionnaires were completed and returned. Parents' responses provided the information that for 88% of the responding parents this was their first experience in becoming involved in their children's school program. This is consistent with 87.5% of the parents who reported that assisting in the classroom was their first experience in becoming involved in their children's school program. Fifty-eight percent of the parents responded positively to the home teaching tasks being helpful in developing teaching techniques that work with their children. The following specific comments were made by parents:

"The activities helped us to talk together."

"I know how to lead my child to think to find out the answer."

Sixty-seven percent of the parents responded positively to the home teaching tasks being helpful in discovering the way their children learn. The following specific comments were made by parents:

"Learning is fun for him."

"I learned that things I took for granted were things she still needed to learn."

"For my child, when I said this was homework, it gave him more incentive to work with his older brother and sister and Mom."

Eighty-eight percent of the parents responded positively to the home teaching tasks being helpful in providing information about what the children were learning in kindergarten. One parent commented that: "It's easier to keep in touch with what's going on at school when you have corresponding home tasks to complement the teaching at school." Another parent commented that: "I discovered she knew more than I realized." And still another parent commented that: "I learned the level of kindergarten and not to expect too much."

Each activity was identified as being the one their children liked best by at least one parent. The activities that were identified as being the best most often are presented in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6

FAVOURED HOME TEACHING TASKS

Activity	% Children Liked Best	% Parents Liked Best
Finding and Matching	21	8
Colour Recognition	17	8
Name Printing	17	13
Clocks	17	8
Rhyming Words	17	17
All About Me	13	13
Counting Junk	13	8
Hot and Cold	13	8
Concentration	13	13
Words	13	8
Sounds	13	8
Egg Carton Colour Cups	13	0

In most cases the activities parents liked best were consistent with the activities their children liked best except for the Egg Carton Colour Cups which was chosen as least liked by the parents. A specific comment from one parent shed some light onto why the Egg Carton Colour Cups was unpopular with the parents, "I liked the Egg Carton activity least, probably due to little pieces of paper on the floor".

Anecdotal records kept by the teacher/researcher throughout the period of the study revealed similar information as the logbook evaluation forms and the home teaching task evaluation questionnaires. Parents spoke of liking the involvement, "I liked being in the classroom and seeing that my child was like the others." "We are new immigrants, all three of my children learned to work together on these projects." Parents developed some insight into how children learn, which was apparent in the statement of one parent, "Children won't try if unsure, therefore they need reassurance." Parents saw their children enjoying and gaining from their involvement,

> "My child is very pleased with his accomplishments."
>
> "My child became interested in completing projects."
>
> "She even picked out different shapes while at the store."

Of the activity 'Clocks', one parent noted a possibly less than positive result, "She now can tell the time when cartoons start."

Children whose families spoke a language other than English at home commented that the activities provided the opportunity for the children to learn in two languages. For example, the activities 'Colour Recognition', 'Shapes', 'Letters', 'Words", provided the opportunity for the children to learn the words for colours, shapes, letters, and words for various objects both in English and the language of the child's family, and the similarities and differences between

the languages. The parents of the children with English as a second language, for the first time in the experience of this teacher/researcher, took a more active role in communicating with their children's teacher and even brought pertinent information about the home teaching task 'Finding and 'Matching' to the attention of the teacher. The concern was expressed that there was a cultural difference and the home did not have any of the matching things that were suggested in the activity. Culturally appropriate matching objects were suggested through the school's teacher aide and these suggestions were distributed to other parents of the same culture.

Parents became more aware of the role of the teacher and more appreciative of the effort put forth by the teacher on behalf of the children. After assisting in the classroom one parent commented on how tired she was, "staying on top of everything is exhausting, I'm glad it's for only one day so I can rest up tommorrow."

During talking time, children often chose as a topic of discussion the home teaching activity they had worked on with their parents. They talked about "the game they played", "the homework they did", and "the time" they spent with their parents as very positive experiences.

In addition, it was noted by the teacher/researcher that a larger percentage of kindergarten parents than in the previous year, attended other school functions not directly related to the kindergarten i.e., Fun Fair, performing arts

and sports competitions. Kindergarten parents were also more willing to volunteer their help for these functions than in the previous year.

At parent-teacher conferences related to the reporting of the children's progress, 100% of the parents who were requested to come for an interview did so. This was an increase over the previous year when only a mean rate of 65% of the parents attended parent/teacher conferences when they were requested to do so by the teacher.

Parents who had taken part in the study used the open line of communication between themselves and the teacher to ask about and share educational games that benefited their children. They became more aware of the importance of reading to their children and asked to sign out books from the school library. Books provided for loan on the parents' notice board were signed out by the parents more often than in the previous year. The topics of these books included information for single parents, how to handle divorce with your children, behavioral management, child development, how to help your child learn to read and write, etc.

Similar findings were reported by Head Start evaluators noting changes in parental attitudes. They reported, with involvement in their children's Head Start programs, parents viewed school as a valued experience, they were more comfortable in the school setting, and they were more aware of their role in teaching their children (Gordon, 1976; Gray, 1971; Slaughter, 1982; Zigler, 1979a).

In Britain, it was also noted that the practical help provided in the schools by parents, led to their learning about and understanding how schools work and how to help their children (Smith, 1980).

A further consequence was noted by the grade one teacher. She commented on the requests for involvement from the parents when their children began grade one. When work was sent home, parents were more willing to help their children than she had experienced prior to the kindergarten involvement. These observations were consistent with the conclusion drawn by Wicken (1982) that if parents become accustomed to having a voice in their children's education early they will want to continue to relate to the school in a different way than they have in the past.

Summary

The data revealed that there were statistically significant results for the main effect of the parent involvement treatment. No statistically significant results were found for the effects of sex or attendance in the morning or afternoon sessions of kindergarten. It was concluded that the parent involvement had an effect on the achievement scores of the participating children as measured by the MSCA. The mean scores of the children whose parents were involved in both the classroom and the home teaching tasks were significantly higher than those of the children whose parents were involved in the home teaching tasks only.

The findings from the logbook, questionnaires, and anecdotal records indicated a positive reaction from the parents and children toward both the classroom involvement activities and the home teaching tasks and the benefits they provided the kindergarten children and the other children in the family. The parent involvement opened a line of communication between parents and the teacher, provided the parents with the opportunity to learn something about their children, and educated parents about the expectations of the kindergarten program and about ways to work with their children. In addition, there appeared to be a spin off effect of increased parental support in other school related activities.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether parents' involvement in their children's kindergarten program would have a statistically significant effect on the children's language development and readiness scores as measured by the MSCA. More specifically, this study investigated the effects of two types of parent involvement, classroom volunteering and teaching at home using home teaching tasks sent from the school to focus the parents attention on the themes and skills under study in the classroom.

Summary of the Background

The attack on the effects of poverty on children's educational performance in the United States with the Head Start programs in the 1960's, and the investigations of the Plowden committee in Great Britain into school failure and the increased number of children involved in socially deviant behavior, resulted in a renewed awareness of and research on the effects of parent involvement. Historically parents have been involved in their children's education. Acting as teachers of their own children, becoming involved in parent/teacher organizations such as the PTA, and becoming involved in educational governing bodies such as in Parent Cooperatives, parents have worked as partners with the churchs and schools to provide for a better education for their children.

Researchers demonstrated the importance of the early years on cognitive development and the importance of the children's environment with the interacting family members during these early years (Piaget, 1963; Hunt, 1961; Bloom 1964; Deutsch, 1964). These research findings indicated the need for and spurred interest in developing effective early childhood education programs.

The British Columbia Kindergarten Needs Assessment (1981) provided the information that parents wanted to become more involved in their children's kindergarten programs. Obstacles were also reported. Parents reported younger children at home needing care, and transportation were the greatest obstacles to becoming involved in their children's kindergarten program. Teachers and administrators reported working parents presented the greatest obstacle to parent involvement.

This study provided information at two levels. Firstly, it experimented with procedures to manage and help overcome the obstacles when involving parents in the classroom and provide meaningful and easily handled activities for parents to use to teach their children at home. Secondly, it investigated the effectiveness of these experimental procedures.

Summary of Design and Analysis

There were 32 lower socio-economic kindergarten children from an inner city school in School District #61 and their parents in the experimental group and another 32

children from the same school but from the previous year when parents had not been involved in the kindergarten program, in the control group. The experimental group in addition to the regular kindergarten program, participated with their parents in the home teaching tasks, and the parents of 38% participated by assisting in their children's classroom. The control group participated only in the regular kindergarten program.

The results of a three-way analysis of variance indicated that the children's increased scores were statistically significant, $p < .05$, in terms of the treatment effect. The effects of sex, attendance in the morning or afternoon session of kindergarten, and the interactions between these variables on the children's test scores were not statistically significant at $p < .05$.

The parents' perceptions about the effects of the parent involvement on their children were obtained through questionnaires that accompanied each home teaching task and classroom volunteer session and were used for a formative evaluation. In addition, parents' perceptions were obtained through a summative questionnaire following the 34 week program of home teaching tasks and through anecdotal records kept by the teacher/researcher.

Limitations

The following are limitations that must be considered when intrepreting and applying the findings and conclusions of the study.

1. Using the test scores of the kindergarten children from the previous year was an attempt to control for the teacher effect that could result from using a control group taught by another teacher or in another school. Though the two groups were matched as closely as possible for age, sex, ethnic and language characteristics, there could have been some differences between the two years that could not be controlled.

2. Although the kindergarten children were randomly assigned to the morning and afternoon sessions, there is still the limitation that the children were not randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups.

3. The findings must be limited to the population of lower socio-economic, multi-cultural parents and children from which the sample had been taken. Populations with different characteristics in socio-economic status or race could produce different results.

4. This study is also limited by the size of the sample. There were 64 subjects in the sample. The sample was limited to the number of kindergarten children who were registered at Blanshard School in 1984 and 1985. The use of a larger sample could produce different results. With the limitation on the size of the total sample comes the added limitation of the small numbers in the groups represented in the three-way analysis.

5. The length of time for the study was limited to the time available within the school year for the treatment and

testing.

6. The testing and instruction were conducted by the investigator and although steps were taken to guard against possible bias, this effect cannot be totally excluded from consideration as a limitation.

7. The descriptive information from questionnaires, to be analyzed by the teacher/researcher, must be considered in light of the fact that the parents may have responded with what they believed the teacher/researcher wanted (Goodwin & Driscoll, 1980).

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study and within the scope of the limitations the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The kindergarten children whose parents were involved in both the classroom assistance program and home teaching task program scored statistically significantly higher in their language and readiness skills as measured by the MSCA, than the children whose parents did not participate in their children's kindergarten program. It seems that when parents at home provide one-to-one instruction and reinforce the the skills being taught at school the children's performance is improved. There is evidence to support the position that the interaction at home on cognitive activities will promote children's achievement (Rich, 1977; Vukelich, 1978).

In addition, when parents extend the one-to-one instruction and reinforcement of skills into the classroom, the children's

improvement in performance is greater than when parents instruct and reinforce skills at home only. These findings are consistent with many research studies concerned with parent participation programs that have concluded when children preceive their parents' increased interest in the classroom as a demonstration of the importance their parents place on their schooling, they in turn put forth a better effort on their school work (Berger, 1983; Gordon, 1976; Honig, 1979; Nedler & McAfee, 1979).

2. Another conclusion of this investigation was that there was no statistically significant effect on the children's language development and readiness test scores due to sex, or attendance in the morning or afternoon session or the interaction of the two variables with either treatments. The effect of the children's sex and attendance in the morning and afternoon sessions have been questions of concerned educators but have not often been analyzed in studies on parent involvement.

3. It can also be concluded that the use of a Needs Assessment can sufficiently identify the needs of parents to implement feasible programs to overcome the obstacles that may hinder their involvement. Implementing a flexible scheduling of classroom assistance and implementing a program of home teaching tasks makes it possible for more parents to take part in their children's kindergarten program and overcome the obstacles of working, having small children needing care, or having problems with transportation.

In addition and keeping in mind the limitations of this study, there must also be a consideration of the conclusions that can be drawn from the descriptive information. In a critique of educational research procedures, Bronfenbrenner (1976) noted that additional information obtained from the participants in the studies were generally neglected by investigators. He stated that failure to obtain this information,

> represents yet another transfer to the real-life situation of the limited perspective of the laboratory, in this instance its exclusive focus on objective behavior to the neglect of subjective elements - the perceptions and feelings of persons serving as subjects in the experiment (pp.169-70).

He also pointed out that an examination of participants perceptions "is a requirement of phenomenological validity" (p. 171).

From the parents' responses in the logbook and evaluation questionnaires, it can be concluded that both the classroom assistance and home teaching task program provided parents with information about their children. This is consistent with one of the advantages of parent participation noted by the evaluators of the Head Start programs (Zigler, 1979). The classroom assistance and home teaching task program also provided parents with information about what was expected of their children in the kindergarten program.

This was a request made by parents in the British Columbia Kindergarten Needs Assessment (1981).

The home teaching tasks not only provided educational activities for the kindergarten children but could also be extended to their siblings. Similar findings were considered to be a positive 'spin-off' of parent participation in the Head Start programs (Berger, 1983; Levenstein, 1977; Gray & Klaus, 1970).

Finally, it can be concluded that the parents who were involved in their children's kindergarten program continued their interest into their children's grade one program. Again there is a similarity in the longitudinal effects of the Head Start programs involving parents (Lazar & Darlington, 1979; Gordon, 1976).

Educational Implications

The significant gain in the test scores of the children in this study whose parents were involved in their kindergarten program supports the research findings that parent involvement can have an effect on children's school achievement. The implication is that educators should work toward implementing a parent involvement program in kindergarten that meets the needs of both the parents and the children. This can be accomplished first, by assessing the needs of the parents and planning a program to meet the needs and provide alternatives to any obstacles. For example, some parents may be willing to provide care for the younger children of another parent assisting in the kindergarten classroom. Since the rate of return of

the needs assessment in this study was 69%, a change in format and length or follow-up may be needed to improve parent participation providing this information. Flexible scheduling of classroom assistance seems to provide for optimum parent involvement. The home teaching task program seems to be a feasible program of involvement for parents who are not able to assist in the classroom. Secondly, an on-going evaluation of the children's developmental needs is required to plan home teaching tasks that are beneficial to the individual needs of the children.

Responses to the questionnaire showed a difference in the preferences for activities. Some parents reported they and their children preferred the activities that used a game approach. This is similar to the findings of Poy (1985) whose parent involvement games program produced statistically significant gains in kindergarten children's readiness scores. Some parents preferred the 'homework' approach. The educational implication is that a variety of activities should be provided to meet the needs and interests of both the children and parents.

The requests for involvement made of the grade one teacher in the following year by parents who had participated in their children's kindergarten program indicated an interest in a parent involvement program continuing on through grade one. There is the possibility that a parent involvement program extend even further in the child's educational experience which is an area of possible future research.

Suggestions for Further Research

As a result of the findings, limitations and educational implications of this study many suggestions for further research are possible. Replication studies using samples drawn from populations with different characteristics could investigate if the findings of this study can be generalized to a broader population. The different sample characteristics could include a different socio-economic status, a different educational setting, a different ability level, and a wider range in age. Use of a larger sample and random assignment to treatment and control groups could determine if sample size and use of intact groups significantly affected the results of this study. Having another kindergarten teacher use the flexible classroom assistance program and the home teaching task program might help determine if the teacher/ researcher bias affected the results of this study.

This study indicated the parents were interested in continuing their involvement into grade one. A longitudinal study to follow a group of children through kindergarten, grade one and further in their educational experiences could investigate if parent involvement continues to make a positive difference in the children's school achievement. A longitudinal study could investigate the effectiveness of extending the home teaching task program through various grade levels. It has been recommended by other researchers looking into the effects of parent involvement that a longitudinal design may be needed "to clarify the effectiveness of different degrees and

kinds of parent involvement efforts" (Honig, 1979, p. 47). A longitudinal study could also investigate whether or not a change in parental attitude occurs, as has been reported by the longitudinal studies into the effects of the Head Start programs (Goodson & Hess, 1975; Schaefer, 1972) and whether parents eventually take responsibility for initiating their involvement in their children's education.

This investigation concerned itself with studying the effects on language development and readiness scores. Research has indicated that social and emotional development are also essential to readiness and affect children's cognitive development (Bloom, 1964). Further research could address the social and emotional effects of a parent involvement program.

Further research could investigate some of the specifics of this study to provide additional information. The home teaching task evaluation questionnaires could address the possible difference in effectiveness of the home teaching tasks beyond like and dislike. The home teaching tasks could be investigated individually to determine if there is a relationship between specific activities and the children's school achievement.

Parents were provided with written instructions on the use of the home teaching tasks. The addition of a component of observation of parents using the home teaching tasks could provide information on the parents' teaching styles.

Parents were asked to indicate whether or not the home teaching tasks involved the siblings of the kindergarten children. Another investigation could follow the progress of these siblings to see if there is a difference in their school achievement when compared to siblings of children who were not part of the treatment group.

Finally, no attempt was made in this study to determine who directed the home teaching tasks. An investigation into who directed the activities, mother, father, or another family member, and an investigation into any possible differences in preferences for activities or differences in maternal and paternal teaching styles could provide valuable information to help educators in the development and preparation of home teaching tasks.

Summary

This study was an attempt to investigate the effects of parent involvement on language development and readiness achievement. It was demonstrated that a flexible clasroom assistance program and a home teaching task program effectively involved parents in their kindergarten children's program. It was concluded that the kindergarten children whose parents participated in their kindergarten program made statistically significant gains in their language development and readiness scores as measured by the McCarthy Scale of Children's Abilities.

There are limitations to this study that need to be considered, and there remain possibilities for future

research to extend and validate the conclusions reached in this study. However, on the basis of the data and findings of this study, teachers may become aware of the importance of parents taking part in their children's kindergarten program and the possibilities for developing and implementing a parent involvement program.

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Appendix A

Parent Needs Assessment Questionnaire

PARENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

OTHER CHILDREN'S NAMES AND AGES: _____

_____

_____

_____

WORK PHONE NUMBER (if applicable): _____

PLEASE ✓ THE APPROPRIATE BOXES:

1. As a parent, my interest in becoming involved is (you may choose more than one):

☐ a. In the classroom working with children

☐ b. In receiving information about what my child is doing and what is expected of my child in kindergarten

☐ c. In working with my child at home

2. As a parent my special interests are (you may choose more than one):

☐ a. Working with young children

☐ b. Story reading

☐ c. Cooking

☐ d. Assisting in physical education

☐ e. Sharing special hobbies, interests and skills, please specify

_____

☐ f. Collecting items for kindergarten

☐ g. Assisting on field trips

☐ h. Providing transportation

☐ i. Music, playing piano, guitar, other _____

☐ j. Sharing another language, please specify _____

☐ k. Typing

- ☐ l. Working on fund raising activities
- ☐ m. Planning special occasion parties for children
- ☐ n. Planning parent activities
- ☐ o. Babysitting for other parents while they assist in Kindergarten
- ☐ p. Interpreting for parents who speak another language, please specify language/s _____
- ☐ q. Photographing student activities
- ☐ r. Telephoning
- ☐ s. Other, please specify _____

3. When would be the most convenient time for you to attend meetings? (you may choose more than one)

	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tuesday	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wednesday	☐	☐	☐	☐
Thursday	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friday	☐	☐	☐	☐
Weekends	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. If able when would be the most convenient time for you to volunteer in the classroom? (you may choose more than one)

	Morning	Afternoon	Every week	Twice a month	Once a month
Tuesday	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wednesday	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Thursday	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friday	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

or

Specific Time (please specify)_____

5. I am unable to volunteer my services, but would like to visit the classroom on _____ (day) at _____ (time).

6. Do you know of any other people in the community that we could contact for help who might be useful to our program? _____

_____

7. Can you suggest places of interest that the class might visit?

_____

_____

8. Questions or concerns that you would like us to consider.

_____

_____

9. Do you speak another language besides English? If yes, what?

_____

_____

10. Would you be willing to teach songs and some words in that language?

_____

_____

Other Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix B

Evaluation Questionnaire for Home Teaching Tasks

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOME TEACHING TASKS

(Please put a check (✓) in the space which best represents your response to each question.)

	YES	UNDECIDED	NO
1. Did you like working with the activity?	___	___	___
2. Did your child like working with the activity?	___	___	___
3. Did any of your other children take part in the activity?	___	___	___
4. Do you think your child has benefited from the activity?	___	___	___

If yes, in what way? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. How could I change this activity to make it better?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Logbook Evaluation Page

LOG BOOK EVALUATION PAGE

(Please comment on a separate page for each activity in which you assisted)

Activity _____

Time _____

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement (√).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Working with the children on this activity was enjoyable.	____	____	____	____	____
2. Working with this activity was a new experience for me.	____	____	____	____	____
3. The children benefited from the activity.	____	____	____	____	____
4. The activity kept the children's interest.	____	____	____	____	____

Comments:

What does your child think about your working in the kindergarten?

Is there anything about your own child that you have learned from being involved and seeing him/her in the classroom? If yes, what?

When you watch the teacher work with children, does it help you? If yes, how?

Do you feel that you would like some further help in your "volunteering" work? If yes, what?

Appendix D

Letter of Invitation

Sept. 18, 1984

Blanshard School and Mrs. Probst, the kindergarten teacher, invite you to a special open house and orientation meeting to be held on Thursday, Sept. 20, 1984 at 3:30 p.m.

The meeting is held for all parents of Kindergarten children. Parents will have a chance to tour the school building, examine the Kindergarten classroom, and receive information regarding their child's Kindergarten program.

Please plan to attend. Also, an introduction to the parent involvement program will be given. A questionnaire to help establish the specific needs of your involvement will be presented and your assistance in providing this information would be appreciated.

Hoping to see you there.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Mrs. Annetta Probst
Your child's Kindergarten teacher.

I am unable to attend the meeting, but would like to meet at another time to receive information regarding the Kindergarten program ☐;

I would like information about the parent involvement program ☐;

I would like to participate in providing information through the questionnaire ☐.

_____

Name

_____

Phone number

Appendix E

Letter Of Permission For Participation In The Study

LETTER OF PERMISSION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

"The Effects of Parent Involvement on the Learning of Kindergarten Children" research project to be conducted by Mrs. Annetta Probst, and the process for evaluation, have been explained. I understand that information will be obtained from parents through questionnaires and from the children through a screening test appropriate for kindergarten-aged children.

I, _____, am willing to participate
Name
in the study of the parent involvement program.

_____
Signature

I give permission for my child, _____,
Child's name
to participate in the study of the parent involvement program.

_____
Signature

Appendix F

Home Teaching Tasks

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: All About Me

Why? For the child: Learning information about oneself helps develop confidence.
For the parent: Helping your children learn information about themselves is important if they are ever lost or in need of assistance.

What? Fact sheet with the child's phone number, birthday, age, and address.

How? Display the fact sheet in a prominent place. Once or twice a day, help your child recite your telephone number. When the phone number has been learned, help your child recite his/her birthday and age until they are learned. Then help your child recite your address until it has been learned.

What else? Help your child learn other important phone numbers - fire, police, grandparents. Teach your child the proper use of the telephone.

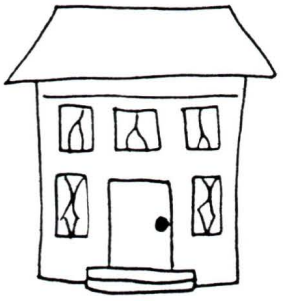
All About Me!

My telephone number is

My birthday is

I am years old.

My address is



My name is

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: Fruits and Vegetables

Why? For the child: Cutting helps develop small muscle coordination; classifying fruits and vegetables helps develop the childs thinking processes.
For the parent: Talking with your child about fruits and vegetables provides the opportunity of learning about your child's likes and dislikes in foods, an opportunity to talk about a greater variety of foods and some nutritional aspects.

What? Magazines for cutting, scissors, sorting envelopes.

How? Show and talk to your child about the two envelopes marked Fruits and Vegetables, and the envelope for other pictures. Have your child look through the magazines and cut out pictures of what they think are fruits and vegetables. Talk with your child about the pictures and decide together whether they should be put in the envelope for fruits, vegetables, or other pictures, for example, corn and potatoes would be placed in the envelope marked Vegetables; apples, oranges, and tomatoes would be placed in the envelope marked Fruits; cheese and cereal go, in thr other picture envelope.

What else? Allow your child to cut out from magazines other pictures that they like. Talk about why your child likes the pictures.

HOME TEACHING TASK

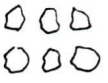
Title: Counting Junk

Why? For the child: Counting objects and recognizing the numeral that represents each set of objects is a basic arithmetic skill that precedes all other arithmetic skills.
For the parent: Working with your children while they learn to count provides the opportunity to share the feeling of success with your child in the development of an academic skill.

What? Junk (bottle caps, bread fastners, rocks, sticks, etc.) and numeral cards.

How? First, cut apart the numeral cards. Next with your child collect some junk that can be counted. Let your children sort and group the junk the way they want (for example, white bread fastners, green bread fastners, big rocks, little rocks, pop bottle caps, jar lids, etc.). Work with your child as they count the number of objects in each group and help them find the card with the numeral that represents the correct number of objects.

[3]



[6]

What else? Allow your child to group objects into sets that are bigger than 10. Use the extra blank cards to print the numerals for these bigger sets. .
Help your child find numbers in their environment- price tags, numbers on the telephone, numbers on the calendar, numbers in books, magazines and in the newspaper. Count household objects- toys, chairs, etc.; and personal items- socks, shoes, etc.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10		

HOME TEACHING TASK

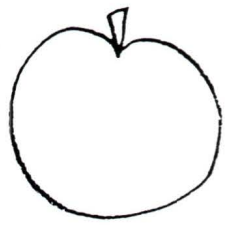
Title: Colour Recognition

Why? For the child: Recognizing the different colours and remembering the colour names develops the child's visual discrimination and memory; both are reading readiness skills.
For the parent: Providing experiences for your children to identify colours helps them learn to observe their environment to develop more skills.

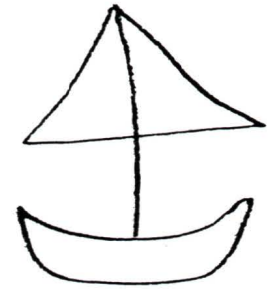
What? Colour pictures for the identification of each colour, magazines, books, scissors (optional).

How? Help your child identify one colour picture at a time, for example a red apple, then have him/her look around the house, in books and magazines for items and pictures that are the same colour. Next, help your child identify another colour picture, for example a blue boat, then have him/her locate items and pictures that are the same as the first and second colours identified, for example red and blue pictures. Continue similarly with all eleven colours.

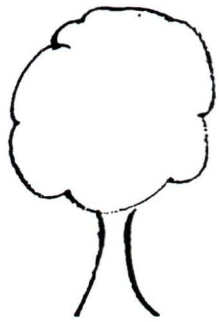
What else? Help your child cut out pictures from magazines putting all the pictures that are red together, all that are blue together, green, yellow, etc. Let your child sort his or her toys into groups according to their colours.



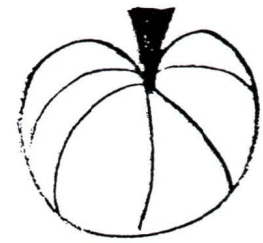
red
apple



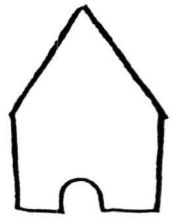
blue
boat



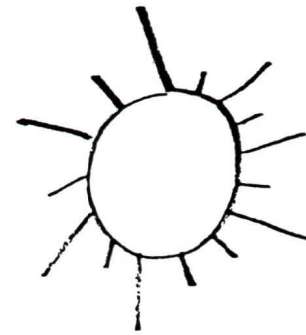
green
tree



orange
pumpkin

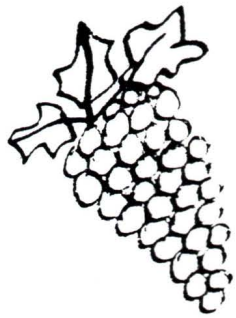


brown
house



yellow
sun

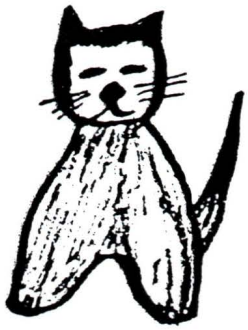
(Colour appropriately)



purple
grapes

gray
mouse

white
snowman



black
cat

pink
ice-cream

(Colour appropriately)

HOME TEACHING TASK

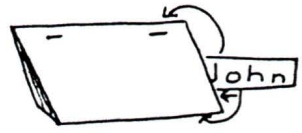
Title: Name Printing

Why? For the child: Being able to print your name on belongings, art work, and papers enables the child to personalize and take ownership of that which belongs to him/her.
For the Parent: Helping your children learn to print their own names is a step toward developing independence.

What? Plain white paper, a 4"x6" or 10cm x15cm card with John child's name printed in felt pen, pencil.

How? Place the name card under the white paper. Help your child trace over the letters of their name that appear through the paper. Help your child start on the left hand side and trace each letter in order from left to right identifying the name of each letter as it is being printed. Encourage your child to trace his/her name several times each day.

What else? Have your child place the name card at the top of a paper from which to copy their name. Point to the first letter to be printed, then the next and the next. Eventually let your child try printing his/her name without looking at the card. Then together look at the card to check if all the letters are in the correct order and the printing is readable.



HOME TEACHING TASK (Adapted from Playtime Learning Games for Young Children, Honig, 1982, pp. 44-47).

Title: Egg Carton Colour Cups

Why? For the child: Your child learns colour names, learns to notice and match different colours, and tearing paper into bits provides for small muscle development of the fingers.
For the parent: Helping your child notice and match differences in colours provides practice in visual discrimination, development of a concept of classification -classifying by colour, and the development of the small muscles in the fingers is beneficial for printing activities.

What? An egg carton, coloured paper, glue or tape, and a basket or a bowl.

How? Have your child tear a small corner off each coloured sheet of paper and glue or tape one piece inside each egg carton cup. Be sure your child knows the name of each colour used. Start with three sheets of coloured paper, ask your child to tear into strips each sheet of paper. Then tear the strips into tiny bits. Mix all the tiny bits together in a bowl or a basket. Let your child fish out a bit of paper from the bowl, tell you the name of the colour and find which colour cup matches the bit of paper. Have your child put the bits of coloured paper into the appropriate egg carton cups until the cups are full. Then do the same activity with the other coloured sheets of paper until all the egg carton cups are filled with paper bits of the same colour.

What else? If your child is really sure of all the colours

have him or her work on all the colours right at the start. Try a trick, if your child picks up an orange bit of paper, you could ask, "That goes in the red cup, doesn't it?" Your child will enjoy catching you making a mistake. Children enjoy playing teacher and telling adults the right answer.

After the colour game the bits of paper may be used to make a collage by glueing bits of colour together to make a picture. Flour and water can be mixed together into a smooth sticky consistency and used as glue. These activities can be repeated using colour bits torn out of magazines.

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: HOT AND COLD

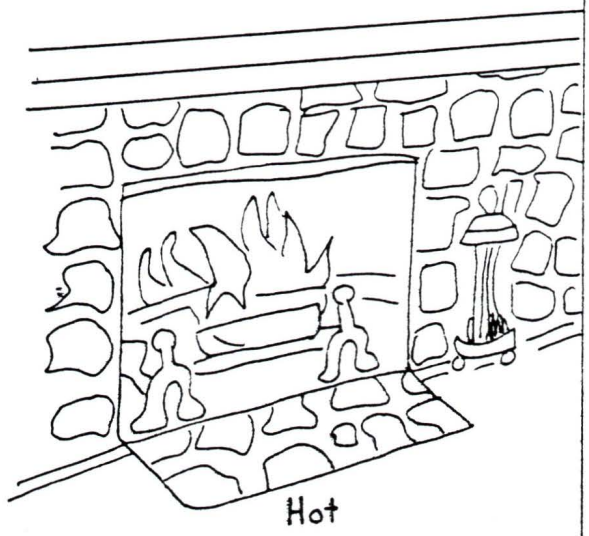
Why? For the child: To explore the differences between hot and cold and to classify according to similarities. For the parent: To help your child develop the concepts of hot and cold and establish some necessary safety rules and survival skills dealing with things that are hot and cold in the environment.

What? Items in the household and immediate environment that are hot and cold, the attached activity sheet, scissors and glue (flour and water mixed into a smoothpaste makes an alternative to glue).

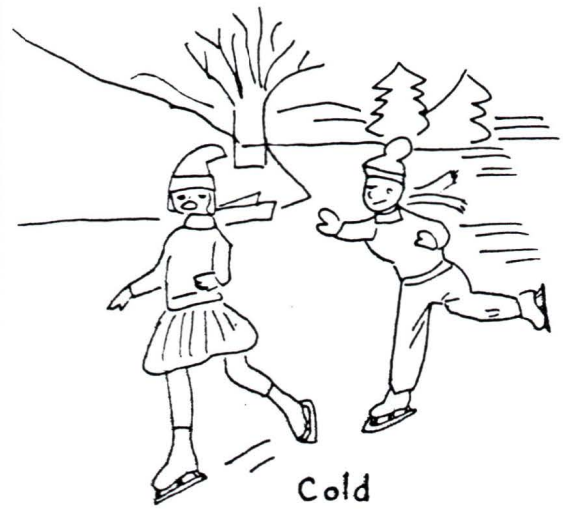
How? Discuss with your children some common household items that are hot and cold explaining the appropriate safe behavior to be used when dealing with these items, for example running and bumping into hot coffee may cause a burn; as may also happen handling a hot toaster; opening and closing the refrigerator door has several concerns, frequent opening and closing increases electrical consumption, possible catching of hands in the door; abandoned refrigerators should not be played with as enclosing oneself in a refrigerator could cause suffocation; playing with matches could cause burns and fire. Discuss variations in the weather, such as the cold snow and the warmth of the sun. Appropriate clothing for different types of weather could also be discussed. After an informative discussion about things that the child lives with that are hot and cold, talk about the pictures on the attached activity sheet. Help your child decide if the pictures represent something that is hot or cold. Have your child

cut out the pictures at the bottom of the sheet and paste them under the appropriate picture at the top of the page, pictures that represent hot items under the fireplace and things that represent cold items under the ice skaters.

What else? Have your child look through magazines for other pictures of hot and cold items. They can be pasted on an additional paper labelled 'HOT' and 'COLD'. Involve your child in the making of ice, frozen desserts, etc. to experience the change from room temperature to cold. Also involve your child in the making of toast, heating water for hot chocolate, etc. to experience the change from cold to hot.

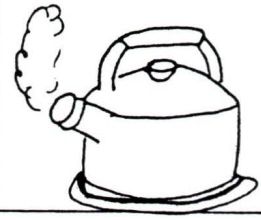


Hot

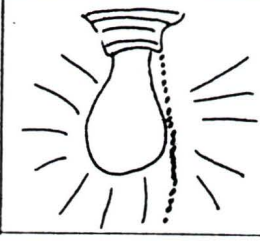


Cold

Cut



Cut



Hot

Cold

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: Can You See A Difference

Why? For the child: To be able to name the different shapes and describe them. It will help him/her to know how one shape differs from the other.
For the parent: To help the child develop new ideas and to help him/her learn the different ways of describing what he/she sees.

What? Pencil, crayons, paper, objects around the house.

How? 1. On a sheet of paper, draw a square,triangle and a circle.
2. Point to them and name them. Ask your child to repeat the names after you.
3. Ask the child which is the circle, which is the triangle, which is the square.
4. On another sheet of paper, draw a few circles, a few triangles and a few squares. Ask your child to colour all the squares red, all the triangles green, all the circles yellow.
5. On another sheet of paper, draw 3 circles and 1 square like this  .
Ask your child which one does not belong here, and why? Try the same idea using all three designs.

What else? Suggest to your child to look around the house and find things that are squares, circles, or triangles. Ask him/her to group these objects according to their shapes.

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: SHAPES

Why? For the child: Your child will learn to distinguish between differences and similarities in shapes and size.
For the parent: You will be helping your child in the development of the necessary visual discrimination skills needed to distinguish between letters and words in reading.

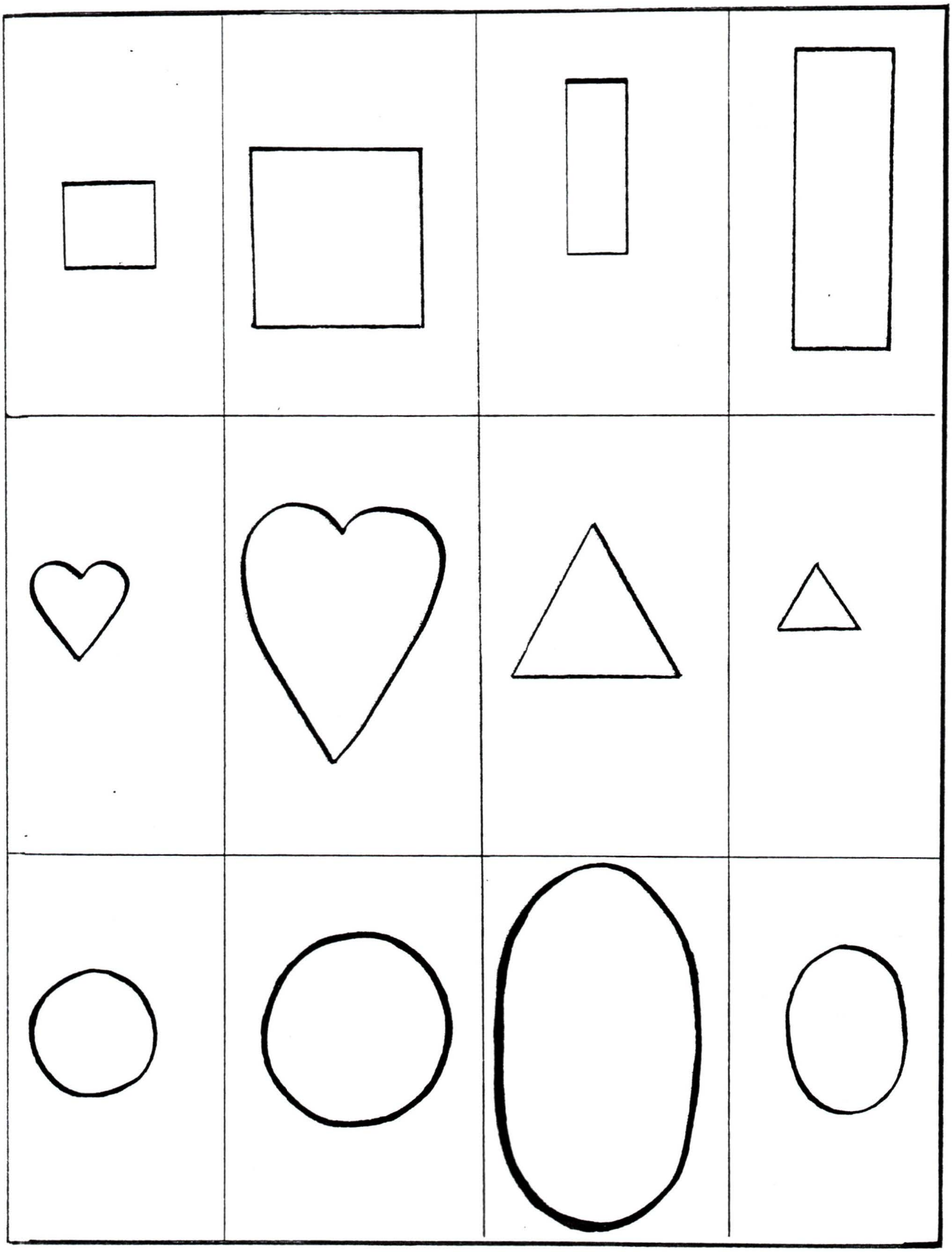
What? Two sheets with pictures of shapes (squares, rectangles, triangles, circles, ovals, and hearts) attached, and scissors.

How? Cut out the shape cards. Mix up the cards. Spread out all the cards face up. Pick up one card, have your child find the matching shape. Continue until all pairs are matched, helping your child to look closely at and talk about differences especially between the squares and rectangles, circles and ovals, and the two sizes of each shape.

What else? Teach your child to play the card game 'Fish' using the shape cards. Mix up the cards. Deal 4 cards to each person playing, leave the extra cards in a pile face down between the players. The goal of the game is to match similar shapes into pairs. If you have a small heart shape card in your hand you can ask your child if he/she has a small heart shape card. If your child does have the matching shape he/she gives it to you and you've matched a pair. If your child does not have the same shape he/she says 'Fish" and you choose a card from the extra cards in the pile. If the card you choose

from the pile is the small heart you get to put down your pair and save it. If the card you choose from the pile does not match a shape in your hand, you keep the card in your hand. Then have your child ask for a card in your hand to match with a card in his/her hand. Continue to play until one player has matched all the pairs in his/her hand. The winner is the person with the greatest number of matched pairs.

KEEP THESE CARDS TO ADD TO A NEW GAME I'LL SEND HOME NEXT WEEK.



HOME TEACHING TASK

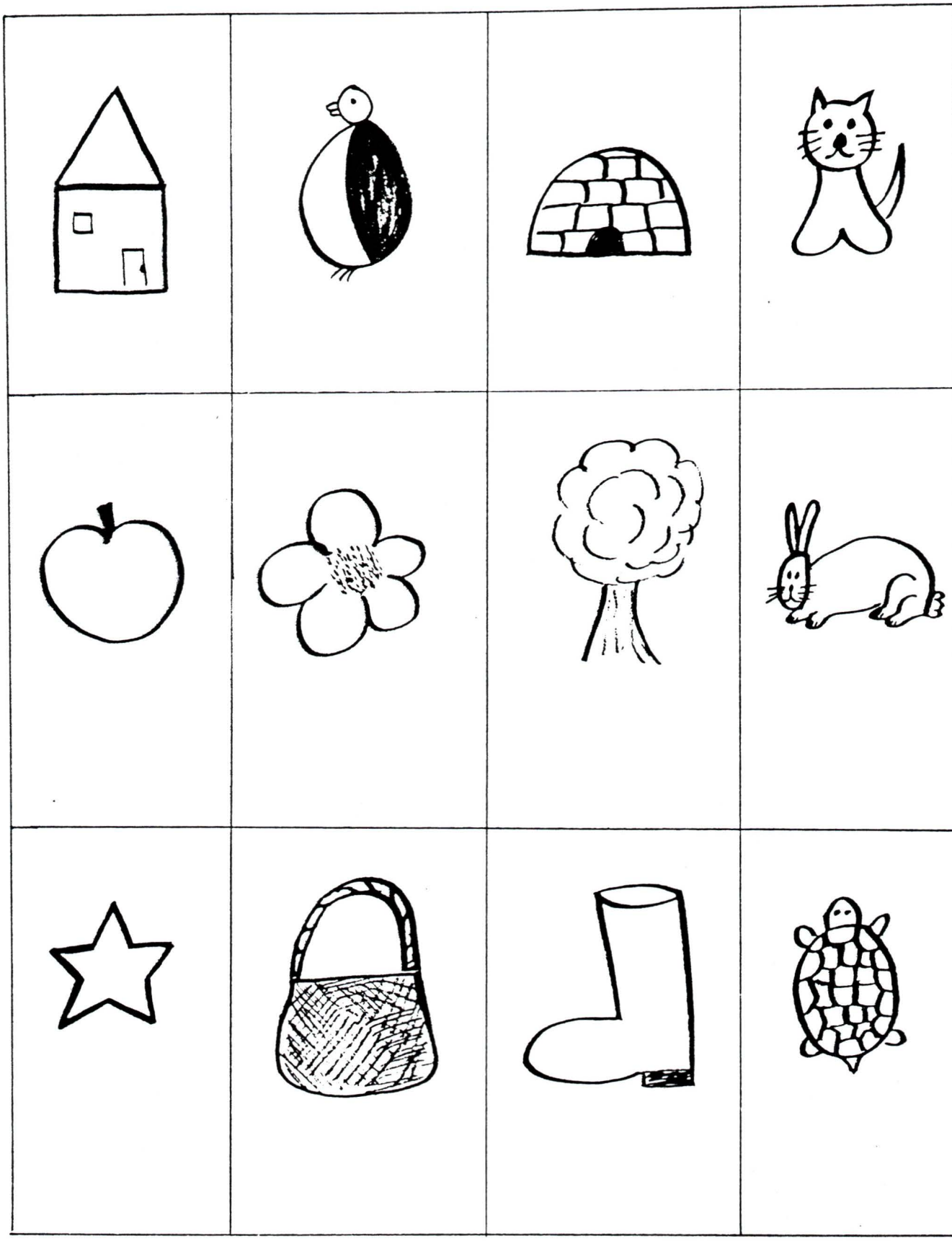
Title: CONCENTRATION

Why? For the child: This game will provide practice to help your child develop his or her ability to remember.
For the parent: This game will continue to provide practice in the development of your child's visual discrimination skills and by helping your child develop his or her ability to remember your are helping your child develop long term memory.

What? Two sheets of picture cards (attached), and scissors.

How? Cut out the picture cards. Have your child find each pair of pictures. Mix up the cards, then spread the cards out face down. Turn over one card, have your child name the picture, then turn over another card to see if it matches the first card turned over. If the cards match put the pair to the side and save it. If the cards do not match, turn them face down again. Let your child turn over one card to see if he or she can find the matching card. Continue taking turns until all the cards are matched. Help your child remember where a matching card is if it has been previously turned over. The winner of the game is the player with the greatest number of matched pairs.

What else? After your child has played the game several times and is successful in matching these pictures, add last week's shape cards to increase the difficulty of the game. Hopefully this will be a game that you will play over and over again and involve other people (friends, brothers,sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)



HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: Letters

Why? For the child: Your child will learn to recognize the lower (small letters) and upper (capital letters) case forms of the letters of the alphabet.
For the parent: You will be helping your child develop a pre-reading and pre-writing skill.

What? Two sheets of letters attached, one sheet with upper case letters, and one sheet with lower case letters; and scissors.

How? Cut out the letter cards and mix them up. Spread out all the cards face up. Pick up one card, name it, then have your child find the same letter in the other case. Depending on previous experiences with letters your child may need your help finding the matching card. Continue until all the upper and lower case letter cards have been matched. If your child is having difficulty start with only a few letters at a time. The letters in your child's name would be the most meaningful to him or her to start matching.

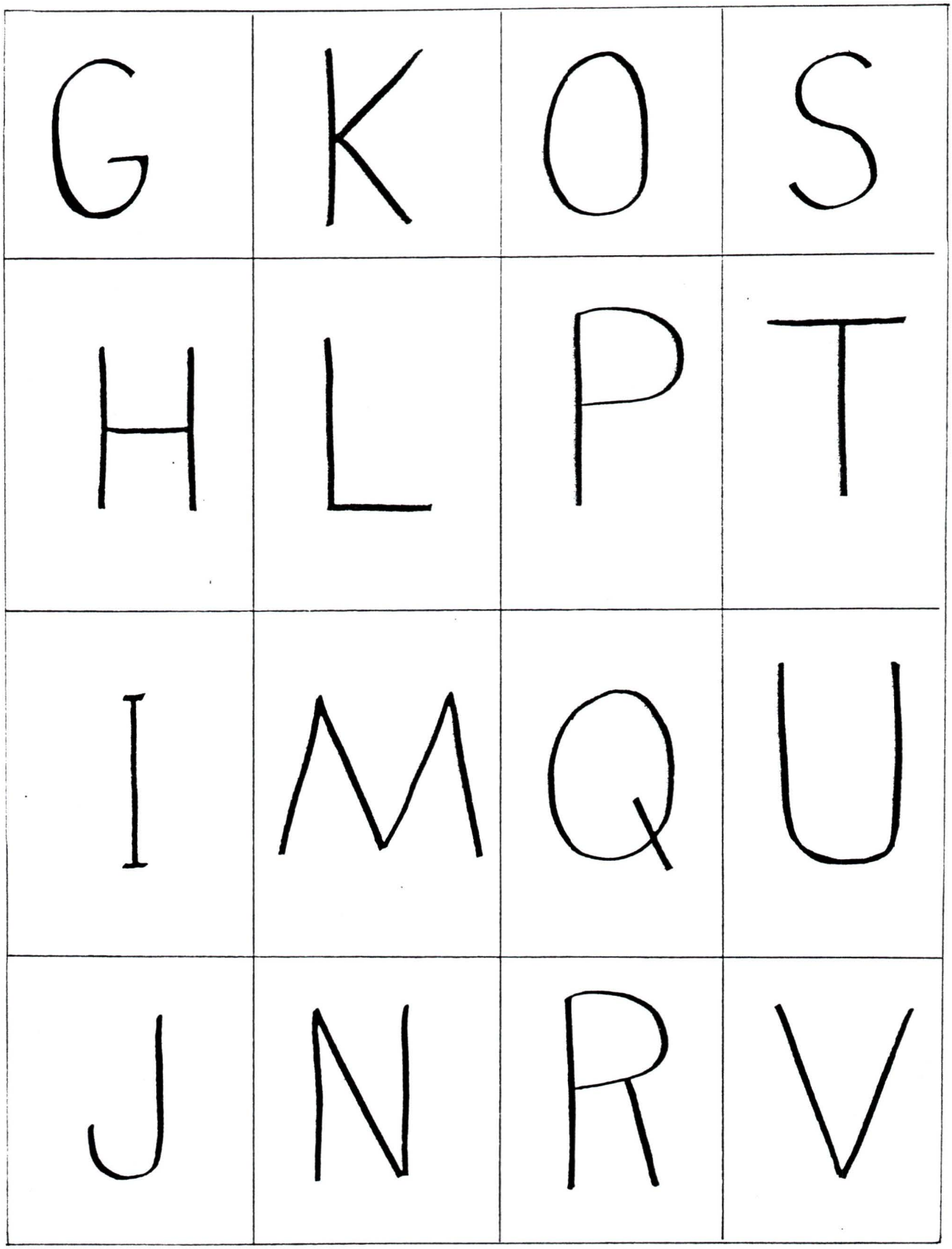
What else? The games of "Snap", "Fish", and "Concentration" suggested in the last two Home Teaching Tasks can be played using the letter cards.

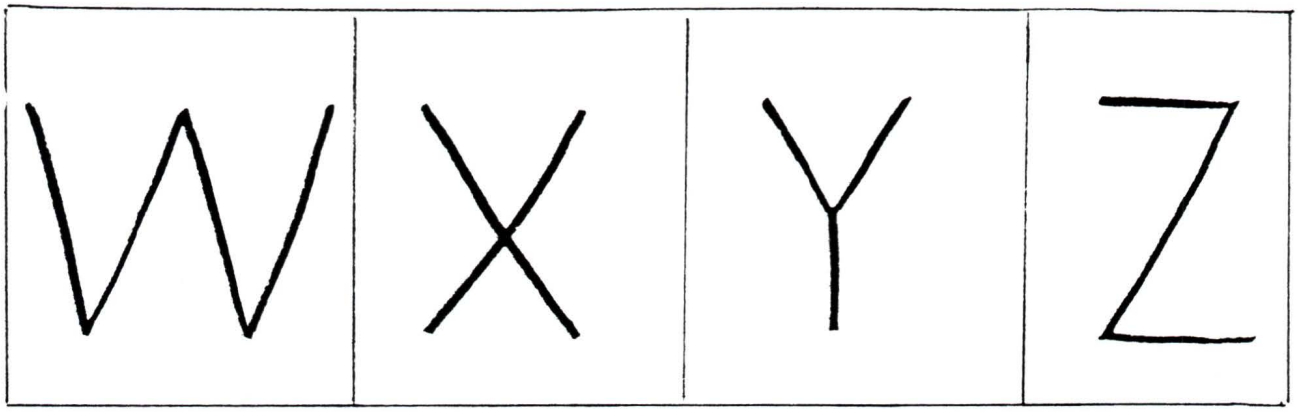
KEEP THESE CARDS TO USE IN A NEW ACTIVITY

NEXT WEEK.

a	e	i	m
b	f	j	n
c	g	k	o
d	h	l	p

q	u	y	C
r	v	z	D
s	w	A	E
t	x	B	F


G K O S
H L P T
I M Q U
J N R V


W
X
Y
Z

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: Words

Why? For the child: To help your child understand that words are made up of a combination of letters.
For the parent: In addition to helping your child extend his or her visual discrimination skills, you will be helping your child develop an understanding that is basic to the English language reading and writing processes.

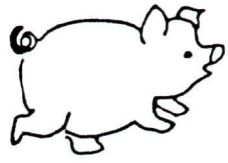
What? Sheets of pictures attached, scissors, and letter cards from last week's Home Teaching Task.

How? Cut each sheet into four pages and make a book. Spread out last week's Home Teaching Task's letter cards face up. Have your children name the picture on each page, direct them to look at the word that represents the picture and then have them locate and make the word with the letter cards. Work on one page at a time and one book at a time.

What else? Use the blank pages to make up a book with words your children want to know. Use the letter cards to make up the words that are important to your child i.e., Mom, Dad, your child's name, the name of a pet or toy, etc.

cat

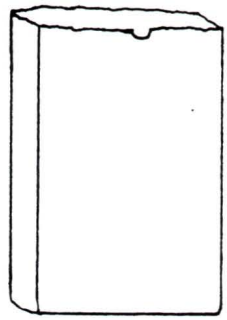
dog



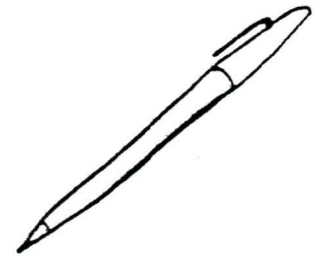
10

pig

ten

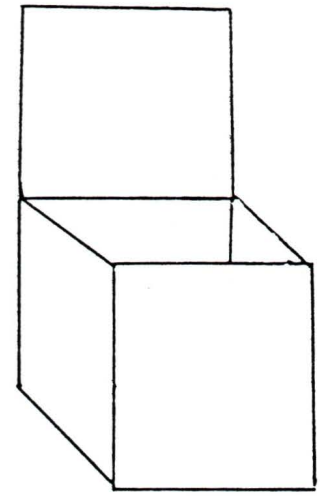


bag

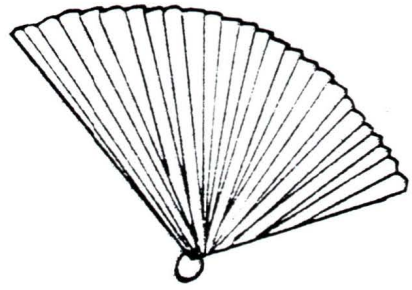


pen

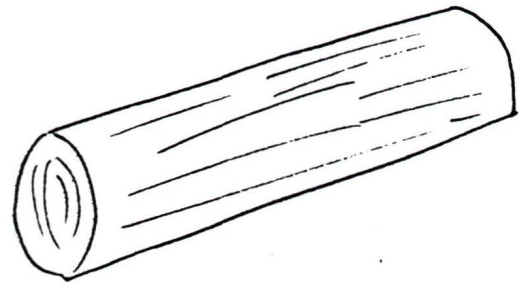
man



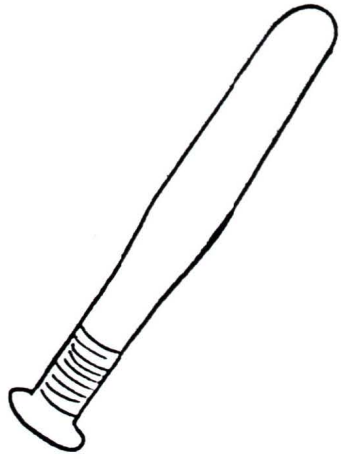
box



fan

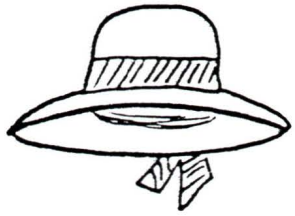


log

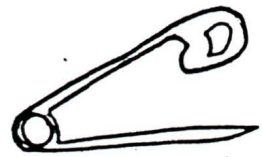


bat

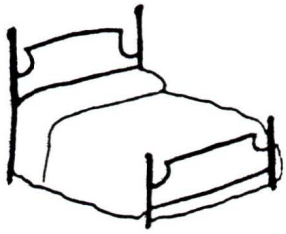
mug



hat



pin



bed

can

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: Clocks

Why? For the child: The children learn to recognize the numbers on the clock and associate these numbers with the time for specific happenings, i.e., lunchtime, bedtime, etc.
For the parent: You will be helping your child take the first step in learning to tell time and you will be helping your child learn one use for numbers.

What? Toy clocks or clock representations (the children have made clocks in kindergarten).

How? This activity will need to be conducted throughout the day over several days to be meaningful to your child. At first the children should be shown only specific times on the hour, i.e., 12:00, 3:00, 8:00. On a real clock show your child the time that relates to a specific happening, for example, 8:00 breakfast time, 12:00 lunchtime, 4:00 cartoon time, 7:00 bedtime (these are only a few suggestions). Each time you draw your child's attention to a specific time on the real clock, help him or her show the same time on the toy clock. If a specific happening that is important to your child happens on the half hour i.e., a favourite T.V. program, or a visit from a grandparent, then show him/her the time and help him/her make the same time on the toy clock.

What else? Look for similarities in a variety of clocks. Talk about time, what happened yesterday, what will happen tomorrow, after dinner, before school, etc. If it is appropriate show your child these times on the toy clocks.

THIS IS A DIFFICULT CONCEPT THAT MANY CHILDREN WILL NOT DEVELOP THIS YEAR BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET YOUR CHILD STARTED AND TO CONTINUE DRAWING YOUR CHILD"S ATTENTION TO CLOCKS AND TIME WHENEVER IT IS APPROPRIATE

HOME TEACHING TASK

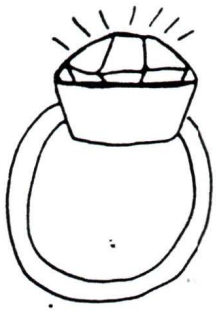
Title: Rhyming Words

Why? For the child: Your child will learn to recognize and match words that rhyme, have a similar sound at the end of the word.
For the parent: Being able to hear and recognize that words rhyme is one prerequisite skill for being able to sound out words.

What? Sheet of picture cards, attached; scissors.

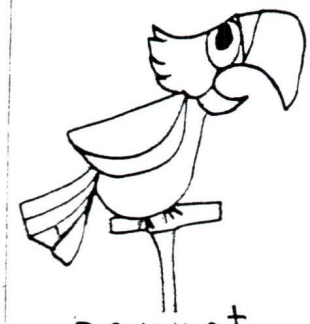
How? Cut apart the picture cards. Have your child choose a card, name it, and then help him or her find the picture of the word that rhymes with the chosen word. Point out to your child the words for each picture and talk to him or her about the letters at the end of the word that are the same. Continue until all the picture cards are matched. Shuffle the cards and play a game of "Fish" taking turns with your child asking for cards that rhyme with the cards in your hands.

What else? Play rhyming games often. Choose an everyday word and help your child think of other words that rhyme, both real and nonsense words. Rhyme words on a shopping list i.e., 'dish' for 'fish', 'tomatoes' for 'potatoes', 'bears' for 'pears'; rhyme words while carrying out chores i.e., 'rake my head' for 'make my bed', 'stick up boys' for 'pick up toys'; etc.

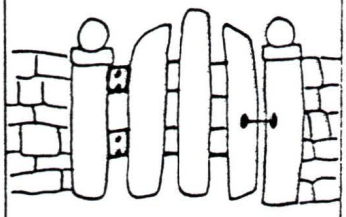

ring

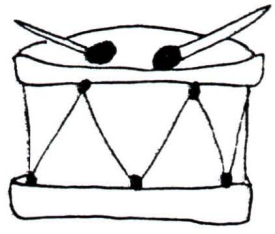

frog


skate


parrot


carrot

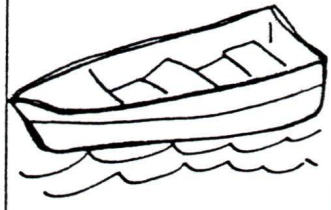

gate


drum

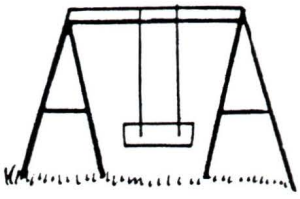

mouse

gum

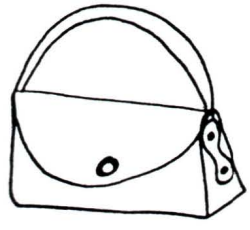

nurse


boat


house


swing


coat


purse


dog

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: LISTEN TO IDENTIFY

Why? For the child: Your child will learn to listen for specific sounds.
For the parent: Listening for specific sounds is a necessary prerequisite to listening for specific letter sounds when sounding out words in reading and learning to spell words in writing.

What? Household and community sounds.

How? Play listening games with your child. When you are working in the kitchen have your child sit with his/her back toward you. Make common kitchen sounds for example, water running; getting forks, knives and spoons from a drawer; getting dishes from a cupboard; mixing with an egg beater or electric mixer; frying foods; boiling water and foods; etc. Have your child try to identify the direction from where the sound is coming and what he/she thinks is making the sound. Play the game with other household sounds, have your child identify sounds of the refrigerator, washing machine, dryer, vacuum cleaner, ticking clock, etc. Before your child's favourite T.V. program, have your child close his/her eyes and listen for the theme song or beginning dialogue to identify the program. Sit with your child near a window and listen for outdoor sounds. Help your child identify traffic sounds, sounds of people, sounds of animals, sounds of aircraft, etc.

What else? Go to a park to play the listening game to identify playground toys, children that are playing, sounds made by animals and birds. Play the listen to identify game at a farm, new building site, shopping centre, hospital, fair, or anywhere there are identifiable sounds.

HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Why? For the child: Your child will be able to practice and develop the skill to listen for and carry out directions and gain an understanding of some directional words.

For the Parent: Young children have difficulty carying out more than one direction at a time. You will be helping your children develop the ability to learn to follow directions; listen to and carry out more than one direction at a time; and help expand their vocabulary by using directional words, for example,up, down, on top of, at the bottom, etc.

What? Pencil or crayons, and attached drawing paper.

How? 

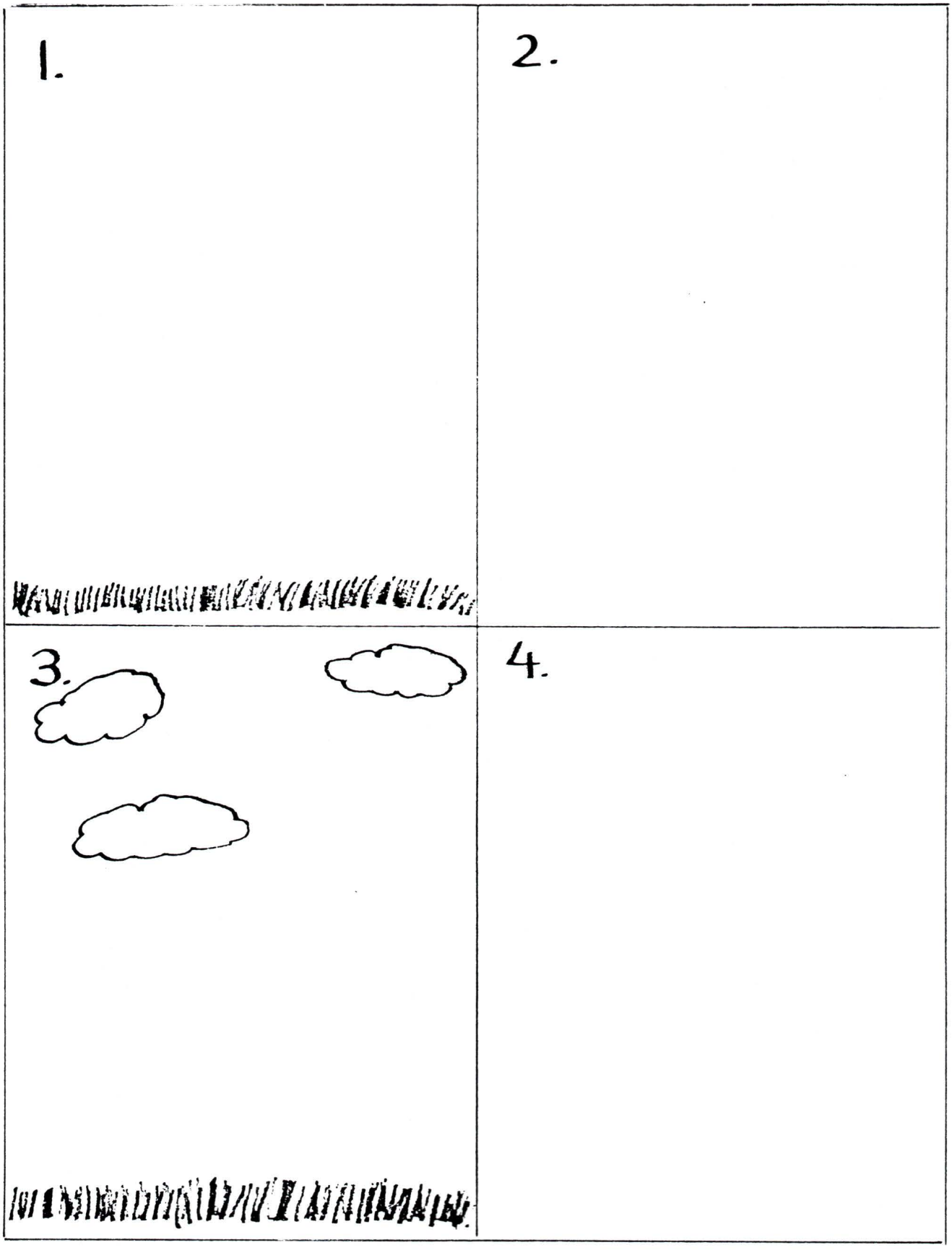
Direct your child to find box 1 on the drawing paper. Direct your child to draw a tree in box 1. Direct your child to put apples on the tree.

Next direct your child to find box 2. Direct your child to draw a house with a door, two windows and a chimney in box 2.

Next direct your child to find box 3. Direct your child to draw a diamond shape up in the sky. Then direct your child to draw him/herself on the ground. Then direct your child to draw a line from the diamond shape to join the picture of him/herself.

Next direct your child to find box 4. Direct your child to draw a large circle in the middle of the box. Direct your child to add two small circles for eyes. Then direct your child to add a nose and a mouth. Next direct your child to draw a large triangle on top of the large circle. Then direct your child to draw a bow tie at the bottom of the large circle.

What else? During household tasks give your children directions and have them carry out the directions, for example, go to the closet and take out your yellow jacket; got to the kitchen drawer and take out 4 spoons, 4 knives, and 4 forks, then set the table; etc.
While shopping direct your children to help collect unbreakable items on your shopping list, such as, a loaf of white bread, a box of crackers, 3 oranges, etc.
While preparing for a trip or a picnic direct your children to carry out directions to help get ready.
Increase the number of things you request your children to do at one time as they demonstrate they are able to remember more than one thing at a time.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2.
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HOME TEACHING TASK

Title: Finding and Matching

Why? For the child: To understand that different things belong together in a special way.
For the parent: To help the child understand the meaning of how some things belong together.

What? Pairs of different objects that relate to each other, such as a cup and saucer, needle and thread, etc. Magazines, paper, paste, scissors.

How? The parent should collect things that she/he thinks belong together: needle and thread, cup and saucer, comb and mirror. Arrange them in pairs and discuss each pair separately. Look at the first pair and ask the children to:

1. Name each object.
2. Describe each object in detail.
3. Do these two objects look the same? Why? (there is no right or wrong answer. Let the child say what he/she thinks.)
4. Why do they go together? (No right or wrong answer.)
5. We use them together. What do we use them for? (Let the child discuss the use of both objects.)

Follow with the same questions for the other pairs of objects, Always talking about what makes them belong to one another. Ask the child to look through a magazine. The parent will cut out one picture (of one object) and will ask the child to find a picture of another object that matches with the one already picked.

Ask your child to:

1. Name both objects.
2. Explain why he/she thinks they match.
3. Paste both pictures of objects on a sheet of paper.
4. Look for another picture that could match with the other two (e.g. comb, mirror brush).
5. Explain why all these pictures (objects) belong together. Ask the child to collect a group of pictures that match (belong together) and then add to it another picture that does not match. Ask your child to tell which is the picture that does not belong, and why.

What else? Let your child look around the house and find the groups of things that belong together. Let him/her tell you why, for example, shoes and socks, toothbrush and toothpaste.

Appendix G

Final Evaluation Questionnaire For Home Teaching Tasks

FINAL EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOME TEACHING TASKS

(Please put a check (✓) in the space which best represents your response to each question.)

	YES	UNDECIDED	NO
1. Do you have any experience in "parent-volunteering" at the preschool level?	___	___	___
2. Do you think that you are developing a technique (or have developed a technique) that seems to work for you when working with your child on the activities?	___	___	___

If yes, what? _____

_____

_____

3. Have you discovered some ways that your child is learning at kindergarten through the use of the activities?	___	___	___

If yes, how? _____

_____

_____

4. Do you feel that you know about what your child is learning at kindergarten through the use of the activities?	___	___	___

If Yes, what have you learned? _____

_____

_____

5. Is there anything about your child that you have discovered due to being involved in the home teaching tasks?

_____

_____

_____

HOME TEACHING TASKS

All About Me
Fruits and Vegetables
Counting Junk
Colour Recognition
Name Printing
Egg Carton Colour Cups
Hot and Cold
Can You See a Difference
Shapes
Concentration
Letters
Words
Clocks
Rhyming Words
Listen to Identify
Directions
Finding and Matching

6. Which activity did your child like best? least? Why?

BEST_____

_____

_____

LEAST_____

_____

_____

7. Which activity did you like best? least? Why?

BEST_____

_____

_____

LEAST_____

_____

_____

8. Do you have any suggestions about the activities (e.g., helpful hints in the use of the activities, things to improve, activities that are not worhtwhile, etc.). _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaires.

Vita

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President's Entrance Scholarship, 1968; University of Victoria, B.C.

Denton Memorial Book Prize, 1968; University of Victoria, B.C.

Rose's Ltd. Jeweller's Watch, 1968; University of Victoria, B.C.

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Publications:

British Columbia Kindergarten Needs Assessment, 1981.

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THE EFFECTS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT ON THE LEARNING OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Author: [redacted]
Signature

ANNETTA MAE PROBST

April 8, 1986
Date