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Samantha Thelemann

St. Catherine University, SThelemann535@stkate.edu

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The Effect of Parent Nights on Parents' Involvement in Homework Support for
Children

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Samantha Thelemann

Saint Catherine University

St Paul, Minnesota

Advisor _____

Date _____

Abstract

The presented research was performed to answer a specific question. What is the effect of an in-depth Parent Orientation Evening and an Open House Material Night on parents' involvement in homework support for their children in a mixed 1st – 3rd grade Montessori classroom? The study consisted of fifteen students and their guardians. The six weeks of exploration began with a Parent Orientation Evening. It continued with data collection in Math Facts and Spelling Words Practice Sheets, Teacher and Parent Running Record, an Open House Material Night, and Parent Attitude Scales. The research found the two times guardians were invited to the school were helpful to explain the expectations of adults within the classroom and with homework. The findings also showed a small correlation between parents practicing math facts and spelling words with their children and the students' weekly scores. Continuing the research for a longer period would help answer the initial question posed.

Keywords: Montessori, parent education, parent involvement, lower elementary

Studies show parental involvement in homework would help children be more successful in their educational lives (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). Finding success in children's education because of parents may not stand true with every situation and parental immersion may not take place in some children's lives. These different conditions are what lead me to wonder if the effects of diverse forms of parental involvement would show other outcomes for my students. A variety of circumstances can help guide parents to be positively involved in their children's education. In my Elementary One (EI, mixed first through third-grade) Montessori classroom, also known as EI, parents were invited to attend an in-depth parent orientation evening and an open house material night. These two nights helped disperse information needed for the parents to be fully involved in their children's homework and school year.

Over the past couple years, I noticed students struggle while doing their works. Works referring to students' daily assignments. Those same students that exhibited hardships in the classroom, were the students not bringing their homework back to school complete the following day. I also experienced struggles in communication between myself and these students' parents. I felt as though everything I could do was being done on my end to reach out to parents and bridge communication gaps. E-mail, phone calls, and written notes home were all attempts to connect with parents. It usually was a hit or miss in actually connecting with them. It began making me feel like their children's educations were not a priority for them. I hoped to bridge the gap of communication which in turn would help those students be more successful in the classroom. I assume the more time parents put into their student's education; the more successful those students will be. This assumption is why I have chosen the research question what is the effect of an in-depth Parent Orientation Evening and an Open House Material Night on parents'

involvement in homework support for their children in a mixed 1st – 3rd grade Montessori classroom? There is a desire to discover the effects of a Parent Orientation Evening and an Open House Material Night on parents' involvement in homework support for their children in a mixed first through third-grade Montessori classroom.

The research began with a Parent Orientation Night. Orientation was to welcome old and new families to the 2017-2018 EI classroom and school year. All parents of EI students were invited via E-mail to this night and asked to RSVP. Families that did not RSVP, were contacted with another E-mail. If E-mail was not successful, I reached out to those parents via phone. During orientation parents were introduced to the Behavior Calendar, Math Facts Practice Sheet, and Spelling Words Practice Sheet; all pieces significant to the data collection of my research. About three weeks into my study the students and I invited parents back into the classroom for an Open House Material Night. During this time, students taught their parents how to use a Montessori material. Open House helped keep the lines of communication open and continued to make parents feel welcome and comfortable in their children's education.

A majority of the data collection tools could be completed by parents in the comfort of their own homes. They were asked to initial Behavior Calendars after talking with their children about how their days went. The parents were also asked to initial Spelling Word Practice Sheets and Math Facts Practice Sheets when they worked on these two pieces of homework with their children. I also needed to collect data from students. Data collection consisted of the students practicing their Spelling Words and Math Facts at home, taking Spelling Tests every Friday at school and participating in Math Fact Challenges every Thursday at school. The purpose of data collection tools was to show how often parents were asking their children about their school days and helping them with their school work at home. These tools were created because there was a

problem in my classroom that I wanted to get resolved. I needed to answer the question, what is the effect of an in-depth Parent Orientation Evening and an Open House Material Night on parents' involvement in homework support for their children in a mixed 1st – 3rd grade Montessori classroom? The more I researched the problem, the more I came to find that I was not the only one facing these issues of parental involvement. A plethora of studies were found as I was attempting to solve the problems I was encountering.

Review of Literature

Parental involvement can appear in many ways depending on the eye of the beholders. It can be effected by a variety of barriers. It can take place in different locations yet still have positive effects on students and their educations. A child's education comes from a variety of different sources: school, teachers, and parents. A well-rounded education comes from all parties working together to provide the necessary resources for children's academic success.

At Home

Parental involvement at home can be helping with homework, talking about the school day and works their children did, and having structured home activities (Lee & Bowen, 2016). Some examples of structured home activities would be cooking, reading, going on outings, expressing positive school expectations and providing home activities that support learning (Wilder, 2014; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). Wilder (2014) found in Hill and Tyson's meta-analysis a positive effect on student academic success from structured home activities.

At School

Parent involvement in school is just as imperative as at home. At school, parents can participate in school functions, have conversations with teachers about their children, and volunteer in the children's classrooms. Barnard (2004) conducted a study with 1,165 children's

families in which the parents reported at least once a month whether they participated in school functions, had conversations with their child's teachers, and volunteered in their child's classroom (Barnard, 2004). The most common form of school involvement in Barnard's (2004) study was communication with their child's school; parents stated that happened on more of a weekly basis. The contact between parents, schools, and teachers originated from the formation of positive relationships with teachers (Barge & Loges, 2003). With a positive bond between parents and teachers comes positive communication between parents, teachers, and school. A resilient relationship between school and home helps teachers communicate to parents' successful ways in which they can assist their children with homework. Parents engaging in their children's education helps form a connection between prominent adults in children's lives (Lee & Bowen, 2016). Other ways parents felt involved in schools was by creating a positive relationship with their children's teachers, attending parent-teacher conferences, going to school sporting events, and being present at meetings (Barge & Loges 2003; Hlavaty, 2015; Brock & Edmunds 2010; Lambiase 2014).

Through the Eyes of Teachers

Barge and Loges (2003) found that teachers see parental involvement as attending parent-teacher conferences, making school visits, and participating in phone conversations. In their study, they also found teachers view parents who are asking about their children's days and thus engaged in their children's school life as showing involvement. Anderson and Minke (2007) found teachers felt parents being present at school for different events showed the parents involvement. Xu and Filler (2008) found, contrary to Anderson and Minke, that teachers felt parent involvement was more than just physically being at the school. The teachers examined in

Xu and Filler's (2008) study expressed their feelings that parents can go beyond just attending meetings and being an aid in the classroom.

Through the Eyes of Parents

As teachers, parents also have shown differing definitions of parental involvement. In the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of parental involvement, Anderson and Minke (2007) discovered parents chose to become involved in their children's lives depending on their feelings about certain situations. They showed having more of a "community-centric view" on parental involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007, p. 311). Those with a community-centric view felt getting their children to school and keeping them out of harm's way was their way of being involved (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Parents voiced their opinions of the need to be wanted by their children's teachers and when they felt that, they would be more willing to be involved no matter the circumstances (Xu & Filler, 2008). Parents take on a position called "role construction". Role construction is the parents' thoughts on how they can participate in their children's lives at school. Parents taking on the role construction position have a high involvement in their children's schooling (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

Lack of Time

Parent involvement, no matter who defines it and how it looks, is important for children's educations, but barriers can block the way to positive involvement. Brock and Edmunds (2010) conducted a study on parental involvement and found parents expressed there was not enough time for them to be involved or they had difficulties making time because of work schedules. Reinhart (2015) also conducted a study and found parents struggled being involved because other children they had to care for and not having childcare. He too found that parents voiced their lack of time.

Lack of Homework Knowledge

Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000) found homework to be a large obstacle to parental involvement. Most parents are not given appropriate training to help their children with homework, or they use a style of teaching different from the classroom teacher thus creating confusion for students (Wilder, 2014). It is necessary for teachers to help parents feel more competent in supporting their children with homework. A meta-analysis took place which found when parents were educated how to be successfully involved in their children's homework it resulted in homework getting completed more often, fewer problems with the homework, and potential for positive "academic performance" (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008, p. 1039). It is hard for parents to find time to help with homework, to help their children create consistent homework time, and to help their children build successful study habits (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000). Also in Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye's (2000) study, parents expressed not enough information was given about what children were learning for them to help guide children through their homework. Parents also felt restricted with their children because they did not know when help was necessary and when the children should be able to do the work on their own (Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye, 2000).

How Parental Involvement Can Look

In Anderson and Minke's (2007) study they surveyed 431 parents, and out of the 431 surveys, 351 were sent back. When analyzing the results of the survey, they found individual invites from teachers to parents to come to a school event had the highest effect on parent's involvement. Barge and Loges (2003) also did a study on nine parent focus groups and found parents felt it was important to watch their children's academic progress. Parents stated they could do this by paying close attention to daily assignments and homework, making sure homework and

assignments were completed, and giving their children help with their homework when needed. Parents felt report cards and progress reports would help them monitor the progress of their children. In the study, Barge and Loges (2003) also found parents felt it was vital to create a relationship with teachers. Parents stated they could do this by communicating early in the school year and continuing communication and strengthening of the relationship as the school year went on. Parent-teacher conferences were one major event the parents felt could help with the communication and relationship between themselves and the teachers. The parents felt to help their children in school they needed to be involved and support all involved communities: academic, parental, and non-profit (Barge & Loges, 2003).

Encouraging Parents

Literature addresses many ways in which parents can be involved in their child's education. The outstanding question is: how can educators successfully encourage parents to engage in their child's education? Graham wrote an article for the National Education Association called *10 Ideas for Engaging Parents*. In the article, teachers shared their ways to communicate and form a partnership with parents successfully. Some of the ideas stated in Graham's article were texting, looking at the positive, communicating experiences that happened at school, finding similarities, persuade parents into the school, and make home visits to the families' homes. Graham (2013) wrote about the convenience of texting and how it was a quick and a simple way of communication that could happen consistently. Texting is a contemporary use of communication that a majority of people use, which makes it an easy tool for communication between teachers and parents. He also mentioned the importance of talking to parents before problems arose, so the communication between teachers and parents was not

always to share the negative news. Teachers could also use texting to share with parents when their children have done positive things. (Graham, 2013)

Conclusion

The many studies above have shown data to support parental involvement can truly make an impact on children's academic achievements. They also show the importance of teachers and parents coming to a clear consensus of the expectations of parental involvement. When one digs further into the research, the data shows parental involvement in homework can make a positive impact on the children's educational successes when parents feel confident in helping with homework (Cooper, H., Lindsay, J. J., & Nye, B., 2000). When parents feel competent in helping their children with homework, the children show positive strides in their work at school, and they show happiness when their parents are involved and can help them when they need it (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). For children to show positive academic achievements, it is important that everyone is on board and fully aware of the educational expectations. When teachers have different views than parents on how they see parental involvement the relationship between the two can weaken, which in turn affects all the great things that can come out of strong adult figures in children's academic lives.

The current research lays a path to continue studying parental involvement and the positive outcomes it has on children's academics. To further the studies, I plan to implement an attainable, user-friendly system for parents to help with homework. The parents will be given plenty of preparation before the data collection begins, and they will be given ways to feel involved in a Parent Orientation Evening and an Open-House Material Night. Lee and Bowen (2016) found, when parents were present in the school, it had a positive relationship with their child's academic successes. Barge and Loges (2003) discovered when parents and teachers

formed relationships the quality of parent involvement heightened. Wilder (2014) uncovered a solid connection with intellectual accomplishments when parents provided help with homework. The results from the variety of studies, encouraged me to implement an orientation and open-house which can offer guidance parents may need to help with their children's homework.

Methodology

The six-week study was conducted in hopes to find the answer to one key question, what is the effect of an in-depth Parent Orientation Evening and an Open House Material Night on parents' involvement in homework support for their children in a mixed 1st – 3rd grade Montessori classroom? Five different data tools were used to search for answers to this question: Parent Attitude Scales, Parent Running Records for Travel Folders, Teacher Running Records for Travel Folders, Spelling Words Practice Sheets, and Math Facts Practice Sheets. These data tools were implemented in a strategic manner.

On August 31, 2017, an in-depth Parent Orientation evening took place. Parent Orientation started with all parents filling out the Parent Attitude Scale (see Appendix A). One parent was asked to hand out the scales, another was asked to hand out pens, and a third was asked to make sure all scales were placed in a folder followed by coming to get me. I sat outside of the classroom while the scales were being filled out to ensure confidentiality. Prior to leaving the classroom, I respectfully asked parents to leave their names off of the scales. When I was invited back into the classroom the informational part of the orientation began. I displayed a PowerPoint which helped explain all the expectations for the other data tools necessary to collect the information I needed to answer the key question.

The first data tool explained to the parents was the Math Facts Practice Sheets (see Appendix B). The Math Facts Practice Sheets were placed in the students' Travel Folders every

week. On Thursday, I would take the last week's sheet and replaced it with the following week's. Parents were asked to initial every day in which they practiced Math Facts with their sons and daughters. Along with explaining how the Math Facts Practice Sheets worked I described the expectations of Math Facts in order to avoid any confusion on how that process worked and the roles the parents took in practicing these with their children.

The second data tool I explained to parents was Spelling Words Practice Sheets (see Appendix B). These too were taped in all students' Travel Folders (see Appendix E). Every Monday I would replace the prior weeks' sheets with the upcoming weeks'. During orientation, I had a sample Travel Folder so all parents could see how the two sheets would look when taped in folders. They were asked to initial the days in which they practiced Spelling Words with their children, similar to the expectations of the Math Facts Practice Sheets. After going through both practice sheets the room was open to any questions to help clear up confusions parents may have had.

Orientation moved forward with me describing the Parent Running Records for Travel Folders (see Appendix C). Parents were told Running Records could be found in their children's Travel Folders. They were asked to initial the date on the calendar after they discussed how their child's day went. Running Records were a daily communication from school to home and also a conversation starter for children and parents. The purpose of collecting these data pieces was to help indicate how often parents communicated with their children about their school days. It was also desired that the data show how often parents were using the Travel Folders as a means of communication from school to home. Orientation concluded with the explanation of what communication tools were being used in the classroom, how to use them, the expectations of the

class for students and parents, and handing out the forms necessary for students and parents to be part of my research project: Active Consent Form and Passive Consent Form.

On September 5, 2017, data collection began. This was also when the final data collection tool was implemented, the Teacher Running Records for Travel Folders (see Appendix D). These were for myself, the teacher, to be able to record when calendars were initialed and when folders were emptied of papers sent home. The first two forms of data collection implemented in the classroom were the Parent Running Records and the Teacher Running Records. Every afternoon students would show me their Running Records. In the classroom, Running Records were referred to as calendars. They were called calendars to help simplify the name for the students. When students showed me their calendars, I would record on the Teacher Running Records if they had the prior day's date initialed. On days when papers were sent home, I would check to see that folders were emptied of those items the following school day and also mark that on records form.

Following the application of running records was Spelling Words Practice sheets. Students got their first set of Spelling Words on September 11, 2017. On that Monday, I inserted the practice sheets into students' folders and also sent a Remind message to parents reiterating that Spelling Words started and not to forget to initial the practice sheets. Remind is a phone application that offers texting abilities but keeps phone numbers private. On Friday of the same week, students took their first Spelling Tests (see Appendix F). I recorded their scores from the tests and had students take their tests home so parents could also see how their child did. This process continued for six weeks.

On September 14, 2017, the Math Facts Practice Sheets were implemented. This process was similar to Spelling Words Practice Sheets. I added practice sheets to students' Travel

Folders, reminded parents, via E-mail, Math Facts were starting and to initial practice sheets when they went over Math Facts with their children. Students were given a pre-test to determine which level of Math Facts each child needed to be on. Results were recorded on the students' Math Facts bags so parents could also see where their child started and as they progressed through facts. After students were placed on the correct level of Math Facts they were challenged every Thursday. This process continued for the next six weeks.

Four weeks into the study the parents were invited back to school for an Open House Material Night. Students were in charge of inviting their parents to the open house. They created invitations with guidance from me. I sent a message to the parents to look for the invitations in their children's Travel Folders and reiterated the information that was on them. Students were able to choose a Montessori material they wanted to teach their parents. While the children were teaching their parents, I was able to circulate and address questions parents had. Having the parents in the classroom helped to further educate them on Montessori and continued to keep the lines of communication open between teacher and parents.

Before the end of the study a few more procedures needed to take place. The first step was informing parents they no longer needed to initial Spelling Words Practice Sheets and Math Facts Practice Sheets. I thanked the parents for their participation and let them know although the actual practice sheets were no longer going to be found in their children's Travel Folders, students would still need to practice their Spelling Words and Math Facts for the weekly tests and challenges. Our class likes to refer to Math Fact Challenges and challenges instead of tests because it takes away the anxiety of the word test, and it makes it a more "fun" challenge for the students. The final step was to send Parent Attitude Scales via each child's Travel Folder followed by an E-mail from me reminding them to fill out the scales and to return them to school

with their child. I sent out a final thank you showing great appreciation for the parents and students participating in my research study.

Analysis of Data

The first data collection tool analyzed was the Parent Attitude Scale (See Appendix A). A total of 21 initial scales were filled out and returned during Parent Orientation. The Parent Attitude Scale consisted of ten statements rated with choices of one to five, one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. Throughout those ten statements were five short-answer questions. The short-answer questions had more than twenty-one responses because the participants were not limited to listing only one way of involvement, or method.

The first statement on the Parent Attitude Scale is presented below. Figure one shows the results of parents' opinions towards the school offering opportunities for parent involvement. The results show a majority of parents strongly agreed to the statement.

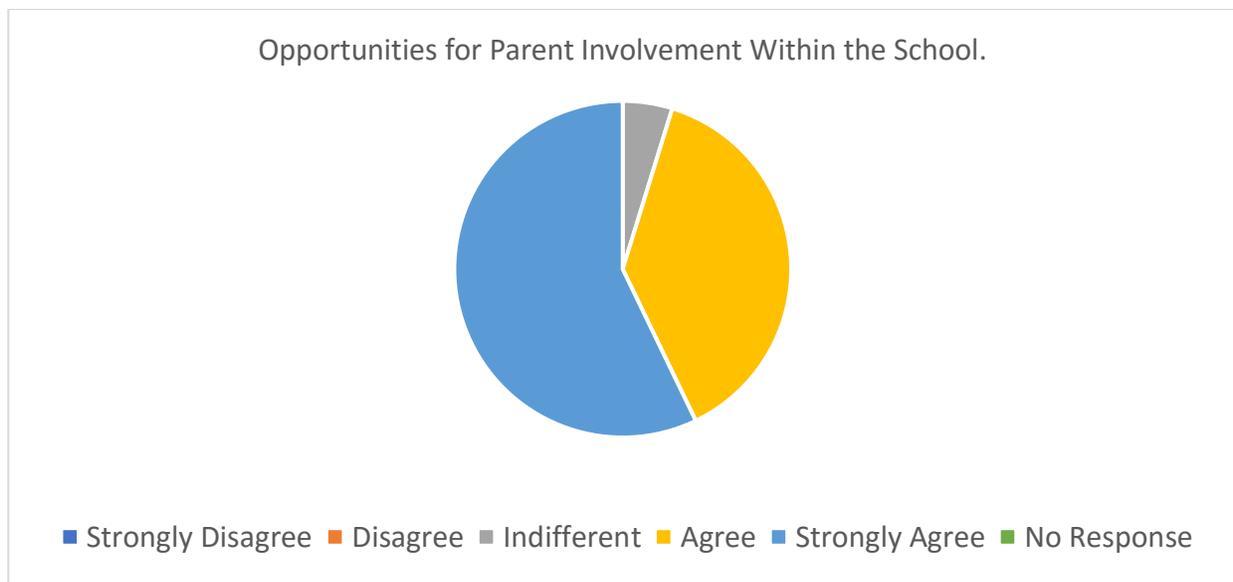


Figure 1. Parent Attitude Scale statement one ratings.

Following the first statement was the first short-answer question, *how would you like to be more involved in the school?* Twelve respondents did not answer, three agreed social events

would help them be more involved, and another three agreed being in the classroom would help them be more involved in the school. This left one parent wanting to assist in making safety a number one priority and two of the answers did not apply to the question.



Figure 2. Parent Attitude Scale short-answer question one responses.

The second statement read, *EI offers opportunities for parent involvement within the classroom*. The response to this question had a closer relationship between agree, 30%, and strongly agree, 43%. There was a higher number of people who were indifferent towards this statement. I feel the 19% of people who shared indifferent attitudes were those new to the classroom who have yet to experience EI and the involvement opportunities it has.

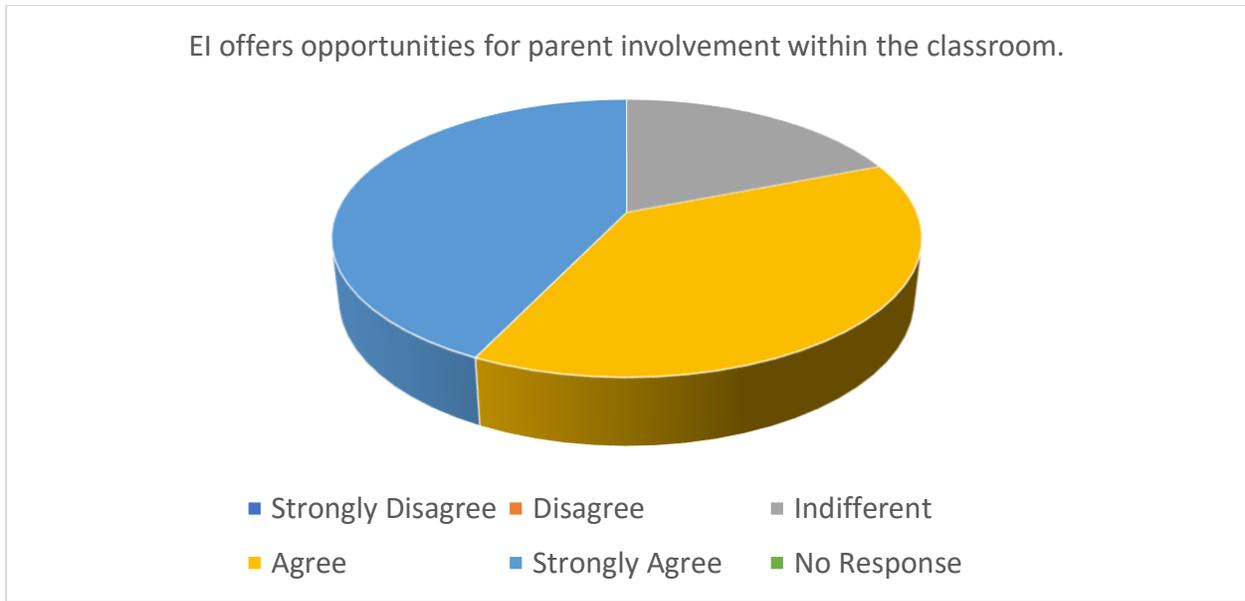


Figure 3. Parent Attitude Scale statement two ratings.

Parents were then asked how they would like to be more involved in the classroom. More than half left the response to the question blank. For those who did respond, 29% said they would like to be more involved by donating their time. In addition to that, 9.5% of the 21 people said they would like to donate items, followed by another 9.5% whose answer did not apply to the question. Figure four below represents the data from question two.

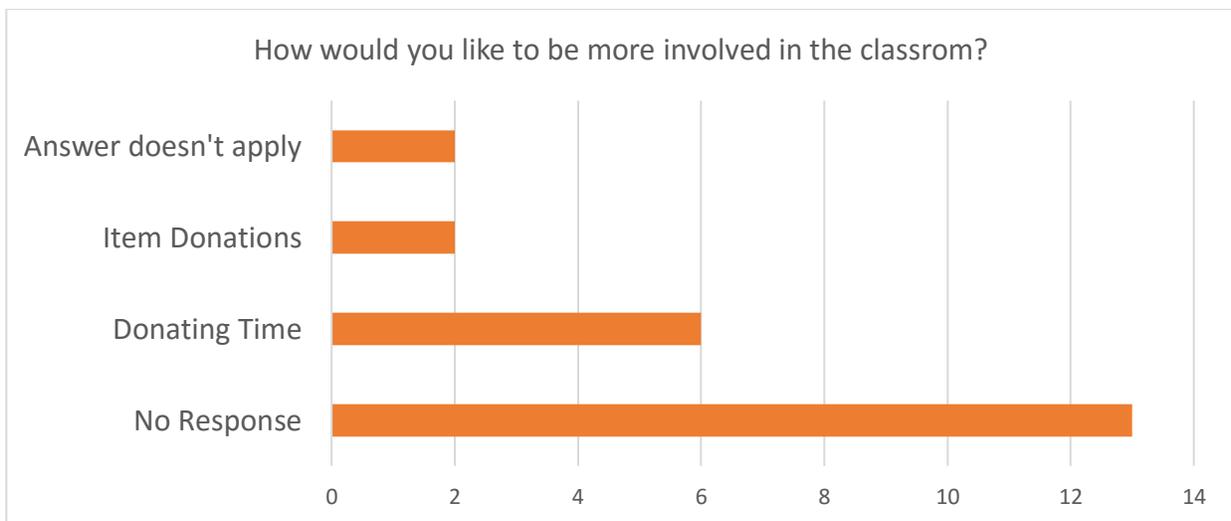


Figure 4. Parent Attitude Scale question two responses.

Statements three and four of the Parent Attitude Scale asked parents to rate, *the school offers opportunities to participate in schoolwide activities* and *the school has opportunities for parent education*. The responses showed strong feelings toward the school offering opportunities to participate in schoolwide occasions. A total of 17 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Parents did not feel the same about receiving parent education. Ten responded indifferent or lower, and one did not respond.

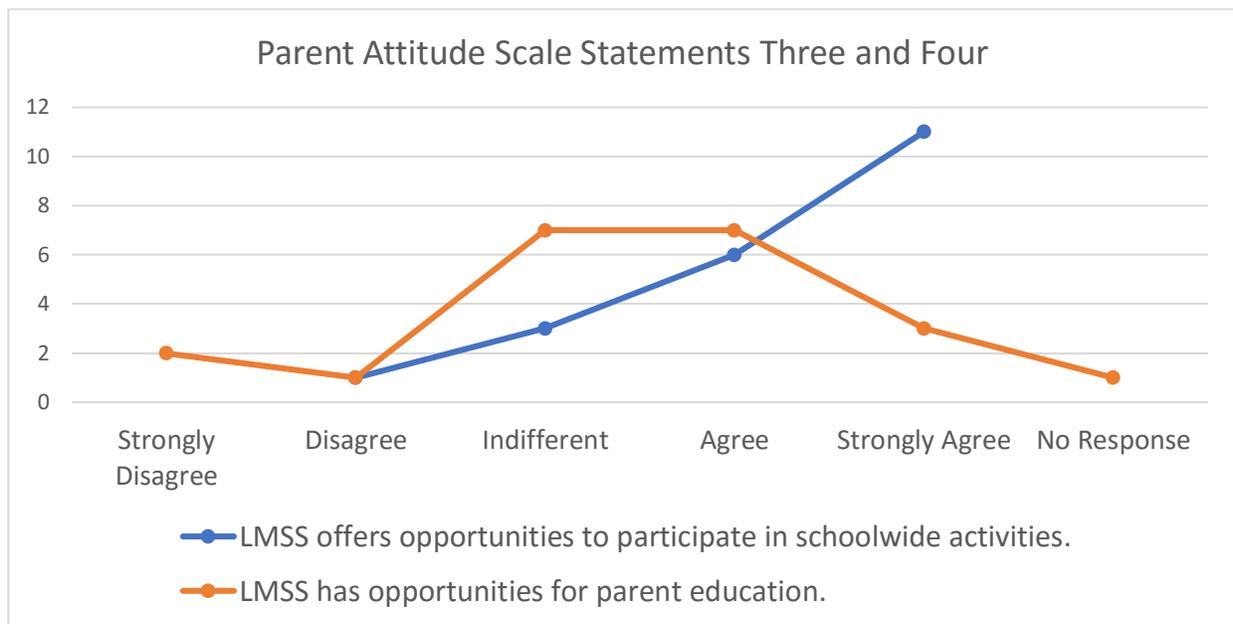


Figure 4. Parent Attitude Scale statement three and four ratings.

Statement five, *I am given a variety of methods to communicate with teachers*, had strong responses, on the four and five ends of the rating scale. Eighty-six percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed they were given a variety of methods to communicate with teachers. The parents were then asked to list the techniques. The highest method listed was the Internet (E-mail and other online programs the school utilizes). Trailing by, seventeen who stated phone, which included a phone call or text messaging as a form of communication, fourteen people wrote face-to-face, four said folders home, and one did not respond.

The next four statements, six, seven, eight, and nine, discussed the topic of homework. Seventy-eight responses were on the high end of the scale between three through five. A majority of parents felt they had a clear understanding of homework expectations, were comfortable helping with homework, set aside homework time at home, and gave their child a quiet space to work on homework. Again, I feel many of the indifferent ratings were made from those new to the classroom and had not yet experienced homework.

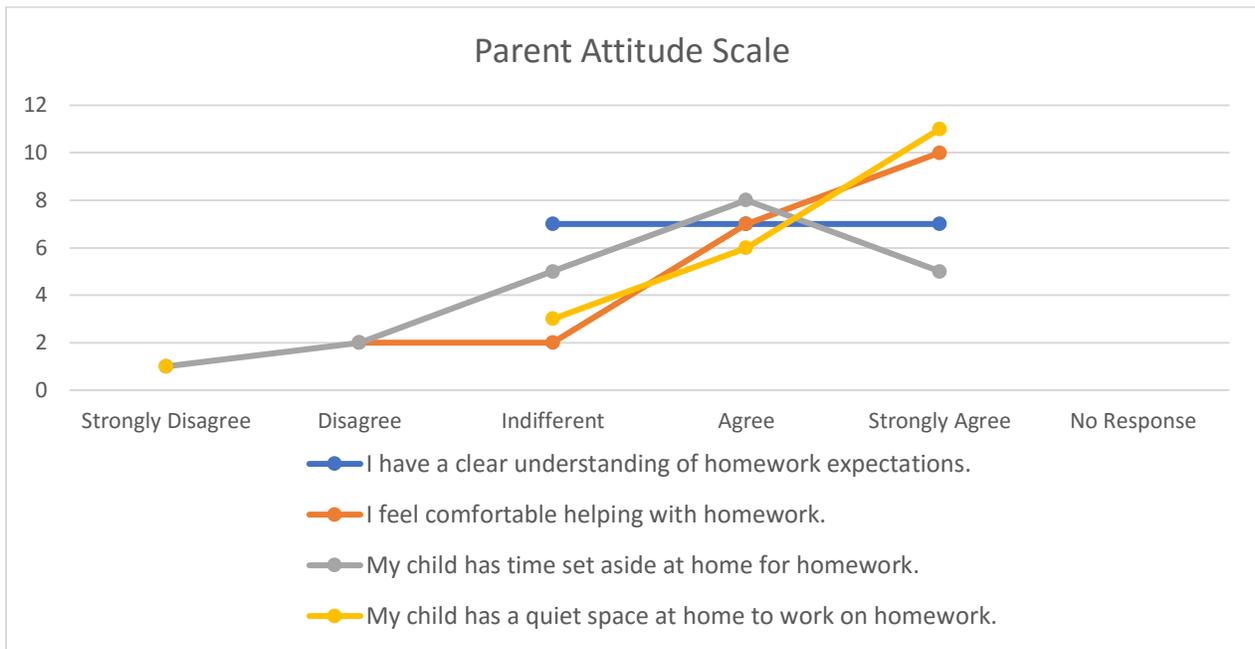


Figure 5. Parent Attitude Scale statement six, seven, eight and nine ratings.

Much to my surprise, there was a range of responses to the last statement, *I view school as my child's number-one priority*. Two of the 21 responses were disagree, four indifferent, five agree, and ten strongly agree. I anticipated more parents would have responded with a strongly agree, and no responses would be below agree. I wonder, had I eliminated the phrase “number-one” and simply said, *I view school as a priority in my child's life*, the results would have evolved differently. Using the Parent Attitude Scale in the future, I may rephrase the statement or input a short-answer question asking, “If school is not your child's number-one priority what is?”

Asking that question could give me a better understanding of the parents and what they view as top priorities in their children's lives. It could help me be able to relate with the families throughout the school year.

The final short-answer question asked families how they would like to be involved in their children's homework specifically and generally in the classroom/school? Offering homework support and getting a general overview of the homework expectations were the top two answers with seven responses for each. Three did not respond, and three respondents stated they would be more involved in their children's homework if the teacher informed them of the work. Two parents felt they would instill positive homework expectations (complete and turn in homework on time) into their children. Another two felt communicating between home and school would be ways they could be involved in their children's homework. An additional two replies were not applicable to the question.

After the Parent Attitude Scale, the implementation of the Spelling Words Practice Sheets and tracking the students' spelling test scores took place. A majority of parents practiced spelling words with their child two to three times a week for five weeks. In the first week, nine out of 15 total students practiced spelling words two to three times per week. Of those nine students, five received a perfect spelling test score. Four students practiced four to five times per week, two getting a 100%, one getting 90%, and another getting an 80% on their spelling tests. Only two students practice zero to one time per week, both receiving perfect scores. During the final four weeks, 82% of students practiced their spelling words two to three times or four to five times per week. Of those students, 90% received perfect scores on their spelling tests for the four weeks. There were 11 students who practiced one time or not at all in the four weeks. Seven of those 11 students still received a perfect score on their tests. I believe the minimal amount of

time practicing spelling words and the perfect test scores occurred because the first couple weeks of spelling, the words were review from the previous year. On the other hand, there were three students who practiced two to five times and got a 60% or less on their test scores. These results may be in correlation to the first-grade students who are new to the spelling word process. See Appendix I for detailed charts on how many times per week each student practiced their spelling words in correlation to spelling test scores.

Within the six-week study, four weeks of data were collected for Math Facts practice at home and correlating Math Fact Challenge results. Six weeks of data were not collected for math facts because they started on the Thursday of the second week of the study. Each new set of math facts started on a Thursday and ended on a Thursday. The length of the weeks and when the study started and ended it allotted enough time to collect four weeks of data. Each week allowed for the students to practice a maximum of eight days at home with an adult. The average amount of days the students practiced math facts was three days per week. In the first two weeks 100% of the students moved to the next set of math facts. It was not until week four the data started to show a slight correlation between amount of days practiced and moving on to the next set of cards. Four students in week four practiced zero to one time per week. Of those students, only one moved on. Also in week four, students who practiced three, four, even five times did not move to the next set. I believe the data started to show a slight correlation between math facts becoming more challenging for the students and the amount of times they practiced at home with an adult. Please refer to Appendix G for detailed tables displaying correlating data.

In addition to the above tools were the Parent and Teacher Running Records (See Appendix C & D) for the students' travel folders. Parents were asked to initial when they checked their children's travel folders. At school, I would check to see which students had their

running records initialed. I would also see what students had their folders emptied when papers were sent home. When looking at this data, there are a couple of different aspects one needs to take into account. A total of 27 days was on the Parent Running Record. Of those days, an average of 26 days students were physically in school for the running records to be recorded. If the students were not in attendance on a day, the parents were not asked to initial that day, and I would not mark that day on the Teacher Running Record. In the average 26 days where students were in school 53% of the students' running records got initialed between 22 and 26 times. Of those students, 88% moved on to the next set of math facts three or four times out of the four-week span. Those same students scored an average of 89% on their spelling tests, that is equivalent to getting one or two incorrect words out of ten words. Conversely, 47% of students who had their running records initialed 19 or fewer times in the 26 average days, 71% moved to the next set of math facts three or four times out of the four-week span. Their average spelling test scores were 92%. I believe if the data were to be collected deeper into the school year and for a greater amount of time, we would see a stronger relationship between the number of times adults are involved in homework and math facts and spelling test scores. It is my theory that as the homework became more challenging the need for more parent involvement would heighten.

Individual Student	Days in School	Days Initialed	Moved on in Math Facts					Spelling Test Scores				
			Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four	Total Times	Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four	Week Five
1	26	22			x	x	2	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%
2	26	24	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%
3	25	18			x	x	2	100%	100%	60%	50%	70%
4	26	23	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	100%	90%	100%
5	27	22		x	x	x	3	100%	80%	80%	70%	90%
6	26	19			x	x	2	100%	90%	100%	60%	80%
7	27	16	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	90%	80%	90%
8	27	4		x	x	x	3	90%	100%	100%	90%	100%
9	27	24	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
10	26	19	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%
11	27	26	x	x	x	x	4	90%	80%	80%	90%	100%
12	22	16	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
13	27	23	x	x	x	x	4	60%	70%	70%	70%	80%
14	26	19	x	x	x	x	4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
15	27	24	x	x	x	x	4	80%	90%	90%	70%	100%

Figure 10. Comparing days Parent Running Records were initialed to students' Spelling Test Scores and how many times students moved on in Math Facts.

The final step was to send home a new Parent Attitude Scale for parents to fill out and return. In August, I had 21 parents who filled out a scale, compared to the 13 I got back in October. In August, parents were asked to fill out the scales while at orientation, whereas in October the scales were sent home and parents were asked to fill it out and send it back to school. I believe, had I invited parents to another gathering I would have had more participation in filling out the scales. For a majority of the statements on the October scale, they were rated more agree or strongly agree in comparison to the August scale. The results showed more

disagree for statement number four, the child's school has opportunities for parent education, as compared to August's. Up to that point in October the school had not offered parent education opportunities and I speculate that is why there was an increase in the disagree ranking. Overall, there was a rise in how parents felt about the school and classroom when it came to communication, involvement opportunities, and education comparing to the beginning of the six-weeks the study. See Appendix H for a full detailed chart of corresponding data.

Similar to the trend for the statement ratings in the final Parent Attitude Scale, short-answer questions did not give strong feedback. Many parents did not fill out the short-answer sections of the final scale. Of those that did, the answers were not as in-depth as the initial scale answers. The most significant feedback given was when parents were asked which method they prefer to use when communicating with the teacher. Sixty-nine percent preferred the Internet, which included E-mail and online programs the school utilized. Following the Internet was phone, with 46% of people who preferred either phone calls or texting as a way of communication.

Future data collection will be necessary to accurately see an effect of an in-depth Parent Orientation Evening and an Open House Material night on parents' involvement in homework support for their children in a mixed 1st – 3rd grade Montessori classroom. The small correlation peeking through nearing the end of the study is enough for me to have a need to continue to gather data. Deeper into the school year and at the end of the year more data analysis can take place to hopefully help display the positive correlation between help at home and practices at school.

Action Plan

Going into my research I hypothesized the more involvement parents had in their child's educations, the better the children would do with their school work. I tested this theory by creating tools to see how often parents were helping their children with the work that was expected to be done at home: math facts flashcards and spelling words. To see how often math facts and spelling words were being practiced at home, I asked parents to fill out practice sheets. Data collected from both math facts and spelling words practice sheets showed a slow trend in the number of times adults practiced with their children. The practice sheets' data was then compared to the success children were having on their Spelling Tests and their Math Fact challenges. In order to show a stronger trend, I would continue collecting data throughout the school year. As the year goes on the Spelling Words and Math Facts become more challenging, and I theorize that is when students will need more at home support. Having done this research I believe continuing to give the parents clear expectations of what is desired of them at home will be vital to helping maintain positive homework support.

I also implemented a tool to see how often Travel Folders were being checked. I felt Travel Folders were crucial components for communication from school to home and vice versa. During previous school years, I noticed a pattern of students who would frequently come back to school with homework missing or incomplete, or papers from the day before that were supposed to be left at home. These same students were also showing struggles in the classroom on spelling, math, and reading works. Works is a term used in Montessori classrooms, comparable to what assignments are in a traditional room. This connection led me to wonder if the lack of parent involvement at home had anything to do with the hardships at school. The data collected from the Teacher and Parent Running Records for Travel Folders did not show a significant

connection with parents checking folders and students' Math Facts and Spelling Tests, until later in the study. After observing this slow trend towards a positive relationship, I will continue to find ways to encourage parents to check Travels Folders for important messages and to be active participants in their children's education.

A Parent Orientation Evening at the beginning of the school year was implemented. Orientation gave me the opportunity to explain parent expectations, show families how to access programs being utilized for the school year, and to make clear the directions for Math Facts and Spelling Words Practice Sheets. I wanted to make sure all lines of communication were open and to make sure there was no confusion on how to use the variety of communication forms and data collection tools being manipulated. A second opportunity for parents to come into the room, meet with me face-to-face, and ask any further questions was Parent Material Evening. It was also a day for the students to show their parents how to use Montessori materials. From the first Parent Attitude Scale given during orientation and then the second time at the end of the study, more parents felt they understood homework expectations and felt comfortable helping with homework than they did at the start of the school year. These findings tell me the orientation and material evening were beneficial to helping the parents be successful at home with guiding their children in their homework. Looking into the future, I will continue to have opportunities for parents to come into the classroom for the remainder of the school year and carry on these practices in the years to come.

Upon examining the data collection, there were a few variables which affected the results of the study. One factor brought to my attention was the students who received additional assistance in the classroom. Although it is wonderful to be able to give children all they need to be successful students, it did skew data results. For example, a student does not have a lot of

support at home practicing Math Facts and Spelling Words, but the extra guidance at school helped him/her move to the next set of flashcards and received a high score on his/her Spelling Test. Another element that influenced my results was the beginning of the school year review. As previously stated, the first couple of weeks for both Math Facts and Spelling Words were lessons the students are reviewed from last year. With the works being reviews, the students do not need as much support at home to be successful on the challenges and tests at school.

If I were to do the same study again, I would start later in the school year or have it last longer than six weeks. I would also only track the initials on the Parent Running Records for Travel Folders and not when students took papers home and who had their folders emptied the next day, as it shows on the Teacher Running Record for Travel Folders. In the end, I was collecting the same data the initials were already telling me.

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Appendix A

Date: _____

Parent Attitude Scale

- I would like to continue, but prefer not to have my responses included in the study.
 I would like to continue, and I am comfortable allowing my responses to be included anonymously in the study. Completion of these questions is voluntary and anonymous.

Please rate each statement using a 1-5 scale.

* Completion of this form is voluntary and anonymous. You may quit at any time.

1= Strong Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Indifferent 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

1. La Crescent Montessori and STEM School offers opportunities for parent involvement within the school.

1 2 3 4 5

How would you like to be more involved in the school?

2. EI offers opportunities for parent involvement within the classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

How would you like to be more involved in the classroom?

3. LMSS offers opportunities to participate in schoolwide activities.

1 2 3 4 5

4. LMSS has opportunities for parent education.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I am given a variety of methods to communicate with teachers.

1 2 3 4 5

Please list methods:

Please list which method you and your family prefer.

6. I have a clear understanding of homework expectations.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I feel comfortable helping with homework.

1 2 3 4 5

8. My child has time set aside at home for homework.

1 2 3 4 5

9. My child has a quiet space at home to work on homework.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I view school as my child's number- one priority.

1 2 3 4 5

** How as a parent would you like to be involved in your child's homework specifically and generally in the classroom/school?

Appendix B

Math Facts Practice Sheet

	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.
Date	10-12-17	10-13-17	10-14-17	10-15-17	10-16-17	10-17-17	10-18-17	10-19-17
Please initial when you practice Math Facts with your child.								

Spelling Words Practice Sheet

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Date	10-9-17	10-10-17	10-11-17	10-12-17	10-13-17
Please initial when you practice spelling words with your child.					

Appendix C

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September 2017					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Notes: Please initial each day after you check your child's travel folder.						

Blank September 2017 Calendar Printable calendars available from www.blankcalendarprintout.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
October 2017						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Notes: Please initial each day after you check your child's travel folder.			

Blank October 2017 Calendar Printable calendars available from www.blankcalendarprintout.com

Appendix D

Teacher Running Record for Travel Folders

+ = Folder Was Emptied

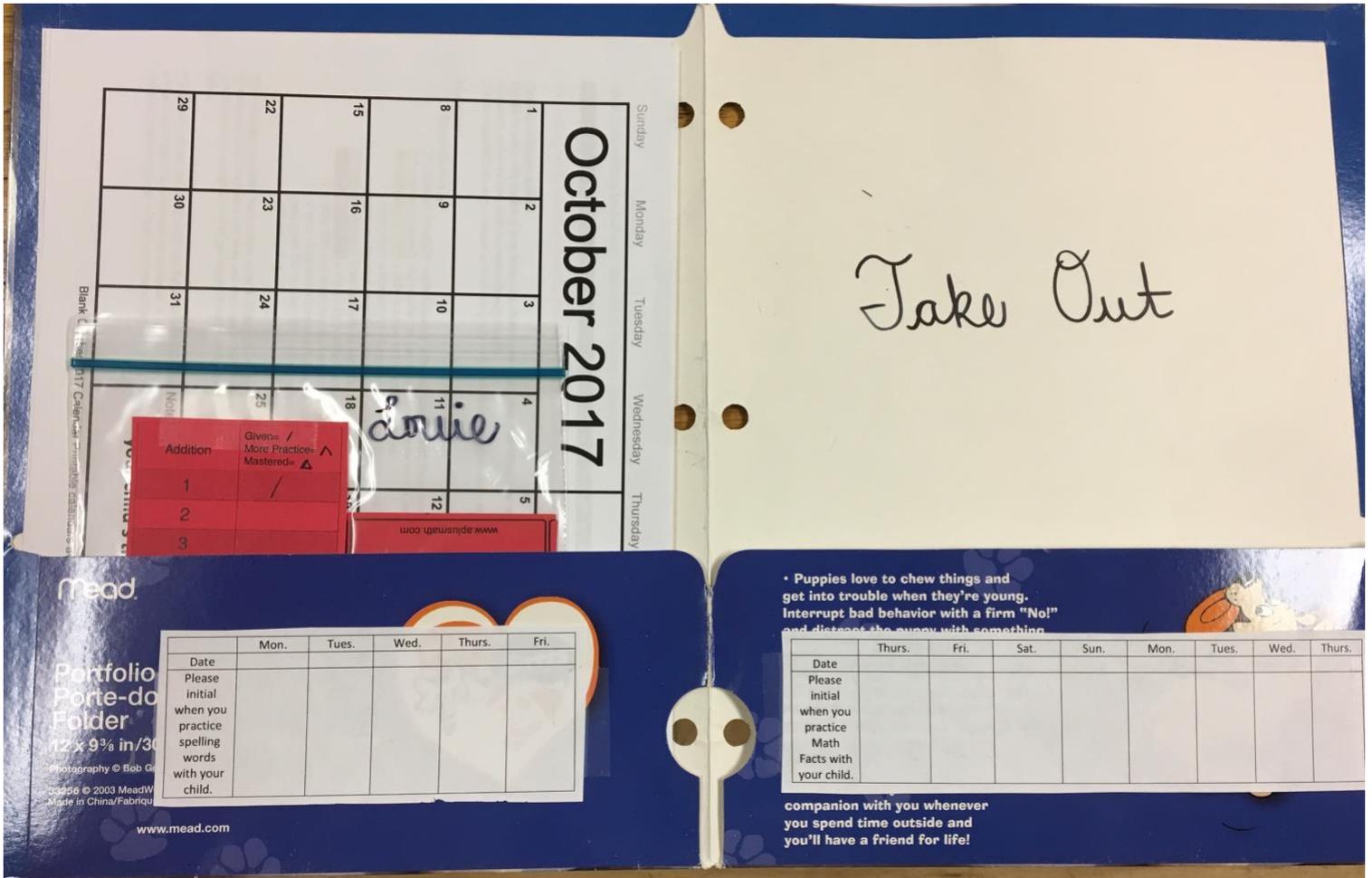
- = Folder Was Not Emptied

X = No Papers Sent Home

***** = Parent Running Record for Travel Folder Initialed

Date:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Students					
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					

Appendix E



Take Out

Aurie

• Puppies love to chew things and get into trouble when they're young. Interrupt bad behavior with a firm "No!" and distract the puppy with something...

	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.
Date								
Please initial when you practice Math								
Facts with your child.								

companion with you whenever you spend time outside and you'll have a friend for life!

Mead
Portfolio Pencil Case
12 x 9 3/8 in/30
Photography © Bob G...
© 2003 MeadW...
Made in China/Fabriqu...
www.mead.com

Appendix F

Spelling Test

- 1. ran ✱
- 2. hat ✱
- 3. bag ✱
- 4. ant ✱
- 5. pan ✱
- 6. cap ✱
- 7. map ✱
- 8. apple ✱
- 9. tag ✱
- 10. lamp ✱

0

10
—
10

Appendix G

	9/14/17	9/15/17	9/16/17	9/17/17	9/18/17	9/19/17	9/20/17	9/21/17	Practiced	Move On
1	x	x			x	x	x		5	x
2	x	x		x	x		x		5	x
3	x					x			2	x
4					x		x		2	x
5			x				x		2	x
6	x				x	x	x		4	x
7		x	x	x	x		x		5	x
8									0	x
9				x		x	x		3	X
10	x				x				2	X
11	x				x	x	x		4	x
12	x			x	x	x	x		5	x
13	x			x	x	x	x		5	x
14		x			x		x		3	x
15	x			x	x	x	x		5	x

Students 13

	9/21/17	9/22/17	9/23/17	9/24/17	9/25/17	9/26/17	9/27/17	9/28/17	Practiced	Move On
1	x				x				2	X
2			x			x	x		3	X
3					x		x		2	X
4	x				x		x	x	4	X
5						x		x	2	X
6	x	x			x	x			4	X
7	x	x	x			x			4	x
8									0	X
9		x		x	x	x	x		5	X
10				x					1	x
11	x		x	x	x	x	x		6	X
12	x	x		x	x	x	x		6	x
13	x		x	x	x	x	x		6	x
14					x	x	x		3	x
15	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		7	x

Students 13

	9/28/17	9/29/17	9/30/17	10/1/17	10/2/17	10/3/17	10/4/17	10/5/17	Practiced	Move On
1	x	x			x	x	x		5	
2		x		x	x		x		4	x
3					x	x	x		3	
4		x	x	x	x				4	x
5									0	x
6					x	x	x		3	
7				x	x	x	x		4	x
8									0	x
9	x			x	x	x	x		5	x
10									0	x
11	x				x	x	x		4	x
12	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8	x
13				x	x	x			3	x
14	x				x	x			3	x
15	x			x	x	x	x		5	x

Students 10

	10/5/17	10/6/17	10/7/17	10/8/17	9-Oct	10/10/17	10/11/17	10/12/17	Practiced	Move On
1	x	x					x		3	
2	x			x	x	x			4	x
3					x				1	
4	x	x	x				x		4	x
5								x	1	
6	x				x	x	x		4	
7			x	x	x	x	x		5	x
8									0	
9	x	x	x		x	x	x		6	x
10	x							x	2	x
11	x				x	x	x		4	x
12									0	x
13	x			x	x	x	x		5	x
14					x		x		2	x
15	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		7	x

Students 8

Appendix H

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Response
1. LMSS offers opportunities for parent involvement within the school.						
Aug.			4.76%	38%	57%	
Oct.				31%	69%	
2. EI offers opportunities for parent involvement within the classroom.						
Aug.			19%	38%	43%	
Oct.			7.69%	38%	46%	7.69%
3. LMSS offers opportunities to participate in schoolwide activities.						
Aug.		4.76%	14%	29%	52%	
Oct.				54%	46%	
4. LMSS has opportunities for parent education.						
Aug.	9.52%	4.76%	33%	33%	14%	4.76%
Oct.		15%	38%	31%	15%	
5. I am given a variety of methods to communicate with teachers.						
Aug.			14%	33%	52%	
Oct.				15%	77%	7.69%
6. I have a clear understanding of homework expectations.						
Aug.			33%	33%	33%	
Oct.			23%	15%	54%	7.69%
7. I feel comfortable helping with homework.						
Aug.		9.52%	9.52%	33%	48%	
Oct.				38%	54%	7.69%
8. My child has time set aside at home for homework.						
Aug.	4.76%	9.52%	24%	38%	24%	
Oct.			7.69%	46%	38%	7.69%
9. My child has a quiet space at home to work on homework.						
Aug.			14%	29%	52%	
Oct.			7.69%	54%	31%	7.69%
10. I view school as my child's number-one priority.						
Aug.		9.52%	19%	24%	48%	
Oct.			15%	38%	31%	7.69%

Appendix I

Week 1 Practiced Per Week

Score	0-1 Times	2-3 Times	4-5 Times
100%	2	5	2
90%	0	2	1
80%	0	1	1
70%	0	1	0
60%	0	0	0
50%	0	0	0
40%	0	0	0
30%	0	0	0
20%	0	0	0
10%	0	0	0
0%	0	0	0
Total Students	2	9	4

Week 2 Practiced Per Week

Score	0-1 Times	2-3 Times	4-5 Times
100%	1	2	1
90%	1	1	1
80%	1	1	0
70%	0	2	1
60%	0	0	1
50%	0	2	0
40%	0	0	0
30%	0	0	0
20%	0	0	0
10%	0	0	0
0%	0	0	0
Total Students	3	8	4

Week 3 Practiced Per Week

Score	0-1 Times	2-3 Times	4-5 Times
100%	2	3	4
90%	0	1	1
80%	0	1	1
70%	0	0	1
60%	0	1	0
50%	0	0	0
40%	0	0	0
30%	0	0	0
20%	0	0	0
10%	0	0	0
0%	0	0	0
Total Students	2	6	7

Week 4 Practiced Per Week

Score	0-1 Times	2-3 Times	4-5 Times
100%	3	4	3
90%	0	0	2
80%	1	0	1
70%	0	0	1
60%	0	0	0
50%	0	0	0
40%	0	0	0
30%	0	0	0
20%	0	0	0
10%	0	0	0
0%	0	0	0
Total Students	4	4	7

Week 5 Practiced Per Week

Score	0-1 Times	2-3 Times	4-5 Times
100%	1	6	4
90%	1	0	1
80%	0	0	1
70%	0	0	0
60%	0	1	0
50%	0	0	0
40%	0	0	0
30%	0	0	0
20%	0	0	0
10%	0	0	0
0%	0	0	0
Total Students	2	7	6