

HOME LITERACY PRACTICES IN DIVERSE FAMILIES: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN
KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

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Although prior research has shown that parental involvement positively affects a child's literacy development, attention should also be directed to the factors that keep parents from being involved in their children's education. The study reported in this dissertation examined five factors: socioeconomic status, level of education, employment, culture, and language that may be influential in parental assistance of their children's literacy development in the home. The data sources for this investigation included interview responses and a demographic survey. Data from 17 parents, each from a different household, and each with a child in kindergarten were obtained and used for the study. For analyses of these data, content analysis was used to identify similar themes among the interview responses and the demographic survey.

Results indicated the following: (1) the time parents spent assisting their child with literacy activities was affected by long work hours, (2) parents with a yearly income of \$25,000 or less were unable to provide additional literacy materials for their children, (3) lack of multicultural literature caused culturally diverse parents to feel devalued, and (4) parents who did not speak English fluently lacked the strategies to assist their children in completing English literacy homework. The findings suggest there are significant factors in the home environment that impact the quality and amount of literacy activities that parents provide for their children. In order for teachers to support parents in providing for their children's literacy development, they need to be aware of these factors. In addition, teachers should be culturally sensitive by including multicultural literature in the curriculum.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
HOME LITERACY PRACTICES IN DIVERSE FAMILIES	1
Introduction	1
Historical Perspective	7
Theoretical Perspective	10
Literature Review.....	12
Statement of the Problem	28
Methods.....	31
Data Analysis and Discussion of Results	44
Discussion of Results in Relation to Research Questions	84
Discussion.....	89
Conclusions	91
Recommendations	98
Summary and Implications	99
Appendices	
A. DETAILED METHODOLOGY	100
B. DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY.....	105
C. INTERVIEW QUESTION	109
D. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PILOT STUDY).....	111
E. OTHER ADDIIONAL MATERIALS	113
COMPREHENSIVE REFERENCE LIST	119

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. 2013 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	19
2. Pilot Study Questions and Reasons to Revise.....	39
3. Group Demographics Matrix	68
4. Reading Materials in the Home Matrix.....	70
5. Time Spent Reading Matrix.....	72
6. Additional Literacy Activities Matrix.....	77
7. Difficulties in the Home Environment Matrix.....	80
8. Parents Opinions Regarding Teacher Provided Literacy Materials Matrix.....	81
9. Categories and Patterns within Themes Matrix	83

HOME LITERACY PRACTICES IN DIVERSE FAMILIES

Introduction

Parent involvement plays an important role in the success of children's learning in many academic areas, specifically in language arts and literacy (Crowe & Reichmuth, 2008). Young children develop stronger early literacy and language skills when parents value their role in their children's literacy and language development, regularly engage their children in literacy and language enhancing activities, organize the home to support literacy and language, are role models for literacy, and are active partners with their child's teacher (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006). Consistent parental involvement during the child's school career can have significant benefits, including motivation to learn and increased academic performance (Crowe & Reichmuth, 2008). For instance, children whose parents read to them at home recognize letters of the alphabet sooner than those whose parents do not (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 2010). Children whose parents teach them how to write words are able to identify letters and connect them to speech sounds (Haney & Hill, 2004). Children whose mothers use complex sentences in their everyday conversations achieve high scores on literacy-related tasks in kindergarten (Tabors, Roach, & Snow, 2007). Research shows that the earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer lasting the effects (Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Ritchson, & Sullender, 2004). Additionally, of all school subjects, reading has been found to be most sensitive to parental influences (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002).

Although researchers know that parents greatly impact a child's development in literacy, having this knowledge does not ensure that the child will have a literacy rich

environment in the home. Many parents want to help their children be successful but do not have the knowledge or training to do so (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Parents are also faced with many life factors that do not permit them to provide literacy-rich environments for their children. For example, many parents are single parents, work one or more jobs, and are in low socio-economic households (Clark, 2009). They also might be faced with cultural and language barriers that prevent them from providing mainstream literacy activities for their children. Researchers must examine these factors to help determine why every child does not have a rich home literacy environment that provides successful literacy experiences.

Some studies show the connection between parent involvement in literacy at home and reading success (e.g., Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006). Student failure in literacy continues to increase due to a definite disconnection between the schools and parents (Paratore, 2002). The disconnection occurs between the school and parents for many reasons. A survey conducted by the National Education Association (2012) found that out of the one thousand teacher participants, only 7% of teachers believed parents were not given the opportunity to offer input and guidance in school events and activities. At the same time, more than one-quarter of parents' surveyed felt they were shut out of the process (NEA, 2012). A significant number—71%—of teachers felt they held enough conferences with students' parents (the majority held them twice per school year). Only 48% of parents said the same (National Education Association, 2012).

The disconnect between parents and teachers is causing some children to have difficulties in literacy achievement (Lynch et al., 2006). Schools continue to have little or no progress in raising the scores on state reading assessments. The National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP) most recently assessed fourth grade students' reading skills in 2011. The percentages of fourth grade students performing at or above the basic (67%), at or above proficient (34%), and at advanced (8%) achievement levels in reading showed no measurable change from 2009, but were higher than in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Teachers and administrators need to understand what can be done to help with the disconnect between teacher and parent perceptions and communications. They need to understand why literacy practices within the home are difficult and challenging for parents. Educators may not have the background to understand these issues at home and therefore do not do anything more to involve parents (Brown, 2007). For example, the most effective forms of parent involvement are those that engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home (Clark, 2009).

Literacy practices are much different in the home environment than in the school environment. This sometimes causes an imbalance of literacy practices for the child (Baker, 2003). Parents are different in every household and have different expectations and goals for their children. In their study, Beutel and Anderson (2008) examined the educational expectations of African American, Hispanic/Latino and Caucasian parents and children. They found that parents and children have high educational expectations regardless of race, but black parents and children have higher educational expectations than nonwhite and white parents once socioeconomic and other factors are controlled (Beutel & Anderson, 2008). The goals and expectations held by parents can affect student's performance in school and can cause them to have difficulties. One reason for these difficulties might be the parent's educational background; they might not have the skills needed to assist the child at home

(Clark, 2009). Another reason might be that many parents have to work long hours, more than one job, and some parents have to work hours at night (Beutel et al., 2008). The result is less time is spent with the child. Also, parents who come from different cultures may value literacy in different ways which reflects on the child. Educators must be aware of these issues and be willing to work with parents in order for the children to be successful in school (Clark, 2009).

Parent involvement has a strong positive correlation with children's academic development. Decades of research shows that when parents are involved, students have higher grades, test scores, graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, and better self-esteem (Williams & Chavkin, 2008). The earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects on their school and academic success (Williams et al., 2008). Children are better prepared for school when they come from homes where parents model the uses of literacy and engage children in activities that promote literacy (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2009). Schools must understand that lack of participation by parents does not necessarily mean they are neglecting their responsibilities. They simply do not have the time, resources, or know-how to help out. In 2012, almost 50 million (16%) people in the United States were considered to be living in poverty (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Families living in poverty do not have the income to provide materials such as books, computers, or tutors to create a rich and positive literacy environment for their children (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Parents may also lack the education and skills needed to help children become readers (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). In 2011, less than a third of the United States population (32%) held a bachelor's degree or higher (US Department of Education, 2012). According to the US Census Bureau (2011) there are 381 distinct non-English languages

with over 60 million people speaking a different than English. With different languages comes diverse backgrounds and knowledge and parents from diverse backgrounds often do not understand school-based literacy practices and have a difficult time implementing literacy activities in the home (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

Parents who have little education, and who live in poverty, or speak a language other than English may not provide mainstream literacy practices in the home; however, they can still provide other literacy practices for their children. For example, sending text messages, blogging, tweeting, writing and responding to emails, and posting messages on social network websites such as Facebook can be types of literacy practice. Yet, these types of parent involvement in literacy are not always considered by educators and schools to have a positive impact on a child's education. For instance, Auerbach (2005) points out that many educators hold untrue assumptions about family literacy situations. Edwards (1995) reminds us that it is important to focus on understanding the reasons why certain types of parent involvement in literacy practices do not necessarily translate into school success. More research needs to be conducted to help educators understand the actual types of literacy practices that are occurring in the home in order to determine how to better help parents use non-traditional literacy practices, such as writing emails, texting, participating in online social networks, and telling stories to improve school performance.

The parent–teacher relationship is implicated in children's early school success (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). When parents participate in their children's education, both at home and at school, and experience relationships with teachers characterized by mutuality, warmth, and respect, students achieve more, demonstrate increased achievement motivation, and exhibit

higher levels of emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment (Pianta, 2006). Through parent-teacher partnerships, literacy interactions between parents and children can be improved. For example, Christenson and Sheridan (2001) concluded that positive parent-teacher relationships improved the following; how parents encouraged and discussed leisurely reading, parent monitoring of student's homework and how time is spent, specifically in reading, the quality of reading materials provided for the child, parent modeling of learning by reading, and the amount of reading with children. Similarly, minority and low-SES parents experience less positive relationships with teachers and engage in fewer school involvement activities than do Caucasian and higher SES parents (Boethel, 2003). Teachers perceive minority parents as engaging in fewer involvement behaviors and as less cooperative than Caucasian parents (Boethel, 2003). Teachers and principals tend to attribute lower levels of parent involvement among ethnic minority parents to a lack of motivation to cooperate, a lack of concern for their children's education, and a lower value placed on education (Lopez, 2001). Teachers and schools often do not have strong relationships with parents, causing them to be unaware of parent's life situations that prevent them from providing school-based literacy activities for their children. This lack of a strong relationship causes educators to hold the perception that many parents do not support their children's literacy development. However, most parents do support their children's literacy development and their educational success. For example, Christenson and Sheridan (2001) found that African American parents report levels of parent involvement that are comparable to or higher than that of Caucasian parents, whereas teachers rate African American parents' involvement as lower than that of Caucasian parents. Other studies have reported that minority parents endorse attitudes toward education similar to

those of Caucasian parents and exhibit levels of involvement in home-based parent involvement activities similar to, if not higher than, those of Caucasian parents (Rimm-Kaufman, La Paro, Downer, Pianta, 2005). If the assumption is correct that parents care about literacy development and want to help, then more research needs to be done to understand the factors in the home environment that prevent parents from providing or assisting their children with literacy interactions. Furthermore, this research should explore what parents think teachers can do in order to strengthen the parent/teacher relationship as well as strategies teachers could use to involve parents more in literacy practices with their children.

Historical Perspective

From the time of the first U.S. colonies and continuing through Civil War times, there was no effort to relate school and home experiences to one another (Finn, 1999). In those days, a parent's main goal was survival, keeping the family alive by providing food and shelter. School was not valued or regarded with the importance it is today. Parental involvement was described as a one-way transaction, from the school to the home (Linder & Foote, 2002). Children's failure was mainly blamed on the parents, without any responsibility being taken by educators or methods. The belief was that all children could be taught the same way. If one child was successful, then all should be able to be successful in the same way.

Beginning in the 1890s and lasting until the 1930s, the Progressive Movement greatly impacted education. It arose as a response to the vast changes brought by modernization, such as the growth of large corporations and railroads, and fears of corruption in American politics (Progressivism, 2001-2005). The era was notable for a dramatic expansion in the number of schools and students served, especially in the fast-growing metropolitan cities. Finally, after

1910, smaller cities began building high schools (Progressivism, 2001-2005). Modernization of society, city leaders believed, necessitated the compulsory education of all children, even if the parents objected (Gamson, 2003). During this era, middle and upper class parents began to believe in the importance of education. School populations consisted mostly of white middle- and upper-class children. However, parents were still unlikely to be involved in their child's education, leaving the job solely to the schools and educators (Gamson, 2003).

After the Civil War and until the 1970s, culture, class, and race continued to be issues affecting parental involvement in children's academic success. Nieto (1996) stated that schools did not acknowledge diversity among children. Teaching was predominantly focused the majority or dominant culture. Teachers claimed they were not being biased because everyone was receiving the same materials and education (Brown, 2007). In its 1974 decision in *Lau v. Nichols*, the United States Supreme Court claimed that non-English speaking students could not understand the language in which they were being taught; therefore, they were not being provided with an equal education. The Supreme Court further said that: "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (Office for Civil Rights, 2006). The Supreme Court also clarified that equality of opportunity does not necessarily mean the same education for every student, but rather the same opportunity to receive an education, and that an equal education is only possible if students can understand the language of instruction (Office for Civil Rights, 2006). Within weeks of the *Lau v. Nichols* ruling, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) mandating that no state shall deny equal education opportunity to any individual

"by the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program" (Office for Civil Rights, 2006). This ruling forced schools and teachers to pay attention to the diversity that existed among students. Slowly children began to be seen as individuals with different learning styles, characteristics, and abilities.

One of the earliest research studies on the effects of culture and language on literacy, Heath (1983) investigated language differences between towns in North and South Carolina. The study found that children's literacy development was affected by their lives and culture, and that language itself was affected by cultural patterns and socialization (Heath, 1983). The communities that Heath studied had different patterns of interaction between oral and written language due to differing cultural patterns (Heath, 1983). This helps shape the idea that the differences among children and their home environments correlates strongly with academic success.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the importance of parental involvement in the child's schooling continued to grow. In 1999 Finn claimed that educators needed to focus on "the whole child" and his or her experiences. Finn also argued that every child is different, with differing backgrounds and interests that go beyond their cultural background to include family issues and socio-economic conditions. He argued that in order to understand these issues, teachers must develop positive relationships with parents in order for the children to be successful in school (Brown, 2007).

In 2001, Laier, McMillon, and Danridge further studied parent involvement and the relationship between the home and school. They defined this relationship as an "integral

network.” They found that in order for students to be successful, parents and teachers must work together; yet, all too often the relationship failed due to a disconnect between the home and school. Laier et al. (2001) argued that the disconnect happened due to the use of mainstream approaches in the classroom, such as reading aloud and other book reading activities that are not altered to different cultures and reading abilities. Brown (2007) concluded that teachers must understand how home and school literacy can differ and work to decrease the reliance on literacy programs or curriculum so that they can better assist the families of every child (Brown, 2007). When teachers communicate with parents they can better understand the diverse needs of the children. Teachers can better understand what happens in the home and eliminate the blame often placed on parents who are not involved in their child’s schooling (Edwards et al., 2001).

Theoretical Perspective

Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory argues that children construct knowledge through social interactions (Santrock, 2004). Vygotsky suggests that emergent literacy develops through these social interactions in which children develop knowledge, values, and skills. These interactions differ from child to child which leads to diverse development (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 2010). The social constructivist theory states that learning first happens in the environment. It is then internalized by the child, followed by the internal creation of knowledge (Haney, 2004). The child then uses this knowledge to develop skills to be successful in things like reading and writing. That being said, literacy, as something that is constructed through the social world, varies widely based on this theoretical framework. One child’s knowledge will have been constructed differently from another child’s knowledge based on their social

constructs. This adds credence to the argument that it is important to the study of literacy to examine parent involvement in the home environment (Brown, 2007). Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2005) points out that educators' assume parents know how to help their children learn to read, which in most cases is not true. Furthermore, Tabors et al. (2007) describe the assumption that most parents do want their children to succeed. Yet, they point out that many of them, especially those of low socioeconomic status, do not have the knowledge or skills to help their children with literacy activities. Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2005) draws the conclusion that educators need to support parents so that they can gain the skills necessary to provide appropriate social interactions for literacy activities within the home for the child. When teachers seek to understand a child's culture and home environment by listening to parent needs and recognizing their capabilities, teachers will be better able to provide instruction for individual children, and support parents in helping their children develop literacy skills (Paratore, 2002). By understanding the diverse literacy environments that children live within, including second-language households, educators can develop a positive relationship between the home and school and expand the focus beyond the literacy behaviors of the dominant culture (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2005)

If parents are not receiving the resources they need to support their children's literacy development, they may not be able to provide meaningful literacy activities within the home. Finn (1998) states that parents must have access to books and the knowledge to properly use the books. They must be aware of the importance of literacy and be able to teach reading strategies to their children. They must have access to teachers and communicate with them about how to best help their children. They must also take a proactive role in sharing

information with teachers about the literacy environment within the home, but it's up to teachers to facilitate that exchange of information (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2005) Ideally, there will be a tight home-school connection through consistent communication practices where the intention is to help parents be a partner in literacy development (Crowe & Reichmuth, 2008).

Literature Review

Strong Home Literacy Environments

An abundant amount of research provides insight into the importance of home environments for children's reading literacy development. Children's early literacy experiences lay the foundation of the learning-to-read process prior to formal schooling (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Parents can support their children if they engage in literacy-related activities with them (Leseman & de Jong, 2001). The parental role model is especially important in motivating students and influencing attitudes to reading and learning (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Providing children with opportunities to practice literacy skills is important to further literacy development.

To encourage children to explore literacy, families must have access to print resources and literacy materials (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Parents' attitudes to reading activities have an impact on the home literacy environment, as they determine the extent to which parents themselves get involved in activities and encourage their children to do so (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Parents who engage in many literacy activities with their children foster the development of positive attitudes to reading (Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002). To encourage children to explore literacy families must have access to print resources and developmentally appropriate literacy materials.

Modeling of Literacy Skills

There is ample evidence that parents who promote literacy in the home have a strong effect on the literacy success of their children. In strong homes, teachers see parents as caring role models who spend time reading with their children (Paratore, 2002). Parents who promote literacy believe their children will be successful literate people (Rashid, Morris, & Sevcik, 2005). Parents who show that they enjoy and value reading are more likely to have children who develop those same attitudes. For instance, in a home where a parent encourages a child to read a grocery list or a newspaper, although not directly related to school literacy, that child will likely develop print awareness and be more familiar with environmental print (Leserman et al., 1998).

In these and other cases, research has provided ample evidence that children will be much more successful in their literacy development when there is strong parental involvement in literacy in the home. It is crucial for parents to understand how they can best model literacy practices within the home and provide opportunities for children to participate in literacy activities. This can be especially challenging for homes where literacy is not dominant or parents have little time to spend with children. In this case it becomes even more important for teachers to get involved with the parents to provide solutions (Rasinski & Padak, 2004). In 1995, Edwards conducted a study to learn how a literacy program influenced low socioeconomic fathers and mothers after the program developer was dismissed and the ongoing influence of the developer was no longer present. The parents demonstrated that they were capable of helping their children learn literacy skills after being taught the skills themselves, even if the program developer was no longer involved (Edwards, 1995). This

supports the notion that parents want to be involved and can be a significant factor in school success when they are taught the skills they need to support their children.

Opportunities for Practicing Literacy Skills

The amount of time a child spends reading at home has a correlation with school performance (Brown, 2007). Furthermore, according to Crowe & Reichmuth (2008) a parent's ability to organize and monitor a child's reading time is an important measure of the child's success in school. When parents are managing their child's reading time, they are ensuring they are actually practicing the reading skills being taught in school. In their study, Crowe & Reichmuth (2008) found that when parents were involved with children in learning and practicing reading skills, the children's performance improved in school due to receiving individualized practice with literacy activities. However, parents must have the specific skills needed to teach reading strategies to young children in order for them to become successful readers'. When parents do not have the literacy skills necessary to teach children reading strategies at home it can actually hinder children's learning. The development of speaking, reading and writing abilities are compromised when children are not able to practice them every day at home. If parents do not have the reading skills to assist children, education is compromised. Even if a child does make it to school, older generations cannot assist with homework necessary for the student's success.

Powell-Smith, Shinn, Stoner, and Good (2000) studied two parent tutoring programs, one which used basal readers and one that used literature books to work with children. They found that some parents lacked the skills necessary to correctly use the books provided in the program, causing both themselves and the children to be unsuccessful in properly using reading

strategies. It is important that parents are taught how to be reading teachers in the home so that there may be meaningful and consistent reading practices taking place within the home.

Motivation to Read

Parents play a major role in children's success in education and life (Nord, 2010). They are looked upon to provide guidance, support, and the necessities children need to stay alive. A parent's attitude is usually shared by the child. Positive parental attitudes toward literacy can help children become more successful readers (Baker, Kessler-Skar, Piotrkowski, & Parker, 1999). By providing materials that capture the child's interest, a parent motivates the child to read (Edwards & Bauserman, 2006). It is not only important that parents are motivated to read, but also to be readers themselves. Parents who show their own interest in reading by reading in front of their children are encouraging them to read, too (Parents As Teachers National Conference, 2012). Enthusiasm about books and reading can be shared between a parent and child and deepen the child's interest in learning to read (Baker, Kessler-Skar, Piotrkowski, & Parker, 1999). Children who learn from parents that reading is fun may be more likely to sustain efforts to learn to read when learning provides obstacles as they become more fluent and higher level readers (National Research Council, 2008). Some experts believe that parental emphasis on reading as entertainment, rather than as a skill, motivates children to have a more positive attitude toward reading (Neuman, 2004). When children are motivated to participate in reading and literacy activities within the home they are more likely to participate in recreational reading (Baker et al., 1999). Because the child is participating in a desired activity they will want to read more, thus building their reading skills. When a child is read to

consistently on a daily basis his motivation will increase and they will truly learn the pleasures of reading (Neuman, 2004).

Available Literacy Materials in the Home

Some experts believe that for America's poorest children, the biggest obstacle to literacy is the scarcity of books and appropriate reading material (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Families living in poverty do not have the income to provide materials such as books, computers, or tutors to create a rich and positive literacy environment for their children (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). In many homes, particularly those with adult non-readers, there simply aren't any books, magazines, or newspapers appropriate for young children. Yet, studies show that parents who are given books and "prescriptions for reading" by their children's pediatricians are four times more likely to read and share books with their young children (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). The NAEP 2009 Reading Report Card found that students with higher reading scores were more likely to report four types of reading materials in their homes—encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, and at least 25 books. Homes with reading and writing materials for children—such as books, newspapers, writing paper, pencils, and crayons—create more opportunities to develop literacy (PATNC, 2012). Children who come from homes with little reading materials often begin school with little reading experience. In some home, even when books are available, they are not interesting or developmentally appropriate for the children. Parents who lack the resources to provide literacy activities also tend to be less involved with their children's school work. This again goes back to the importance of the teacher knowing the needs of the parents and providing support that helps train the parents in the best ways to help their children. Perhaps, as Aikens & Barbarin (2008)

said, teachers need to “prescribe” literacy activities to parents. Teachers should encourage parents to include not only books, but also magazines, newspapers, menus, and any other materials that might captivate the child’s interest. Teachers should encourage parents to provide their children with reading experiences, such as going to the library, reading signs in the environment, and watching educationally appropriate television together (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). The more literacy materials and experiences are provided within the home, the more familiar with literacy children will be when they enter school.

Factors that Impact the Home Environment

Today’s families face challenges that include single or working parent households, lower socioeconomic status, lower educational level of parents, and cultural diversity that adds complexity to the learning environment at home. Children who experience one or more of these factors often have increased difficulties in school because they may not be receiving the same support or the same literacy experiences as their peers (Brown, 2007). Evans, Shaw, & Bell (2000) found that the amount and types of literacy practice that happens in children’s environment has a tremendous impact on the children’s development of literacy skills. In most cases, when there is a lack of certain practices by the parent such as teaching and explaining concepts, monitoring and reviewing homework, and supporting the child’s success their performance greatly suffers (Finn, 1998). According to Aikens and Barbarin (2008), more than half of the children in the United States are labeled as being at risk in school due to having one or more of the above mentioned risk factors. Due to the importance of how these risk factors affect children, it’s valuable to explore exactly how they affect literacy and what can be done about each of them when they are a problem.

Single and working parents

Research shows that parents do care for their children's educational success, yet when parents are forced to work two and even three jobs to pay for basic living needs, there is little time for helping children learn at home (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). For example, a single mother of three children who is working two jobs to provide for her family is going to have a much harder time paying for expenses than a husband and wife who both work a fulltime job to provide for their children (Brown, 2007). Having multiple jobs or one job with long work hours causes parents to be out of the home and away from their children. In cases where there are multiple children in the household, the older children often assume the role of an adult or even a parent to younger siblings at a very early age (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). When children have to care for younger siblings it leaves them less time for their own school work and reading. Single parents often do not have the time to commit to literacy activities and monitor children's homework. Hofferth (2006) found that parents in "traditional" families with a working father and an at-home mother spent an average of 22 hours a week directly engaged with their children under age 13. That was slightly more than the 19 hours spent by parents in dual-income families and more than double the 9 hours spent by single mothers (Hofferth, 2006). The National Household Education Survey of 2009 found that 61% of preschoolers in two-parent households were read to daily versus 46% of preschoolers in households with one parent or no parents.

Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status has a major impact on literacy activities within the home (Linder & Foote, 2002). Socioeconomic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family's SES, researchers examine the total household income, earners' education, and occupations (Wikipedia, 2012). In 2012, 50 million (15.1 %) people in the United States were considered to be living in poverty (Department of Health & Human Services, 2012). Table 1 lists the 2012 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines.

Table 1

2012 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
1	\$11,490
2	15,510
3	19,530
4	23,550
5	27,570
6	31,590
7	35,610
8	39,630
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,020 for each additional person.	

Note. From "United States Consensus Guidelines 2013." Department of Health & Human Services. Retrieved March 1, 2013 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml>.

Children who live in low SES homes tend to experience difficulties with learning (Edwards & Bauserman, 2006). In particular, children in low income families are less likely to be read to daily. There is a link between low SES and education level of the parents in those

households. Often parents in low SES households lack the educational abilities to help their children with school activities, such as literacy activities. Although they are not capable of helping their children with literacy activities and other school work, it cannot be assumed that they are not involved. While these parents may not help their children with homework, they often monitor their children to ensure that the work is getting done (Nieto, 1996). Brown (2007) echoes this, by pointing out that parents from low SES homes often also lack the resources to help with literacy activities and the quality and frequency of shared reading is lower (Brown, 2007).

Education level of parents

Educated adults have more influence on their children's education; the children become literate adults who, in turn, produce more educable children (Stichtand & McDonald, 1990). The single most significant predictor of children's literacy is their mother's literacy level (Educational Testing Service, 2006). The more education a mother has, the more likely she is to read to her child. Studies show that 77 percent of children whose mothers have a college education were read to every day, while only 49% of children whose mothers had a high school education were read to daily (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Young children need positive support and modeling of reading early on in their life. Yet, in many homes with lower education levels, the parents do not have the knowledge or habits to provide support and modeling, causing young children to start school with few literacy experiences. For example, the National Household Education Survey (2006) found that about half of the children of college graduates make monthly trips to the library, compared with less than one-sixth of children whose parents never completed high school. Due to not having positive literacy

behaviors modeled for them, these children tend to lack the skills necessary to be good readers throughout their school years.

In 2006, Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, and Shapiro found that parent's education directly related to their beliefs and values about literacy. Parents with less education tended to value reading less than those with higher education levels (Lynch et al., 2006). Parents who have attended and graduated from college understand the importance of literacy and reinforce the practicing of concepts at home (Brown, 2007). When parents who are uneducated try to help their children they often use practices that prevent learning. For example, if a child consistently makes mistakes throughout the reading of a story, and the parent corrects the child instead of teaching him reading strategies to help with self-correction, the child can become frustrated and lose his motivation to read. The parent can also become frustrated and no longer want to help the child.

Cultural diversity

The shifting demographics of school-aged children, as well as future projections, suggest that the enrollment of children who are culturally and linguistically different from the dominant U.S. culture will continue to increase (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Culture plays a major role in shaping literacy in the home. Yet in many cases, school culture is much different than family culture (Nieto, 1996). According to Nieto (1996) literacy is valued and perceived differently depending on cultural values and experiences of the parents. Due to these differing values, children are faced with the challenge of parsing their different environments and finding a way to exist in both worlds. Many families choose to speak only their native language in the home, causing difficulty for children to transfer their knowledge from one

language to another (Baker, 1999). Although parents with a lower education may want to help their children, they do not have previous experience with school based literacy standards (Edwards, 1995). Nieto (2006) states this causes parents to be unable to reinforce literacy concepts in English. Differing cultural values in the home also causes differences in how homework is completed and valued. Because culture and values greatly influence literacy development, it is important that educators understand the culture and values of each child in order to help him or her be successful (Linder & Foote, 2002).

Overall, children who come from homes where parents have little education, speak another language, have low SES, and are culturally diverse are most likely to have negative influences that prevent positive literacy experiences (Neuman, 2003).

Parent Perceptions of Literacy Practices

For children to be successful readers they must have support from their parents (Finn, 1998). How parents perceive and value literacy greatly relates to the amount of literacy activities, their motivation, and the achievement of their child (Baker, 1999). Every home is different; therefore how literacy is viewed and valued is different, especially in the homes of minority families and low SES families. Lynch et al. (2006) found parents of low SES tend to have more skills-based approaches to reading, where they focus much more on specific skills and tasks. Conversely, parents in high SES households embrace emergent literacy development. They participate in shared reading, where they ask more questions and involve the child in the actual reading of the text (Lynch et al., 2006). Lynch (2006) suggests that the children from low SES homes receive different literacy experiences due to parent's perceptions about literacy. Therefore, it cannot be presumed that parents from these homes do not value literacy; instead

their perceptions of literacy need to be examined so that parents and teachers can work together.

Many parents do not read to their children because they are poor readers themselves. Parents' self-concept as readers impacts their perception of literacy that takes place in the home (Baker, 2003). Parents who are poor readers often are unable to read homework instructions or communications sent home by teachers (Edwards, 1995). Having this dilemma causes parents to be unable to assist their children. Rasinski and Padak (2004) state that parents often feel they lack the skills necessary to help their children read and complete homework. Consequently, parents become unsure of themselves and make mistakes, therefore choose not to provide for or participate in literacy activities with their children. Parents in this situation may have a negative perception of the literacy activities that take place with the child (Brown, 2007).

Parent's perceptions of literacy are effected by their own self concepts and cultural history. Families from diverse backgrounds usually maintain their cultural values and language, thus causing difficulties in providing support for their child in mainstream literacy development (Nieto, 1996). Although it is important that their children are successful, they often have difficulty with the cultural and language barriers that exist between home and school. Parents often try to help their children with literacy yet are unable to properly reinforce concepts. This puts pressure on parents to give up their own culture to align to mainstream literacy practices (Brown, 2007). Yet it may not be necessary to homogenize cultures in order to teach literacy. If educators build relationships with parents, they can help the parents feel comfortable with providing literacy support in their homes without giving up their own cultural values.

Parents' abilities often influence how they interact with and support their children at home (Rasinski and Padak, 2004). On the one hand, teachers may perceive parents as capable of supporting literacy activities that are sent home from school. On the other hand, in most cases due to lack of experience and training, parents are not always capable of providing proper literacy activities to children. Rasinski and Padak (2004) argue that if parents have training and are provided with demonstrations of literacy activities then they will be more capable of assisting their children. When teachers provide parents with clear objectives and instructions, parents will better understand mainstream literacy expectations that are set for their children.

Collaboration

Positive parent and teacher relationships are pertinent to the success of the child whether in literacy or any other subject. In their study, Bauman Hoffman, Dusty-Hester, and Ro (2000) found that 93% of the teachers studied recommended that parents listen to their child read aloud every day. However, they also found that only half of that percentage sent materials, such as books, home with the children, assuming that parents have what they need already in the home (Baumann Hoffman et al., 2000) stated that only 10% of the teachers collaborated with parents about proper literacy activities they could implement in the home with their children. Educators often assume that parents understand the literacy activities that come home with the children (Baker, 1999). Yet, if parents are struggling readers themselves they are not going to be able to assist their children with reading.

Linder and Foote (2002) found that parental involvement had decreased in many schools and that there was a need to educate parents to help them become more involved. In their study Linder and Foote interviewed pre-service and practicing teachers about their

awareness of the importance of family literacy. They found that the teachers had little awareness of the importance of parent involvement, and that furthermore, the teachers did not know the appropriate strategies to involve parents. According to the results, Linder and Foote (2002) found that in order to help parents become more involved there must be more programs for teachers to help parents understand and develop strategies to assist their children with literacy activities.

Over the years educators have created and implemented programs that help parents learn how to properly provide literacy activities within the home. These programs include Head Start, Even Start, or the Family School Partnership Program (Cairney, Ruge, Buchanan, Love, & Munsie, 2002). Although these programs are federally funded, they are limited by strict guidelines of who they can and cannot serve. In fact, in their study Cairney et al. (2002) found that these programs have not made much difference in helping parents assist their children in their literacy development. These programs also fail to recognize the language, literacy, and cultural diversity of the communities they are working with (Nickse, 1993). Although these programs are funded by the government and research-based, these programs have fallen short of meeting the needs of families due to their lack of understanding of the different cultures within the home (Cairney et al., 2002).

As mentioned above, research has proven the importance of the connection between parents and teachers. Over the past two decades literacy programs have been developed by teachers, in order for them to understand diverse families and to help to build those connections (Auerbach, 1995). Yet, in his study Auerbach (1995) found that these programs only involve parents when help is needed for a special event or with an individual child. This

does not necessarily get parents involved in the individual child's academic success within the school or at home. Handel (1999) argues that schools are failing to look at home environments from which children come causing parents to mistrust the school due to lack of acknowledgment of the child's literacy needs. According to Handel (2009) these programs are a one-way street: from home to school, in which the underlying issues in the home are ignored.

Parent-teacher collaboration has an enormous impact on students, specifically those who are struggling readers. Baker (1999) suggests that it is important for teachers and parents to make a connection between the school and home environments. The amount and quality of literacy interactions between the parent and child will help them be successful in school. This is why educators must help parents learn about how to engage in literacy activities at home (Leserman & de Jon, 2008). Teachers must also be careful in what they perceive the parents can and cannot do with the child. Teachers must help parents build confidence, provide them with guidance, and allow them to be involved in the classroom in whatever way they can (Baker, 1999). Communication should be a two-way street in which parents and teachers can both provide advice and information about the child. This two-way relationship is important because it helps motivate readers and allows for a more consistent literacy environment between the home and the school (Brown, 2007).

Summary

Parental involvement strongly correlates with the academic development of children. Decades of research show that when parents are involved in their children's studies, the children have higher grades, test scores, graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, and better self-esteem (Williams & Chavkin, 2008). The earlier parents get involved

in a child's educational process, the more powerful the effects (Williams et al., 2008). Children are better prepared for school when their parents model the uses of literacy and engage children in activities that promote literacy (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2008). Schools must understand that lack of participation by parents does not necessarily mean they are neglecting their responsibilities. As more and more children enter into school lacking the skills necessary to be successful readers, it is important for educators to be aware of the many factors that can impact that success. Educators must understand that most parents do care for their children's success in education (Finn, 1998). However, some parents from lower SES households, parents who speak English as a second language, or parents who lack a higher education may lack the time, resources, or skills to help them appropriately (Brown, 2007). We must also take into consideration the culture and values that exist among different families and how these factors effect children's literacy development. Values and beliefs about literacy in the home may not align with those of the school culture (Neuman, 2003). In order to teach all children as equally as possible, teachers must be aware when the values and beliefs of the child's home environment could impede literacy development. Teachers must strive to communicate better with those parents and strive to incorporate literacy practices that can be embedded within those family's traditions. There needs to be two-way communication between parents and teachers. This allows teachers to extend their reach beyond the classroom into the home where they can create learning partnerships with parents in order to dramatically improve literacy.

Statement of the Problem

Parent involvement has a strong positive correlation with children's academic development. Decades of research shows that when parents are involved, students have higher grades, test scores, graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, and better self-esteem (Williams & Chavkin, 2008). The earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects on their school and academic success (Williams et al., 2008). Children are better prepared for school when they come from homes where parents model the uses of literacy and engage children in activities that promote literacy (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2009). Schools must understand that lack of participation by parents does not necessarily mean they are neglecting their responsibilities. They simply do not have the time, resources, or know-how to help out. In 2012, 50 million (16%) people in the United States were considered to be living in poverty (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services). Families living in poverty do not have the income to provide materials such as books, computers, or tutors to create a rich and positive literacy environment for their children (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Parents may also lack the education and skills needed to help children become readers (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). In 2011, less than a third of the United States population (32%) held a bachelor's degree or higher (US Department of Education, 2012). According to the US Census Bureau (2011) there are 381 distinct non-English languages with over 60 million people speaking a different than English. With different languages comes diverse backgrounds and knowledge and parents from diverse backgrounds often do not understand school-based literacy practices and have a difficult time implementing literacy activities in the home (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

Parents who have little education, living in poverty, or speak a language other than English may not provide mainstream literacy practices in the home; however, they can still provide other literacy practices for their children. For example, sending text messages, blogging, tweeting, writing and responding to emails, and posting messages on social network websites such as Facebook can be types of literacy practice. Yet, these types of parent involvement in literacy are not always considered by educators and schools to have a positive impact on a child's education. For instance, Auerbach (2005) points out that many educators hold untrue assumptions about family literacy situations. Edwards (1995) reminds us that it is important to focus on understanding the reasons why certain types of parent involvement in literacy practices do not necessarily translate into school success. More research needs to be conducted to help educators understand the actual types of literacy practices that are occurring in the home in order to determine how to better help parents use non-traditional literacy practices, such as writing emails, texting, participating in online social networks, and telling stories to improve school performance.

The parent-teacher relationship is implicated in children's early school success. When parents participate in their children's education, both at home and at school, and experience relationships with teachers characterized by mutuality, warmth, and respect, students achieve more, demonstrate increased achievement motivation, and exhibit higher levels of emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment (Pianta, 2006). Through parent-teacher partnerships, literacy interactions between parents and children can be improved. For example, Christenson and Sheridan (2001) concluded that positive parent-teacher relationships improved the following; how parents encouraged and discussed leisurely reading, parent monitoring of student's time

reading, the quality of reading materials provided for the child, parent modeling of learning by reading, and the amount of reading with children. Similarly, minority and low-SES parents experience less positive relationships with teachers and engage in fewer school involvement activities than do Caucasian and higher SES parents (Boethel, 2003). Teachers perceive minority parents as engaging in fewer involvement behaviors and as less cooperative than Caucasian parents (Boethel, 2003). Teachers and principals tend to attribute lower levels of parent involvement among ethnic minority parents to a lack of motivation to cooperate, a lack of concern for their children's education, and a lower value placed on education (Lopez, 2001). Teachers and schools often do not have strong relationships with parents, causing them to be unaware of parent's life situations that prevent them from providing school-based literacy activities for their children. This lack of a strong relationship causes educators to hold the perception that many parents do not support their children's literacy development. However, most parents do support their children's literacy development and their educational success. For example, Christenson and Sheridan (2001) found that African American parents report levels of parent involvement that are comparable to or higher than that of Caucasian parents, whereas teachers rate African American parents' involvement as lower than that of Caucasian parents. Other studies have reported that minority parents endorse attitudes toward education similar to those of Caucasian parents and exhibit levels of involvement in home-based parent involvement activities similar to, if not higher than, those of Caucasian parents (Rimm-Kaufman, La Paro, Downer, & Pianta, 2005). If the assumption is correct that parents care about literacy development and want to help, then more research needs to be done to understand the factors in the home environment that prevent parents from providing or assisting their children with

literacy interactions. Furthermore, this research should explore what parents think about the strategies teachers use to involve parents more in literacy practices with their children.

Methods

The study was designed to investigate how identifiable external factors affect the amount and type of literacy activities parents provide their kindergarten children in the home. These factors include the following: (1) careers/jobs; parents may or not have the time to provide literacy activities for their kindergarten children due to working strenuous jobs that require long hours of service (2) socioeconomic status; does a parent's SES affect their ability to provide literacy activities and literacy materials for their kindergarten child (3) parent's education level and reading ability may or may not affect their ability to provide literacy activities for their child and teach them literacy skills needed to become fluent readers, (4) cultural diversity, language and cultural traditions may or may not affect the amount and type of literacy activities parents provide for their kindergarten children. This study was also designed to examine to what extent parents provide literacy activities in the home for children in kindergarten, and if any at all, what kinds of literacy activities do the parents provide for their children. Furthermore, a review of the literature suggests that parents' perceptions of school based literacy activities does in fact impact if and how parents provide literacy experiences with their children in the home. Therefore, it is important to examine if parents' agree or disagree with teacher strategies to involve them in literacy practices at home.

In qualitative research, an interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of interviewees responses (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story

behind a participant's experiences (McNamara, 1999). The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Thus, a face-to-face, standardized, open-ended interview was considered an appropriate research design for the study to investigate the amount and types of literacy activities parents provide their kindergarten children in the home. The standardized open-ended interview is extremely structured in terms of the wording of the questions (Turner, 2010). Participants are always asked identical questions, but the questions are worded so that responses are open-ended (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This open-endedness allows the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire and it also allows the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up (Turner, 2010). Additionally, the standardized, open-ended interview is considered an appropriate research design for the study to investigate if the types of literacy activities parents provide in the home for their kindergarten children during the school year and to what extent parents are affected by their perceptions' of teacher strategies to involve parents in literacy practices at home. The primary advantage of interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys (Boyce & Neal, 2006). They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information—people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you as opposed to filling out a survey (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002). Face-to-face interviews allow the observation not only of verbal but also nonverbal data such as facial expressions and body language (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004). A non-experimental survey was considered appropriate to obtain demographic data pertaining to each participant. In order to gain multiple perspectives, this study used the maximum variation sampling strategy. A maximum variation sample is a purposefully selected sample of persons or

settings that represent a wide range of experience related to the phenomenon of interest (Maykut & Morehouse, 2000). With a maximum variation sample, the goal is not to build a random and generalizable sample, but rather to try to represent a range of experiences related to what one is studying (Maykut & Morehouse, 2000). To achieve this, parents of kindergarten children attending Pecan Creek Elementary, a bilingual/Title 1 school with a high number of economically disadvantaged families were recruited; and parents of kindergarten students attending EP Rayzor Elementary, an affluent, non-bilingual school with a low number of economically disadvantaged families were recruited to participate. The parent participants were identified with the assistance of kindergarten teachers in the two elementary schools. The data gathered from the parent interviews and demographic surveys were analyzed using the content analysis approach. Content analysis is a set of procedures for collecting and organizing information in a standardized format that allows analysts to make inferences about the characteristics and meaning of written and other recorded material (General Accounting Office, 1999). Simple formats can be developed for summarizing information or counting the frequency of statements. These statements are coded, categorized, and then analyzed to interpret the data. For the purpose of this study, content analysis was used to examine the data for emerging themes that specifically provide data to answer the research questions.

Pilot Study

During the spring 2012 semester, the researcher carried out an individual research project that served as a pilot study for the dissertation. Parents of kindergarten children attending a public school in an affluent neighborhood were interviewed. The interview questionnaire (see Appendix D) was administered to 10 parent participants of kindergarten

children to determine the adequacy and validity of the interview questions and determine if other measures were needed. Before data collection, the pilot study was reviewed and approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects. From the pilot study the researcher learned that the parent participants selected from the study did not represent a range of experiences, values, and diversity. All of the parents lived in an affluent neighborhood with large houses, and all of the participants were Caucasian and spoke only English. The researcher learned that in order to get a range of data to answer the research questions, the sample must represent participants that include diversity in language, education, SES, race, and culture. In order to attain this sample, participants must be selected from more than one school, preferably an affluent school and a school with a large number of children living in a household with an income of less than \$25,000 per year. From the pilot study, the researcher also learned that some of the interview questions required reformatting in order to provide sound data for the final dissertation study (see Table 1). Furthermore, the pilot study informed the researcher of the importance of retrieving demographic information about each participant in the final dissertation study. After interviewing the parent participants in the pilot study the researcher used the following procedures to improve the internal validity of the interview questionnaire: discarded all unnecessary interview questions, assessed whether each question gave an adequate range of responses, established that replies could be interpreted in terms of the information that is required, and re-word/re-scale any questions that were not answered as expected.

Table 2

Pilot Study Questions and Reasons to Revise

Pilot Study Interview Questions	Reason to change the question
<p>1. Do you find it hard to find time to read or work with your child on reading activities? If so, why?</p> <p>2. What aspects of your home make it difficult for you to work with your child?</p>	<p>1 & 2 Reformat so that participants will specifically discuss what interferes with their participation in reading activities with their child.</p>
<p>6. What types of activities do you currently do to help your child? How often do you and your child do reading activities? How long?</p>	<p>6. Re-word adding what parents do to help the child be successful in school and give examples.</p>
<p>7. What makes it easy to work with your child on literacy activities?</p>	<p>7. Re-word “do they find it difficult work on literacy activities with their child?”</p>
<p>10. If you could change one aspect of your home environment that would help your son/daughter perform better in school, what would you change?</p>	<p>10. Reformat to ask what challenges parent’s face that prevents them from providing literacy activities for the child. ADD-what about their schedule that makes it difficult to be involved in school work.</p>
<p>11. What can the teacher do to help you better as a parent?</p>	<p>11. Delete (This was a negative question assuming participants were not good parents.</p>
<p>13. What would you like the teacher to do differently?</p>	<p>13. Give examples (homework explanations, more communication)</p>
<p>15. Have you currently developed strategies to work with your teacher to make a strong connection between home and school?</p>	<p>15. Reformat to have less academic language (what have they done to build a relationship with the teacher?)</p>
<p>16. Your child’s teacher says that she does _____. How do you feel about this? Is it helpful?</p>	<p>16. Discard</p>
	<p>ADD-What does the parent do to motivate the child to read? ADD-Participant’s perception of literacy materials and assignments sent from school.</p>

Participant Selection

In order to gain multiple perspectives, this study used the maximum variation sampling strategy. A maximum variation sample is a purposefully selected sample of persons or settings that represent a wide range of experience related to the phenomenon of interest (Maykut & Morehouse, 2000). With a maximum variation sample, the goal is not to build a random and generalizable sample, but rather to try to represent a range of experiences related to what one is studying (Maykut & Morehouse, 2000). To achieve this, parents of kindergarten children attending Pecan Creek Elementary, a bilingual/Title 1 school with a high number of economically disadvantaged families were recruited; and parents of kindergarten students attending EP Rayzor Elementary, an affluent, non-bilingual school with a low number of economically disadvantaged families were also recruited to participate. A Title 1 school is determined by the number of children who receive a free or reduced lunch. A total of 210 parents' received the participation letter and consent form (110 with a kindergarten child attending EP Rayzor Elementary, and 100 with a kindergarten child attending Pecan Creek Elementary). Of the 210 parents whom received the participation letter/consent form (see Appendix G), 17 of those parents agreed to participate in the research study (10 parents with a kindergarten child attending EP Rayzor and 7 parents with a kindergarten child attending Pecan Creek).

Procedures

In order to gather a diverse sample of participants, two elementary schools in Denton Independent School District were targeted for the study. Before data collection, the study was reviewed and approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB) for

the protection of human subjects, after which approval letters were sent to Denton ISD and the principals of each elementary school. Upon receipt of approval this researcher informed all of the kindergarten teachers at each elementary school of the purpose of the study and interviews to take place with the parents. The teachers were provided with the parent consent letters to send home with each and every kindergarten student. If a parent was identified as speaking only Spanish, a translated consent letter was sent home (See Appendix E). Once a parent returned the consent form and agreed to participate in the study the researcher contacted the parent by phone. This researcher explained the format of the interview process to the parent participant, describing the interview and survey, and the time frame taking no longer than thirty minutes. The parent participants were ensured of the privacy and confidentiality of their responses through secured numeric coding. This researcher scheduled the interview date and time with each individual parent participant. The interviews were conducted in the homes of the parent participant's. The parent interviews were recorded using an I-Phone. Within twenty four hours of each interview, this researcher transcribed the recorded interview using the program Dragon Naturally Speaking. Transcriptions were uploaded to the software program, NVivo10, which conducted a search for emerging themes among the participant responses.

Measures

In qualitative research, interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic. Often in qualitative research, interviews are coupled with other forms of data collection in order to provide the researcher with a well-rounded collection of information for analyses (Turner, 2010). For that reason and for the purpose of this study a standardized, open- ended, interview (see Appendix C) was used

to identify external and internal factors that affect the quality and amount of literacy activities parents of kindergarten children provide in the home. The interview was also used to determine whether parents of kindergarten children agree or disagree with the kindergarten teacher's strategies to involve them in their child's literacy development. The interview questions were open-ended in order to allow the researcher to increase the length and depth of interviewees' responses (Louw, Todd, & Jimakorn, 2011). This open-endedness allowed the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desired and it also allowed the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up (Turner, 2010). Also, a demographic survey (See Appendix B) was used to gather background information such as SES, employment, marital status, race, ethnicity, language, and education level.

Interview

For this research study the primary data source consisted of interviews with parent participants (See Appendix C) as well as a parent demographic survey (see Appendix B). When interviewing parents, the researcher asked questions to capture parents' experiences working with their children at home to develop their literacy skills and their opinions of the kindergarten teacher's strategies to involve them in their child's literacy development (see Appendix C). The interview questions were derived by the researcher based on previous research and structured to provide data for the following research questions: (1) to what extent, if any, do parents of kindergarten children provide literacy activities other than assigned school work, for their children? What kinds of literacy activities do the parents provide for their children? (2) to what extent if any, do identifiable external factors such as SES, level of education, marital status, and employment affect the amount and types of literacy activities parents provide for their

kindergarten children? (3) to what extent, if any do identifiable internal factors such as cultural beliefs, values, and language barriers affect the amount and type of literacy activities parents provide for their kindergarten children? (4) to what extent do parent's agree or disagree with the strategies and activities their children's teachers use to involve them in their children's literacy development? The standardized open-ended interview questions were extremely structured in terms of the wording of the questions (see Appendix C). Participants were asked identical questions, but the questions were worded so that responses were open-ended (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This open-endedness allowed the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desired and it also allowed the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up (Turner, 2010). Semi-structured, open-ended interviews are likely the most popular form of interviewing utilized in research studies because of the nature of the open-ended questions, allowing the participants to fully express their viewpoints and experiences (Turner, 2010). According to Gall et al., (2003), open-ended interviews reduce researcher biases within the study, particularly when the interviewing process involves many participants.

In order to achieve, and maintain, data quality, interviews must collect data using methods that produce reliable answers to the interview questions. The primary advantage of interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys (Boyce & Neal, 2006). They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information—people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you as opposed to filling out a survey (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002). Face-to-face interviews allow the observation not only of verbal but also nonverbal data (Hiller

& DiLuzio, 2004). When in the same room, for instance, participant and interviewer have access to facial expressions, gestures, and other paraverbal communications (how we say what we say) that may enrich the meaning of the spoken words (Carr & Worth, 2001). Because both researcher and participant are in the same space, and thus have access to more than just verbal data, they can build the rapport that may enable participants to freely disclose their experiences more effectively (Shuy, 2003). Furthermore, Polkinghorne Knox, and Burkard (1994) asserted that in-person interviews yield authentic and deep descriptions of phenomena via the interviewer's ability to facilitate trust and openness in the interviewee, which lessens the interviewee's need for impression management and enables the examination of her or his private experiences. For example, while interviewing one of the participants she began to tear up as she talked about the time she spends away from her son due to long work hours. To ensure the accuracy of parent responses the interviews were recorded using an I Phone and transcribed using the program Dragon Naturally Speaking. The researcher used the content analysis method to evaluate the transcriptions for reoccurring themes as they related to the research questions. Qualitative content analysis involves a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation

Demographic Survey

The Parent Demographic Survey (see Appendix B) was developed by the researcher based on the research discussed and structured to provide data for the following research question: (2) to what extent if any, do identifiable external factors such as SES, level of education, marital status, and employment affect the amount and types of literacy activities parents provide for their kindergarten children? The demographic survey contained questions

on participants' gender, age, ethnicity, race, current marital status (e.g., married, divorced), level of education, employment status, and total family income. The survey was used to gain background information about each participant.

Case Summaries

After the researcher met with interview participants and collected demographic data, the researcher constructed a case summary of each participant. The qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008). One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Through these stories the participants are able to describe their views of reality and this enables the researcher to better understand the participants' actions (Robottom & Hart, 1993). These summaries included information about their experiences in working with their kindergarten child in literacy development, background information such as ethnicity, SES, income, marital status, and education level in order to create an image of each individual. This served to introduce and to characterize each individual. The profiles are written in narrative form, however the researcher used the data gathered from the interview protocol when writing each case summary (see Appendix C). The researcher chose to detail the summaries of the participants by structuring each with an identification number or confidentiality purposes, demographic information, followed by the data retrieved from the interview and written according to the emerged

themes. Names of participant's children have been changed to protect identity. The research discussed early was used to guide the researcher in finding data among the participant responses to include in the study. Then, the researcher used NVivo10 to look for the similarities and differences that emerged in the data. These themes were coded and categorized. After the coding, It appeared to the researcher that the logical order of the discussion included in each participant case summary would be to begin with demographic information, and the following themes: Reading materials in the home, Time spent reading in the home, Language barriers, Culture, Additional literacy materials in the home, Difficulties in the home, Parents opinions regarding teacher provided literacy materials. This would provide a clear picture of each participant and their responses.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data consists of words and observations, not numbers (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). To make sense of the data, it must be analyzed and interpreted. Data analysis in qualitative research has two purposes: (a) to understand the participants' perspectives, and (b) to answer the research questions (Alexander, 2004). Qualitative data analysis can be described as organization and attributing to the meaning of data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). According to Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative data can be analyzed in a three-phase process. This process includes: (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and (c) conclusion drawing and verification.

Data Reduction

The first phase of qualitative data analysis is called data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction involved the process of selecting, simplifying, and extracting themes from

transcriptions. These themes or codes are reoccurring expressions, ideas, and phrases that were common among research participants (Kvale, 2007). This approach for analyzing qualitative data or narrative data is most commonly called content analysis (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). Qualitative content analysis involves a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the direct content analysis approach which uses a theory or research findings to guide with initial coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Categories and a coding scheme were derived from three sources: the data, previous related studies discussed in the literature review, and Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory. This theory argues that children construct knowledge through social interactions (Santrock, 2004). An initial list of coding categories was derived from the research and theory. This initial list of coding categories include: participant SES, Marital status, Job, Level of Education, Culture/Language, Parent's beliefs/values of literacy, and whether or not parents agreed or disagreed with teacher strategies to help them support their child's literacy development in the home. However, the researcher also used inductive reasoning or the indirect content analysis approach in which themes and categories emerged from the data. To accomplish this task, the researcher used NVivo10 to find emerging themes and similarities and differences among those themes. NVivo10 is a program that contains tools to help the user locate, code, and annotate findings in the data, weigh and evaluate their importance, and visualize the relationships among them. NVivo10 assigned code names to particular themes that were detected and then organize into categories of related topics that emerged from the interviews.

Data Display

The second phase of data analysis in qualitative research according to Miles and Huberman (1994) is known as data display. Data displays are tools that present the results of the data reduction. Displays are used to incorporate information into an accessible summary to facilitate conclusions (Alexander, 2004). For the purpose of this study the researcher used matrices and networks to display the data. Matrices are rows and columns of data that have been extracted from coded transcripts and are organized according to themes, with supporting quotations (Alexander, 2004). The researcher chose to include matrices to show a clear comparison of participant responses. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) the research questions and emergent concept must dictate the data display techniques. Therefore, the researcher chose to use matrices and networks for the data display based on the data reduction.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

This section presents the findings from participant interviews as they related to the research questions composed for this study. This part of the paper consists of two sections. First, participant case summaries were developed to introduce the participants who shared their experiences and aided this research. A summary of group characteristics is also included. The second section presents themes from a cross-case.

Parent Participant Case Summaries

Parent 1

Parent 1, 42, is a single, white, non-Hispanic, female parent raising two girls, Joy age 5, and Jenny, age 13. Joy attends kindergarten at Pecan Creek Elementary. Parent 1 grew up in Denton and attended college at Texas Woman's University where she received a bachelor's degree in hotel management & hospitality. After graduating, Parent 1 was unable to find a job in the hotel business and began working in the restaurant business. Parent 1 began working after a divorce at age 35 and has worked as a server in the restaurant business making approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 a year. Parent 1 indicates that she finds it important for Joy to be a good reader, and holds herself responsible in teaching Joy at home. As a result, she indicates that she reads to Joy every night that she does not work, for approximately 5-10 minutes per day. Every day after school, Parent 1 helps Joy with homework. On the nights and weekends that Parent 1 works, Joy spends time with her elderly grandmother who is unable to help her with her homework. Beyond reading and homework, there are no additional activities done to help Joy with literacy development. Parent 1 states, "We do have books and magazines in our home." Parent 1 loves to read to herself when she has time and constantly reads in front of her children. Parent 1 enjoys taking her children to the library, however her job does prevent her from doing so on a regular basis. Parent 1 believes that it is working long hours at night and on weekends that prevent her from reading with Joy. She indicates that this makes it difficult because she is not home to help her with her work. She said, "I wish I could afford to work fewer hours so that I could help my children with reading." Currently, Parent 1 is pleased with the strategies the kindergarten teacher is using to involve her in her child's literacy

development. She explains that the book bag Joy brings home each night is very appropriate because it gives her and her daughter a book to read at night. "It also helps me to see Joy's level of reading and the type of books she is reading in class. Her teachers really is good and I like the books she sends home."

Parent 2

Parent 2 is a 27-year old, white, non-Hispanic female, who is currently married. She and her husband are raising one child who, Sarra, age 5 and currently attends kindergarten at Pecan Creek Elementary. Parent 2 and her husband grew up in Ohio. Parent 2 received her bachelor's degree from Ohio State University in accounting and her husband attended Ohio State University and received a bachelor's degree in economics. Parent 2 is currently an accountant for the military and works 8:00AM-3:00PM. Combined, the couple makes over \$80,000 per year. Parent 2 indicated that that she enjoys helping Sarra with her school work. She said, "It gives me time to spend while at the same time I am helping her to be a better learner." Parent 2 indicates that every day after-school, she and Sarra work on homework together until it is completed. This usually ranges from 30 minutes to an hour. She stated, "Sarra loves to read so it makes it easy for me to work with her." The rest of the evening is filled with extracurricular activities Sarra may be involved in such as gymnastics and piano, dinner, and a bath. According to Parent 2, the extracurricular activities do not interfere with school work and other literacy activities. Prior to bed each night, they spend 20-30 minutes reading together and practicing sight word cards from school. She indicated that this was a great way to wind down before bed. They usually read and practice sight word cards six to seven nights a week. Currently, Parent 2 does not believe that there is anything in the home environment that makes it difficult to work

with Sarra. Therefore, there is nothing that she would change. The family currently has numerous books available for Sarra to read. They have two book cases full with levels ranging from newborn through elementary, all different levels. Their collection includes books such as Dr. Seuss, Jan Brett, and Eric Carle. They do have literacy related games or activities. Sarra's parents do try to do other literacy related activities to reinforce her learning. These activities include identifying sight words in her environment. Playing rhyming games in which a family member states a word and Sarra has to come up with a word that rhymes. Parent 2 agrees with what the kindergarten teacher is currently doing to involve her in Sarra's learning. She likes the weekly newsletters because they inform her of what Sarra is learning about in Language Arts and through this she is able to reinforce concepts Sarra is learning at school. Parent 2 also likes when Sarra brings home a book bag with a leveled book. "I like the leveled book because I can see exactly where Sarra stands in her reading ability." Parent 2 stated that she currently does not require any guidance from the kindergarten teacher because Sarra is not having any problems in school. However, at the beginning of the year the kindergarten teacher did have a meeting to show parents how to properly use the leveled books with their children. She said, "The teacher demonstrated using the book with a child, not to cover up the picture, how to question for comprehension, and reading strategies we could use with the children such as sounding out a word or asking if the text read made sense." Often times Parent 2 requests extra materials from the teacher, however, she does not receive them or they are too easy for Sarra. Parent 2 said, "I think that she is a good teacher, however I do not think she is pushing Sarra to a level she is capable of meeting in her reading."

Parent 3

Parent 3, is a 43-year old non-Hispanic, black- African male, living in Texas on a student visa status. Parent 3 is married, with three children, Daniel, age 6, Chloet, age 7, and Julius, age 10, all of whom are English Language Learners. Parent 3 and his wife both attend graduate school at a nearby University and plan to return to Africa when their degrees are completed. Parent 3 was able to communicate in English, however his primary language is French, therefore the researcher had to read the interview questions slowly and repeat several times. Daniel attends kindergarten at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 3 and wife are full time students and are at the University from 8:30am-2:30pm every day. Income is generated from student loans and grants and is about \$3500 per month for bother parents while in school. Parent 3 believes it is very difficult to read and work with Daniel on activities that come from school because one, Daniel is unable to read and write in English and two, Parent 3 has a hard time understanding the directions from the teacher if they are not written in step by step order. He said, "The teacher wants Daniel to read a little book to me, but Daniel can even read it because he does not speak English well." "Every time Daniel brings the book to me he cries, because he cannot read the words yet." "So I don't make him read." Parent 3 stated that instead, he worked with Daniel using English picture vocabulary words. He said, "Sometimes the teacher gets angry with Daniel because he does not read, but it is my fault because I do not think the books are appropriate for him." Parent 3 stated that he and his wife were both able to be home when the children got home from school so in that instance it is easy to work with the children. Daniel is not involved in any extracurricular activities, so after school he goes straight home and attempts to work on homework sent from the teacher. If it is too difficult, Parent 3 has him

work on vocabulary cards to practice English. Every night before bed Parent 3 reads children's books that are in French and portray their African culture. Parent 3 believes that the kindergarten teacher could help him better if she provided reading activities that Daniel could actually be successful in completing until he becomes better at speaking English. Parent 3 currently attends graduate school and therefore is constantly reading articles or textbooks. Although he does not like to read, Parent 3 tries to read his textbooks in front of Daniel as if to show an interest in reading.

Parent 4

Parent 4 is a 36-year old, Hispanic, white female who has taught for 15 years and currently teaches first grade at EP Rayzor. Parent 4 has a bachelor's of science with a major in education. Parent 4 and her husband, an accountant, are raising two children. Josh, is a kindergartner at EP Rayzor. Jordan is a fourth grader at the same school. Their combined income is over \$120,000. As a teacher, Parent 4 feels that it is important for her children to learn to read in order to be successful adults. Parent 4 finds that it is easy to work with Josh on homework because he is excited about learning to read and write. Each day after school Josh comes to his mother's classroom and together he and his mother work on his homework. Parent 4 listens to Josh read and practice his sight words. She said, "If he does not have any homework, I provide a leveled book for him and make him practice new sight words. Sometimes I will give him a spelling test." In addition to the leveled books and sight word cards, the kindergarten teacher currently provides Josh with handwriting practices sheets so that he can develop better fluency in writing the alphabet. Parent 4 believes that each of these activities has been effective for Josh. He has mastered his letters and sight words. Josh is

currently in baseball, however his games and practices do not begin until the evening, and therefore it does not interfere with his reading and writing school work. Parent 4 believes that the leveled books are very effective because Josh is motivated to read them. In addition, Parent 4 and Josh try to read together every night before bed, however this is sometimes difficult because of the long days when there is baseball practice or games. On nights that there is no baseball they read together it is for about 20-30 minutes. To help Josh with his reading, they currently play many games. Josh loves to play *Star Fall* along with a variety of other online games. In addition, Josh has a subscription to National Geographic for kids, and Highlights. There are lots of children's and adults books in the house that are accessible to everyone. Parent 4 stated that she likes to read during any free time that she gets. She finds she is a good role model for Josh because he is constantly seeing them read. Parent 4 is very happy with what the kindergarten teacher is currently doing to help her assist Josh in reading and writing. She likes the leveled books and the sight words flashcards. She believes that the books Josh reads are developmentally appropriate for his level of reading and that he has making progress every week. Parent 4 is amazed at how many sight words Josh has learned and she attributes it to the kindergarten teacher's enthusiasm for learning. Parent 4 likes the newsletters that are sent home from the teacher that explain weekly assignments and activities. She said, "It helps me to be informed on what Josh is learning about so I can help him when he needs it. Parent 4 indicated that the teacher's overall communication is good and that email works out very nicely. She said, "If I have a question about an assignment, she is very good at responding quickly."

Parent 5

Parent 5 is a 46-year old, non-Hispanic white female who is currently married and raising one child of her own and two step-children. Chloe is currently a kindergartener at EP Rayzor Elementary. The other two children, Jane and Jake are 8 year old twins, also attending EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 5 graduated from high school, and is currently a homemaker. Her husband works for an oil company and is out of town for weeks at a time. Her husband's income is approximately \$175,000-\$185,000 per year. Parent 5 believes it is her responsibility to teach Chloe how to read and write outside of the classroom. However, she finds that it is difficult to work with Chloe because she has been diagnosed with Autism. Therefore, it is hard for Parent 5 to work with Chloe because she is very inattentive and is not able to communicate orally. The kindergarten teacher does send home a leveled book and question to answer every day, however Parent 5 has been advised by the teacher that she can read it to Chloe. If Chloe is able to participate she does. This homework is done every day when Chloe gets home from school. Parent 5 does find the leveled book to be appropriate for Chloe, however Chloe is unable to answer the questions about the book. Parent 5 states that she wishes the kindergarten teacher would come up with another way that Chloe could respond to the book instead of answering the questions. She said, "To be honest, I just answer the questions for Chloe. I feel like if this is how she is expected to respond in the classroom, then she probably feels left out or incapable of completing an assignment. She needs to have activities that she is capable of completing." In addition to homework, Parent has bought some alphabet workbooks for Chloe to complete and she works on these every day after the two of them have read the leveled book. The family also has books in the home for all age levels. Parent 5 states

that she enjoys reading but having a child with autism makes it hard for her to have any time to read at all. She feels as though she could do better at motivating Chloe to read. Parent 5 believes that the kindergarten teacher is not doing a good job to involve her in Chloe's reading development. She stated that the teacher provides activities that Chloe just cannot complete. She said, "She needs to understand that Chloe is different, she is autistic, and needs different homework than everyone else. Parent 5 stated she is very unhappy with the progress that Chloe is actually making in the classroom and that it is just a daycare for Chloe. Parent 5 believes that at this time she does not have a relationship with the kindergarten teacher because she does not feel Chloe's needs are being met.

Parent 6

Parent 6, 39, is a widow, non-Hispanic, white-Iranian female raising two children, Haddie, age five, and Zeriam, age 9. Haddie is a kindergarten student at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 6, her now deceased husband, and the children moved to Texas three years ago from Iran. The husband died tragically during a robbery at a gas station. Currently, Parent 6 and her children live with her sister and her family. Parent 6 only spoke Persian at the time of the interview, and therefore used her sister to translate the interview questions. Parent 6 was arranged to be married at the age of 14, so she did not attend school past that age. While married, she was restricted from work, due to cultural beliefs. Now that her husband is deceased, she is trying to find a job, but has had much difficulty due to the lack of ability to speak English. Currently, there is not income, besides what her sister's family brings home. Parent 6 was taught that in her culture, reading is not important for women, therefore it has been hard for her to motivate her children. She said, "It is more important that they help

around the house and take care of my sister's children right now than anything else. I am unable to pay my sister rent, so I pay her back by keeping her house clean and preparing meals. My children have to help with this." Parent 6 indicated Haddie does read his book that his kindergarten teacher sends home but he has to read it in English. Because Parent 6 does not speak English, Zeriam, the older sister helps Haddie with reading and any other homework. Beyond reading and homework, there are no additional activities done to help Haddie with reading. There are a few books in the house, but they are not children's books. Parent 6 did not have an opinion about the reading and writing materials sent from the kindergarten teacher. She said, "I can't read them so I don't know if they are good or not. It is too much time for my children to or sister to translate what they are reading to me, so I do not bother. I trust they are doing a good job." Currently, Parent 6 feels it is the teacher's responsibility to make sure Haddie becomes a good reader and that she does not have the time to teach him how to read. Parent 6 believes that since Haddie seems to be reading in English, the teacher must be doing a good job.

Parent 7

Parent 7 is a 31-year old, non-Hispanic, white female, who is currently married. She and her husband are raising four children: Conrad, 12 years old, Campbell, 5 years old; Cullen, 3 years old, and Emily, 11 months old. Campbell is currently a kindergarten student at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 7 and her husband grew up in Austin. She received her bachelor's degree from University of Texas in music and her husband attended the University of Austin and got his bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Parent 7 is currently a music teacher at local private school. Combined, the couple makes over \$70,000 a year. Parent 7 indicated that she

finds it easy to read and work with Campbell because they have a routine and because Campbell is excited to read. Every day after-school, Parent 7 and Campbell have an hour to complete homework. During this time, they do Campbell's homework and work on any other projects she may have. The rest of the evening is filled with dinner, baths, and any extracurricular activities Campbell may be involved with such as dance and soccer. Parent 7 indicated that these activities usually do not interfere with the amount of time they spend on literacy related activities. If they do, they rearrange their schedule to fit everything in. Prior to bed each night, they spend 20-30 minutes reading together. They usually read six - seven nights a week. Currently, Parent 7 does not believe that there is anything in the home environment that makes it difficult to work with Campbell. The only challenging aspect is that Campbell is a perfectionist. Therefore, she gets easily frustrated when she does not know a word.

The family currently has numerous books available for their children to read. They have three book cases full with levels ranging from newborn through elementary, all different levels. In addition to reading books, Campbell is allowed to use an I Pad to play literacy games. Parent 7 believes that the kindergarten is doing a great job of involving in the children's reading. She feels the books that Campbell brings home are great and she has asked the teacher where she could find them for her own home. She never has a question about an assignment because the teacher gives explicit directions. Parent 7 is also happy with the amount of homework that Campbell receives, 20 minutes a day of reading, and sight word flashcards. She feels this is not too much for Campbell but just enough to practice what she is learning at school.

Parent 8

Parent 8, a 42-year old non-Hispanic, white male, is divorced and is raising Mason, his only child, as a single parent. Mason is a six-year-old in kindergarten at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 8 has full custody of Mason during the school year. Mason stays with his mom every day after school until 4:30pm, every other weekend and during summer vacation. Parent 8 works days, 8am-4pm, at a local grocery store. He did receive a high school diploma. His average annual income is between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Parent 8 believes that it is easy to read and work with Mason on activities at home because his work schedule allows him to be home every night. When they arrive home between 4:30-5:00, they sit down and complete homework. Mason reads a leveled book from school and practices writing sight words on lined paper. Because Parent 8 is able to be home and Mason does not participate in any extracurricular activities, this routine is very easy to follow every night. After dinner and some TV time, Parent 8 reads a book to Mason before he goes to bed. On average, they read approximately five days a week for 5-15 minutes each time. There are many low level children's books that Mason can read and he also has a Leap Frog Leap Pad with 10 different books that he can listen to and read. Parent 8 believes that the kindergarten teacher could help him better if she provided more feedback to him. He indicates that Mason struggles with reading the book that is sent home and he is unable to remember the sight words from day to day. Parent 8 has tried communicating through email what the teacher thinks about Mason's inability to read the leveled books and learn the sight words but she never provides feedback. Although Mason's report card shows he is successful in Language Arts. The kindergarten teacher did recommend that Parent 8 use some specific strategies with Mason while he is reading, but Parent 8 has

since forgotten. Overall, Parent 8 believes the leveled book and sight word practices cards are not effective because Mason is not able to read them. Parent 8 would like the teacher to be more supportive and give him ideas as to what to do to help Mason be a better reader at home.

Parent 9

Parent 9 is a 62-year old, non-Hispanic, white female who is currently married and raising her grandchild, Alex, age 5, who attends kindergarten at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 9 and her husband are both graduated from high school many years ago and are now retired accountants and receive social security and retirement benefits equaling to approximately \$45,000 per year. Parent 9 finds that it is difficult to work with Alex because of he has been diagnosed with ADHD. Alex is unable to receive the proper ADHD medication because Parent 9 does not have insurance that covers the cost of the medication. Therefore, it is hard for Parent 9 to work with Alex because he is very hyperactive. However, they do find time to read five days a week for approximately 20 minutes each time. As soon as he gets off the bus, Alex starts his homework. This takes most of the evening because it is a fight trying to get Alex to complete the work. For homework, he reads a leveled book and has to practice words for a spelling test. Parent 8 likes each of these activities but states that they are difficult for Alex to complete because of his hyperactivity. She states that Alex likes the leveled book that he brings home each night because when he can focus, he is actually able to read it. Other than the homework and reading, Parent 9 does not provide Alex with any literacy activities. She states it is just too hard to get him to pay attention. According to Parent 9, there are books in the house, but they are put away because at a young age, Alex tried to rip them all apart. Parent 9 states that by the time she is finished helping Alex with his reading and school work, she is very tired and does not

have the energy to read herself. Parent 9 would like to work with Alex more but says that it is difficult to do so because of his activity level. Parent 9 believes that the kindergarten teacher is currently doing a good job at involving her in Alex's reading. She states, "The teacher is providing all of the right reading materials and even has shown us parents how to read with our children." Parent 9 states that the kindergarten teacher has been very supportive in accepting Alex's behavior and provides him with activities that keep him up and moving during the school day.

Parent 10

Parent 10, age 39, is a Hispanic, white female, who is currently married, with seven children. Jose, is five years old and attends EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 10 attended and graduated high school in Mexico and is currently a homemaker. Her husband works full time at a nearby Jack in the Box. Both parents were identified as speaking Spanish in the home. Income from Jack in the Box as well as state benefits the couple receives equals about \$25,000 per year. Parent 10 finds it difficult to work with Jose because she has to care and attend to the younger children in the house. She indicates that his older siblings help him with his reading homework. Parent 10 states that she does care about Jose's reading that is why she makes sure that the older siblings work with him every day. Parent 10 indicates that she also does not feel confident in her ability to read English. "I do not want my Spanish to mess up his reading," she says. Parent 10 states that she does like to read but can only read fluently in Spanish. She indicates that they cannot afford to purchase Spanish books, therefore she is not able to read much at home. When Jose arrives home from school, he plays outside for about thirty minutes, then he works on his homework when his older brother is home from school. Jose reads the

leveled book his teacher sends in a folder. According to Parent 10, this is the only homework Jose ever has to complete. Parent 10 worries that Jose is not bringing home all of his reading and homework. She has tried to get in contact with the teacher but due to not having a phone or computer it is very difficult. Therefore, Parent 10 feels that there is no relationship between her and the teacher.

Parent 11

Parent 11, age 34, is an Istanbul Turkish, white female, who is currently married, with three children. Benji, age 5 attends kindergarten at Pecan Creek Elementary, Glorian, age 12 attends middle school, and Jodranyn, age 15 attends high school. Parent 11, and husband both went to high school in Turkey but did not graduate. Currently, Parent 11 is a stay at home mother and her husband manages a dry cleaning company. His income is approximately \$22,000 per year. Their home language is Turkish, however they were able to speak and understand English enough to answer the interview questions. Everyday Benji returns home from school and together he and his mother have an hour alone before the older siblings arrive. This time is dedicated to Benji's homework and reading. Benji is not enrolled in any extracurricular activities so this does not interfere with reading and school work. Parent 11 indicates that she does not feel confident in her ability to help Benji with his homework. She states, "I know Benji is a good reader, he can read the Turkish children's books that we have, but I do not know if he can read well in English, because I cannot read most of the words myself." She indicates that she tries to listen to Benji read and when she is finished she has him read a Turkish children's book to me so she can understand him. Every day Parent 11 has to sign her name and write the title of the book indicating whether or not she listened to Benji

read. She states, "About a month ago I wrote down Turkish books that Benji read instead of the books sent from the teacher. I did this for about a week. Benji's teacher sent a note home that Benji should be reading books that she sent so he could learn how to read in English. Benji also told me he had to start staying in from recess to read his books. So I quit doing that."

Parent 11 indicates that she is frustrated with Benji's teacher but she does not want to question the teacher's authority. She said, "It is disrespectful in my culture to question a person of such value and power. But I do not know how to be involved in Benji's English reading and writing when I can't understand it myself." Parent 11 indicates that there are Turkish children's books in the house, however there is not enough money to purchase new books written in English. There are no other types of literacy games or activities in the home. Currently, Parent 11 is unhappy with the materials the kindergarten teacher sends home. She states, "I feel like she does not value our culture, and that she only wants Benji to learn to read in English." Parent 11 also states that the teacher has not provided any support for her in helping Benji with his homework. Parent 11 indicates that currently she does not have a relationship with Benji's teacher because she cannot speak English.

Parent 12

Parent 12, 38, is a single, non-Hispanic, white female raising two girls, Savannah, age five, and Mikela, age eleven. Savannah is a kindergarten student at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 12 grew up in Texas and graduated from a Texas high school. She attended college for a few semesters but dropped out. Parent 12 has worked many jobs within the last couple of years, most of them in the restaurant business, in which she had an income of about \$20,000 per year. Currently, Parent 12 receives unemployment while she looks for a new job. The

unemployment checks equal to about \$1500 per month. Parent 12 indicates that the checks are barely enough to pay the rent and buy groceries. Parent 12 indicates that she does not have time to help her children read and complete homework because she has to find a new job. She states, "When Savannah comes home, Mikela helps her with her homework. She listens to her read her book and practices her words. I rely on her to make sure it gets finished." There are no other books in the home for the children to read and Parent 12 indicates that she does not enjoy reading herself. Parent 12 believes that it is the worry of money and not having a stable job that prevents her from being involved in Savannah's reading. "Every night I am so tired from filling out applications and going on interviews. Every night I worry we will not have food to eat. I cannot worry about whether or not Savannah does her homework right now." Currently, Parent 12 thinks that because she has not heard any complaints that Savannah is doing well in school and the teacher is doing a good job. She said, "As long as I don't get a bad note, then I am happy with what the teacher is doing." She states that Savannah as had pretty good grades on her standards based report card. Parent 12 indicates that it is the teacher's job to teach her because she does not have the time to do it herself. Parent 12 indicates that she has a positive relationship with the teacher when she is able to be involved but it is not often.

Parent 13

Parent 13, 26, is a married, non-Hispanic, white-Asian female raising two boys; Connor, age five, and Cameal, age 2. Connor attends kindergarten at EP Rayzor Elementary. Parent 13 grew up in China. She came to America when she was pregnant with Connor, whom was born in Texas. Parent 13 speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese and English. Parent 13's husband currently still resides in China and she and her children visit him 2-3 times per year. Parent 13 is a student

at a nearby University and is working on a Bachelor's degree in education. Each month her husband sends \$3000 to help pay the bills. Any other money comes from student loans. Parent 13 states that she gets out of class at 2:00 so it is easy for her to work with Connor on his reading and homework. She indicates that when Connor gets home they she listens to him read his level book and practice his sight word cards. Parent 13 believes that Connor is very bright and needs more work than what the teacher sends home. As a result, she makes vocabulary cards for him to practice reading and writing every night, and has him read other books around the house. Parent 13 also has Connor work for 30 minutes on the computer each night playing word and reading games. Parent 13 indicates that she reads to Connor every night for at least twenty minutes before bed and that she tries to find Asian multicultural children's stories to read to him. Connor does attend violin practice twice a week but Parent 13 ensures that it does not interfere with any reading or homework. Aside from reading, Parent 13 takes her children to the library about once a week. During this time, Connor enjoys playing computer games and picks out books to bring home. Parent 13 does not believe it is hard to help her children with their work because she is able to be at home. Parent 13 indicated that she felt the leveled books sent home for Connor are too easy and she would like to see the teacher challenge him more. She stated, " I wish she would help me find more reading and vocabulary activities to work on with Connor, so I don't have to go searching on my own." She indicates that the teacher does not feel Connor needs more of a challenge and that he is reading at a level that is appropriate for him. " Parent 13 also indicates that she would like to see Connor reading more multicultural books at school, specifically related to their Chinese culture. She states, "I want Connor to value his Chinese culture as well as his American culture." Because Parent 13 feels

that the teacher is not providing enough multicultural materials she plans on meeting with her. She indicates that she does not want the teacher to make her son feel devalued and that it is causing her to think negatively about the kindergarten teacher's style of teaching.

Parent 14

Parent 14, 32, is a single, non-Hispanic, white female, raising two boys, Jaden, age five, and Joseph, age nine. Jaden attends kindergarten at Pecan Creek Elementary. Parent 14 attended University of Arlington where she received a bachelor's degree in education. After graduating, Parent was offered a teaching job, however she became pregnant and stayed home to raise her children. When Parent 14 divorced two years ago, she tried to get a teaching job but had no luck. She began working for a Janitorial service that cleans doctor's offices. Currently Parent 14 makes approximately \$25,000 a year. On the nights that Parent 14 does not work, she is there when Jaden arrives from school, to help him with his homework. He is not in any extracurricular activities that interfere with homework. Parent 14 believes that it is part of her responsibility to help teach her child to read. As a result, she indicates that she tries to read to Jaden every night that she is not working for about 20 minutes. On the nights that Parent 14 works, Jaden spends his time with an Aunt who will help him with his work. Jaden also likes to work on an I Pad which helps reinforce letter and sound recognition. Beyond reading and homework, there are no additional activities done to help Jaden with reading. Parent 14 provides books at home for the children and they have a desk they can use stocked with writing paper and pencils. Parent 14 enjoys reading to herself and she is constantly reading in front of her children during her free time. Aside from reading, Parent 14 takes her children to the monthly story time show at the library. There the children can listen to stories be read and

check out books to bring home. Parent 14 also takes the children to the yearly Story Telling Festival. Parent 14 believes that her job makes it the hardest to work with her children on reading. She usually has the weekends off but works nights during the week. This makes it difficult because she is not home to help her children with their work. Currently, Parent 14 believes that the books Jaden brings home are very effective because it gives her and Jaden a book to read at night and it also allows her to see the level and types of books that he is reading. She believes that the sight word cards and have been very effective for Jaden. She indicates that he has mastered the word cards but they continue to work on them every day for extra practice. Overall there is nothing Parent 14 believes she would change about the support she is receiving from the kindergarten teacher and that they have a positive relationship.

Parent 15

Parent 15, a 46-year old white, Hispanic male, is married and is raising five children. The children are ages, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 15. Mario, is a five-year-old and attends kindergarten at Pecan Creek Elementary. Rob works days, 5am – 3pm, at Wal-Mart and his wife works at Whataburger from 5:00pm-1:00am. Both parents graduated received their GEDs. Their average annual income is between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Neither of the parents graduated from high school. Every day Mario comes home from school and reads his book his teacher sends. He is not involved in any extracurricular activities that would interfere with his homework. Parent 15 finds it hard to work with Mario on his homework because he is very tired from working all day. He states, “I want Mario to do a good job, but I am too tired, I have to take a nap as soon as I get home.” The older siblings help Mario with his reading. Parent 15 indicates that he thinks it is important for Mario to learn to read, however he does not feel confident in his ability to teach

him. He indicates that although he does speak English fluently, he is not a very good reader (in Spanish or English). He said, "I failed most of my classes and school and that is why I dropped out. I want Mario to be smart and a good reader so that he can get a better job than I have." There are no books in the home for Mario to read, and Parent 15 states that at this time they cannot afford to buy any books. Other than the books and homework Mario brings from school, he does participate in any reading activities at home. Parent 15 states that he has never met Mario's teacher, but he thinks she is doing a good job. He states, "When I do listen to Mario read his books from school, he reads all the words the right way, and he could not do that before he started kindergarten." Parent 15 indicates that he thinks that the leveled books that Mario brings home are appropriate because they are not too difficult for Mario to read. Parent 15 states that he does not have the time to meet with the teacher so he trusts that she is doing a good job with Mario. He indicates that although he does not know the teacher, he would think that they have a positive relationship.

Parent 16

Parent 16, is a 42 year old, non-Hispanic, African American female who has taught for 5 years and currently teaches fourth grade. Parent 16 and her husband, a dentist, are raising two children. Parent 16 received a bachelor's of science with a major in education from Texas Woman's University. Shane, is a kindergartener at Pecan Creek Elementary. Their other two children are in second grade and seventh grade. Their combined income is over \$70,000. As a teacher, Parent 16 finds that it is easy to work with Shane on homework because of the structure of the homework. She believes the leveled books are easy to use and the flash cards that Shane brings home are good to practice sight words. Every day Shane goes to Extended

School Day (ESD) until 5:30. Parent 16 picks him up at this time and Shane works on homework at home while Parent 16 makes dinner. She is there for him if he has a question about the work. During this time, reads a leveled book from school, practices writing sight words, and reads a poem from his poetry folder. Parent 16 believes that each of these activities has been effective for Shane. He has mastered sight words, and according to his teacher he is reading at a first grade level. After dinner, Shane has play time which is on the computer playing reading games or outside with friends. Then Parent 16 and Shane sit down together to read. They each read seven nights a week for approximately 20-30 minutes each time. Parent 16 believes that Shane has a very long day which sometimes makes it difficult to do activities together. Shane arrives at school with his mother by 7:15 and does not leave until 5:30. Therefore, his attention span is only about 20 minutes during his homework time. Shane is not involved in any activities that interfere with homework time but his older brother often has sporting events that he attends. This changes their schedule but homework and reading are still done as soon as they get home. Parent 16 believes that it is important that she teach Shane how to read at home. Currently, Shane has an online subscription to Star Fall, and online literacy website that teaches reading and letter knowledge. Parent 16 provides a lot of books for Shane and the other children and they take a trip to Barnes and Noble at least once a month where each child is allowed to purchase new book. She stated that she and her husband like to read a lot. Therefore, she finds that they are great role models because Shane is constantly seeing them read. Parent 16 would like to spend more time with Shane in the evenings but their family's busy schedule with two older children often makes it difficult. Parent 16 finds that Shane's kindergarten teacher is very supportive, however she does not require a lot of assistance in

helping Shane with his homework because she is a teacher herself. She indicates that the level of books that Shane brings home is very appropriate, not too hard and not too easy. Parent 16 feels as though she has a positive relationship with the teacher and there is an open line of communication whenever she has a question.

Parent 17

Parent 17 is 38, non-Hispanic, white, Russian female who arrived from Russia at the beginning of the school year. Parent 17 is currently married with three children, Igor, age 5, Ivan and Inan, (twins) age 10. Igor attends kindergarten at Pecan Creek Elementary. Parent 17 received a bachelor's of science in history from a Russian University, and currently is a homemaker. Her husband works for Microsoft. His income is approximately \$78,000 per year. Both Parent 17 and husband speak, read, and write in Russian and English. For the past ten years they lived in Russia, before that they lived in Boston, Massachusetts. Parent 17's husband is here on a work visa. Their children whom have only lived in Russia, came to America not speaking any English at the beginning of the school year. Currently, they are able to speak English in short sentences regarding academic language (language that relates to academic subjects such as math, science, history, etc.). However, they are able to carry on causal conversations in English with friends and family. According to Parent 17, the children have been very successful in learning English with her help. Each day when Igor arrives from school, he works on his reading homework with Parent 17. She states, "We spend about thirty minutes reading the book his teacher sends and practicing his sight word flashcards. Then I have him practice reading in Russian. I don't want him to lose the Russian language." She states, that it is very important to her that her children be able to read and write in English and Russian. Igor

currently does not participate in any extracurricular activities so it does not interfere with homework time. Parent 17 states that they are working on building up a collection of books for the children to have in English, however, currently the only books that are in the home are in Russian. Parent 17 indicates that she likes to read Russian poetry and often will read it to her children before they go to bed. Parent 17 states that when the kindergarten teacher does not send books home to read, she has Igor sing Russian songs and read Russian folktales. She states, "One day when Igor was sick and absent from school I told his teacher that we had written a story in Russian together, and I asked if it could take the place of missed work. The teacher said, "No because it was not written in English that she would not be able to read it, and therefore could not count it as an assignment." Parent 17 indicated that she felt devalued, however agreed with the teacher's decision. She stated, "I still have Igor read and write in Russian, we just don't tell the teacher." Parent 17 is pleased with the success Igor is making at school and likes the books that he is bringing home to read in English. However, she is worried that he will lose the Russian language. She would like to see the Russian culture and language incorporated into the books Igor reads.

Group Demographics

This portion of the paper presented the participant case summaries. The participant case summaries were created as a result of in-depth interviews with parents of kindergarten children. The case summaries were presented as a guide to the analysis and results of the data gathered. A summary of the group characteristics is presented in the table on the next page.

Table 3

Group Demographics Matrix

Participant	Age	Gender	Marital stat.	Ethnicity	Income/household	Education	Employment	Primary Language
1	42	F	single	White	\$15-\$20,000/year	BS	Server	English
2	27	F	married	White	\$80,000 or more /year	BS	Accountant	English
3	43	M	married	Black/African	\$3500 per month (student loans and grants)	BS	Grad Student	French
4	36	F	married	White/Hispanic	\$120,000/year	BS	Teacher	English
5	46	F	married	White	\$175 - \$185,000/year	High School	Homemaker	English
6	39	F	widowed	White/Iranian	\$0	High school through age 14	Looking for a job	Persian
7	31	F	married	White	\$70,000	BS	Teacher	English
8	42	M	divorced	White	\$20-\$30,000/year	High School	Grocery clerk	English
9	62	F	married	White	\$45,000/year (social sec. benefits)	High School	Retired	English
10	39	F	Married	White/Hispanic	\$25,000/year	High school	Homemaker	Spanish
11	34	F	Married	White/Istanbul Turkish	\$22,000/year	High school	Homemaker	Turkish
12	38	F	Single	White	\$20,000/year when working	High school	Unemployed	English
13	26	F	Married	White/Asian	\$36,000/year sent from husband plus student loans	High school	Student	Mandarin
14	32	F	Single	White	\$25,000/year	BS	Cleaning Service	English
15	46	M	Married	White/Hispanic	\$20-\$30,000/year	High School through age 16	Wal-Mart clerk	Spanish
16	42	F	Married	Black/African American	Over \$70,000/year	BS	Teacher	English
17	38	F	Married	White/Russian	\$78,000/year	BS	Homemaker	Russian

Results

The data analysis procedures began once the interview data was converted from the I Phone recordings to the transcribed text using Dragon Naturally Speaking. Data reduction began with NVivo10. The transcribed interviews were uploaded to NVivo10 which processed the documents for themes. Using NVivo10 the emergent themes were developed as follows: (1)

Reading Materials in the Home, (2) Time Spent on Reading, (3) Language Barriers, (4) Culture, (5) Additional Literacy Activities, (6) Difficulties in the home environment, (7) Parent's Opinion of Teacher Provided Literacy Materials. The development of these themes as described in the case summaries provided thick description of the parent's involvement in their kindergarten child's literacy development in the home. For example, several of the parents expressed some type of difficulty in the home that prevented them from providing quality literacy activities for their kindergarten child. The pages that follow present the experiences expressed by the participants and are the major findings that emerged in accord with each theme. The quotes from the participants are displayed in a Matrix format. They are presented in this style to allow the reader an opportunity to draw on the reflection of thought given to the participants' responses.

Reading Materials in the Home

Each parent interviewed was asked if they had materials in the home to support their child with literacy. While most of the parents had reading materials, the amount and type of materials varied from one household to another. The parents (Parent 6, Parent 10, Parent 12, Parent 15) with a low yearly income (less than \$25,000) (US Poverty Guidelines, 2013) seemed to have a few books or no books at all when compared to those who had incomes above \$50,000 per year. For example, Parent 6, unemployed stated, "I am unable to pay my rent and can't buy books for my children." Parent 10 is supported by her husband's income of \$25,000 per year stated, "We can't afford to buy books right now because we can barely afford our bills." Parent 11, income of \$22,000 per year said, "We have Turkish children's books in the house, however there is not enough money for us to purchase English children's books." Parent

15, income of \$25,000 per year, said, “We cannot afford to buy any books.” The following Matrix reveals whether participants did or did not have reading materials in the home.

Table 4

Reading Materials in the Home Matrix

Participant	Reading Materials in the Home	No Reading Materials in the Home
1	“We do have books and magazines in our home.”	
2	“We have two book cases full with levels ranging from newborn through elementary, all different levels.”	
3	“We have book shelves full of books.” Our Collection includes: Dr. Seuss, Jan Brett, and Eric Carle books.”	
4	“We have lots of books that are in French.”	
5	We have lots of children’s books in the house and Josh has a subscription to National Geographic Kids and Highlights magazines.”	
6		“I am unable to pay my rent and can’t buy books for my children.”
7	“We have three bookcases full of books with levels ranging from newborn to elementary.”	
8	“Mason has many books that he can read and he has a Leap Frog Leap Pad with 10 different books that he can listen to and read.”	
9		“There are books in the house, but they are put away because Alex tries to rip them all apart.”
10		“We cannot afford to buy books right now because we can barely afford our bills.”
11		“There are Turkish children’s books in the house. There isn’t enough money for us to buy English books.
12		“I do not enjoy reading myself and do not have the money to purchase books.
13	“I make sure Connor always has a book to read.”	
14	“We have lots of books in our home and the children also have a desk stocked with writing paper and pencils.”	
15		“We cannot afford to buy any books.”
16	“Shane has lots of books to read and I take him to Barnes and Noble once a month to buy a new book.”	“I am unable to pay my rent and can’t buy books for my children.”
17	“I like to read the children Russian poetry before they go to bed for twenty minutes.”	

The parents with a higher income indicated that they had numerous books available at varying levels for their children to read. Parents 1 stated she had books and magazines in the home. Parents 18 indicted they all had many books in the home. For example, Parent 4 stated, “We have two book cases full with levels ranging from newborn through elementary , all different

levels.” Parent 3 said, “ We have two books cases full of books. “Our collection includes: Dr Seuss, Jan Brett, and Eric Carle books.” Parent 4 said, “We have lots of books in French.” Parent 7 stated, “We have three bookcases full of books with levels ranging from newborn to elementary.” And Parent 13 said, “ I make sure Connor always has a book to read.” Parents 5, 8, 14, and 16 indicated that not only do they provide books for their children, but they also provide other literacy related materials such as children’s magazines, Leap Frog Leap Pad, and writing paper. Based on these families, the amount of reading materials in the home relates to the SES of the family. The families identified as having a higher SES reported that they have more materials, and books than those families of low SES. Although Parent 1, who has an income less than \$20,000 per year did state she provide books and magazines for her children to read. Parent 9 with an income of \$45,000 per year indicated she did have books in the home, however did not allow the child to have access to the books. For these parents, SES has an effect on the amount of materials provided in the home as well as the type of materials and interactions with each. Those with a higher SES had other materials in addition to books for their children. Parent 5 stated she provided alphabet workbooks for her child and Parent 16 stated that her son had an online subscription to a literacy website titled “Star Fall.”

Time Spent Reading

All of the parents interviewed wanted their child to be successful readers, however, not all of the parents read to their child every day, seven days a week. The parents who were reported as having fewer or no materials (Parent 1,6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 15) either do not read at all to their child, or only spend between five and twenty minutes per day. Parents 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 14, and 17 who each come from higher SES homes report that they read to their child for

twenty minutes or seven days a week. The following Matrix reveals the time participants spent reading to their child in the home.

Table 5

Time Spent Reading Matrix

Participant	Time Spent Reading
1	"I read to Joy for 5-10 minutes every night."
2	"We read every night for about 20 minutes"
3	"We read African Folktales every night for 30 minutes."
4	"On the nights we don't have baseball we read for 20-30 minutes.
5	"I don't have the energy to read to Chloe because her homework takes so long to complete,. It really wares me out."
6	"I can't read books in English so why bother."
7	"We read for 20-30 minutes each night."
8	"After dinner and some TV time, I read a book to Mason for about 10 minutes."
9	"We do find time to read every day for about 20 minutes.
10	"I don't want my Spanish to mess his reading up so I don't read to him."
11	"I don't read to him much because I am not a good reader."
12	"Every night I worry we will not have food to eat. I cannot worry about whether or not Savannah does her homework or read to her."
13	"I read to Connor every night for at least 30 minutes."
14	"I try to read to Jaden every night when I am not working for about 20 minutes.
15	"I do not read to Mario because of my job. I have to get up at 1:00AM."
16	"I read to him for 20-30 minutes every night.
17	"I like to read Russian poetry to the children every night before they go to bed for 30-60 minutes.

Inconclusive to the research this study found that families of higher SES, those with an income of \$25,000 or more per year (see Table1) spend more time reading with their child each week. These parents were able to be at home with their children in the evenings and weekends in order to provide reading time to their child. It is also important to look at the fact that Parents 4 and 7 each have an educational background and work day shift hours. Therefore, they may understand the importance of literacy and are able to spend time in the evenings and on

the weekends reading and working with their children. On the other hand, Parents 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 15 each find something difficult about the amount of time they are able to spend on literacy with their child. Parents 1 and 15 find it difficult to read with their children because they work many nights or weekends. Therefore they are not available to read and work with their children on a regular basis. Parents 5 and 8 seem to have a lack of knowledge of how to properly work with their child in learning how to read. They want to work with their child more but often find it difficult. Parent 6 indicated that it was more important for her to help around the house and take care of her sisters children in place of paying the rent due to lack of income. Parents 6, 10, and 11 seem to face language barriers that prevent them from having the confidence to read to their children, whether in their home language or in English which will be discussed in more detail in the next section. As a result, for these families work hours, lack of strategies, and language barriers contributes to the amount of time parents spend working on literacy with their children. The amount of time Joy spends reading with her parents is limited because of child care arrangements. Joy, a child from a lower SES home, spends a lot of her nights at her grandmother's home. While her mother values literacy and see the importance of working with their child as much as possible, this situation does limit the amount of time they have to spend on literacy each evening. Parent 1 indicated that she wishes she could afford to work less hours so that she could help her children with reading. This family faces an issue of time and because of their busy life, they often have to squeeze in reading and homework time. Low SES children may spend a lot of their time with extended family because their parents have to work long hours. Therefore, these children may not be receiving the same amount of rich literacy experiences that other children may be getting at home. Parent 4 had a similar

situation to Parent 1 in that she would like to spend more quality time with her son. However, it is much different than that of Parent 1's because she has limited time with Josh due to extracurricular activities with the older children in the evenings. As a result, Parent 4 is not home in the evenings to work and participate in literacy activities with Josh. Therefore, Josh is also facing a risk factor of less quality literacy time at home. Therefore, while low SES status homes face risk factors, high SES homes may face the same risk factors as well.

Language Barriers

Parents 6, 10, and 11, 13, 15, and 17 reported that English was not their primary language. Parent 6 only spoke Persian at the time of the interview and indicated that she did not read with her child or help him with homework because she did not speak English. Parent 6 indicates that he does not want his Spanish language to interfere with his son's learning to read in English. Parent 11 states that she does not feel confident in her ability to help Benji with his homework. The statements parents made relating to language barriers are shown in Table 4. Language barriers prevent many limited-English proficient (LEP) parents from participating fully in their children's literacy development. Limited-English proficient parents lack critical information about their children's education and often have no way to communicate with their child's teacher. Parent 6 only speaks Persian and therefore is unable to help her son, Haddie with reading and homework. Parent 6 is not aware of the reading materials that Haddie brings home from school because she is unable to read them. Parent 10 who primarily speaks Spanish, does speak English but not in the academic since, therefore she cannot read or write in English. Parent 10 indicates that she does not want to interfere with Jose's ability to learn to read in English fluently. Parent 11 who primarily speaks Turkish, indicates that she does not want to

read to her son because is not a “good reader.” Parent 3 indicated that his son does not speak English fluently and he is unable to read the leveled books the kindergarten teacher sends home every day. Parent 3 states that instead of requiring the child to read the leveled book, he practices basic English vocabulary words using picture flashcards. Parent 3 states, “Sometimes the teacher gets angry with Daniel because he does not read, but it is my fault because I do not think the books are appropriate for him because he can’t speak English yet.” Parent 5 is raising a child, Chloe, who is diagnosed with Autism. Parent 5 struggles with the reading materials the teacher send home due to Chloe’s lack of speech. Currently, Chloe is unable to speak fluently, much less read a book. However, according to Parent 5 the teacher still expects Chloe to read a leveled book each night and answer questions. Chloe is not able to engage in the literacy activity with her mother because she has no language. These children may not be receiving the same amount of rich literacy experiences that other children may be getting at home because their parents’ are unable to speak and read in the English language or the children are unable to speak the English language appropriately. Therefore, these children may not be receiving the same amount of rich literacy experiences that other children may be getting at home due to language barriers their parents face.

Culture

The importance of culture and diversity was also a theme among the participant responses. Parent 13 indicated that she wished her son’s kindergarten teacher would incorporate more multicultural books to send home that specifically related to their Chinese culture. Parent 11 indicated that she felt the teacher devalued her Turkish culture. She stated that her kindergarten child’s teacher disagreed with Parent 11’s decision to replace the weekly

reading homework of leveled books written in English with children's books written in Hebrew. Parent 10 indicated that he wanted this child to become a fluent English reader and his lack of the English language would prevent the child from doing so. Parent 17 stated, "One day when Igor was sick and absent from school I told his teacher that we had written a story in Russian together, and I asked if it could take the place of missed work. The teacher said, "No because it was not written in English that she would not be able to read it, and therefore could not count it as an assignment." Parent 17 indicated that she felt devalued, however agreed with the teacher's decision. She stated, "I still have Igor read and write in Russian, we just don't tell the teacher." The classroom today is much more diverse than it has been in years. It is imperative that students learn acceptance and understanding of different races, ethnicities, and cultures. At the same time, they should value their own race, ethnicity, and culture. To help these parents and their children feel as though their culture and language is valued, the teacher should incorporate multicultural literature into the reading curriculum.

Additional Literacy Activities

To reinforce their child's learning and reading, Parents 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 17 indicated that he or she provides materials or does additional activities to help them. The following Matrix reveals the evidence of parents' providing additional literacy activities in the home for their kindergarten child.

Table 6

Additional Literacy Activities Matrix

Participant	Additional Literacy Activities
2	"We find sight words in her environment and play rhyming games."
3	"Instead I work with Daniel using English vocabulary cards."
4	"If he does not have any homework, I provide leveled books for him and make him practice new sight words."
5	"I bought some alphabet books for Chloe to work on after she finishes her homework."
7	"Campbell is also allowed to use the I Pad to play literacy games."
8	"Mason has many books he can read and he also has a Leap Frog Leap Pad with 10 different books he can listen to and read."
13	"I take Connor to the library once a week and play computer games and picks out books to bring home."
14	"I take the children to the monthly story time show at the library. There they can listen to stories and check out books to bring home."
17	"I have him practice reading in Russian. I don't want him to lose the Russian language."

The parents listed above indicated they provided other additional literacy activities for their kindergarten child. Parents 2 and 3 indicated that their children played sight words games or practiced vocabulary cards. Parents 4 stated she provided additional leveled books for her child and Parent 5 required her child to complete alphabet books every day. Parent 17 indicated she had her son practice reading Russian books. Parents 7 and 8 indicated the children used technology such as Leap Frog Stories and the I Pad in addition to school reading activities. Most of the parents currently work on literacy activities at home with their child. However, the parents used different activities to engage his or her child. The cases for the most part show how that the parents of high SES extend their child's learning more through the use of multiple materials such as books, technology, and the environment. Other parents (1, 12, and 15) find it difficult to engage in additional activities because of working long hours. Parent 1 states she

enjoys taking her children to the library but is not able to do so on a regular basis due to working nights and weekends. Parent 12 indicates she did not have the time to provide additional literacy activities for her child because she was looking for a job. Parent 15 did not incorporate reading activities at all because he had to get up very early every morning. Parent 16 mentioned that she takes her son to Barnes and Noble every week to buy new books, but there busy schedule prevented her from providing literacy activities other than helping with her son's homework. Parent 9 stated that it was too difficult to provide her grandson with additional activities due to his hyperactivity which would indicate personality differences. Therefore, some of the parents extend their child's literacy development beyond others because of the home environment and the additional resources that they have. As a result, these factors may be affecting the amount and quality of literacy interactions at home.

Difficulties in the Home Environment

Parent 1 is a single mother with a low yearly income (\$10,000-\$20,000) which limits the amount of materials and support that are available for her child at home. Through these risk factors, her daughter Joy, may be at a disadvantage because she is not receiving the same rich literacy experiences as some of his peers. Chloe is diagnosed with ADHD and her mother (Parent 5) does not feel competent in supporting Chloe in dealing with her inattentiveness and hyperactivity. She indicates that she becomes very frustrated with Chloe and is unable to provide her with extra literacy assistance. Haddie recently lost his father and his mother is unable to find a job to support the family. They currently live with an aunt who supports the family while Parent 6 looks for a job. While Parent 8 is able to be home in the evenings and on the weekends with Mason, he often struggles with how to help his son with literacy activities.

Mason tries to engage in the literacy activities provided by the teacher but seems to struggle with retaining the information. Parent 8 does not have an educational background and indicated that he is unaware of how to help his son. He does provide electronic games that are supposed to help reinforce his reading skills, but he does not have many materials beyond this. As a result, it seems as though these risk factors may be affecting Mason's learning and the time spent on additional literacy activities at home. Mason is not receiving the rich, extended literacy experiences that other children may have. In addition, while he is working on school provided activities, Parent 8 may not know what strategies to use to help him. Jose comes from a home where multiple risk factors are at stake which may be affecting the interactions with literacy in the home. Jose is being raised by Parent 15 and father who both work long hours and have a combined low yearly income of \$25,000. Both parents are unable to even assist Jose with his homework much less provide extended literacy activities. Parent 11 indicated she did not provide other types of literacy activities in the home. Parent 12 is a single parent who is currently unemployed. She indicates that her time is spent looking for a job and the older siblings are responsible for reading to her kindergarten child. Parent 14 is a single parent with an income of \$25,000 per year and currently works nights for a Janitorial service. Her long work hours prevent her from providing her son Jaden with additional literacy activities except for a monthly visit to a story time show at the local library in which they listen to stories being read. Although Parent 16 has an educational background, the long hours that her son Shane spends at school and in after school limits the amount of literacy activities that she can provide. She states that Shane is so tired once he gets home that he has a very limited attention span. The parents with low SES (income of \$25,000 or less a year) for the most part were unable to

provide extended literacy activities for their children due to long work hours. Overall, high SES parents tend to engage in higher quality interactions. Difficulties in the home environment are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 7

Difficulties in the Home Environment Matrix

Participant	Risk Factors that Cause Difficulty in the home
1	Income (\$10,000-\$20,000) Works nights and weekends Child spends most of time with Grandmother
5	Child diagnosed with ADHD Frustration with child Lack of knowledge to deal with inattentiveness
6	Unemployed Does not speak English Lives with relatives
8	Child struggles with reading Parent lacks education to help child with reading struggles
15	Income of \$25,000 Long work hours
12	Single parent unemployed
14	Single parent Income of \$25,000 per year
16	Works long hours Child spends long hours in school and daycare

Parents Opinions of literacy homework and materials provided by the teacher

It is important for parents to value how the teacher chooses to involve them in their child’s literacy development. Parents often become involved in their children's education through homework. Specifically reading homework can be a powerful tool for letting parents know how and what the child is learning. It is important the parents not only value the literacy homework that is sent home but also understand it. The matrix on the next page portrays

parent's attitudes towards the literacy homework and materials the kindergarten teacher provided for the students.

Table 8

Parents Opinions Regarding Teacher Provided Literacy Materials Matrix

Participant	Agree	Disagree
1	"It also helps me to see Joy's level of reading and the types of books she is reading in class." "I like the books the teacher sends home."	
2	"I like the leveled book because I can see exactly where Sarra stands in her reading ability."	
3		"Sometimes the teacher gets angry with Daniel because he does not read, but it is my fault because I do not think the books are appropriate for him." "They are too hard for him because he can't speak English yet."
4	"I like the books and sight words flashcards. The books Josh reads are good for his level of reading and he has made a lot of progress each week."	
5		"It's not that I don't like the leveled books, it's just that Chloe can't answer the questions. "I wish the kindergarten teacher would come up with another way that Chloe could respond to the books instead of answering questions."
6		"I can't read the books so I don't know if they are good or not."
7	"I feel the books that Campbell brings home are great and I even asked the teacher where I could find them for my own home."	
8		"Mason struggles with reading the book that is sent home and he is unable to remember the sight words we practice."
9	"Alex likes the leveled book that he brings home each night because when he can focus, he is actually able to read it." "The teacher is providing all of the right reading materials and even has shown us parents how to read with our children."	
10		"I think reading one small book is not enough for Jose." "I worry he does not bring home all of his homework."
11		"I do not know how to be involved in Benji's English reading and writing when I can't understand it myself." "I think he should be able to read Turkish books too."
12	"I like that the teacher provides books for Savannah because I can't."	
13		"The leveled books sent home for Connor are too easy." "I would like to see the teacher challenge him more. "I wish she would help me find more reading and vocabulary activities to work on with Connor so I don't have to searching on my own." "I want Connor to value his culture as well as his American culture and read books about it."
14	"The books Jaden brings home are good because it gives me and Jaden a book to read at night and it allows me to see the level and types of books that he is reading." "The sight word cards have been very effective for Jaden."	
15	"The books that Mario reads are good because they are not too hard for him."	
16	"The books are perfect, not too hard not too easy."	
17		"One day when Igor was sick and absent from school I told his teacher that we had written a story in Russian together, and I asked if it could take the place of missed work. The teacher said, "No because it was not written in English that she would not be able to read it, and therefore could not count it as an assignment." "I still have Igor read and write in Russian, we just don't tell the teacher."

According to the Table 7 only nine out of the 17 parents agreed with the literacy materials the kindergarten teacher provided for the students. Parents 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 12,14, 15, and 16 all liked the leveled books for the following reasons: not too hard, provides enough of a challenge, and show the parent the child's specific reading ability. Parents 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 13 disagreed with literacy materials the kindergarten teacher provided due to the child's inability to read the leveled book or because the books were not diverse and lacked multiculturalism. There was no correlation between SES and whether or not parents agreed or disagreed with the literary materials.

Discussion of Themes: Categories and Patterns

Using Nvivo 10, categories were discovered within each of the themes. A brief discussion is included here as a method of interpretation. The first step in analyzing the data using NVivo10 was to identify themes within the interview transcriptions. After the completion of identifying those themes, using NVivo 10, this researcher analyzed each of the themes and looked for re-occurring patterns among the themes, and categorized each pattern as they related to each other. Using NVivo 10, this researcher identified the following categories as follows: Multicultural Literature, Relying on Technology, Frustration with the kindergarten teacher, Other family members, and challenging or unchallenging materials. It was quite apparent that Parents 3, 6, 11, 13, and 17 wanted to see multicultural literature incorporated in their child's learning at home and at school. These parents indicated the kindergarten teacher should be more sensitive to their diverse cultures. Parents 7, 8, and 9 indicated they provided some type of technology for their child to practice reading and listening to stories. The children are capable of using these programs without parental assistance. Through this, the parents

believe they are assisting their children by allowing them to use the computer programs, however they are not actually interacting with the child’s literacy development. They are relying on these specific computer programs to teach their children to read. Frustration with the kindergarten teacher was a pattern among Parents 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 17. Reasons for the Parent’s frustration included: lack of multicultural books, books sent home from the teacher were too challenging or not challenging enough for the children, and lack of communication from the child’s kindergarten teacher concerning reading levels and ability.

Table 8 describes those categories and patterns among the themes.

Table 9

Categories and Patterns within Themes Matrix

Themes	Categories	Patterns
Reading Materials in the Home	Multicultural Literature	Parents want to see more multicultural literature used by the teacher
Time Spent Reading	Multicultural Literature	Parents want to see more multicultural literature used by the teacher
Language Barriers	Multicultural Literature	Frustration with teacher
Culture	Multicultural Literature	Parents want to see more multicultural literature used by the teacher Frustration with teacher
Additional Literacy Activities	Relying on Technology	Technology takes the place of books
Difficulties in the Home Environment	Other family members	Parents rely on other family members to help kindergarten child with reading
Parents Opinions Regarding Teacher Related Materials	Challenged Unchallenged	Parents feel the materials are too hard Parents feel the materials are not hard enough

Discussion of Results in Relation to Research Questions

Results for Research Questions 1 & 2

Research question 1 (see Appendix A) asked, whether or not parents of kindergarten children provide literacy activities for their children other than assigned school work and if so, what types of literacy activities. Research Question two (see Appendix A) asked, whether identifiable external factors such as SES, level of education, marital status, and employment affect the amount and types of literacy activities parents provide for their kindergarten children. Data from the 17 participants who were parents of kindergarten children was used, and content analysis was performed to address the question. Whether or not parents provided additional literacy activities for their kindergarten child was a clear theme among the transcriptions.

Socioeconomic Status

Parents 2 and 3 indicated that their children played sight words games or practiced vocabulary cards. Parents 4 stated she provided additional leveled books for her child and Parent 5 required her child to complete alphabet books every day. Parent 17 indicated she had her son practice reading Russian books. Parents 7 and 8 indicated the children used technology such as Leap Frog Stories and the I Pad in addition to school reading activities. For the most part these parents had a high SES. Other parents (1, 12, and 15) found it difficult to engage in additional activities because of working long hours. Parent 1 stated she enjoyed taking her children to the library but is not able to do so on a regular basis due to working nights and weekends. Parent 12 indicated she did not have the time to provide additional literacy activities for her child because she was looking for a job. Parent 15 did not incorporate reading activities

at all because he had to get up very early every morning for work. Parent 16 mentioned that she took her son to Barnes and Noble every week to buy new books, but there busy schedule prevented her from providing literacy activities other than helping with her son's homework. These Parents (1, 12, and 15) were identified as having a low SES.

Education

Parent 5 (high school education) indicated she did not feel competent in supporting her daughter in dealing with her inattentiveness and hyperactivity. Parent 8 (high school education) indicated that he is unaware of how to help his son who was struggling with learning how to read. Parent 15 (high school education) were not able to assist their son with literacy activities due to working long hours and lacking the confidence to help him learn English. Parent 11 indicated she did not provide other types of literacy activities in the home. Parent 12 (high school education) stated she was unable to find a job due to her education and therefore could not spend time with her kindergarten child during literacy activities. Parent 14 (high school education) due to lack of education is unable to find a job other than working for a Janitorial service at night, this prevented her from assisting her child with literacy activities. Parent 14 is a single parent with an income of \$25,000 per year and currently works nights for a Janitorial service. Her long work hours prevent her from providing her son Jaden with additional literacy activities except for a monthly visit to a story time show at the local library in which they listen to stories being read. Although Parent 16 has an educational background, the long hours that her son Shane spends at school and in after school limits the amount of literacy activities that she can provide. She states that Shane is so tired once he gets home that he has a very limited attention span. The parents with low SES for the most part were unable to provide extended

literacy activities for their children due to long work hours. Overall, high SES (yearly income of \$50,000 or more) parents tend to engage in higher quality interactions.

In sum, the findings demonstrated that in terms of parents of kindergarten children, parents with a high SES (yearly income of \$50,000 or more) assist their child with school work, and provide additional literacy activities and materials. Parents identified as having a low SES worked long work hours causing them to have less time with the child to work on literacy activities. Lack of income also prevented these parents from providing additional literacy materials for their children.

Results for Research Question 3

Research Question three (see Appendix A) asked, whether identifiable internal factors such as cultural beliefs, values, and language barriers affect the amount and type of literacy activities they provide for their kindergarten children. In order to answer the question, data from the 17 participants who were parents of kindergarten children was considered.

Language Barriers

Parents 6, 10, and 11 reported that English was not their home language. Parent 6 only spoke Persian at the time of the interview and indicated that she did not read with her child or help him with homework because she did not speak English. Parent 10 indicated that he did not want his Spanish language to interfere with his son's learning to read in English. Parent 11 states that she did not feel confident in her ability to help her son with his homework because she does not speak English fluently. Parent 6 was not aware of the reading materials that Haddie brings home from school because she is unable to read them. Parent 10 stated she could not read or write in English. Parent 11 whom primarily speaks Turkish, indicated that she did not

want to read to her son because she a fluent reader. Parent 3 indicated that his son did not speak English fluently and he was unable to read the leveled books the kindergarten teacher sends home every day. Parent 5 struggles with the reading materials the teacher sends home due to her child's lack of speech.

Culture

Among the sample, Parent 13 indicated that she wished her son's kindergarten teacher would incorporate more multicultural books to send home that specifically related to their Chinese culture. Parent 11 indicated that she felt the teacher devalued her Turkish culture. She stated that her kindergarten child's teacher disagreed with Parent 11's decision to replace the weekly reading homework of leveled books written in English with children's books written in Hebrew. Parent 10 indicated that he wanted this child to become a fluent English reader and his lack of the English language would prevent the child from doing so.

In sum, the findings demonstrated that in terms of parents of kindergarten children, parents' who speak who do not speak English fluently, are restricted in assisting their children with "English" reading school work as well as providing them with additional "English" Literacy activities and materials. These parents did indicate the ability to provide additional literacy materials and activities in their own spoken language. The findings also demonstrated that the specific parents who were not White, felt as though their culture was not valued by the teacher. These parents indicated the need for their children to be exposed to literature that incorporated their own cultures as well as American-English literature.

Results for Research Question 4

Research Question four (see Appendix A) asked to what extent, if any, do parent's agree or disagree with the strategies and activities their children's teachers use to involve them in their children's literacy development."

Nine out of the 17 parents agreed with the literacy materials the kindergarten teacher provided for the students. Parents 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 12,14, 15, and 16 all liked the leveled books for the following reasons: not too hard, provides enough of a challenge, and shows the parent the child's specific reading ability. Parents 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 13 disagreed with literacy materials the kindergarten teacher provided due to the child's inability to read the leveled book or because the books were not diverse and lacked multiculturalism.

In sum, the findings demonstrated that there was no direct correlation with why or why not parents agreed with the strategies the teacher used to involve the parents in their kindergarten child's literacy development.

The home environments of each of the parents interviewed revealed a direct relationship the amount of materials, the time spent reading, and SES. Each household contains different materials and parents with a higher yearly income seem to have more materials for their children than parents with a low yearly income. Most of the parents expressed a desire in helping their child with literacy despite their income level or work schedule. Most of the parents spend time reading and working with their children but the amount of time varies from one family to another.

The data collected during seventeen parent interviews were analyzed at the conclusion of the data collection period. Each aspect of the home environment as well as parent opinions

on classroom teacher's strategies was studied. Similarities were found in many areas; however, each parent differed in the type of materials they provided and on the amount of time they spend reading with their child. In addition, most parents identified different aspects of the home that make it hard for them to work with their child.

Discussion

Parent involvement plays an important role in the success of children in school in many academic areas, specifically in language arts and literacy (Crowe & Reichmuth, 2008). Young children develop stronger early literacy and language skills when parents value their role in their children's literacy and language development, regularly engage their children in literacy and language enhancing activities, organize the home to support literacy and language, are role models for literacy, and are active partners with their child's teacher(Weigel , Martin, & Bennett, 2006). The study explored the following questions: (1) To what extent, if any, do parents of kindergarten children provide literacy activities other than assigned school work, for their children? (2) What kinds of literacy activities do the parents provide for their children and to what extent if any, do identifiable external factors such as SES, level of education, marital status, and employment affect the amount and types of literacy activities parents provide for their kindergarten children? (3)To what extent, if any do identifiable internal factors such as cultural beliefs, values, and language barriers affect the amount and type of literacy activities parent provide for their kindergarten children? And (4) To what extent, if any, do parent's agree or disagree with the strategies and activities their children's teachers use to involve them in their children's literacy development?"

Most parents, regardless of gender or SES, want to help their children learn; however, there are external and internal factors that prevent them from doing so. It is important to understand these factors of the home environment because literacy interaction between the parent and child is important because it relates to a child's success in school (Brown, 2007). This study was designed to determine what external and internal factors in the home environment that makes it difficult for parents to help their kindergarten children with their literacy development. It was also designed to determine how parents feel about the literacy materials and strategies the kindergarten teachers use to involve them in their child's literacy development. A total of 210 parents' were recruited to participate in the study, 17 agreed to participate. Once interviews were completed, recorded interviews were transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking. The transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo10 which created matrices of the responses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The findings from each interview indicate that there are external and internal factors of the home environment that affect the amount and quality of literacy activities taking place in the home. The interviews revealed that factors such as socioeconomic status, working status, educational background, and time all affect the amount of parent involvement that is taking place in homes. The data revealed that each home environment is different and therefore parents find that some aspects are easy such as a routine time to read. Other parents find it difficult because of their job, lack of time, or knowledge of the strategies. The data from the interviews indicated some of the parents agree and some did not agree with the kindergarten teacher's strategies to involve them in child's literacy development. Those who agreed, liked the leveled books and found them to be appropriate for their children. Those parents who did not agree found the leveled books to

either be too challenging due to difficulty of the text, too challenging due to child's lack of the English language, or the leveled readers did not incorporate other cultures.

Conclusions

Reading Materials and Time Spent on Reading in the Home

The data showed that while most parents want to support their child's literacy development, there are factors that affect the types of literacy materials parents provide for their children in the home. The interviews revealed that parents with lower SES (yearly income of \$25,000 or less) had fewer materials and resources available for their children than parents of high SES. For example Parent 6, Parent 10, Parent 12, Parent 15 had a low yearly income (less than \$25,000 per year) and had few or no books at all when compared to those who had incomes above \$25,000 per year. The parents with higher incomes indicated that they had numerous books available at varying levels for their children to read. Based on these families, the amount of reading materials in the home relates to the SES of the family. The families of higher SES reported that they have more materials, and books than those families of low SES. Although Parent 1, who has an income less than \$20,000 per year did state she provide books and magazines for her children to read. Parent 9 with an income of \$45,000 per year indicated she did have books in the home, however did not allow the child to have access to the books. For these parents, SES has an effect on the amount of materials provided in the home as well as the type of materials and interactions with each. Those with a higher SES had other materials in addition to books for their children. This finding reaffirmed by Aikens and Barbarin (2008) who state that families living in poverty do not have the income to provide materials such as books, computers, or tutors to create a rich and positive literacy environment for their children.

The interviews revealed that low SES parents spend fewer days and fewer minutes reading with their children than parents of higher SES. For example, Parents 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 15 each found something difficult about the amount of time they are able to spend on literacy with their child. Parents 1 and 15 found it difficult to read with their children because they work many nights or weekends. Parents 5 and 8 seem to have a lack of knowledge of how to properly work with their child in learning how to read which related to only having a high school education. Parents 6, 10, and 11 seem to face language barriers that prevented them from having the confidence to read to their children. As a result, for these families long work hours, and lack of education contributed to the amount of time parents spent working on literacy with their children. As a result, Parent 4 is not home in the evenings to work and participate in literacy activities with her son. Research by Aikens and Barbaran (2008) has shown that working class parents and low SES families often face difficulties in the home environment that affect the amount and quality of time they are able to spend with their children. On the other hand, parents of higher SES, with an educational background (Parents 2, 4, 5, 7, and 17) reported reading with their children every day for approximately 20 minutes. Brown (2007) found that children who are read to for about 30 minutes every night will have acquired many hours of print exposure before kindergarten even begins. However, children with low socioeconomics and demographic risk factors often have limited experiences with books which often inhibit their reading progress (Neuman, 2003). According to these findings, SES and educational background relate to the amount of materials in the home environment as well as the amount of time spent reading.

Language Barriers and Culture

The cases show that 7 out of the 17 reported that English was not their home language. Parent 6 only spoke Persian at the time of the interview and indicated that she did not read with her child or help him with homework because she did not speak English. Parent 6 indicates that he does not want his Spanish language to interfere with his son's learning to read in English. Parent 11 states that she does not feel confident in her ability to help Benji with his homework. Language barriers prevent many limited-English proficient (LEP) parents from participating fully in their children's literacy development (Yasui, Wong, & Lau, 2006). Limited-English proficient parents lack critical information about their children's education and often have no way to communicate with their child's teacher (Yasui, Wong, & Lau, 2006). Parent 6 only speaks Persian and therefore is unable to help her son, Haddie with reading and homework. Parent 6 is not aware of the reading materials that Haddie brings home from school because she is unable to read them. Parent 10 who primarily speaks Spanish, does speak English but not in the academic since, therefore she cannot read or write in English. Parent 10 indicates that she does not want to interfere with Jose's ability to learn to read in English fluently. Parent 11 who primarily speaks Turkish, indicates that she does not want to read to her son because is not a "good reader." Language barriers prevent many immigrant and limited-English proficient (LEP) parents from participating fully in their children's education (Yasui, Wong, & Lau, 2006). Many families choose to speak only their native language in the home, causing difficulty for children to transfer their knowledge from one language to another (Baker, 2003). Nieto (2006) states this causes parents to be unable to reinforce literacy concepts in English. Parent 3 indicated that his son does not speak English fluently and he is

unable to read the leveled books the kindergarten teacher sends home every day. Parent 3 states that instead of requiring the child to read the leveled book, he practices basic English vocabulary words using picture flashcards. Parent 3 states, “Sometimes the teacher gets angry with Daniel because he does not read, but it is my fault because I do not think the books are appropriate for him because he can’t speak English yet.” These children may not be receiving the same amount of rich literacy experiences that other children may be getting at home because their parents’ are unable to speak and read in the English language or the children are unable to speak the English language appropriately. Therefore, these children may not be receiving the same amount of rich literacy experiences that other children may be getting at home due to language barriers their parents face.

Culture

Parent 13 indicated that she wished her son’s kindergarten teacher would incorporate more multicultural books to send home that specifically related to their Chinese culture. Parent 11 indicated that she felt the teacher devalued her Turkish culture. She stated that her kindergarten child’s teacher disagreed with Parent 11’s decision to replace the weekly reading homework of leveled books written in English with children’s books written in Hebrew. Parent 10 indicated that he wanted this child to become a fluent English reader and his lack of the English language would prevent the child from doing so. Parent 17 stated, “One day when Igor was sick and absent from school I told his teacher that we had written a story in Russian together, and I asked if it could take the place of missed work. The teacher said, “No because it was not written in English that she would not be able to read it, and therefore could not count it as an assignment.” Parent 17 indicated that she felt devalued, however agreed with the

teacher's decision. She stated, "I still have Igor read and write in Russian, we just don't tell the teacher." Culture plays a major role in shaping literacy in the home. Yet in many cases, school culture is much different than family culture (Nieto, 2006). According to Nieto (2006) literacy is valued and perceived differently depending on cultural values and experiences of the parents. Due to these differing values, children are faced with the challenge of parsing their different environments and finding a way to exist in both worlds. Differing cultural values in the home also causes differences in how homework is completed and valued. Because culture and values greatly influence literacy development, it is important that educators understand the culture and values of each child in order to help him or her be successful (Linder & Foote, 2002). The classroom today is much more diverse than it has been in years. It is imperative that students learn acceptance and understanding of different races, ethnicities, and cultures. At the same time, they should value their own race, ethnicity, and culture. To help these parents and their children feel as though their culture and language is valued, the teacher should incorporate multicultural literature into the reading curriculum.

Additional Literacy Activities

The cases show that some of the parents extend their child's literacy engagement by providing additional literacy activities. Parents 2 and 3 indicated that their children played sight words games or practiced vocabulary cards. Parents 4 stated she provided additional leveled books for her child and Parent 5 required her child to complete alphabet books every day. Parent 17 indicated she had her son practice reading Russian books. According to Vygotskian theory children learn through social interactions with others and a difference in social interactions can lead to differences in performance (Vygotsky, 1978). Parents 7 and 8 indicated

the children used technology such as Leap Frog Stories and the I Pad in addition to school reading activities. Although these parents are providing these literacy materials, there is no interaction between the parent and child. Other parents (1, 12, and 15) found it difficult to engage in additional activities because of working long hours. Parent 1 states she enjoys taking her children to the library but is not able to do so on a regular basis due to working nights and weekends. Parent 12 indicates she did not have the time to provide additional literacy activities for her child because she was looking for a job. Parent 15 did not incorporate reading activities at all because he had to get up very early every morning. Parent 16 mentioned that she takes her son to Barnes and Noble every week to buy new books, but there busy schedule prevented her from providing literacy activities other than helping with her son's homework. Parent 9 stated that it was too difficult to provide her grandson with additional activities due to his hyperactivity which would indicate personality differences. Therefore, some of the parents extend their child's literacy development beyond others because of the home environment and the additional resources that they have. As a result, these factors may be affecting the amount and quality of literacy interactions at home. According to Lynch (2006) the interactions between parent and child have a great influence on the child's literacy development and success in school. The quantity and quality of literacy activities in the home is directly related to a parent's income and education (Baker, 2003). Therefore, while literacy may be practiced in all homes, in many homes it may be basic literacy skills. In other homes, children may be exposed to higher level literacy because these parents may have more education and therefore have an idea of additional strategies and activities to use. Parents without experience or little education

may be unaware of any additional literacy activities to implement beyond the basic activities provided by the teacher.

Difficulties in the Home Environment

Information from the interviews shows that 8 out of the 17 have at least one aspect of the home environment that makes it difficult to work with their child. Parent 1 is a single mother with a low yearly income (\$10,000-\$20,000) which limits the amount of materials and support that are available for her child at home. Chloe is diagnosed with ADHD and her mother (Parent 5) does not feel competent in supporting Chloe in dealing with her inattentiveness and hyperactivity. She indicates that she becomes very frustrated with Chloe and is unable to provide her with extra literacy assistance. Haddie recently lost his father and his mother is unable to find a job to support the family. They currently live with an aunt who supports the family while Parent 6 looks for a job. While Parent 8 is able to be home in the evenings and on the weekends with Mason, he often struggles with how to help his son with literacy activities. Jose is being raised by Parent 15 and father who both work long hours and have a combined low yearly income of \$25,000. Both parents are unable to even assist Jose with his homework much less provide extended literacy activities. Parent 11 indicated she did not provide other types of literacy activities in the home. Parent 12 is a single parent who is currently unemployed. Parent 14 is a single parent with an income of \$25,000 per year and currently works nights for a Janitorial service. Although Parent 16 has an educational background, the long hours that her son Shane spends at school and in after school limits the amount of literacy activities that she can provide. She states that Shane is so tired once he gets home that he has a very limited attention span. Many parents do not have time to assist their

children with school work because they are often trying to provide the basic needs (Dever and Burts, 2002). Parents also do not have the confidence or feel they lack the knowledge needed to help their child with literacy (Finn, 1998). Because of this, teachers need to support parents and show them the strategies to use with their children as well as provide literacy materials for them to use in the home. It is also important to note that home literacy can be difficult for parents of both high SES and low SES. Home literacy is not just challenging for working class, single parents but also for those high SES families who have fulltime jobs and a busy family schedule.

Overall, each family faces something that makes it hard for them to engage in literacy with their child. As a result, it is important for educators to understand what is happening in the homes of their students (Brown, 2007). It is important for teachers to understand the various factors that affect literacy and learning in home environments such as busy schedules, the difficulties parents face while working nights and the struggles parents may face when their child has been diagnosed with a certain condition.

Recommendations

Researchers should continue to study the issue of parent involvement in children's literacy development. It is important for researchers to look at the external and internal factors that affect literacy at home and offer suggestions on how to minimize these factors. A suggestion for further study includes studying high SES homes where time may affect the amount and quality of interactions that are taking place. In addition, researchers should continue to study the teacher's role in incorporating multicultural literature for homework as it relates to the diverse cultures within the classroom. It is also important for researchers to

look at the communication that takes place between teachers and parents and offer suggestions for teachers on how they can better communicate with parents. In addition, it would be valuable to study how teachers are assisting parents and what activities they provide. Through these studies parent involvement in their child's literacy development should continue to develop in hopes that all parents will learn new strategies to help improve their child's reading performance.

Summary and Implications

The results of this study show that there are significant external and internal factors in the home environment that impact the quality and amount of literacy activities that parents provide for their children. It also revealed that teacher's should provide explicit strategies for parents to use as they support their child's literacy development in the home. It also revealed that teacher's should include diverse reading materials such as multicultural literature that is sensitive of other cultures. If teachers are aware of the factors in the home that prevent parents" from providing literacy activities to their children they will be more capable of supporting these parents. By using diverse reading materials in the classroom and providing them for home use, parents and students will feel their diverse family life and culture is valued. To further explore the purpose of this study, explicit examination of how teachers incorporate multicultural literature with homework would like to be studied.

APPENDIX A
DETAILED METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

Although parents want to help their children be successful, they may not have the knowledge or training to do so (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Parents face many external and internal factors in the home that do not permit them to provide literacy rich environments for their children. Parents may, for example, be single parents who are working one or more jobs, or they might come from low socio- economic households (Wanat, 2005). Many parents also face cultural and language barriers that prevent them from understanding or providing mainstream literacy activities for their children (Edwards, McMillon, Turner, & Laier, 2001). However, because a parent is not able to provide school-based literacy practices in the home, it does not mean they are not providing other literacy based activities for their children. Therefore, this study investigated types of literacy activities parents of kindergarten children are providing at home if any at all as well as reasons why parents may not provide literacy activities for their children. This study also looked at whether or not parents agreed with the kindergarten teacher strategies to involve them in their child's literacy development at home.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues and discussions addressed in the study.

- Parent involvement: Parent involvement is the support and participation of parents at home, in the community, and at the school site that directly and positively affect the educational performance of all children.
- Emergent reader/young reader: The term refers to a child who has some knowledge about language, reading, and writing before coming to school.

- Mainstream/School Based Literacy Practices: The term refers to literacy practices that are regarded as normal or conventional; the dominant trend in opinion in the school setting.
- Home literacy activities: The term refers to participation in literacy-related activities in the home, which can include aspects of exposure (availability of print material) and frequency of reading.
- Home-school partnerships: The term refers to the connection between the home and school setting and the contributions each makes to fostering children's development.
- Social economic status (SES): This term refers to the economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation
- Sight word(s): This term refers to a word whose spelling is not straightforward and, therefore, does not enable a learning reader to determine what spoken word it represents just by sounding it out according to the rules. Learning readers recognize sight words from having memorized them or by drawing their meaning from context.
- Leveled books: This term refers to books that are organized in levels of difficulty from the easy books that an emergent reader might begin to the longer, complex books that advanced readers will select.
- Academic language: This term refers to words used in a classroom environment to discuss lessons and material.

- Social language: This term refers to aspects of language proficiency strongly associated with basic fluency in face-to-face-interaction. Natural speech in social interactions, including those that occur in a classroom
- Multicultural literature: This term refers to literature from all cultures, with no distinction between the dominant and other cultures.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed in response to the research purposes of the study:

Question 1

To what extent, if any, do parents of kindergarten children provide literacy activities other than assigned school work, for their children? What kinds of literacy activities do the parents provide for their children?

Question 2

To what extent if any, do identifiable external factors such as SES, level of education, marital status, and employment affect the amount and types of literacy activities parents provide for their kindergarten children?

Question 3

To what extent, if any do identifiable internal factors such as cultural beliefs, values, and language barriers affect the amount and type of literacy activities parent provide for their kindergarten children?

Question 4

To what extent, if any, do parent's agree or disagree with the strategies and activities their children's teachers use to involve them in their children's literacy development?"

APPENDIX B
PARENT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

1. What is your gender? Male/Female
2. What is your age?
3. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. Hispanic or Latino
 - b. Not Hispanic or Latino
4. What is your race?
 - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e. White
5. What is your marital status?
 - a. Now married
 - b. Widowed
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Separated
 - e. Never married
6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.

- a. No schooling completed
 - b. Nursery school to 8th grade
 - c. 9th, 10th or 11th grade
 - d. 12th grade, no diploma
 - e. High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
 - f. Some college credit, but less than 1 year
 - g. 1 or more years of college, no degree
 - h. Associate degree (for example: AA, AS)
 - i. Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, AB, BS)
 - j. Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)
 - k. Professional degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)
 - l. Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)
7. What is your employment status?
- a. Employed for wages
 - b. Self-employed
 - c. Out of work and looking for work
 - d. Out of work but not currently looking for work
 - e. A homemaker
 - f. A student
 - g. Retired
 - h. Unable to work

8. What is your total household income?

- a. Less than \$10,000
- b. \$10,000 to \$19,999
- c. \$20,000 to \$29,999
- d. \$30,000 to \$39,999
- e. \$40,000 to \$49,999
- f. \$50,000 to \$59,999
- g. \$60,000 to \$69,999
- h. \$70,000 to \$79,999
- i. \$80,000 to \$89,999
- j. \$90,000 to \$99,999
- k. \$100,000 to \$149,999
- l. \$150,000 or more

9. What is your home language?

APPENDIX C
PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does your kindergarten child do after school?
2. Do any of these activities interfere with homework and reading activities?
3. What types of reading and writing activities do you use to help your kindergarten child be more successful in school? For example, do read with your child every night, do you help him/her complete homework?
4. Do you find it is difficult to work with your child on reading and writing activities? Why or why not?
5. Do you think it is important for child to learn to read and write? Why or Why not?
6. Do you have books, magazines, iPads, or other types of reading materials in your home that your kindergarten child can use?
7. Sometimes you might face challenges that prevent you from providing reading and writing activities for child or assisting them with school work. What might some of these challenges be?
8. What kind of support in assisting your child with reading and writing school work do you receive from your kindergarten child's teacher?
9. Is there anything your child's teacher to do differently to help you assist your child with reading and writing school work? Explain homework directions better, communicate more frequently about assignments, etc.
10. Do you have a positive relationship with your child's teacher? Why or why not?
11. What do you think about the reading and writing materials that are sent home by your child's kindergarten teacher?
12. What do you do to motivate your child to read? Do you read yourself?

APPENDIX D
PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PILOT STUDY)

1. Do you find it hard to find time to read or work with your child on reading activities?
If so, why?
2. What aspects of your home make it difficult for you to work with your child?
3. What is your child's after-school routine like?
4. What does an average evening in your home look like?
5. What activities are your child involved in that interferes with the time you spend on homework and reading activities?
6. What types of activities do you currently do to help your child? How often do you and your child do reading activities? How long?
7. What makes it easy to work with your child on literacy activities?
8. What types of reading materials do you have at home?
9. How do you feel about being a teacher at home for your son/daughter? Do you feel it is part of your responsibility? If not, whose is it?
10. If you could change one aspect of your home environment that would help your son/daughter perform better in school, what would you change?
11. What can the teacher do to help you better as a parent?
12. What guidance are you currently getting or not getting from the teacher?
13. What would you like the teacher to do differently?
14. What would you like the teacher to do the same?
15. Have you currently developed strategies to work with your teacher to make a strong connection between home and school?
16. Your child's teacher says that she does _____. How do you feel about this?
Is it helpful?

APPENDIX E
OTHER ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Parent Participation Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a student at the University of North Texas in the Graduate Early Childhood Program. I am currently doing a research study on reading in the home. The purpose of my study is to find out what reading activities you are currently doing with your child and what factors might make it difficult for you to work with your child on reading. In addition, I want to know what you think about your child's teachers' strategies for involving you in helping your child become a better reader at home and school. This study will benefit teachers and parents by helping them create a stronger connection between home and school.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to be in this study. If you are interested in being in the study, I am asking you to fill out the attached form, sign it, and return the slip to your child's classroom teacher. If you are chosen, you will be contacted to meet with me one-on-one to discuss your view on the home reading environment. The interview will take place one time and should take thirty minutes to an hour to complete. Once you have signed the form and returned it, we will discuss times that you are available to meet. When the interview is complete, there will be a onetime meeting held with your child's teacher so that he/she can model explicit reading strategies for you to use at home. This meeting will be no longer than thirty minutes and will be scheduled after all interviews are complete.

Please be sure that all of the information you share will remain private. The interview will be audio taped for use by me, the researcher. Transcripts of the interview will be included in my

dissertation; however, a fake name will be used. Tapes will remain in a locked file and will be thrown away at the end of this study. The tape will not be shared with anyone else. No personal information or names will be shared; only results from the study.

If you choose to be in this study it would be helpful. However, participation in this study is voluntary. Please keep in mind that the likely risks to you are no greater than those in daily life. By completing the form; you are agreeing to be in the study. If your form is not returned within one week, I will contact you by phone to see if you are interested.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lauren Gonzalez

Graduate Student

University of North Texas

INFORMED PARENT CONSENT FORM

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: __ Literacy at Home: An Investigation of Literacy Practices in the home of Kindergarten Students _____

Student Investigator: __ Lauren Gonzalez _____, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of __ Early Childhood _____.

Supervising Investigator: __ George Morrison _____

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of my study is to find out what reading activities you are currently doing with your child and what factors might make it difficult for you to work with your child on reading. In addition, I want to know what you think about your child's teachers' strategies for involving you in helping your child become a better reader at home and school. This study will benefit teachers and parents by helping them create a stronger connection between home and school.

Study Procedures: After you agree to participate in the study we will set up a time that you would be available to be interviewed by me at your home or at Eugenia Porter Rayzor Elementary. The interview will take no longer than one hour. Interviews will be digitally recorded but all information will be kept confidential.

Foreseeable Risks: There are "no foreseeable risks to you or your child's participation in this study."

Benefits to the Subjects or Others:

“This study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to you, but it will generate information about how teachers and parents can partner to help kindergarten children become better readers”

Compensation for Participants: None

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: Neither your name nor the school name will be made public. All records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer in my home.

Research Participants' Rights:

Your participation in the survey confirms that you have read all of the above and that you agree to all of the following:

- (Lauren Gonzalez has explained the study to you and you have had an opportunity to contact him/her with any questions about the study. You have been informed of the possible benefits and the potential risks of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

- You understand you may print a copy of this form for your records.

You understand that your consent does not guarantee your participation in this study. Due to time constraints, the researcher must set a limit to the amount of participants that part of the study.

*Please keep the letter for your records and return only this consent form.

Your Full Name

Phone Number

The best time of day to contact me at the number listed is:

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

Signature Date

COMPREHENSIVE REFERENCE LIST

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