



School-Home Notes: Students' and Parents' Perceptions of Involvement and Satisfaction

Jennifer L. Rymanowski, Tanya L. Eckert, Adrea J. Truckenmiller, Jennifer L. Koehler, Elizabeth A. Koenig, and Bridget O. Hier
Syracuse University, Department of Psychology



Introduction

Parents' involvement in their children's education and the systematic collaboration of school and home is considered to have important implications for children's academic and behavioral competence (Christenson, 2004). Surveys of parents' preferences regarding school involvement suggest that parents prefer activities that are quick and simple to implement and provide information on their child's academic skills (Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998). Further, studies have suggested that indirect forms of parent involvement, such as school-home notes, lead to improvements in children's classroom adaptive behavior, general academic competencies, and specific academic competencies in spelling and mathematics. However, no study has examined the role of school-home notes within the academic domain of writing.

Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to descriptively examine parents' involvement and satisfaction with school-home notes that were implemented within the context of a writing intervention. In addition, the study also examined students' satisfaction with school-home notes that were implemented within the context of a writing intervention.

Parents' involvement with the school-home notes program was examined descriptively over the course of the eight-week study. Parents' and students' acceptability ratings of the school-home notes program were also examined descriptively at the conclusion of the study.

Participants and Setting

- A total of 31 third-grade students from an urban school district and 35 parents of the third-grade students participated.
- Most of the student participants were female (57.6%), and self-identified their race and ethnicity as Black or African American, not Hispanic or Latino (54%) or White, not Hispanic or Latino (39%).
- Most of the parent participants were female (77%) and self-identified their race and ethnicity as White, not Hispanic or Latino (68.2%).

Procedures

- School-home notebooks were distributed to all children and contained weekly school-home notes.
- Each weekly school-home note provided parents with an update of their child's academic progress in writing and requested parents' involvement in three areas:
 - Reviewing progress report with child
 - Engaging in reinforcement activities listed on progress report
 - Recording the duration of parent involvement

Parent Progress Report

How many words did _____ write this week??

This report is to keep you informed of your child's progress in writing. If your child improved from last week, you may reward your child for his/her great accomplishment! Types of rewards are listed below. Indicate how you rewarded your child. The amount of your time spent on the reward, and sign this progress report. Please keep this report in the binder and return it to school with your child's binder each week.

I rewarded this week's progress report on _____ accomplishments. I rewarded my child with:

more time to read a book special treat (food) special treat (other than food)

being time (i.e. games, special outings) later bedtime attention (praise, hug, etc.)

getting out of a task (i.e., setting the dinner table) other _____

Time Spent: 0-5 minutes 5-10 minutes 10-15 minutes 15-20 minutes 20+ minutes

Signature _____ Date _____ Return to Child _____

Sample Child Acceptability Measure

Question #11: I like it when my teacher tells my parents how well I did in school.

Question #12: My parents are proud of me when I do well in school.

Results

- The results of this study indicated that parents regularly reviewed the school-home notes (77%).
- Parents indicated employing numerous types of reinforcement procedures; with attention and praise for writing progress serving as the most commonly used forms of reinforcement (see Table 1).
- Parents ($X = 4.73$; $SD = 0.84$) and students ($X = 4.37$; $SD = 0.83$) reported high levels of satisfaction with the school-home notes.

Table 1. School-Home Notes Progress Report

Time Spent		Type of Reinforcement	
Amount	%	Activity	%
0-5 minutes	16.65	TV/game	5.25
5-10 minutes	5.73	Treat (food)	1.43
10-15 minutes	4.75	Treat (other)	5.27
15-20 minutes	10.48	Chore removal	2.38
20 minutes	24.75	Late bedtime	4.78
		Praise/attention	32.85
		Family time	14.75
		Other	6.69

Discussion

- Given parents' active engagement in the school-home notes intervention program, this study appeared to provide practical support for eliciting parents in the intervention process.
- In addition, parents' and students' high ratings of treatment acceptability suggested that intervention procedures that utilize parent involvement may serve as a catalyst for a valuable connection between students, teachers, and parents.