The Effects of Home Visits: A Parent’s Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of teacher home visits through the parents’ perspective. There continues to be ongoing research on the effect of teacher home visits through educators’ perspective, but how do the parents view these home visits? Home visits create an opportunity for parents and teachers to get to know each other outside of the school. There are many parents who are reluctant to get involved and feel judged when they arrive at school. Teacher home visits break down these misconceptions between the parent and teacher. It allows parents and teachers to see each other as normal people who simply want the best for the child (Brown, 2013). The research for this study was conducted in Byron Center, Michigan during the school year of 2016-2017 with four sets of parents of kindergarten students. The study involved three separate home visits, one at the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year. The purpose of the home visits was to establish relationships between the teacher and the families, discuss expectations and set goals for the parents, students, and teacher. The results of this study provide some support for the notion that parents believe teacher home visits do in fact strengthen the parent/teacher relationship, empower and engage parents more, and have a positive impact on student performance at school. The researcher recommends a broader study be conducted to support this idea.
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Chapter 1 – The Problem

Introduction

Two of the most important and significant places of influence in the life of a child are the home and school. Based on an average school day in Michigan, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm for 180 days, each year students spend about 1,260 hours in school and approximately 4,000 waking hours in the home. It is evident that a child’s home life can play a significant role in his/her behavior and performance at school. In 2009, President Barack Obama claimed in a joint session to Congress:

There is no program or policy that can substitute for a mother or father who will attend those parent-teacher conferences or help with the homework or turn off the TV, put away the video games, read to their child. Responsibility for our children’s education must begin at home. (The White House, 2009)

Parents and teachers must work together in order for children to reach their highest potential. However, a problem that many schools have faced is the lack of parent engagement (Gentry, 2011). Teachers have complained about the lack of parent engagement while parents have complained about the lack of communication from teachers. This has created a disconnect between these two parties despite the importance of them working together. If teachers could create a strong and positive relationship with parents, would that result in an increase in parental engagement? How would a teacher create this strong, positive relationship? How often should a teacher walk into this part of a child’s world since the home life has so much influence on the child? Should they take the time to see and learn for themselves what the child experiences on a day-to-day basis? If they were to do so, would it strengthen the relationship with the parents?
Would it strengthen the relationship with the student? The researcher conducted several different home visits in order to answer these questions and to analyze the effects of home visits through the eyes of the parents.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of teacher home visits through the parents’ perspective. Teacher home visits have been done on rare occasions at schools. If they were done, it was most often because the child was consistently displaying negative behavior at school and the teacher was desperate to change the behavior somehow. The researcher sought to learn whether parents felt the home visits empowered them as parents, whether they felt more confident in supporting their child academically at home, and whether they felt more comfortable voicing their opinions or concerns about their child’s education or school. The researcher also sought to learn whether parents felt more comfortable communicating with their child’s teacher and whether they felt more confident in using the resources the school and community had to offer their family. The researcher also wanted to know if parents felt the home visits had a positive impact on their child’s behavior and classroom performance. While exploring the effects of home visits, this study also sought to bridge the gap between the school and the home.

**Justification for the Study**

Schools have pushed for more parent engagement and better communication between parents and teachers (Reid, 2015). Educators have constantly brainstormed ideas of how to bridge the gap between home and school. Based on research of teachers’ personal experiences with home visits (Stetson, R., Stetson, E., Sinclair, B. & Nix, K. (2012), the researcher hypothesized that home visits could help bridge the home life and school life and in turn improve both parental engagement and parent-teacher communication. By visiting the home, teachers
could build a strong and trusting relationship with the parents and students. By building a strong and trusting relationship with the parents, parent engagement would likely increase. With increased parent engagement and building a strong student-teacher relationship, research has shown that students will display more positive behavior in school and be more engaged in the classroom (Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair & Nik, 2012). Parents of low-income families’ opinions have often been overlooked when it comes to their child’s education because teachers have been frustrated by their assumed lack of engagement. The researcher believed teachers often did not consider the barriers that prevented parents from becoming more engaged and involved in their child’s education. The researcher wanted to give parents a voice. The researcher wanted educators to hear from parents regarding their opinions on the effects of teacher home visits.

The researcher believes this study is important for fellow educators because, as previously stated, schools have struggled to engage parents and bridge the gap between school and home (Gentry 2011). If parents felt home visits helped bridge this gap and empower them in regards to their child’s education then more teachers should consider sacrificing time to get to know their students and families outside of the classroom. School administrators need to be aware of the possible benefits of home visits, and in turn encourage their teachers to partake in home visits, even compensating them for their time.

It has been rare for educational-policy makers to look outside of the school when it comes to analyzing students’ test scores (Long, 2013). Policy makers need to understand the possible impact home visits could have on the home-school connection and more specifically on a student’s academic performance. If parents felt home visits made a huge impact on their relationship with the teacher and school as well as their child, policy makers should then push for schools to adapt programs that train and equip teachers for home visits as well as compensate
them for their time.

**Research Question**

The research question for this study is, “What are the effects of teacher home visits through the eyes of the parent?” Although there is research from studies such as Stetson, Sinclair, and Nix’s (2012) *Home Visits: Teacher Reflections about Relationships Student Behavior and Achievement*, proving that schools have seen a benefit in teacher home visits, the question the researcher hoped to answer was, what did parents feel were the effects of teacher home visits?
Definition of Terms

This study references several important terms, which include:

Parent Engagement -

Constitutive Definition:

According to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (2012), “Parent engagement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents” (p. 2).

Operational Definition:

For the purpose of this study, parent engagement will refer to parents intentional actions towards their child’s school and education which reflect their interest and attitude. For example, are the parents reaching out to the teacher when they have questions and concerns? Are they engaging with their child at home about school, goals, homework, etc… Are they aware of what is going on at school and if not, are they doing something to make sure they are aware? Are they engaged in conversations with the teacher regarding their child?
Parent Involvement -

Constitutive Definition:

According to Larry Ferlazzo (2011), author of the book *Building Family Engagement in Schools*, parent involvement refers to “Identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute” (What’s the Difference section, para. 2).

Operational Definition:

For the purpose of this study, **parent involvement** refers to the specific actions parents take to get involved with their child’s education and school. For example, do they attend parent teacher conferences, field trips, or school events when they are able to? Are they making an effort to get involved and help the school in some way?
Home Visit -

Constitutive Definition:

According to the NW Oregon Head Start Program (n.d.), “A home visit is a time when parent, child and teacher come together to provide successful experiences for learning. The home visit is designed to focus on family needs and goals, and to support and enhance the parental role as the principal influence in the child's education and development” (p. 1).

Operational Definition:

For the purposes of this study, a home visit refers to the teacher meeting with the parent(s) and child in the home, building a relationship with them outside of school, establishing goals together, and empowering the parent as the teacher in the home.

Parent -

Constitutive Definition:

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (n.d.), “A parent is a person who is a father or mother, a person who has a child.”

Operational Definition:

For the purposes of this study, a parent refers to anyone in the child’s home that takes on the role of the parent towards the child. This can include, but is not limited to, father, mother, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or guardians.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Introduction: Bridging the Gap Between Home and School

Many scholars in the field of education have claimed that when teachers and parents built a relationship of trust, it increased parent engagement which research showed increased the likelihood of a child’s success (Parker, Grenville, & Flessa, 2011; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Canker, Deutsch, & Sentocnik, 2012; Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair & Nik, 2012). Although many schools have continued to struggle to get parents involved, parents shared that they have desired to be involved in their child’s education (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Schools have often overlooked parents’ desires to be involved when barriers such as lack of material resources, time, and confidence prevented parents from engaging with the school. This unfortunately hurt the schools because they ignored a bank of resources and left it untapped based on the assumption that parents were not interested in their child’s education (Reece, Staudt, & Ogle, 2013).

A concern that several scholars have shared is that when teachers and parents come from different cultural and socio-economic statuses, misunderstandings of expectations and distrust tend to occur. (Janssen, Bakker, Bosman, Rosenberg & Leseman, 2012; Goodall, Montgomery, 2014). How could a teacher bridge this gap between school and home, particularly with low income minority families and teachers from middle class, white families? The researcher believed teacher home visits were the key.

A Look into the Past of the Dreaded Home Visit

Home visits have taken place for many years, most often by social workers and preschool teachers (Steele-Carlin, 2001). Traditionally, home visits were used to remediate a specific negative behavior or academic concern (Johnson, 2014; Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair & Nik, 2012).
If a child continued to act out or continued to struggle academically after multiple interventions were carried out, then the teacher or social worker would visit the home in hopes of pushing the student (with the support from the parents) to improve behavior. Preschool home visits have traditionally been used to help parents enhance their parenting skills and assist parents in the growth and development of their child (Sykes, 2010). In a traditional elementary, middle and high school, teacher home visits have not been a common practice because of the time commitment required by the teacher as well as concerns of safety and fear of awkwardness once inside the home. Many teachers have shared that they feel intimidated by parents of problem students and hence limited their interaction with them (Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair & Nik, 2012). Home visits are not a common practice in elementary, middle, and high schools in many states throughout the country. Teachers have continued to rely on traditional methods for engaging and building relationships with parents such as classroom newsletters, phone calls, emails, classroom websites, and parent teacher conferences.

**The Effectiveness of Home Visits in Bridging the Gap Between Home and School**

Home visits should not be feared or seen as simply a way to remediate negative behavior. A relationship of trust and respect could potentially result from teachers visiting the homes of students for the simple purpose of getting to know the family and allowing the family to get to know their child’s teacher. This type of relationship would be crucial for a strong parent-teacher collaboration (Janssen, Bakker, Bosman, Rosenberg & Leseman, 2012; Flannery, 2014). With a strong parent-teacher relationship, parents’ engagement would increase and students’ behavior and academic performance would improve (Flannery, 2014).

One particular study was carried out on schools’ and teachers’ views on the effects of home visits on the parent-teacher relationship and student performance. Stetson, Stetson,
Sinclair, and Nik (2012) found that teachers overall felt very positive about the home visits. The home visits caused teachers to see the students and parents in a whole new light and their desire to help the students succeed increased. Home visits that have been performed for the simple purpose of building relationships have been very positive. Parents have also shared positive experiences as well with home visits (Smith, 2014).

Schools have continued to strive in building a bridge between the home and school for years. Home visits have not always had the greatest reputation and have often been dreaded by families. Parents have been reluctant to allow educators into their homes in fear of judgement. The researcher hoped that home visits that had the sole purpose of building relationships and bridging the gap between the home and school, would redefine and transform the past stigmas of home visits. The researcher desired to study and analyze the parents’ perspective on teacher home visits because they have been reluctant and apprehensive in the past. The researcher hoped that by redefining home visits, parents would see them as a great tool in bridging the gap between the home and school.

The State of Michigan’s Current Home Visit Initiative

In August of 2016, the state of Michigan approved a grant that would allow six hundred families of infant to kindergarten age children to receive a home visit from a school educator or a school employee involved in the child’s and/or families educational and health interests. Michigan has been striving to be a Top 10 Education state. The Michigan Department of Education believed that a child’s school readiness would improve if home visits were carried out for at risk and high need families. The purpose of these home visits would be to help engage and equip parents with the necessary resources to assist in their child’s education and development (MDE, 2016).
A typical home visit would include four basic parts; arrival, during the visit, concluding the visit, and after the visit. During the arrival time, the school employee would set the tone for the visit and begin establishing a rapport with the family. During the visit, the school employee would review the purpose of the visit, discuss the family’s strengths, and set goals for the family. The family would also have an opportunity at that time to share their thoughts and concerns. At the conclusion of the visit, the school employee would summarize the visit, discuss the next steps, and say goodbye. After the visit, the school employee would document and evaluate the visit as well as follow through on any items discussed during the visit (San Francisco Unified School District, p.2).
Chapter 3 – The Research Study

Introduction

This study sought to determine whether parents viewed teacher home visits as effective or not. In order to determine this, the researcher needed to set up several case studies and carry out home visits with each subject of the case studies. Three home visits were scheduled throughout the school year. The researcher used surveys and interviews to collect data on parents’ opinions of parent/teacher relationships, parent engagement, and student performance, both behaviorally and academically. The data was then put into a spreadsheet and graphs were created to analyze the data. Parents’ responses were analyzed by looking at their opinions at the beginning of the year before the home visits as well as at the end of the year at the conclusion of the study. Individual parent responses were also compared to other sets of parents involved in the study. These comparisons allowed the researcher to determine more clearly the positive and negative effects parents felt home visits had on the parent/teacher relationship, parent engagement, and student performance.

Description of the Research Design

Due to the nature of the information needed, the researcher chose to use the qualitative research method ethnography, specifically a case study. According to Stephen Wilson (1977):

Ethnography is said to be based on two fundamental beliefs: (1) Events must be studied in natural settings; that is, understanding requires field-based research. (2) A researcher cannot understand events without understanding how they are perceived and interpreted by the people who participate in them. Thus, participant observation is one of the method’s major data-collection devices (as cited in Tuckman & Harper, 2012, p. 388).
This method allowed for multiple home visits throughout the year to assess parents’ attitudes, opinions, and actions regarding school, teachers, and their child’s academic and behavioral performance through the surveys and interviews during the initial home visit and final home visit.

The method used to collect data for the research project was through surveys and interviews. Bruce Tuckman and Brian Harper (2012) state, “Interviews help researchers to convert into data the information they receive directly from people (research subjects)” (p. 244). This method was chosen because initial data and final data needed to be collected regarding parents’ perspectives on the effects of home visits. The researcher then analyzed the parents’ perspectives on the effects of the home visits: whether the home visits impacted their attitudes, opinions, and actions regarding school, their child’s behavior and academics, parent engagement, and the parent-teacher relationship before and after the home visit study. The results of the surveys and interviews from the selected parents of four kindergarten students for the school year 2016-2017 was used as the data needed to determine the effects of home visits through the eyes of the parents. Multiple choice and open-ended questions were chosen specifically to gain the information needed to analyze the parent perspectives on the effects of the home visits.

The case study of home visits and data collection using parent surveys and interviews, began in October of 2016 and concluded June of 2017. Surveys and interviews were completed at the initial home visit at the beginning of the year. A final home visit was completed at the end of the year where an interview was conducted, after a survey was completed by the families. During those two visits, the researcher/teacher worked to establish and build a relationship with the parents and family that exhibited trust, respect, and openness. In between those two home visits, the researcher/teacher visited the homes of the students one other time to simply check in
with the family. This allowed the family to share any needs or concerns that arose after the initial visit. The surveys and interviews were used to analyze the effects of the home visits through the parents’ perspective.

**Description of the Sample**

The participants in this study were the parents of kindergarten students for the school year 2016-2017 at Marshall Elementary in Byron Center, Michigan. There were eight participating parents, twenty-five years to fifty years old. All eight participants were of Caucasian ethnicity. It is perceived based on interactions and Title I school data that one family came from a lower socioeconomic status and the other three came from a middle to high socioeconomic status.

**Description of the Instruments Used**

Interviews and surveys of the parents of the four kindergarteners for the year 2016-2017 were used to collect data at the beginning and end of the research study. Multiple choice and open-ended questions were specifically chosen to gain the necessary information needed to analyze the parents’ opinions on the positive and negative effects of the home visits (appendix A and appendix B).

The results of the surveys were entered into a spreadsheet (appendix H). The open-ended questions were categorized according to the responses and coded for the different categories. Bar graphs and pie graphs were created for each question to provide a proper visual for analyzing the information. Questions were also placed in categories such as parent-teacher relationship, parent engagement, student performance, and home visits. The researcher then analyzed individual parent responses in the different categories using the graphs. The researcher also analyzed the data by comparing individual parent responses to the other parents involved in the
study.

**Explanations of the Specific Procedures Followed**

The research study followed three steps. The first step was the initial home visit and initial interview, the second step was a second home visit to check in with the family, and the third step was the final home visit and final interview.

Before the home visits began, phone calls were made to the students’ parents explaining the study and asking if they were interested and willing to participate in the study. The parents who agreed were given the consent form to read and sign (appendix C). To ensure a fair selection process, parents who signed the consent form showing they were interested in participating were assigned a 2-digit number. Parents who were interested in participating were assigned a 2-digit number. Four sets of parents were then selected using a random table of numbers (digits 0-9 listed in a variety of ways for several pages) (appendix J). A random spot on the table was chosen to start and the single digits were joined in groups of two. The first four numbers that were in the range of 01-25 were selected. Parents who were chosen, were notified through a letter informing them of their selection (appendix D). The letter also explained that the teacher would be contacting them by phone to set up the first home visit. Parents who were not chosen were sent a letter thanking them for their willingness to participate (appendix E). Since their names were not chosen, they were not a part of the study.

**Step 1: Initial Interview and first home visit**

In the first round of home visits, the selected students’ homes were visited. Phone calls were made to schedule the visits for late October of 2016. The visits were scheduled during a convenient time in the evening for both the families and the researcher.
The protocol for the initial home visit consisted of the following:

- **Arrival**
  - Set the tone (warm introduction, thank family for their time and participation, etc.)
  - Establish rapport/develop caring relationships
  - Include all family members in the home who would like to participate

- **During the Visit**
  - Review the purpose of the visit: get to know each other, learn about their past feelings and experiences with their child’s school and teacher, share goals/expectations for the year, answer parent questions, and review school resources
  - Get to know each other: researcher shares background of him/herself, allow the family to ask questions, ask the family to share information about themselves, and ask questions that keep things simple and nonintrusive.
  - Interview Questions Regarding Past Feelings and Experiences with School:
    - Ask permission to record this part of the conversation and take notes
    - Use the questions on the survey to get information regarding the parents’ past experience with parent-teacher relationships, communication between the school and home, their confidence as a parent with helping their child with academic and behavioral issues at home, home visits, and their own child’s behavior and performance in school. Allow parents to elaborate on their responses.
  - Share goals and expectations:
Tell the parents that their goals will be written down along with their child’s goals and the teacher’s goals for the school year. Make it clear that the goals will be reviewed at the February visit to reflect on how everyone is feeling about the school year.

Ask the family to share what their expectations and goals for their child both academically and behaviorally are for the school year. (What are their expectations and goals for themselves as parents? What are their goals and expectations for the teacher?) Ask the parents to think about concerns or issues they had in the previous years that they would like to see change.

Ask the student to share one goal about something he/she hopes to learn or improve on this school year.

Teacher will share his/her goals and expectations for the student, the parents, and for himself/herself.

1-2 goals will be chosen and written down for each person to work on for the year to better ensure the child’s success for the year.

Written goals will be reviewed and signed by everyone.

Share resources

Provide school resources for the family.

Provide an overview of what will be covered in math, science, social studies, reading, and writing throughout the school year. Provide websites as well to aid in academic support at home.

Provide simple materials to assist the students with their homework at home.
(extra pencils, a choice of a picture book, paper, and crayons).

- Provide a handout regarding ideas on how to support a child academically at home and parenting tips to aid in the success of a child.

- Elicit feedback from the family.

  - Answer questions.

- Concluding the Visit

  - Summarize visit.

  - Discuss next steps.

  - Provide contact information and ask the family to share their preferences for communication. Encourage the family to communicate whenever they have questions, concerns, or comments they want to share. Encourage the family to visit the classroom whenever they are able to.

  - Closure and goodbye.

- After the Visit

  - Document and evaluate the visit through an audio journal regarding the results of the visit and feelings about the family’s current engagement and/or feelings regarding the current school year.

  - Follow-through on referrals, action items, etc.

  - Additional follow-up items, documentation.

  - Send family a copy of goals and expectation document.
Step 2: Middle of the Year Home Visit Check In

The researcher scheduled the second round of home visits during February of 2017 to check in on the families. This visit allowed for a personal check-in as well as a review of how each party felt about the school year and the student’s behavior and academic performance. The expectations and goals were reviewed and some amended as needed.

The protocol for the second home visit consisted of the following:

- **Arrival**
  - Set the tone (warm introduction, thank family for their time and participation, etc.).
  - Continue establishing rapport/develop caring relationships.
  - Include all family members in the home who would like to participate.

- **During the Visit**
  - Review the purpose of the visit: to check in on the family, to check in on everyone’s feelings regarding the school year, to review goals/expectations and ask questions.
  - Check in on the family: ask how the family is doing lately, ask if there have been any major changes in the last few months, ask how their holiday/winter break was and whether they were able to do something fun together as a family, etc…
  - Check in on everyone’s feelings regarding the school year:
    - Ask the parents how they are feeling regarding the school year thus far.
    Encourage them to share things they are happy with as well as concerns.
- Ask the student to also share his/her feelings regarding the school year thus far. Encourage him/her to share things he/she is happy with as well as his/her concerns.

- Researcher shares his/her feelings regarding the school year. He/she share what he/she is happy with as well as his/her concerns.

- Review Goals and Expectations:
  - Review the goals and expectations that were created at the beginning of the year.
  - Assess how everyone is doing with goals.
  - Add or make changes if needed.

- Elicit feedback from the family:
  - Answer questions.

• Concluding the Visit
  - Summarize Visit.
  - Discuss next steps.
  - Provide contact information. Review the best way for communication between both parties. Continue to encourage communication at any time and reiterate the open door policy.
  - Closure and goodbye.

• After the Visit
- Document and evaluate the visit through an audio journal regarding the results of the visit and feelings about the family’s current engagement and/or feelings regarding the current school year.

- Follow-through on referrals, action items, etc.

- Additional follow up items, documentation.

- Send the family a copy of the revised goals and expectations document.

**Step 3: Final Interview/Final Home Visit**

The final home visit was scheduled during June of 2017 as a final good-bye to the families. This visit allowed the researcher to thank the families once more for opening their homes and participating in the research project. Prior to the home visit, the researcher sent a survey home for the parents to fill out regarding their thoughts about the parent/teacher relationship, their engagement as parents throughout the year, their child’s behavior and academic performance, as well as their overall thoughts on home visits (appendix H). The completed survey was given to the researcher at the home visit. Resources were provided to help support their child throughout the summer.

The protocol for the final home visit consisted of the following:

- **Arrival**
  - Set the tone (warm introduction, thank the family for their time and participation, etc.).
  - Continue establishing rapport/develop caring relationships.
  - Include all family members in the home who would like to participate.

- **During the Visit**
- Review the purpose of the visit: check in on the family, (interview) find out how they felt this year regarding the school year and their overall thoughts regarding home visits, thank the family, and provide resources.

- Check in with the family: ask how the family is doing lately, ask if there have been any major changes in the last few months, ask if there is anything the school can do for them, etc…

- Interview
  - Ask for permission to tape record and take notes for this section.
  - Ask parents to reflect on their experience with home visits. Ask them to share their opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of home visits.

- Thank the family: Thank the family for opening their home up, building relationships, and participating in the research project.

- Elicit feedback from the family
  - Answer questions.

• Concluding the Visit
  - Closure and goodbye.

• After the Visit
  - Document and evaluate the visit through an audio journal regarding the results of the visit and feelings about the family’s engagement throughout the year and their feelings regarding the school year.
  - Follow-through on action items, etc.
  - Additional follow-up items, documentation.
As a result of conducting three home visits throughout the year, the researcher was able to establish strong and trusting relationships with the families. The established trust allowed the families to honestly share their feelings regarding the school year and their experience with the home visit project. The data collected through the interviews and surveys was entered into a spreadsheet and graphs were created to analyze the data.

Discussion of External Validity

“A study has external validity if the results obtained would apply in the real world to other similar programs and approaches” (Tuckman & Harper, 2012, p. 6). Due to the small number of participants, the scope of these results are rather limited. This could be done on a larger scale, if teachers were willing to sacrifice their time to visit the homes of their students. Schools could gain valuable insight through this study, however the reality of it being carried out by a large number of teachers is unlikely unless they were compensated.

Description of the Statistical Techniques and Methods of Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data by entering the survey results from the questions in Mac Numbers to create a spread sheet. This allowed the researcher to create graphs to display data, see trends, and determine results. The beginning of the year questions and responses were compared to parents’ responses at the end of the year as well as individual parent responses compared to the other parents’ responses in the project.
Summary

Three separate teacher home visits were conducted to determine how parents felt about the impact, either positive or negative, home visits had on parents’ relationship with the teacher, their engagement as parents in their child’s education, and their child’s performance in the classroom, both behaviorally and academically. During the home visits, the teacher worked to establish a relationship with the parents as well as set goals and discuss expectations for the student, parents, and teacher for the current school year. The researcher used surveys and interviews as a way to gather data on the parents’ opinions. Spreadsheets were then created using the parents’ responses to individual questions, and graphs were created to analyze the parents’ responses from the beginning of the year compared to the end of the year, as well as compared with the other parent responses. This information was necessary to determine how parents felt about teacher home visits and their effects, whether positive or negative.
Chapter 4 - The Research Results

Introduction

The school and home are often the two most influential places in the early years of a person’s life. Kristin Erhgood, a Teach for America Veteran, stated it perfectly when she said, “Teachers are experts in pedagogy, but families are one hundred percent the experts in their children” (As cited in Kronholz, 2016, para. 9). It is essential that parents and teachers work together to help each child reach his/her highest potential. The problem is that schools have often struggled with getting parents involved and engaged in their child’s education, and parents have often complained about the lack of communication from teachers. How does one bridge this gap?

The researcher attempted to bridge this gap through teacher home visits. By visiting the homes of her students, the researcher hoped to build a strong and trusting relationship with the parents which would in turn motivate the parents to be more engaged in their child’s education. Although the researcher believed home visits could be beneficial for the parents and students, she wanted to see how the parents felt about home visits as well. The researcher hoped to answer the question, “What are the effects of teacher home visits through the eyes of the parent?” This chapter explains specifically what was done to answer the research question. It explains how the data was organized and analyzed. It will present the data using graphs. Lastly it will analyze the data and interpret the results.

In order to answer the question, “What are the effects of teacher home visits through the eyes of the parent?” the researcher needed to survey and interview the parents involved in the home visits at the initial home visit and at the final home visit regarding their thoughts and feelings on parent/teacher relationships, parent engagement, student performance, and home visits. The data from the surveys and interviews was then categorized by parent/teacher
relationship questions, parent engagement questions, student performance questions, and home visit questions. The researcher then separated each parent into his/her own spreadsheet, in order to compare and analyze the parents’ feelings and opinions at the start and end of the home visit project. Data from each parent was then used to create graphs to compare the individual parent’s feelings at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year, as well as to compare with the other parents. The data yielded information on parents’ opinions as to whether the home visits improved the parent/teacher relationship compared to previous years’ experience, whether they felt more engaged and equipped to assist their child with learning at home, whether their child’s performance and behavior in school improved compared to previous years, and overall opinions on whether home visits are beneficial or not.

**Data Presentation**

What did the data reveal about parents’ feelings and opinions regarding home visits and its effect on the parent/teacher relationship? According to Figure 1, Parents A, Parents C, and Parents D felt very comfortable communicating with their child’s preschool teacher from the previous year as well as with the kindergarten teacher who performed the home visits. The graph shows that Parents B were not as comfortable communicating with their child’s preschool teacher compared to the kindergarten teacher.

Figure 2 shows information regarding how well the parents felt they knew their child’s teacher. Parents B felt that they did not know their child’s preschool teacher very well, but felt that they knew their child’s kindergarten teacher very well. There was not much change in Parents A’s feelings on how well they knew their child’s preschool teacher compared to the kindergarten teacher, even after the home visits. However, they felt very comfortable communicating with both teachers. Parents C had more of a unique situation because the mother
worked with her child’s preschool teacher. Therefore, they had a very strong relationship with their child’s preschool teacher and felt very comfortable communicating with her as well. Despite feeling they only knew their child’s kindergarten teacher a little even after the home visits, they still felt very comfortable communicating with their child’s kindergarten teacher. Although all four sets of parents felt they had good relationships with their child’s preschool teachers, according to Figure 3, the trend on how they all felt regarding their relationships with their older children’s teachers throughout the years was satisfactory compared to their kindergartener’s 2016-2017 teacher who performed the home visits.

Communication is a key part in building a strong relationship as well as getting parents to be more engaged in their child’s education. Data was collected on how fully informed parents felt regarding their child’s performance in school. According to Figure 4, Parents A, Parents C, and Parents D all felt that they were fully informed about their child’s academic performance both during the preschool and kindergarten year. Parents B felt that they were somewhat informed about their child’s performance during her preschool year, but felt more informed during the kindergarten year.

What did the data reveal in regards to parent engagement during the preschool year and kindergarten year? Parents were asked a series of questions that included how often they contacted the teacher, how confident they felt with helping their child with academic work, how confident they felt with helping their child behaviorally, and whether they discussed the school day with their child. Figure 5 shows that Parents A and Parents B only contacted their child’s preschool teacher at parent teacher conferences, whereas they contacted the kindergarten teacher a couple of times a month. Parents C again, were a unique situation because the mother worked with the preschool teacher; therefore, they were in contact regularly. Parents D shared that they
contacted both the preschool teacher and kindergarten teacher equally, about a couple of times a month.

Parents were also asked how confident they felt in helping their child learn letters and sounds during the preschool year and helping their child learn to read during the kindergarten year. Figure 6 shows that both Parents A and Parents B were a little confident in helping their child learn his/her letters and sounds during the preschool year. They both shared that they expected this to be done at school. During the kindergarten year, they shared how they were much more confident in helping their child learn to read. Parents C and Parents D felt very confident both years in helping their child learn his/her letters and sounds and learn to read.

Parents were then asked how confident they felt in helping their child overall academically in school. Figure 7 shows that in the beginning of the year, Parents A shared that they felt little confidence in helping their child academically. At the end of the year, Parents A felt somewhat more confident helping their child academically. Parents B, Parents C, and Parents D all felt very confident in both the beginning of the year and end of the year helping their child academically.

Parents were also asked how confident they felt in helping their child improve his/her behavior at school. Figure 8 shows that Parents A, Parents B, and Parents C all felt very confident during the preschool year in helping their child improve his/her behavior at school. Parents B and Parents C still felt very confident at the end of the kindergarten year with helping their child improve behaviorally at school. Parents A felt somewhat confident at the end of the kindergarten year and Parents D felt somewhat confident both during the preschool year and kindergarten year with helping their child improve his/her behavior at school. Figure 9 reveals that each set of parents felt comfortable talking with their child about his/her teachers and school
What did the survey and interview results reveal about the child’s performance both behaviorally and academically during the preschool year compared to the kindergarten year which involved a teacher home visit? According to Figure 10, Parents A and Parents D both felt that their child was extremely interested in school and participated regularly both during the preschool year and the kindergarten year. Parents C felt that their child was interested in school and participated most of the time both during the preschool year and the kindergarten year. Parents B felt their child was extremely interested during the preschool year, but only interested and participated most of the time during the kindergarten year. When asked how their child behaved in school, Figure 11 reveals that Parents A and Parents B both felt that their child had good behavior during the preschool year and the kindergarten year. Parents C felt that their child had good behavior during the preschool year, but had satisfactory behavior during the kindergarten year. Parents D felt that their child had satisfactory behavior during the preschool year, but good behavior during the kindergarten year. When the parents were asked if they believed their child had a positive year in school, all four sets of parents believed that yes, their child had a positive year in both preschool and kindergarten (Figure 12).

What did the data reveal about parents’ overall feelings regarding home visits? Three out of the four parents shared that they had never had a teacher visit their home before (Figure 13). All four sets of parents felt that there were no negative side effects from the teacher home visits (Figure 14). When asked what they felt were the positive effects of teacher home visits, Figure 15 shows that all four sets of families believed that it helped them create a stronger relationship with the teacher, as well as gave them a clearer understanding of expectations and goals for themselves and their child for the school year. Three sets of families felt their child worked
harder at home and at school as a result of the home visits. Two sets of families felt their child behaved better in school and their child’s attitude in school improved as a result of the home visits.

At the final interview, parents were asked to share some additional thoughts on the effects of home visits in general. Figure 16 shows that three of the four sets of parents shared that it made their child feel special, made communication with the teacher easier and more open, and it allowed both parents to get to know the teacher better. Some other effects of home visits that different sets of parents shared were that it pushed parents to be more engaged and their child was more interested in doing work at home. One set of parents shared that they felt home visits would be more beneficial for older students. Lastly, all four sets of parents believed that teachers should visit the homes of every one of their students.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

What were the effects of the teacher home visits through the eyes of each of these sets of parents? Did they feel that it improved the parent/teacher relationship? Based on the results of the surveys, all four groups of parents felt the home visits had a very positive effect on the parent/teacher relationship. Parents felt that it made communication with the teacher much easier compared to previous years. In Parents A’s final interview regarding home visits, the mother stated, “I think it helps the relationship as a whole, to the teacher and the parent, just to feel more comfortable to come up to you and talk to you if there is anything that comes up” (personal communication, June 5, 2017).

For some parents, communicating with teachers is more comfortable and natural than for other parents. Although the results of the surveys showed that there was not a huge difference between how parents felt regarding their relationship with their child’s preschool teacher and
their child’s kindergarten teacher, based on the findings in Figure 1 and Figure 2 one can conclude that as a result of the home visits, Parents B were able to get to know their child’s kindergarten teacher much better and this lead them to feel more comfortable in communicating with their child’s teacher. Parents B were the only set of parents who were not able to volunteer in the classroom or at special events throughout the year. The home visits allowed them to spend some extra time with their child’s teacher and form a stronger relationship that otherwise would not have necessarily happened. In regards to the other parents, there wasn’t much of a change with how they felt they knew their child’s preschool teacher compared to the kindergarten teacher. Parents C were the unique situation because the mother worked with her child’s preschool teacher.

The survey question, “How would you describe your relationship with your other children’s previous teachers?” really revealed how home visits can build a stronger relationship between the parents and the teacher. All four sets of parents felt that their relationship with the teachers of their older children in previous years was only satisfactory, but their relationship with their child’s 2016-2017 kindergarten teacher was great. Parents often only have contact with their child’s teacher during parent-teacher conferences. By visiting the child’s home, it gives the parents and teachers an opportunity to get to know each other outside of the two scheduled fifteen-minute parent-teacher conferences each year. Parents A and Parents D revealed in their final interview that if it had not been for the home visits, the fathers would never have met and gotten to know their child’s teacher because they were unable to attend both parent-teacher conferences (personal communication, June 5, 2017). Parents C also shared in their final interview that although the mother volunteered in the classroom once a week and was able to interact with the teacher, the home visit allowed the father to get to know the teacher as well.
EFFECTS OF HOME VISITS

Home visits offered an informal opportunity for both parents to get to know their child’s teacher which resulted in easier communication between both parties. Since the home visits helped parents get to know their child’s teacher better, which then resulted in easier communication between the two parties, all four sets of parents felt they were fully informed about their child’s performance throughout the school year.

Home visits offer an opportunity for parents and teachers to not only establish a stronger relationship than they otherwise would have had, but it also allows the teacher to empower the parents to engage in their child’s education and work with him/her at home by providing tips and resources. Contacting the teacher is one way that parents show that they are engaged in their child’s education. Looking back on Figure 5, Parents A and Parents B had only contacted their child’s preschool teacher at parent-teacher conferences compared to their child’s kindergarten teacher who they contacted a couple of times a month. Parents D felt they had the same amount of communication between the preschool teacher and the kindergarten teacher. Parents C felt they communicated more often with the preschool teacher than the kindergarten teacher. However, this could be a result of the mother working with the child’s preschool teacher. Based on the responses of Parents A and Parents B, one can conclude that as a result of the home visits, these two sets of parents felt more comfortable communicating with the teacher and reaching out when they had questions and/or concerns throughout the year.

Parents A and Parents B also revealed that unlike Parents C and Parents D, they did not feel confident in helping their child learn his/her letters/sounds in preschool. They shared that they thought that was supposed to be learned in school (personal communication, October 24, 2017 & October 26, 2017). Figure 6 shows that Parents A and Parents B felt much more confident helping their child learn to read during the kindergarten year. Although Parents B,
Parents C, and Parents D all felt confident helping their child overall academically both during the preschool year and the kindergarten year, Parents A felt more confident helping their child academically in the kindergarten year compared to the preschool year. Parents B shared on their final survey and interview that the home visits made them more engaged with the teacher and also with their child and her homework and what is expected of her. They shared that their expectations for themselves as parents of a school aged child changed this year. They stated, “The curriculum expects school aged kids to learn more each year (comparing to older siblings). Parents have to put additional work in at home to help kids meet the expectations” (personal communication, June 7, 2017). As a result of the home visits, parents understood more clearly what was expected of them, were more confident in helping their child learn what was expected, and worked harder to help their child reach his/her highest potential (Figure 15).

According to the data in Figure 8, the home visits did not seem to have a major effect on how confident the parents felt in helping their child improve his/her behavior in school. Parents B, Parents C, and Parents D all felt very confident both years, whereas Parents A actually felt only somewhat confident during the kindergarten year compared to the preschool year. There also did not seem to be a huge change among the different sets of parents between the preschool year and the kindergarten year on whether they discussed with their child about his/her school day (Figure 9). Home visits did not seem to add to or take away from this aspect of parent engagement with the four sets of parents involved in the project. Overall, parents seemed to feel that the home visits helped them understand more clearly the expectations for themselves and their child for the school year. This in turn empowered them to be more engaged to help their child achieve his/her goals for the kindergarten school year.

Did parents feel home visits had a positive impact on their child’s performance both
behaviorally and academically? When asked how their child performed in both preschool and kindergarten, three out of the four parents shared that their child performed the same both in preschool and in kindergarten. According to Figure 10, Parents B shared that their child seemed more interested in preschool activities than in kindergarten activities. They still felt that she was interested in the activities in kindergarten, but not as interested as preschool. This could be due to the fact that there are higher expectations academically in kindergarten and there is not as much playtime as there is in preschool.

In regards to how their children behaved in school, Parents A and Parents B did not notice a change in their child’s behavior in the preschool year compared to the kindergarten year. Parents C felt their child’s behavior was only satisfactory in kindergarten, whereas in preschool it was good. This could be a result of kindergarten being more rigorous than preschool and more demanding mentally. It is unclear whether the home visits may have helped make the transition from preschool to kindergarten smoother. Would Parents C’s child have had an even more difficult year, had the home visits not occurred? Continued research is needed to answer this question. Parents D felt their child’s behavior improved in kindergarten compared to the preschool year. The home visits seemed to aid in improving the behavior of Parents D’s child. Parents D shared in their final interview that the home visits made their child feel special when the teacher would come to visit, and their child would get super excited (personal communication, June 5, 2017). Based on Figure 15, three out of the four parents felt that the home visits motivated their child to work harder at school and at home. Two out of the four families felt the home visits improved their child’s attitude towards school and they behaved better in school. Overall based on the data, about fifty percent of the parents felt that home visits had a positive effect on their child’s performance both behaviorally and academically.
Summary

Teachers and parents are often the two most influential people in a young person’s life. It is imperative that they work together to help each child reach his/her highest potential. Teachers and parents often only have direct contact about twice a year for fifteen minutes at parent-teacher conferences. How can a relationship be established in this short amount of time? The researcher attempted to use home visits as a way to bridge the gap between the school and home and improve relations. The researcher’s goal was to determine parents’ perspective on the effects of home visits. Based on the data, parents were extremely positive about the home visits and felt that it strengthened the parent/teacher relationship, making it easier to communicate with each other. They also felt it helped provide clear expectations and goals for themselves as parents and for their child which in turn empowered them to be more engaged in their child’s education and school work. About fifty percent of the families felt the home visits improved their child’s behavior and attitude towards school.
EFFECTS OF HOME VISITS

Graphs for Data Results

**Figure 1**

How comfortable were you in communicating with your child’s teacher?

![Bar graph showing comfort levels in communicating with the child's teacher.](image1.png)

**Figure 2**

How well did you know your child’s teacher?

![Bar graph showing knowledge levels of the child's teacher.](image2.png)
Figure 3

How would you describe your relationship with your children’s previous teachers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past Elementary Teachers of Other Children</th>
<th>2016-2017 Kinder Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

Did you feel fully informed with how your child was performing in school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preschool Teacher</th>
<th>Kindergarten Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5

How often did you contact your child’s teacher?

- Preschool Teacher
- Kindergarten Teacher

- 0 - Never
- 1 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- 2 - A Couple Times/Month
- 3 - Weekly
- 4 - Daily

Parents A Parents B Parents C Parents D

Figure 6

How confident did you feel in helping your child learn?

- 0 - Not confident at all
- 1 - A little confident
- 2 - Somewhat confident
- 3 - Very confident

- Letters and Sounds in preschool
- Reading in kindergarten

Parents A Parents B Parents C Parents D
How confident do you feel in supporting your child academically?

![Figure 7](chart1)

How confident did you feel in helping your child improve his/her behavior at school?

![Figure 8](chart2)
**Figure 9**

Were you able to talk to your child at home about his/her teachers and his/her day at school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preschool Year</th>
<th>Kindergarten Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10**

How did your child perform in the classroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preschool Year</th>
<th>Kindergarten Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 - Extremely interested &amp; Participated</td>
<td>Parents A</td>
<td>Parents B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Interested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Little Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - No interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11

How did your child behave last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Parents A</th>
<th>Parents B</th>
<th>Parents C</th>
<th>Parents D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12

Did your child have a positive experience in school with his/her teacher?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Parents A</th>
<th>Parents B</th>
<th>Parents C</th>
<th>Parents D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were no negative effects of the home visits.

What were the positive effects of teacher home visits?

- Stronger relationship with teacher
- Clearer understanding of expectations
- My child worked harder in school and at...
- My child behaved better in school
- My child's attitude in school improved

End of the year additional thoughts on home

- Make my child feel special
- Communication was easier and more open...
- Allowed both parents to get to know the...
- Pushes parents to be more engaged
- Home visits might be more beneficial with...
- Child was more interested in doing school...
Chapter 5 – Looking Ahead

Research is continuing to unfold each year on the effectiveness of home visits. Currently Steve Sheldon, a John Hopkins School of Education Researcher and Professor, is conducting a two-year study on the effectiveness of parent/teacher home visits in four major urban areas throughout the country. His goal is to prove that without a good relationship with parents, schools will continue to struggle to engage parents in their child’s education. Sheldon states that, “Asking questions and listening to families are a start to building trust in a family-school relationship” (DeFusco, D., 2017, para. 9). In order for parents and teachers to work together effectively there must be a trusting relationship that has been established. The data results from this research study, “The Effects of Teacher Home Visits: A Parent’s Perspective,” revealed that parents felt the home visits created a more comfortable and trusting relationship. This allowed for easier communication between the teacher and parents. Stephanie Smith, a third grade teacher in California and author of the article “Would You Step Through my Door?” states,

I can’t think of an easier way to begin building mutual liking and respect than to give parents a home-court advantage. Bonds of trust begin to build the moment I walk into a parent’s home and compliment his or her hard work in raising an amazing child…The relationship starts when I take that first step toward the family instead of hiding behind my classroom door. (Smith, 2013, p. 76)

Parents’ confidence in themselves and the school builds when teachers take the time to visit their students’ homes. Looking back on figure 15, parents felt that the home visits created a stronger relationship with the teacher as well as provided them with clearer expectations and goals for themselves as parents and for their child. Seventy-five percent of the families felt that the home visits also motivated their child to work harder at school and at home. One hundred percent of
the parents involved felt that all teachers should participate in home visits with their students.

Although the results of the study are positive in regards to home visits, the data is quite limited. The study only involved four sets of parents and their kindergartener for one school year. Also, it is difficult to compare the preschool year and the kindergarten year because there is a huge difference in expectations socially and academically for both years. Additionally, the students involved in the study were very social prior to the home visit and were fairly well-behaved students who loved and enjoyed school. More research is needed on a broader scope to fully understand the effects of teacher home visits through the parents’ perspective. A study needs to take place with many more families of children both in early elementary, upper elementary, middle school, and high school. Students involved need to come from a variety of backgrounds both culturally and socioeconomically. There should also be a range of behaviors among the students, including students who have been known to struggle behaviorally in school as well as students who have been known to do well behaviorally in school. Also, the researcher should not be the one involved in the home visits. This would allow the researcher to get a better perspective of home visits through the eyes of the parents if the home visits are done by several different teachers.

The parents in this study believed that all teachers should visit the homes of each one of their students. What would it look like if teachers visited the homes of every student both young and old, students who perform well academically compared to those who struggle academically, students who struggle behaviorally to the those who do not, students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds to those who come from high socioeconomic backgrounds, and students who come from the same cultural background as their teacher as well as those who come from a different cultural background than their teacher? How would a home visit to every
student effect the parent/teacher relationship, the parent engagement, and the student performance both behaviorally and academically? The fact that these four families felt so strongly about home visits is a step in the right direction. Home visits could be the key to transforming our schools, but there is still so much more research that needs to be done. Schools need to see the value in home visits, encourage teachers to partake in them, and compensate them for their time. Jennifer Heinrichs, a kindergarten teacher in Saskatchewan, sums up the value of home visits perfectly when she states, “When we walk through the door and listen unhurriedly to the child talk, it makes the child feel special and valued. When we share a bit of ourselves with the child and their family, it helps the family see us as a partner, a friend, someone who can be trusted” (Heinrichs, 2015, p. 223). Home visits should be a priority in all schools because they open the doors to building a relationship of trust with the families which in turn has a domino effect on all other aspects of a child’s education.
References:


Appendix A

Beginning of the Year Parent Survey

1. How well did you know your child’s preschool teacher personally?
   1. Very well
   2. Somewhat
   3. A little
   4. Not well at all
   5. Comments:

2. How comfortable were you in communicating with your child’s preschool teacher?
   1. Very comfortable
   2. Somewhat comfortable
   3. A little comfortable
   4. Not comfortable at all
   5. Comments:

3. How often did you contact your child’s preschool teacher?
   1. Daily
   2. Weekly
   3. A couple times a month
   4. Only at parent teacher conferences
   5. Never

4. How often did the teacher contact you directly?
   1. Daily
   2. Weekly
   3. A couple times a month
   4. Only at parent teacher conferences
   5. Never

5. What were the reasons the teacher contacted you? Please circle all that apply:
   1. My child was not behaving well
   2. My child was not doing his or her work
   3. My child was behaving very well
   4. My child was doing a great job on his/her work
   5. Remind me of a school event or field trip
   6. My child’s attendance
   7. Other (please explain):

6. Did you feel that you were fully informed with how your child was performing at school last year?
   1. Yes
   2. Somewhat
   3. No
   4. Comments:
7. What were some of the ways the teacher communicated with you?
   1. Newsletter
   2. Phone calls
   3. Notes
   4. Website
   5. Home visits
   6. Email

8. Has a teacher ever visited your home?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. If Yes, what was the reason?

9. How do you feel your relationships with your child’s or your other children’s teachers have been in previous years?
   1. Great, we communicated on a regular basis
   2. Good, I felt I knew what was going on most of the time
   3. Satisfactory, I knew a little, but I wish she had called me more often
   4. Poor, I felt like I never knew what was going on
   5. Comments:

10. How did your child preform in the classroom last year?
    1. Extremely interested in class activities and participated regularly
    2. Interested in class activities and participated most of the time
    3. Had little interest in participating in class activities
    4. Had no desire to participate in class activities
    5. Comments:

11. How did your child behave in school last year?
    1. Great behavior
    2. Good behavior
    3. Satisfactory behavior
    4. Poor behavior
    5. Very Poor behavior

12. Did your child have a positive experience in school with his/her teacher last year?
    1. Yes
    2. Somewhat
    3. No
    4. Comments:

13. Were you able to talk with your child at home about his/her teachers and his/her day at school?
    1. Yes
    2. No
14. How confident did you feel in helping your child learn his/her letters and sounds?
   1. Very confident
   2. Somewhat confident
   3. A little confident
   4. Not confident at all

15. How confident did you feel in helping your child improve his/her behavior at school?
   1. Very confident
   2. Somewhat confident
   3. A little confident
   4. Not confident at all

16. How confident do you feel in supporting your child academically?
   1. Very confident
   2. Somewhat confident
   3. A little confident
   4. Not confident at all

17. How often are you able to engage in a fun activity with your child? (cooking, playing a sport, playing a game, reading a book, singing/dancing to music, etc…)
   1. Every day
   2. A couple times a week
   3. Once a week
   4. Once every few weeks
   5. Once a month
   6. Never

18. Are you able to eat together as a family on a regular basis?
   1. Yes
   2. No

19. What are your expectations of a teacher?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

20. What are your expectations for yourself as a parent of a school age child?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

End of the Year Parent Survey

1. How well do you know your child’s kindergarten teacher personally?
   1. Very well
   2. Somewhat
   3. A little
   4. Not well at all
   5. Comments:

2. How comfortable were you in communicating with your child’s kindergarten teacher?
   1. Very comfortable
   2. Somewhat comfortable
   3. A little comfortable
   4. Not comfortable at all

3. How often did you contact your child’s kindergarten teacher?
   1. Daily
   2. Weekly
   3. A couple times a month
   4. Only at parent teacher conferences
   5. Never

4. How often did the teacher contact you directly?
   1. Daily
   2. Weekly
   3. A couple times a month
   4. Only at parent teacher conferences
   5. Never
   6. Comments:

5. What were the reasons the teacher contacted you? Please circle all that apply:
   1. My child was not behaving well
   2. My child was not doing his or her work
   3. My child was behaving very well
   4. My child was doing a great job on his/her work
   5. Remind me of a school event or field trip
   6. My child’s attendance
   7. Other (please explain):

6. Did you feel that you were fully informed of how your child was performing at school this year?
   1. Yes
   2. Somewhat
   3. No
   4. Comments:
7. What were some of the ways the teacher communicated with you?
   1. Newsletter
   2. Phone calls
   3. Notes
   4. Website
   5. Home visits
   6. Email

8. How did you feel about the teacher visiting your home at the beginning of the school year?
   1. Very comfortable
   2. Somewhat nervous
   3. Not comfortable at all

9. How did your child perform in the classroom this year?
   5. Extremely interested in class activities and participated regularly
   6. Interested in class activities and participated most of the time
   7. Had little interest in participating in class activities
   8. Had no desire to participate in class activities
   9. Comments:

10. How did your child behave in school this year?
    1. Great behavior
    2. Good behavior
    3. Satisfactory behavior
    4. Poor behavior
    5. Very Poor behavior

11. Did your child have a positive experience in school and with his/her teacher this year?
    1. Yes
    2. Somewhat
    3. No
    4. Comments:

12. In your opinion, what were some of the positive effects of the home visit? Please circle all that apply.
    1. Stronger relationship with teacher
    2. Clearer understanding of expectations and goals
    3. My child worked harder in school and at home
    4. My child behaved better in school
    5. My child’s attitude towards school improved
    6. Other:

13. In your opinion, what were some of the negative effects of the home visit? Please circle all that apply.
    1. My child and family were embarrassed
    2. The parent-teacher relationship became uncomfortable
    3. My child’s attitude toward school got worse
    4. There were no negative effects of the home visit
    5. Other:
14. Do you think teachers should do home visits for every student?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. Comments:

15. As a parent, how would you describe your relationship with your child’s teacher this year?
   1. Great
   2. Good
   3. Satisfactory
   4. Poor
   5. Comments:

16. Were you able to ask your child at home about his/her teachers and his/her day at school?
   1. Yes
   2. No

17. How confident did you feel in helping your child practice reading?
   1. Very confident
   2. Somewhat confident
   3. A little confident
   4. Not confident at all

18. How confident did you feel in helping your child improve his/her behavior at home and at school this year?
   10. Very confident
   11. Somewhat confident
   12. A little confident
   13. Not confident at all

19. How confident did you feel in supporting your child academically this year?
   14. Very confident
   15. Somewhat confident
   16. A little confident
   17. Not confident at all

20. How often did you and your child engage in a fun activity together? (cooking, playing a sport, playing a game, reading a book, singing/dancing to music, etc…)
   1. Every day
   2. A couple times a week
   3. Once a week
   4. Once every few weeks
   5. Once a month
   6. Never

21. Are you able to eat together as a family on a regular basis?
   1. Yes
   2. No
22. Have your expectations for a teacher changed this year? If so, how?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

23. Have your expectations for yourself as a parent of a school aged child changed this year? If so, how?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Additional thoughts:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Parent Consent Form

Date

Dear Parents,

I am currently working on my thesis project for my Masters in Education from ___________. I am sending you this form to request your consent to be a participant in my research project titled “The Effects of Teacher Home Visits: A Parent’s Perspective.” I have requested and been granted permission on (date) by ________, the principal of ________________, to carry out this research study. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effects of teacher home visits through the eyes of the parents. How will parents feel home visits affect the parent-teacher relationship and the child’s performance both academically and behaviorally at school. I will be administering 4 case studies. In order to make the selection process fair, parents who are interested in participating will be assigned a 2-digit number. I will then select 4 sets of parents using a random table of numbers (digits 0-9 listed in a variety of ways for several pages). I will pick a random spot on the table to start and will group the single digits in twos. The first four numbers that are in the range of 01-24 (or however many parents agree to participate) will be selected. By signing this consent, you agree to the possibility of being part of the study. If chosen for the study, you agree to allow me to visit your home 3 times for approximately 15-40 minutes during the school year. Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty if you choose not to participate. Also, if you are one of the four names selected, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences. The project will run from October to June and will include 3 home visits during that time.

The first visit will consist of us simply getting to know each other a little bit more. During this time, I will not record the conversation. The second part of the visit will consist of interview questions regarding your past experience and feelings with schools and teachers. This part of the conversation will be recorded, but anonymously. The third part of the visit will be a time for us to share our expectations for the school year. I will also provide you with information on school resources and materials to help reinforce concepts that I’m teaching at school. The second home visit will simply be to check up on you and your family to see how you’re feeling about the school year. The final visit
will be a time to reflect on the school year as a whole and answer interview questions regarding your experience throughout the year.

All information from this study will be kept completely confidential and no names will ever appear in the research documents. Although participants aren’t anonymous, all recordings of interviews will be identified as Parent A, Parent B, Parent C, and Parent D. Once the information on the recordings has been transcribed, the recordings will be deleted permanently. During the transcribing process, the recordings will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my classroom. I will be the only one to have a key to open it and have access to the recordings. The transcriptions will be kept on my work computer which requires a password to access. No other person will have access to my computer or be given this password. Data from interviews will be available to myself (primary researcher) as well as my faculty research advisor, ____________. Please feel free to let me, ____________, know via email at ____________ if you have any questions or let my supervisor, ____________, know at ____________. We will make sure that your questions or concerns will be addressed fully and you will be satisfied with our answers. If you would like a copy of the research results I will get that to you. Thank you so much for your willingness to help me in my study.

By signing below, you acknowledge your understanding of the information stated above and agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s name: ________________________________

Participant’s signature: ______________________ Date: ______________

Principal researcher’s name: __________________________

Principal researcher’s signature: ______________________ Date: __________
Date

Dear ________________.

I want to thank you so much for your willingness to be a part of my thesis project, “The Effects of Teacher Home Visits: A Parent’s Perspective.” I’m so excited to share that you were one of the randomly selected families who will be participating. I will be contacting you this week to set up our first home visit. Please begin thinking about several possible dates and times that will work for you and your family (after school, evenings, or even weekends if needed). The visit will be between 15 and 40 minutes.

Thank you again and I look forward to getting to know you and your family more!

Sincerely,
Appendix E

Letter to Parents Who Were Interested but Not Randomly Selected for the Study

Date

Dear Parents,

I want to thank you so much for your willingness to participate in my thesis project for my master’s degree. I really appreciate your support. Unfortunately, your family was not one of the randomly chosen families who will be participating. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Thank you again!

Sincerely,
Appendix F

Parents’ and Teacher’s Goal Setting Sheet for Home Visits

Goal #1

Goal #2
Appendix G
Student Goal Setting Sheet for Home Visits

I am a SUPER STAR at....

I would like to get better at...
## Appendix H

### Spreadsheet for Survey Questions

<table>
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<th>Parents A: Beginning of the Year Survey Questions</th>
<th>Parents A: End of the Year Survey Questions</th>
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<td>1. How well did you know your child's kindergarten teacher personally?</td>
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<td>2. How comfortable were you in communicating with your child's preschool teacher?</td>
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<td>3. How often did you contact your child's teacher?</td>
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<td>4. How often did the teacher contact you directly?</td>
<td>4. How often did the teacher contact you directly?</td>
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<td>5. What were the reasons the teacher contacted you?</td>
<td>5. What were the reasons the teacher contacted you?</td>
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<td>6. Did you feel that you were fully informed with how your child was performing at school last year?</td>
<td>6. Did you feel that you were fully informed of how your child was performing at school this year?</td>
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<td>7. What were some of the ways the teacher communicated with you?</td>
<td>7. What were some of the ways the teacher communicated with you?</td>
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<td>8. Has a teacher ever visited your home?</td>
<td>8. How did you feel about the teacher visiting your home at the beginning of the school year?</td>
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<td>9. How do you feel your relationships with your child's or your other children's teachers have been in previous years?</td>
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<td>10. How did your child perform in the classroom last year?</td>
<td>9. How did your child perform in the classroom this year?</td>
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<td>12. Did your child have a positive experience in school and with his/her teacher last year?</td>
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<td>13. Were you able to talk to your child at home about his/her teachers and his/her day at school?</td>
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<td>14. How confident did you feel in helping your child learn his/her letters and sounds?</td>
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<td>15. How confident did you feel in helping your child improve his/her behavior at school?</td>
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<td>19. What are your expectations of a teacher?</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. What are your expectations for yourself as a parent of a school age child?</td>
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Appendix I

School Approval Letter for Project

October 6, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Mrs. Kimberly Bunsee has my approval to pursue her thesis project as an employee of Byron Center Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Kari Anama
Kari Anama
Principal
Marshall Elementary School
Appendix J

Random Table of Numbers Used for Parent Selection

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