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The Benefits of Parent-Teacher Collaboration on Achievement in the Preschool Classroom

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The Benefits of Parent-Teacher Collaboration on Achievement in the Preschool Classroom

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Capstone Project: An Action Research Project

Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa

Abstract

This action research project was conducted to identify a correlation between parent-teacher collaboration and student achievement in the preschool classroom. Baseline data was gathered from the preschool student's using fall Individual Development and Growth Indicators (IDGI) benchmark scores. Opportunities for parent-teacher collaboration began with monthly newsletters sent out on the classroom webpage, parent-teacher conferences, and signed homework assignments. Parent-teacher engagement was tracked through a tally system. A spreadsheet kept track of the number of communications that parents engaged in, as well as the type of communication. All students were progress monitored within each two week session using the IDGI's progress monitoring screener. The winter IDGI benchmark scores were then used to gather ending data. Achievement was measured by comparing fall and winter data with the amount of parent engagement to determine whether or not parent-teacher collaboration has a direct impact on student learning. Data was also collected tracking the type of communication parents engaged in. The total number of each type of engagement was tallied and used to determine the most effective method for engaging families.

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The Benefits of Parent-Teacher Collaboration on Achievement in the Preschool Classroom

The Iowa State Board of Education outlines Teaching Standards and Criteria for educators with the purpose of strengthening the education system in Iowa (Iowa Board of Education, 2010). Within the Criteria listed for Standard 1, Standard 5, and Standard 8, Family Communication and/or Collaboration is listed as an essential component of these standards (Iowa Department of Education, 2010). Iowa acknowledges within these standards the importance of effective and accurate communication to enhance learning (Iowa Board of Education, 2010). The problem is, there are no guidelines provided by the state for the number of engagements, quality, or type of parent-teacher communication. As a result, there is little consistency between classrooms and limited guidance within districts in regards to the expectations for parent-teacher collaboration.

A study conducted by researchers' analyzed attendance and graduation rates of students from a large urban public school district and compared those rates between classroom teachers who chose to conduct home-visits versus those who opted out (Soule & Curtis, 2022). The graduation rate for teachers who chose to conduct home-visits exceeded all other high-school students for each of the 5 years that the study was conducted (Soule & Curtis, 2022). In 2015, the high-school graduation rate of home-visit participants was 4% higher than those who did not participate in home-visits, and in 2019, the graduation rate of home-visit participants increased an additional 2% (Soule & Curtis, 2022). A lack of specific expectations for parent-teacher communication creates a disadvantage for those students whose teachers are less motivated. There is limitless research demonstrating the benefits of parent teacher collaboration on student achievement, however, less research exists analyzing the number and method of delivery of those engagements on student success.

The purpose of this action research project is to illustrate a correlation between parent-teacher collaboration and academic success at the preschool level. This study will analyze how traditional methods of communication compare to more rigorous efforts to engage families and the impact of those engagements on student success. Increasing the number of communications delivered and varying the method of delivery of those communications will make communication more accessible to families and have a positive impact on student achievement. The parent-teacher partnership has been used throughout history as a method to increase student success in the classroom (Maier, 2014). A 2021 Survey asking Headstart Families in Illinois to identify specific barriers to Parent-Teacher Collaboration identified perceived perceptions of teacher attitudes as limiting interactions (Li et al., 2021). Research supports that the greatest influence on parent-involvement is the classroom teacher (Hindin, 2010). Taking the initiative in involving parents beyond parent meetings and including families in the school life demonstrates a significant impact on student achievement (Hindin, 2010). This hope is that the research gained from this project will improve personal practice by allowing educators to evaluate their own methods for communicating with families and by encouraging districts to establish guidelines for consistency across classrooms.

The research studies chosen for this literature review provide an overview of the current research involving parent-teacher collaboration. The literature review will begin by introducing the varying perceptions and inconsistencies amongst practices to demonstrate the need for continued research. To understand what current research demonstrates, the literature review will include the benefits of parent-teacher collaboration by summarizing studies conducted in different types of educational settings and the impact of those studies on the success of the child. This following section will provide a breakdown of the barriers that limit parent participation and

the literature review will conclude with recommendations for improvement supported within the research. The articles selected for the literature review were selected from the online database of peer-reviewed journals found at the Dewitt Public Library. The articles selected were published within the last 10 years and pertain to topics relevant to the subject matter.

Review of the Literature

Limited Guidelines and Inconsistencies

Parents are viewed as a critical partner in the education of their child. Unfortunately, there are no clear guidelines for parent involvement, nor clarity regarding the roles of parents and teachers, or methods used to engage families. The lack of clear expectations for parent-teacher partnerships results in barriers to an equal educational opportunity for all students. A study on the inclusive practices of classroom teachers found that the majority of teachers reported collaboration as a crucial component of educational practice, however, strategies for engagement varied considerably by method and frequency (Boonk et al., 2018). Universities and professional development practices prepare teachers with “foundational knowledge and skills in learning, teaching and reflection,” but only touch on the importance of parent-teacher partnerships (Northwestern College, 2022). In fact, the most serious obstacle impacting effective parent-teacher collaboration in schools is the lack of training and preparedness for new teachers in fostering effective parent-teacher partnerships (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2017).

Parent engagement is directly impacted by the promotion of parent involvement by teachers and schools. The problem is that a lack of expectations results in inconsistencies between classrooms. A meta-analysis of parental involvement revealed inconsistencies in the routes educators take to involve families, the level of engagement, and the frequency to which

parent-engagement occurred (Chappel & Ratliffe, 2021). The methods used to engage families are dependent on teacher preferences. The most common forms of parent-teacher engagement include notes home, parent-teacher conferences, and parent signatures on homework assignments (Chappel & Ratliffe, 2021). Parents reported little to no use of parent volunteers in classrooms (Chappel & Ratliffe, 2021). Parent-teacher collaboration requires advanced planning, preparation, and an initiative to keep parents informed and involved in the classroom (Kraft & Bolves, 2016). Some educators view the extra work as unnecessary and adhere only to district expectations of quarterly conferences and required communications (Kraft & Bolves, 2016). Without clear expectations, adequate time for planning, prep and implementation, and necessary communication infrastructure of the parent-teacher, communication is surpassed as a priority to many teachers (Kraft & Bolves, 2016).

Additional inconsistencies exist amongst the views of educators compared to those of parents. A study on parent-engagement in early childhood uncovered nine distinct definitions of parent engagement (Gross et al., 2020). The most agreed upon definition of parent-engagement defined engagement as a parents' active involvement in their child's education (Gross et al., 2020). Unfortunately, parents and educators have varying perspectives of what constitutes active involvement. An investigation of teacher's attitudes towards parental involvement analyzed over 200 questionnaires and surveys to reveal widely held beliefs of teachers in reference to parent involvement (Nasar, 2016). When rating parent-involvement, teachers rated a mean score of 2.6 using a likert scale (Nasar, 2016). Using the same system, parents rated themselves provided a mean score of 4.3 (Nasar, 2016). An overwhelming number of parents believe that they are doing their part, but teachers do not agree. Effective parent-teacher communication practices would ensure that parents and teachers shared the same ideals.

Barriers

Prior research has established the benefits of parent-teacher partnerships on academic performance. Parent engagement as active partners in a child's education has proven an effective support for academic achievement. The bulk of families value student achievement and parent-teacher communication (Hadley, 2014). Only 75% of parents with students in kindergarten through 12th grade report attending a parent-teacher conference or school event during the school year (US Department of Education, 2020). Literature highlights several factors that have a significant impact on parental involvement and limit the availability of many families. Cultural, socio-economic, and perceptual barriers prevent effective communication between home and school (Li et al., 2021).

Ethnic minority families report facing cultural and language barriers that prevent them from active engagement in their child's education (Baker et al., 2016). Research suggests that language barriers exclude many families from participation in school-based engagement (Baker et al., 2016). Families who do not speak the same language are unlikely to engage in communication or attend school functions. When families and teachers do not share the same background, it becomes more difficult to develop a shared understanding and to build trust (Ozturk, 2013). A common misconception is that Hispanic and migrant families are less invested in their children's education than other groups (Ozturk, 2013). However, Hispanic and migrant families report more barriers, including a lack of English-language ability, not feeling welcomed at school, and cultural differences as limiting engagement in schools (Ozturk, 2013). In addition, migrant families avoid building relationships with staff members out of fear of deportation and unknown immigration policies (Baker et al., 2016).

Socio-economic factors play a crucial role in the participation of parents in school engagement initiatives. Families with limited resources are less likely to engage in communications and school functions. The leading limitation has been identified as time restraints (Baker, 2016). Working families and low-income families have less time to delegate for leisure activities apart from work schedules and household chores (Baker, 2016). Many working families are not available during school hours due to work schedules and lack the vacation time, or financial means to miss a day of work (Leitch & Tangri, 2018). In addition, many employers discourage employees from taking phone calls or answering personal emails while at work (Leitch & Tangri, 2018). Childcare and transportation present additional challenges for families with limited resources (Baker, 2016). Parental education and experiences in school influence parenting practices (Kuru Cetin & Taskin, 2016). Less educated parents find it difficult to navigate school curricula and report feeling intimidated by professionals (Kuru Cetin & Taskin, 2016). Families with prior negative experiences dealing with teachers or other school professionals may hold a mistrust for the profession (Kuru Cetin & Taskin, 2016).

Unspoken expectations and lack of effective communication prevent families from understanding their role as partners in the education of their child (Leitch & Tangri, 2018). Some teachers believe that parents who want to be involved will make the effort. However, research demonstrates that parents who are invited and actively encouraged to engage in school events and parent-teacher communications are more likely to do so (Leitch & Tangri, 2018). At least 15% of elementary teachers rate their communication with parents as inadequate (Mallette, Futris, & Schramm, 2018). In addition, more than half of elementary teachers describe parental involvement in their child's education and parental understanding of the school's curriculum as inadequate (Mallette, Futris, & Schramm, 2018). A survey capturing the perceptions of fathers of

children within the Early Head Start Program felt that programs were designed to support mothers and excluded fathers as equal and active partners in their child's education (Haralampoudis, Nepomnyaschy, & Donnelly, 2021). Getting the information out there and engaging families is a critical component to effective communication.

Benefits of Parent-teacher Partnerships

Strong parent-teacher partnerships have extensive benefits for students. Family partnerships build a welcoming foundation that fosters relationships and strengthens communication (Baker et al., 2016). When parent-teacher partnerships are successfully developed the benefits are widespread. Endless studies conclude that parents who demonstrate higher levels of involvement in schools have children who perform better academically (Baker et al., 2016). Parent involvement is associated with higher levels of achievement for both boys and girls and students of racial minorities (Baker et al., 2016). In addition to student achievement, an improvement in students' attitudes, an improvement in student behavior, and better study habits were reported (Lekli & Kaloti, 2015). Other benefits of family partnerships include improvements in chronic absenteeism and increased graduation rates for high school students (Soule & Curtis, 2021).

When students feel that teachers are in constant contact with parents, students are more likely to work diligently to complete homework assignments, leading to higher student outcomes. A study of sixth and seventh grader students found that frequent teacher/parent contact improved student homework completion by 40% (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013). The study also concluded an increase in student attention by 25% and an increase in classroom discussion was observed (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013). Parents who were updated and aware of the happenings of the classroom reported being more prepared to support students from home and

were more likely to report feeling as though they were equal partners in their child's education (Lekli & Kaloti, 2015).

Another benefit of parent-teacher relationships is improved attitude and behavior in students. A study on parent-teacher partnerships found that strong family partnerships increased class participation rates by 15% (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013). Home based learning including homework assignments, real-life connections, and household discussions, not only support student learning, but were reported to boost student confidence when demonstrating knowledge in an educational setting (Lekli & Kaloti, 2015). In addition, off-task behaviors occurred less frequently and students required less redirection from teachers (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013). A study on student perceptions found that families who model a close parent-teacher partnership are more likely to build relationships with educators themselves and show greater effort in the class (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013).

Finally, strong parent-teacher partnerships can lessen chronic absenteeism and boost graduation rates. When a student doesn't attend school regularly, that student's grades begin to decline and gaps can occur in learning (Soule & Curtis, 2021). Chronic absenteeism makes it difficult to build on experiences and could eventually impact the probability of a student graduating (Soule & Curtis, 2021). A study on the impact of parent-teacher relationships at the high-school level found that home visits were beneficial even to higher level learners. Home-visits strengthen the parent-teacher partnership and lead to more successful student outcomes (Soule & Curtis, 2021). In data collected over a 5 year time period, students visited by a teacher in the home had lower absenteeism rate when compared to other students (Soule & Curtis, 2021). In addition, these students had a 3.7% higher graduation rate than those whose teacher declined

to participate in home-visits (Soule & Curtis, 2021). Parent involvement has also been attributed to a student's decision to enroll in higher education (Soule & Curtis, 2021).

Strategies for Improvement

Countless studies highlight the impact that parent participation has in schools. When schools work collaboratively with families, students demonstrate higher gains in academic achievement, as well as in social-emotional development (Baker et al., 2016). Although federal and state policy and standards for schools provide vague expectations for parent engagement, a collection of peer reviewed studies focus on strategies that improve parent-teacher partnerships and strengthen family engagement in education. When reviewing the literature surrounding improvements in parent-engagement several themes remained consistent; teacher training, a welcoming environment, and promotion of activities/events (Murphy et al., 2021) (Goodman & Hooks, 2016). Other important themes included convenience and reminders for busy families (Puccioni, 2018).

Teacher training programs designed to strengthen parent-teacher partnerships should be a yearly component of professional development. Providing teachers with training on how to build strong relationships with parents has a positive impact on teacher attitudes, perceptions, and professional practices (Murphy et al., 2021). According to an exploratory study, teachers with training specific to parent-teacher partnerships were more likely to engage in effective practices (Murphy et al., 2021). In addition, teachers report gains in confidence when working with families, as well as increased cultural awareness and ability to create a more inclusive welcoming environment (Murphy et al., 2021) (Goodman & Hooks, 2016). A key understanding of the methods and value of parent teacher involvement influences communication and collaboration between parents and teachers (Goodman & Hooks, 2016).

One of the biggest factors limiting parental involvement in schools is the opportunity to get involved. Early childhood education research reveals that the most common form of parent-involvement in schools, 79%, include parent participation in parent-teacher conferences or home-visits (Lekli & Kaloti, 2015). Parent-teacher conferences are one of the least successful means for creating a strong family partnership (Lekli & Kaloti, 2015). More active approaches to family involvement ranked higher in increasing family involvement including opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom, family events and activities, and shared planning opportunities (Puccioni, 2018). Research has established that the most successful parent engagement practices involve planning a variety of activities that accommodate different schedules and preferences throughout the school year (Puccioni, 2018). Researchers suggest that educators and administrators survey how parents wish to be involved, as well as parent availability, and develop a well-organized plan that supports family involvement in schools (Puccioni, 2018).

In addition to teacher preparedness and a well organized plan for family involvement is the promotion of family involvement in schools. In many cases, the promotion of engagement opportunities is overlooked. Lack of communication prevents families from taking part in events or activities (Leitch & Tangri, 2018). Advances in technology have transformed communication methods and made it easier for families to stay informed (Bordalba & Garreta-Bochaca, 2019). Convenience and immediacy are considered of high value to parents (Bordalba & Garreta-Bochaca, 2019). Digital Platforms allow educators to engage with, support, and communicate with families from beyond the classroom (Bordalba & Garreta-Bochaca, 2019). This includes the invitation and promotion of school events and activities. Apps such as Remind make it easy to connect with families and allow educators to text out mass or personalized reminders (Bordalba

& Garreta-Bochaca, 2019). Access to information and knowledge of events play a key role in participation.

Methodology

Research Question

The research question posed during this action research project is; Does parent-teacher collaboration have an impact on the academic achievement of preschool students?

Participants and Research Site

Details about the overall school community offer a fuller description of a particular study within its context (Efrat Efron & Ravid, 2020). This action research project will be conducted in the researcher's own school and classroom. This is a rural school district that is made up of primarily Caucasian students with a small ratio of 5% of all students being of a minority group (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). The school district has a 22.4 percent eligibility rate of students who are able to receive free and reduced meals within the elementary school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). The median income for the community is \$69,250 per household with only 2.5% of residents being below the poverty line (Iowa Demographics by Cubit, 2022). Participants of a study are those who are affected by the investigation (Efrat Efron, Ravid, 2020). The preschool classroom consists of 20 students, 4 to 5 years of age. There are 12 boys and 8 girls enrolled in the program. This is an inclusive setting that includes 3 students receiving special education services.

Intervention

The intervention implemented in this research project increases the method and frequency of parent-teacher communications distributed to families in an effort to increase parent engagement and positively impact student achievement.

Timeline

This research project took course over the 2022-2023 Fall and Winter Quarters. The research was conducted in 3, 2 week sessions, with an additional 2 weeks to analyze data. The first session included traditional methods of communication from teachers to families in the form of monthly newsletters, conferences, and signed homework activities. The researcher communicated primarily through the classroom website and through printed communications sent home with students. The researcher used a spreadsheet to record the number of times a read receipt was received on the classroom website and recorded the number of communications returned to school. In addition, the researcher recorded the number of times that parents reached out independently to engage about the student's education. During the first session, Individual Growth and Developmental Indicators (IGDI) assessments were administered to all students to provide a baseline for student achievement.

The second three-week session included the same traditional communications, as well as the addition of a weekly update added to the classroom website. This weekly update identified the Iowa Early Learning Standards that the teacher focused on in her lesson plans throughout the week and provided a brief idea of the material that was to be covered within the classroom each week. The third session included traditional communications, but with the addition of a daily update. Daily updates identified specific lesson targets and books read each day, as well as

suggested home-school connections correlating with each focus target. Home-school connections provided a home based activity to reiterate skill from home. The teacher also engaged in personalized check-ins with each family once within the third session. During this time, the researcher continued to record the number of times parents accessed each communication, as well as the type of communications that was accessed. Progress monitoring screeners for IGDIs were administered during each two week session to assess student progress. The benchmark screener for IGDI was given at the winter checkpoint.

Variables

The independent variable in this study is the parent-teacher communication. The dependent variables in this study are parent engagement and student outcomes.

Measurement tools

The data collected in each session of the research project was used to analyze the relationship between parent engagement and student achievement. IDGI data was used to identify student achievement compared to the total number of parent engagements that took place to determine whether or not a relationship exists between the two factors. To understand the specific relationship between academic achievement and parent-teacher collaboration an independent t-test was used to compare two mean values, at the end of the study, to determine whether they were different and to evaluate whether or not a correlation exists between the two factors (Efrat Efron & Ravid, 2020). Additional data was analyzed to determine the most effective means for engaging families by looking at the total number of engagements per method of communication.

Countless research supports a positive correlation between parental engagement and

student success in multiple areas, including academic gains. It has been anticipated that the research outlined in the research study will show a similar relationship between the two factors. This research project poses no risks to participants and is being conducted in a school setting. The research involves normal educational practices with the intention of improving the researcher's personal practice. This research project has met the criteria for exemption and has been approved by Northwestern College's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Data Collection

A tally sheet was used to record the number of parent-teacher communications delivered, as well as to record the type of communications or method/platform used. Additional data was collected using this tally sheet to record the number of parent-responses to each type of communication. As communications were sent out, the researcher recorded the communication and platform used. As parents responded to the communication, tallies were used to record the engagement.

To assess student outcomes, the IDGI Literacy Assessment for Early Childhood was given to students to provide achievement data in the areas of Picturing Naming, Rhyming, Sound Identification, and Which One Doesn't Belong. IGDI Scores are universally designed to assess student achievement. Inter-rater reliability training was provided during Professional Development for all teachers in 2021. The IGDI Assessment was designed through a research program that tested the validity of each measure (IGDI, 2022).

Data Analysis

This study concluded that of the 20 students in the research setting 16 of those students achieved adequate growth, of more than one point, based on the IDGI assessment for Early Childhood Literacy from fall to winter as shown in Figure 1. The students that demonstrated the

most gains in early literacy skills based on the IDGI assessment also had the highest amount of parental engagement compared to that of their typically developing peers (see Table 1). The six students demonstrating a total growth of more than 5 points had an average parental involvement throughout the study of 16 parental engagements (see Table 1). In addition, the four students with the highest overall score following the winter benchmark averaged approximately 12 parental engagements throughout the 6 week study (see Table 1). The 10 students that showed composite growth scores of 1.25-5 points averaged 8 parental engagements throughout the study (see Table 1). Students who demonstrated growth of less than 1.25 points, and did not receive specially designed instruction, had an average parental engagement of less than 5 (see Table 1). Students receiving specially designed instruction (SDI) showed the most parental engagements but had the lowest overall scores at the end of the winter benchmark as displayed in table 1.

Additional Data showed that the number of parent engagements increased with the number of opportunities for engagement provided by the classroom teacher as represented in Table 2. As the total number of opportunities for engagement increased, so did the number of overall parental engagements (see Table 2). Data also reflected that the most utilized forms of engagement were conducted using the classroom website/ClassDojo and in a written form that included a monthly family homework activity (see Figure 2).

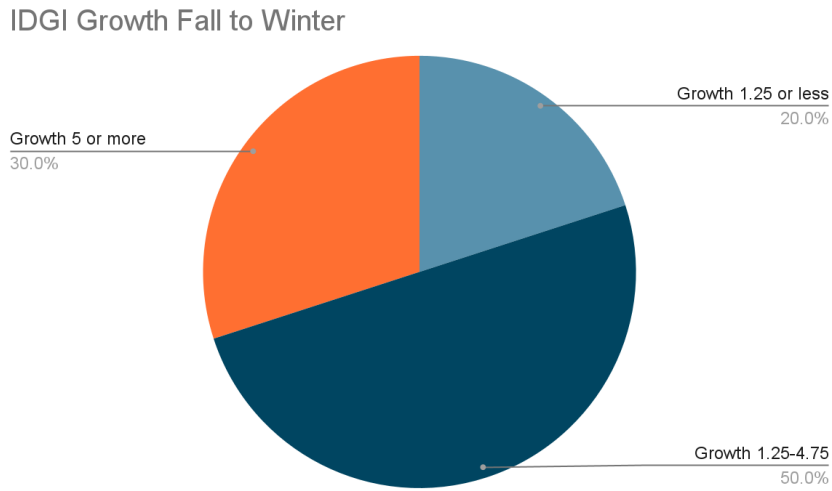
Table 1*Amount of Parental Involvement and Student Scores*

Student	Total Amount of Parental Involvement (6 weeks)	IDGI Fall Scores	IDGI Winter Scores	Total growth from Fall to Winter (Adequate 1.25+)
A (SDI)	20	0	11	11
B	17	39	52.5	13.5
C	4	51.5	52.5	1
D	10	49	51.75	2.75
E	4	46.25	46.5	.25
F	14	23.75	36	12.25
G	6	46.5	47.75	1.25
H	8	51.5	54.25	2.75
I	16	12.5	45.5	33
J	8	38.25	36.25	2
K	14	49.5	55	5.5
L	8	53	54.25	1.25
M (SDI)	24	0	0	0
N	10	52	55	3
O	7	46.75	48.75	2
P	10	48.75	51	2.25
Q	10	48.75	52	3.25
R	6	49.75	51.25	1.5
S	15	22	33.75	11.75
T	3	34.5	34.75	.25

Note. Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). Individual Developmental and Growth Indicators (IDGI).

Figure 1

IDGI Growth Fall to Winter



Note. This pie chart was made from Microsoft Excel. The program automatically creates pie chart based on information entered.

Table 2

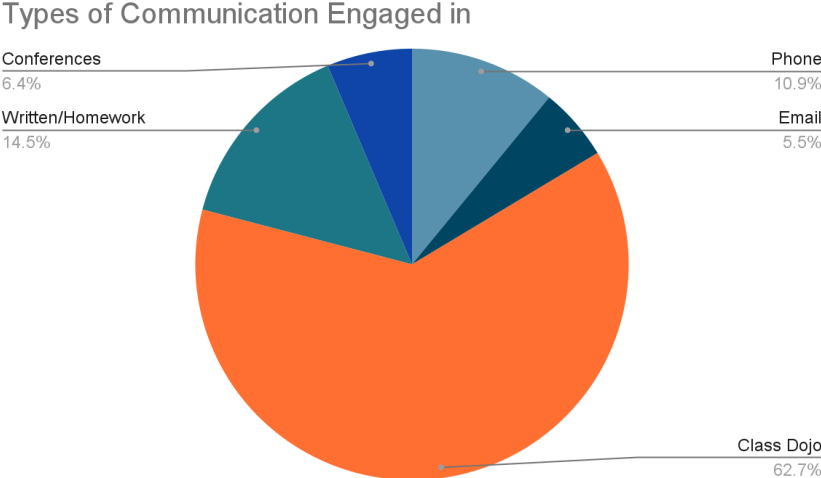
Opportunities and Parental Engagement

Sessi on	Opportunities for Parental Engagement	Parental Engagement
1	60 (3 per parent)	42
2	100 (5 per parent)	65
3	300 (15 per parent)	113

Note. This table was created using Microsoft Excel.

Figure 2

Types of Communication Engaged in



Note. This pie chart was made from Microsoft Excel. The program automatically creates pie chart based on information entered.

An independent t-test conducted reveals a statistically significant relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. When comparing the total amount of parental involvement and overall growth outlined in Table 1 a t score of 2.40 is calculated (see Table 3). This data supports the hypothesis that a relationship exists between the two factors.

Table 3

T-test Results

Standard error of difference

	Parental Involvement	Overall Growth
Mean	10.7	5.5
SD	5.6	7.79
SEM	1.26	1.74
N	20	20

Note. This table was created using Microsoft Excel. T= test results, t= 2.4, df= 38. Standard error of difference 2.15.

Overall there is a positive correlation between parental engagement and student achievement in the area of literacy in early childhood. Keeping parents involved and informed on targeted classroom learning objectives is beneficial in supporting student growth. The skills assessed using the IDGI assessment are crucial growth and development indicators that impact early literacy and beginning reading skills. These skills include vocabulary, rhyming, letter sounds, and identification of which one doesn't belong. Higher levels of parental engagement have demonstrated a positive impact on student growth.

Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

Based on the data collected during this research study it has been shown that the students with the highest amount of parental engagement made the largest gains in achievement on the IDGI assessment for early childhood literacy from fall to winter. In addition, the students with the highest overall scores on the IGDI assessment demonstrated similarly high numbers of parental engagement. The IGDI assessment assesses student knowledge in the areas of vocabulary, rhyming, letter sound identification, and identification of which one doesn't belong. During the research study, the practitioner engaged families using a variety of communication methods and increased communication during each of the 2 week sessions. During this time the researcher kept a spread sheet that tallied the number of opportunities for parental engagement, the type of engagements, and the number of parental engagements.

Students with parental involvement averaging 12 or more engagements over the course of the study made considerable growth of 5 points or higher from fall to winter on the IGDI assessment. Students with parental involvement averaging 8 or more engagements over the course of the study made adequate growth of 1.25 points or higher. Students with less than an average of 5 parental engagements demonstrated the least amount of growth compared to their typically developing peers. However, despite having the highest number of parental engagements, student M who receives Specially Designed Instruction, made 0 progress during the study. This data shows that parental engagement does have a positive effect on student growth and development of essential literacy/beginning reading skills in the preschool classroom. Data from the study also revealed that the most utilized for of parental engagement

occurred using the classroom Dojo, with the second most utilized form of parental engagement being written communication or homework activities.

Impact on Teaching and Learning

This research project has supported the findings of similar research projects. Other studies have shown a positive correlation between parental engagements on student achievement. Parental involvement, parent engagement, and parent-teacher relationships have an overwhelming impact of student success. Reflecting on the literature review, parent engagement has an additional impact on family partnerships, student behavior, student attitudes, better attendance, increased graduation rates, and a greater likelihood to enroll in college. It is essential that school districts utilize this data to create a sustainable plan and expectations for parent engagement for implementation in schools. The researcher will use this data to promote family engagement in the classroom and advocate school-wide opportunities to engage families.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations that could impact the results of the research study conducted and in answering the question posed; Does parent-teacher engagement have an impact on student achievement? Limitations to this study include demographic and socioeconomic factors including limited resources, single parent households, or parental work hours/schedule. Parent work hours and work schedules may limit a parent's availability to engage and exclude them from classroom involvement. Additionally, limited resources may create barriers to technology including the purchase of a reliable device and/or access to internet services. Some parents may have more time and greater access to communicate with teachers thus increasing their likelihood to engage in such communications. However, other families may find it difficult to find a

balance between domestic responsibilities and home-school involvement. Busy households may recruit support from other relatives and childcare providers in caring for children. In this case, relatives and childcare providers should be equally engaged in classroom communications to ensure equitable opportunities for students to achieve.

Another limitation to this study includes the reliability of data for students receiving specially designed instruction. The IDGI assessment is designed to assess specific areas of growth and development crucial to early literacy and beginning reading skills. The assessment does not take into consideration students who are not typically developing or students who receive Special Education Services. These students may have prerequisite goals including joint attention and communication. In this case the IDGI screener would not developmentally appropriate for these students, whereas growth may be observed within the student's IEP goals or observed in other areas.

Further Study

To further the study, the researcher could continue the study starting at the beginning of the school year and extend the length of the study to include the entire length of the year. This would give the researcher additional IDGI data to evaluate and determine whether or not the same progress would be made over a longer period of time. The researcher could also analyze the number of parent engagements during each of the IDGI checkpoints to compare how the fluctuation of parent-teacher engagements impacts student achievement and overall outcomes. Parent engagement and student achievement may look different throughout each checkpoint. A quarterly review of the data could yield more reliable results. The researcher may also share his or her research study with other grade-level teachers and encourage additional involvement in

the study. This would allow the researcher to compare data across classrooms and determine an overall relationship between parental engagements and student achievement.

Conclusion

Does parental engagement have an impact on student achievement in the preschool classroom? The findings in this study show that parental engagement does have a positive effect on student growth and a significant impact on early literacy development for preschool students. Throughout the research study, the researcher tallied the number of opportunities for parent's to engage in classroom communications, the method used to engage parents, and the number of engagements that occurred. During the study, the IDGI assessment was given in fall and winter, with progress monitoring occurring every two weeks. The total number of parental engagements was then compared with student growth from fall to winter using IDGI composite scores. Student growth was calculated by factoring the difference between fall and winter assessment data. Students whose parents engaged in the highest number of classroom communications demonstrated the highest gains in achievement when compared to their typically developing peers. Students with the highest overall scores on the winter assessment had the second highest amount of parental engagement with an average of 12 engagements occurring throughout the study. Students with the least amount of parental involvement showed the least amount of growth on the IDGI assessment from fall to winter when compared to their typically developing peers.

Additional data concluded that the more opportunities that parents were given to engage in parent-teacher communications the more communications occurred. Throughout the research study the researcher used ClassDojo as a platform to engage parents in digital communications. This platform yielded the highest amount of engagement by parents (62.7%). The second most

successful method of parent engagement was written communication or family/homework activities at 14.5%, followed by parent engagement by phone (10.9%). Parent-teacher conferences and email were the least successful methods of parent engagement. This research reflects the findings of other studies in that providing opportunities for parents to engage influences the likelihood of parent engagement in schools.

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