

A STUDY
OF THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN
FROM ONE-PARENT AND TWO-PARENT FAMILIES,

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON ROESCH LIBRARY
MASTERS PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education,
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

Margaret Butts

School of Education
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
Dayton, Ohio
December, 1991

APPROVED BY:

Signature of Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Gordon Anderson, my advisor, for his help in completing this research project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Hypothesis.....	2
Assumptions.....	3
Limitations.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	3
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	5
III. PROCEDURE.....	20
Subjects	
Setting	
Instrumentation	
Design	
IV. RESULTS.....	23
Presentation of Results.....	23
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	26
Summary.....	26
Conclusions.....	27
Recommendations.....	28
APPENDIX.....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	33

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade the family has been one of the most volatile elements in our social system. With one of every two marriages ending in divorce today, it is estimated that almost half of all babies born in the United States will spend at least part of their lives in a single-parent home (Gilbert, 1982).

The writer believes the family background has an influence on school achievement. What a child experiences when not in school (and perhaps in school as well) is in large part determined by the structure of his or her family. The writer believes the fundamental process of learning is probably quite similar in both environments and there are undoubtedly strong interactions between home and school processes.

Reading achievement has been shown to be significantly correlated with: (1) intelligence; (2) socio-economic status of the family; (3) parental attitudes; and (4) the nature of the home environment (Sunseri, Albert, Kent, Schoenberger, Amuwo, Vickers, 1983).

Studies were reviewed (Silvern, 1985) where parental practices positively increased children's reading. Children exhibited more positive attitudes and higher reading levels when parents were involved. Potentially important was the amount of time parents devoted to their children which by definition is less available in one-parent homes.

The purpose of educational research is to identify variables that affect the educational processes both negatively and positively. With the institution of the family undergoing rapid and substantial change the writer chose to study and gain a clearer understanding of the relationship between family structure and children's reading achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine if reading achievement differences exist in third grade students of single-parent families and two-parent families.

Hypothesis

There will be no significant relationship in the reading scores of third grade children from single-parent families and two-parent families.

Assumptions

In order to carry out this study the writer must make the following assumptions. First, the reading scores will be valid evaluations of the child's reading achievement. Secondly, the family data found about the child is correct.

Limitations

The writer finds several limitations affecting this project. One limitation is that the number of subjects used will be relatively small. Another limitation is that the Iowa Test of Basic Skills will be administered to students in each homeroom, therefore each class will have a different administrator.

Definition of Terms

The following will be used in the study.

A Two-Parent Family is a household that is composed of a father, a mother, and a child (children) who are living together. In a two-parent family the parents are usually in command and support of one another.

A one-parent family is a household consisting of a child (children) and only one parent in residence. One-parent families can arise in three ways: by separation or divorce, by the death of a parentt, or by the birth of a child to an unmarried woman. In a single-parent home only one adult is in command and there is no one for the parent to work with

who will provide support or encouragement. This causes a breakdown in the typical family structure.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is a standardized test administered to students in kindergarten through grade twelve. It measures reading achievement using raw scores, grade equivalents, and stanines.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

More than six million Americans between the ages of ten and eighteen live with a single parent. That is one out of every five preteens and teenagers. In fact, almost one-fifth of United States children of all ages live with a mother or father only (Gilbert, 1982).

According to the Carnegie Council on Children, forty-nine out of fifty of the more than fifty-five million children under eighteen years of age in the United States will experience some change from the traditional two-parent married family. Three of five children of divorce live with stepparents. Although the United States Census Bureau reports that three quarters of all children live with at least one parent, only two of three homes have a husband and wife living together within them. One quarter of our children are born out of wedlock, starting their lives from relationships that are basically unstable (Pearsall, 1990).

Our children continue to have children. Births to children in the age range of eleven to fourteen have

increased more than ten percent over his decade, and children with the least financial resources behind them and without social supports of their own are the most likely to have their own children while they are still children themselves. One of four children lives in poverty in the United States. More than seventeen million children, most of these under age six, live without the most basic of life's essentials, and most of these children are being raised by women living alone in poverty, themselves unhealthy and underfed (Pearsall, 1990).

The pressures of change are overwhelming the family system. More than thirty million children live in homes where both parents work and less than one third of homes have only the father working. More than three million school-age children must take care of themselves while their single-parent or both parents work (Pearsall, 1990).

The prototypical American family which is usually considered a married couple with children has undergone a lot of changes in the last couple of decades. The number of single-parent families has grown rapidly over the past twenty years, and this growth is likely to continue in the 1990's. High divorce rates and declining remarriage rates mean that most adults are heading families without the help of a spouse. According to (Schwartz, 1990), two-parent households have dropped from forty percent of the total in 1970 to just twenty-six percent in 1990. And in 1988, sixty-three percent

of all elementary and junior-high school-age children had moms in the labor force.

Schools play a major role in the lives of our families. Therefore teachers should be well informed about what to expect under these circumstances. They should be supportive, sympathetic, and patientt. The schools must also examine the needs and understand special attention may be required of them. Written communication to children's homes should not always assume there are two parents. Parent conferences should be scheduled so the parent has an opportunity to attend and textbooks that are purchased should be given consideration to the types of families portrayed. Single parents may also need help in adjusting and learning to deal with their new circumstances. (Pearsall, 1990) indicates many times the schools assume intact families, systems that will be "home to help," when in fact so many students will go to families in trouble, divided, or in a state of change.

Single parents are also faced with the task of helping their children adapt to their new living situations. Divorce is not just between two parents; it also affects the children. Often, it is harder on them because they have to adjust to this new way of life. Frequently the income becomes much lower, while their surroundings are uprooted, employment changes take place and the children must endure the loss of one parent. They sometimes feel guilt and shame and for awhile may have a difficult time concentrating; their

motivation toward school may dwindle. (Steinzor, 1969) states that certainly a broken home produces a more stressful period of growing up than a home with loving parents. Divorce is a crisis in the lives of all children.

According to (Clarke-Stewart, 1989) though, perhaps the single best prediction of the long term consequences of divorce is the family's financial situation. There is a drastic drop in income and economic insecurity usually accompanies many divorces. This alone presents severe challenges for both parents and children. Economic factors have a powerful effect on adjustment to divorce.

Divorce is a social phenomenon that affects us all. It is up to all of us, then to help children and their parents cope with it as well as they can (Clarke-Stewart, 1989).

Research has clearly shown that family background variables are related to children's achievement. Since divorce and maternal employment are today more likely than ever before to be factors in a child's experience, a study was done by Milne, Myers, Rosenthal, and Ginsburg in 1986. They analyzed the effects of mother's employment and living in a one-parent family on children's achievement. The results indicated negative effects on achievement for those living in a one-parent home but it was mediated by other variables particularly income. (Milne, Myers, Rosenthal, and Ginsburg, 1986) mentioned that in two-parent families, family income is usually higher and the mother works less, therefore

these at-home mothers mediate part of the beneficial effects of two-parent families.

Another study done by Datcher-Loury, 1988) said maternal employment in white collar, craft, or operative occupations (but not as laborers or service workers) raised children's reading performance. This change from the negative effects of full-time work on children's achievement as of ages six and a half to seven and a half indicated that the mother's absence from the household did not inhibit the performance of older children as it appeared to do for younger groups. Instead either the higher financial resources or other positive benefits associated with employment in jobs other than laborers or service workers overwhelmed any possible negative influences due to less time available for child care activity.

(Thompson, 1985) studied the home environment and said it is much more closely associated with the variations in educational performance than is the school environment, and explained how overwhelmingly important the home environment is in its association with variations in educational performance. A lot of time poor reading reflects the reader's lack of background knowledge and experiences. What our children bring or do not bring to the printed page is crucial to reading proficiency. Fundamentals of reading comprehension includes extensive language experience and knowledge of the world. The more experiences and exposure to language usually the better the reader is.

(Shenkman, 1984) said the child raised in a ghetto who has not ventured beyond the few blocks from where he or she lives, whose language interactions are limited, whose school is preoccupied with serving breakfast and maintaining discipline and whose major contact with the wider world is through television will bring little relevant information to literary reading material. In contrast, the child who has enriching experiences with language books and worldly concepts, all other things being equal, will bring more to and get more from what he or she reads.

In studies across nations, the consistent factor associated with reading achievement is not method or language system but home environment (Shenkman, 1984). What goes on in the home environment is intimately linked with success in school. (McDonnell, 1989) believes children's motivations for learning to read has been shown to be closely related to the function of literacy in the lives of their parents and culture. (Edwards, 1989) quoted (Chamber, 1973) as saying that readers are made, not born. No one comes into the world already disposed for or against words in print. If a child comes from a reading family where books are a shared source of pleasure, he or she will have an understanding of the language of the literacy world and respond to the use of books in a classroom as a natural expansion of pleasant home experiences (King, 1980; cited by Edwards, 1989).

Research by (Clark, 1978; Durkin, 1966) has suggested that it is the existence of supportive home environment, not superior intelligence, that influences the development of accelerated reading capabilities. (Heath and Thomas, 1984; Liechter, 1984; Smith, 1984; cited by Burns and Collins, 1987) in the area of literacy supports these findings and suggests that young children develop reading capabilities as they become conscious that reading/writing serves a purpose within their environment. As parents expose children to various types of materials and encourage independent investigation of printed information, the children develop an understanding that a functional relation exists between printed words and specific acts (Harste, Burke, and Woodward, 1981; Plessas and Oakes, 1964; cited by Burns and Collins, 1987). Research involving intellectually superior subjects further expands this idea and suggests that it is a combination of home environment and superior intelligence that result in accelerated reading abilities. Studies by (Cox, 1926; Goertzel and Goertzel, 1972; cited by Burns and Collins, 1987) showed that the majority of their subjects were raised in environments where parents encouraged personal freedom and provided opportunities for exploration. The research clearly supported the relevance of a supportive home environment in the development of early reading capabilities. Research by (Burns and Collins, 1987) reported that mothers of accelerated readers provided a greater number of opportunities in the environment, discuss, recall, and interact with information from stories or

story-related materials, than non-readers. Mothers also reported that accelerated readers had been provided more opportunities in the home environment to interact directly with pictures, letters, words, sounds, sentences, and book-related concepts than non-readers. The research concluded that superior intelligence and a supportive home environment did not automatically result in accelerated reading abilities. Rather, parent reports suggested that accelerated readers had been provided certain types of experiences to a greater extent than non-readers.

There also has been a lot of evidence demonstrating the importance of the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and their children's school achievement (Johnson and Stafford, 1973 and Houser and Featherman, 1976; cited by Datcher-Loury, 1988); however, according to studies by (Datcher-Loury, 1988) it is clear that there are substantial variations in children's outcomes across families that are identical in parent's education and work history, family income, family size and other standard measures of social and economic well-being. For example, many low-income families suffer less from handicaps of fewer economic resources than do others.

Studies by (Datcher-Loury, 1988) implied that while socioeconomic barriers constrain the possibilities of low-income children, they do not preclude many such children from being successful in school. Thus, there is a possibility to overcome the handicaps of limited financial resources and the attitudes

and behaviors associated with it. It is also consistent with the idea that these attitudes and behaviors have long term effects on children's academic performance. Although the findings were clearly tentative, they suggested that programs might be useful in helping to overcome the effects of economic disadvantage on children's scholastic achievement by altering the parent's behavior.

(Ryan and Grolnick, 1989) Since (Coleman's, 1966), controversial conclusion that family background and social context are the primary influence in determining children's achievement, there has been a growing body of research regarding the connections between home and school (Hess and Holloway, 1985). A number of studies have shown associations between home characteristics, demographic variables and achievement-relevant outcomes (Belz and Geary, 1984; Jencks, 1972; Marjoribanks, 1980; cited by Ryan and Grolnick, 1989). According to (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; cited by Ryan and Grolnick, 1989) a large body of research explores parental attitudes, child-rearing behaviors and parent-child relationships as they relate to aspects of children's development. More recently, large scale survey studies have begun to link specific attributes of parent style or behavior to child achievement and adjustments in school (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts and Fraleigh, 1987; Stevenson and Baker, 1987; cited by Ryan and Grolnick, 1989). (Ryan and Grolnick, 1989) stated that more involved parents would provide the emotional resources essential to a sense of

self-direction and confidence as well as more concrete resources that could aid in achievement.

Results of studies done by (Ryan and Grolnick, 1989) using a structured view of middle class families with two parents suggest that parents who are more dedicated to the child-rearing process have children who have a greater sense about who or what controls outcomes in school. Further, despite the general absence of overall effects for parental involvement, correlation and regression analysis pointed to the relative importance of mother versus father involvement in the prediction of children's school self-regulation and competence. More involved mothers had children who were both better adjusted according to teachers and who evidenced higher achievement. Results also indicated that mothers are more involved than fathers in child-rearing. Specifically, they spend more time actively interacting with their children. The greater the interaction of mothers relative to fathers is consistent with studies of younger children and toddlers (Belsky, 1979; Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Russell and Russell, 1987; cited by Ryan and Grolnick, 1989). This may account for the greater predictive value of mother versus father involvement.

Findings also suggested that one way in which economic factors impact upon child development is by affecting the degree to which parents, and particularly mothers, are available for their children and are able to provide them with their psychological resources. Interestingly, maternal work status

was not associated with involvement, suggesting that it may not be the actual hours spent at home with the child but rather availability with regard to specific school issues that may account for the findings. In general, the findings support the idea that within intact, two-parent families, parents exert important influences on children's school-related self-regulation and competence particularly through their support. Applying the study's findings to families that are different in structure may show considerable differences than the sample (Grolnick and Ryan, 1989). Given that single-parent families represent over twenty percent of American families with school-age children (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1988), (Grolnick, 1989) believed it would be important to include them in future studies of parenting styles and school-related outcomes.

(Holdaway, 1979) studied the environment and practices of parents' reading to their children. He concluded that children found oral reading enjoyable, and that it was useful for future reading development. (Guinagh and Jester, 1972) also emphasized the importance of the quality of parents' reading aloud to their children. There should be positive interaction between the child and parent in order to develop a positive attitude toward books and reading.

(Greaney, 1986) listed ways to foster reading achievement and for parents to interact with their children. They include good work habits in the home; encouragement of independence in

the child; and emphasis on the child's self-discovery and performance. A study done by Hess in 1982 (cited by Greaney, 1986) in which these six areas where parents interacted with their children made a difference in the children's reading achievement.

1. Verbal interaction between parent and child leads to reading achievement.
2. Interest in reading by parents contributes to a child's confidence and interest in reading.
3. Parental reading helps develop the habit in children of leisure reading. This was confirmed by a study (Durkin, 1966) discovered that mothers of early readers read more often than the average adult.
4. Access to reading materials is associated with reading achievement. The study by (Laosa, 1982; cited by Greaney, 1986) discovered that among three year olds, the number of books in the home related to performance on a general achievement test.
5. Opportunity for reading can be greatly affected by noisy conditions or overcrowding in the home. These negative elements can adversely affect reading performance. Greaney, in 1980, reported that one half of all leisure reading done in Ireland is done in bed.
6. Parent-child reading can help the child understand the written words long before recognizing them. This conclusion was seen in a study by (Ninio and Brunner, 1978; cited by Greaney, 1986) which stated that this practice of parent-child reading strongly affects language development in children.

Correlational results by (Teale, 1981) indicate that there is a link between being read to and "success in certain general

competencies in language and literacy" while (Doake, 1981) maintains that the reading of stories provides the child with a mental framework or schema that print can exist of itself, that it is permanent and unchanging and that what has been carved in stone may be returned to time and time again.

According to early reports little time was spent in reading aloud to children by parents. For example, the Ginsburg study (Mann, 1984) revealed that working mothers and homemakers spent an average of one minute a day, including weekends, reading to their children. Also, the report indicated that fathers spent less time than mothers; fathers in homes where the mothers worked spent no more than a minute a day reading to their children and no time if the mothers did not work outside the home.

According to the United States Department of Education 1986, parents can do many things to help their children succeed in school but unfortunately evidence indicates many parents are doing much less than they might. According to their research, mothers, on average, spend less than half an hour a day talking, explaining, or reading to their children. Fathers spend less than fifteen minutes. Further research on both gifted and disadvantaged children shows that home efforts can greatly improve student achievement. Steps can be taken so that children can do as well as the children of more affluent families.

Later studies by (Manning and Cody, 1988) presented results that more families were reading to their children and at a very early age. They were going to the library and reading aloud because they wanted their children to love reading and because they themselves like to read and remember being read to as children. Another finding of this study indicates that more than a fifth of the respondents were low-income parents who reported that they read to their children "to help their children to succeed in school." They said they learned reading aloud was a valuable activity.

The amount of leisure time spent reading is also directly related to children's reading ability. Reading at home can be a strong supplement to classwork.

A correlational study by Neuman (cited by France and Meeks, 1986) identified six home processes which were found to be related to high levels of leisure reading.

1. Work habits at home given priority over other activities.
2. Parental help with school work.
3. Diverse leisure activities outside the home, exploration of the larger environment.
4. High parental expectations of child's general performance and standards set for school achievement.
5. Child helped to develop independence and responsibility in social situations and in tasks.
6. Parental encouragement - parents helped child relate to everyday events, had reading materials in the home, modeled reading behavior, read to child.

The strongest relationship was that between parental encouragement and leisure reading.

In conclusion, (Anglum, Bell and Roubinek, 1990) summarized the review of the literature by saying it seems to bear a general agreement among authorities that experiences a young child has before entering school and the environment in which he lives as he grows through school has a strong correlation to reading success or failure. Parents are a key ingredient whether it is a single parent or two parents. Their influence has a tremendous effect on the attitudes and expectations of the child that comes to formal education. According to (Smith, 1988) the role of parents in the education of their children has become one of the most prominent aspects in the reform movement in education. Whether single-parent, or two-parents, it is important to establish an environment in which reading is important.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Subjects

In this study the subjects were thirty third grade students of mixed abilities from both single-parent and two-parent families. The socio-economic status of the subjects can be classified as lower to middle class due to the number of students who receive free lunch.

Setting

The school was a public elementary school with a total population of over four hundred students in grades kindergarten through sixth. Classrooms for kindergarten through third are self-contained with ability grouping within the room for reading.

The location of the school was within a small city of about twenty-six thousand consisting of lower to upper middle class population.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, was administered to all the students in the Spring, 1991. An analysis was then made of the reading achievement of the samples. The total reading score in the form of stanines was utilized in the comparison to determine whether any significant difference between the sample means existed. Family information about the students was obtained from confidential cards on file in the school office.

Design

A chi square for a 2 x 2 table was used. The subjects were children from one-parent families and from two-parent families. The achievement scores from both samples were combined to determine a median. The median was then used as a dividing point to form the frequency category for the 2 x 2 table. The frequencies referring to the categories used to classify the data was the number of achievement scores above the combined median for one-parent and two-parent families and the number of achievement scores below the combined median for one-parent and two-parent families. The 2 x 2 table was set up this way.

Number of scores above
the combined median:

Number of scores below
the combined median:

Both Parents	One Parent
B	A
D	C

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Presentation of Results

For calculating the chi square, the median test was used to find whether there was a significant difference between the medians of the two samples. The median test is a chi square computation using the median as a dividing point to form frequency categories. This method was used because the number of children from one-parent families and the number of children from two-parent families in the study were not the same.

The chi square formula used in this study was:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{N \left[\frac{(AD-BC)^2}{N} \right]}{(A+B)(C+D)(A+C)(B+D)}$$

N represents the number of subjects and because $N < 100$, this formula was used. The total number of scores in the 2 x 2 table is represented by A B C D.

To compute the chi square, it was first necessary to find the median for the two groups of achievement scores that were in the form of stanines. This was done by listing the scores in order from lowest to highest. Scores of children from one-parent families: 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 7. Scores from children from two-parent families: 4, 5, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 8.

Putting together the two sets of scores, the new combined median was 5.1. Using the combined median of 5.1 as the dividing point, the scores for children of one-parent families above and below the median and the scores for children from two-parent families above and below the median were put in the table and chi square was calculated.

	Both Parents	One Parent	
Number of scores above the combined median:	7 B	A 5	12
Number of scores below the combined median:	13 D	C 5	18
	20	10	30

Using the formula, we see that:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{30[13.5 - 7.5) - 15]}{5+7 \cdot 5+13 \cdot 5+5 \cdot 7+13} = \frac{30[63-35-15]}{12 \cdot 18 \cdot 10 \cdot 20} =$$

$$\frac{30 \cdot 225}{216 \cdot 200} = \frac{6750}{43200} = 0.156$$

According to the table used for values of chi square at the .05 level of significance for one degree of freedom and a two tailed test (since only a difference was sought), 0.156 is not significant and the null hypothesis must be accepted. The table used can be found at the end of this study.

In general, the result of the present study shows that children from two-parent families did not have significantly higher achievement scores than children from one-parent families.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if reading achievement differences exist in third grade students of single-parent families and two-parent families.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant differences in the reading scores of third grade children from single-parent and two-parent families.

The Iowa Test of Basis Skills was administered in the Spring of 1991. A chi square was computed from this by analyzing the samples of thirty third grade children from one-parent and two-parent families. Using their total scores in the form of stanines, a median was found. The median was the dividing point to form the frequency categories of children from one-parent families who scored above or below this median and children of two-parent families who scored above or below this median.

The results using a chi square table at the .05 level of significance for one degree of freedom and a two tailed

test (since only a difference was sought) showed no statistically significant difference in the achievement scores so the hypothesis was accepted.

Conclusions

Literature supports the findings that it is what families do rather than family characteristics that influence family achievement.

Families have changed over the years. There are many more single-parent homes today than ever before. Even intact households have changed. So many more children have both parents working and there are many more demands on their time for activities away from home.

Parents, whether single-parent or both parents, who have a positive educational attitude and who spend quality time with their children, are aware of the value of it. They are conscious of the continuous interaction strategies that are important in a home environment. They are also aware that the experiences provided the child in the home environment during the preschool years and during the child's school years provide schema for reading. It is quality time spent with their child and the interest they take in their child's school achievement that is important to academic success. Essentially, those skills needed to raise a child in a single-parent family are the same as those required by parents in an intact family.

Many parents have developed a habit of reading aloud to their children and are doing their best to encourage and to get their children to read earlier. Some parents may know instinctively how to encourage their children to read and some may have learned how to stay actively involved with their children's reading growth in order to promote intellectual development. Most parents, however, probably need the direction and the encouragement of the school in order to know what to do (Smith, 1988).

Based on this study, the results indicate that teachers should not assume that children reared in a family structure other than intact families will exhibit a difference in achievement scores.

Further studies determining if reading achievement differences exist between children of one-parent families and two-parent families might include a larger number of students and possibly scores from two years. The results now indicating no negative effects of a home environment with one-parent families might be subject to change in time.

Recommendations

It is not abundant time and attention that children need, but quality time and attention.

Reading aloud to their children is valuable. It contributes to positive family life and builds positive attitudes toward reading and reading skills. It does not

matter which parent reads as long as positive interaction takes place.

Reading often and in front of their children creates an environment that shows reading is important. Also showing an interest in the reading that children do is substantial. According to (Smith, 1988) the image that children carry with them thereafter will be ingrained in their memories as long as they are learners.

Parents who are just beginning to read to their children can ask their school or public library if demonstrations and discussion groups on effective interaction strategies for shared reading are available. Educators also have available sources to help parents with their roles in the education of their children and as collaborative learners.

Schools and teachers play a different role in helping to improve reading achievement. They must meet the challenge of winning the support of the parents. They must consider activities which have the highest value in preparing children for success in reading. They can start by offering informational and training programs designed to instruct parents about reading and to encourage parents and students to become cooperative learners. It is working together consistently that is important.

Getting the community involved in the school's reading program can also prove beneficial. It might include a

Partners in Education Program where people from the community come in and read as often as possible.

Materials are available, but sometimes parents need to know how they can get access to them. Guidance in this area can be done by educators.

Teachers giving particular attention to increasing parent involvement and viewing our families with a positive attitude in order to further children's reading achievement can be beneficial. Teachers also need to give the extra support and reassurance to the children who are not getting it at home.

Finally, it is recommended that with the changes that are occurring in the structure of the family, there is a need for continued research on the interactions that exist between events in the child's home environment and events in the school environment.

APPENDIX

TABLE C¹

Values of Chi-square (χ^2) for Two-tailed Test
 at Specified Significance Levels²

Degrees Freedom (<i>df</i>)	Test:	Significance Level:		
		.050	.020	.010
1		3.84	5.41	6.64
2		5.99	7.82	9.21
3		7.82	9.84	11.34
4		9.49	11.67	13.28
5		11.07	13.39	15.09
6		12.59	15.03	16.81
7		14.07	16.62	18.48
8		15.51	18.17	20.09
9		16.92	19.68	21.67
10		18.31	21.16	23.21
11		19.68	22.62	24.72
12		21.03	24.05	26.22
13		22.36	25.47	27.69
14		23.68	26.87	29.14
15		25.00	28.26	30.58
16		26.30	29.63	32.00
17		27.59	31.00	33.41
18		28.87	32.35	34.80
19		30.14	33.69	36.19
20		31.41	35.02	37.57
21		32.67	36.34	38.93
22		33.92	37.66	40.29
23		35.17	38.97	41.64
24		36.42	40.27	42.98
25		37.65	41.57	44.31
26		38.88	42.86	45.64
27		40.11	44.14	46.96
28		41.34	45.42	48.28
29		42.56	46.69	49.59
30		43.77	47.96	50.89

1. Adapted from Spence, J. T., et al., *Elementary Statistics*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1968. In turn, abridged from Table IV of Fisher and Yates: *Statistical Tables for Biological, Agricultural, and Medical Research*, 4th Ed., 1953, Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., Edinburgh.

2. When $df = 1$, the significance level for a *one-tailed test* can be stated as $\frac{1}{2}$ of a two-tailed test. In that event, the .05 level of significance is 2.71; $\frac{1}{4}$ (.050), or .025, = 3.84; $\frac{1}{4}$ (.020), or .010, = 5.41; and $\frac{1}{4}$ (.010), or .005 = 6.64.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anglum, Barbara S., Bell, Michael L., and Roubinek, Darrell L. Prediction of Elementary Student Reading Achievement From Specific Home Environment Variables. Reading Improvement. Fall 1990, 27, 173-184.
- Barney, Joanne, and Koford, Judy. School and Single Parents. The Education Digest. October 1987, 53, 40-44.
- Burns, Jeanne M. and Collins, Martha D. Parents' Perception of Factors Affecting the Reading Development of Intellectually Superior Accelerated Readers and Intellectually Superior Nonreaders. Reading Research and Instruction. Summer 1987, 26.4, 239-246.
- Clark, M. Young Fluent Readers. London: Heinmann, 1978.
- Clarke-Stewart, Allison. Single-Parent Families: How Bad For the Children. NEA Today. January 1989, 7, 60-65.
- Datcher-Loury, Linda. Family Background and School Achievement Among Low Income Blacks. The Journal of Human Resources. October 1988, 24.3, 528-544.
- Doake, D.B. Book Experiences and Emergent Reading Behavior. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1981.
- Durkin, D. Children Who Read Early. New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.
- Edwards, Patricia A. In Jo Beth Allen and Jana M. Mason, Risk Makers, Risk Takers, Risk Breakers: Reducing the Risk For Literary Learners. New Hampshire: Heinmann Educational Books, 1989.

- France, Marycarolyn G. and Neeks, Jane Warren. Parents Who Can't Read: What The Schools Can Do. Journal of Reading. 1987, 31.3, 222-227.
- Gilbert, Sara. How To Live With A Single Parent. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, Inc., 1982.
- Greaney, Vincent. Parental Influences On Reading. The Reading Teacher. April 1986.
- Guinagh, B.B. and Jester, R.E. How Parents Read To Their Children. Theory Into Practice. 1972, 11, 171-177.
- Heathering, E.M., Camara, K.A., and Featherman, D.L. Cognitive Performance, School Behavior and Achievement of Children From One Parent Households. Education Team, National Institute of Education. Washington, D.C., 1981.
- Hess, R.D. and Holloway, S.D. Family and Schools as Educational Institutions. In R.D. Parke (Ed.), Review of Child Development Research. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985, 7, 179-122.
- Holdaway, D. The Foundations of Literacy. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic, 1979.
- Leibowitz, A. Parental Inputs and Children's Achievement. Journal of Human Resources. 1977, 12, 242-51.
- Levine, Victor. The Interaction of Family Environment and Educational Administration. Psychology in the Schools. 1980, 264-269.
- McConnell, Beverly. In Jo Beth Allen and Jana M. Mason, Risk Makers, Risk Takers, Risk Breakers: Reducing The Risk For Literary Learners. New Hampshire: Heinmann Educational Books, 1989.
- Mann, J. Homework. The Washington Post. April 17, 1984, C-1.
- Manning, Maryann; Manning, Gary and Cody, Caroline B. Reading Aloud to Young Children: Perspective of Parents. Reading Research and Instruction. 1988, 27.2, 56-61.

- Milne, Ann M., Myers, David E., Rosenthal, Alvin S., and Ginsburg, Alan. Single Parents, Working Mothers, and The Educational Achievement of School Children. Sociology of Education. July 1986, 59, 125-39.
- NAESP Staff Report. One Parent Families and Their Children: The School's Most Significant Minority. Principal. September 1980, 6, 31-37.
- Pearsall, Paul, Ph.D. The Power of the Family. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- Ryan, Richard M. and Grolnick, Wendy S. Parent Styles Associated With Children's Self Regulation and Competence in School. Journal of Educational Psychology. 1989, 81.2, 143-54.
- Ryker, M.J., Rogers, and Beaujard, P. Six Selected Factors Influencing Educational Achievement of Children From Broken Homes. Education Digest. February/March 1971, 91, 200-211.
- Schwartz, John. Portrait of a Generation. Special Edition Newsweek: How Kids Grow, Health, Psychology, and Values. Summer 1991, 6-9.
- Scott, Donald M. and Wishy, Bernard. America's Families: A Documentary History. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982.
- Shenkman, Harriet. Reading: The Perfect Scapegoat. The Educational Forum. Fall 1984, 49.1, 81-90.
- Silvern, Steven. Parent Involvement and Reading Achievement: A Review of Research and Implication for Practice. Childhood Education. September/October 1985, 44-49.
- Smith, Carl B. The Expanding Role of Parents. The Reading Teacher. October 1988, 68-69.
- Steinzor, Bernard. When Parents Divorce. New York: Pantheon, 1969.
- Sunseri, Albert, Alberti, Jean, M., Kent, Nancie D., Schoenberger, James A., Amwo, Shaffdeen, and Vickers, Pamela. Reading Demographic Social and Psychological Factors Related to Behaviors and Attitudes. Journal of School Health. April 1983, 53, 257-263.

- Teale, William H. Parents Reading To Their Children: What We Know and Need to Know. Language Arts. 1981, 58, 902-12.
- Thompson, Warren W. Environmental Effects on Educational Performance. Alberta Journal of Educational Research. March 1985, 31, 11-25.
- United States Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract of the United States: The National Data Book. 1990, 110 edition series P, 86.
- Walberg, Herbert J. and Tasi, Shioh Ling. Correlates of Reading Achievement and Attitude: A National Assessment Study. Journal of Educational Research. January/February 1985, 78, 159-167.