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# Parents and teachers: getting it all together for the exceptional child

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PARENTS AND TEACHERS:  
GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER  
FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD

by

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin

A RESEARCH PAPER  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem

Exceptional children have generated an overwhelming amount of new and exciting research available for teachers to use in planning educational programs. A competitive number of books designed to aid the parent of the exceptional child are also available. However, there are few guidelines for parents and teachers to help them develop together an individualized educational program for a specific child.

The previous research on the topic, parent participation in the education of the learning disabled child, has been controversial as to whether children do benefit when their parents take on part of the responsibility to teach them. Teachers trained in special education are in a position to give special help to parents desiring to participate in the education of their own exceptional children, but it is not known if these teachers actually do try to enlist the parent resource.

#### Purpose

The writer presents two intriguing questions in the present review. What conclusions can be derived from the current research on parent participation in special education as to its usefulness and validity? Do special education teachers make an effort to

teach or train parents to help their own exceptional children?

### Limitations

The review of research extends a previous study on parent participation in the education of the learning disabled child. It encompasses the literature from 1970 to the present.

The field study was an attitudinal survey of Learning Disability teachers in the Milwaukee Public School System.

### Definitions

In the review of research, the term "exceptional children" was used in a broad rather than restrictive sense since the impetus of the study was to gather all data concerning parent participation in special education.

In the field study, the term "learning disabilities" was used in the restrictive sense for the purpose of limiting the study to the Learning Disabilities teachers rather than including special education teachers generally.

### Summary

For the purpose of investigating parent participation in special education, the researcher used a two-part study. The first part contains a review of relevant research. The second part presents the results of an attitudinal survey of Learning Disabilities teachers. The review of research follows in Chapter II.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Review of the literature makes clear that inattention to the potentials of home involvement with school language programs is widespread. Thus, parental participation in the educational development of their children represents a major area of innovation for the 1970's.<sup>1</sup>

A review of the literature from 1970 to the present on parental participation in the education of exceptional children yielded few pieces of research and a great many non-research, informational articles.

All of the research found is reviewed here, beginning with a summary of a 1975 review of research. The research is categorized into the areas of (1) learning and positive reinforcement; (2) parents and language development; (3) parents and perceptual development; (4) reading to children; (5) low income families; and (6) options for parent training.

The salient portions of the descriptive articles yielding important information on parent training groups, home visitation, workshops, toy lending libraries, parents in reading programs, reaching high-risk preschoolers, and other topics of interest are also reviewed.

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<sup>1</sup>William R. Harmer, "To What Extent Should Parents Be Involved in Language Programs for Linguistically Different Learners?" Elementary English, XLVII (November, 1970), 940.



### Research Articles

Mothers can frequently become as effective, or even more effective, than professional educators in their interaction with children.<sup>1</sup>

In a review of the literature, it was found that parent programs prior to 1974 have basically involved parent tutoring. Literature and research on these programs have been inconclusive. The parental role in special education has been recognized if not utilized. Adequate involvement programs have not been devised. The program is yet in it's infancy.<sup>2</sup>

### Learning and Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement and other techniques of behavior modification are becoming widespread not only in the area of discipline but also in learning. Training parents in the use of these techniques were explored in four pieces of research.

A fifteen minute conference, two one-hour conferences, and a letter were the options used to instruct parents in the use of contingent consequences to increase the arithmetic performance of sixteen second grade boys in three classes.

Percentage correct and rank in class on daily assignments were the dependent variables. A smiling face on the daily report card indicated maintainance or an increase in the percentage correct or rank in class from the previous day. Parents were instruc-

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Hamilton, "Teaching Handicapped Children and their Parents; Dubnoff Center for Child Development and Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, California," American Education, IX, No. 8 (1973), 22.

<sup>2</sup>Faye M. Wahl, "Parent Participation in the Education of the Learning Disabled Child," Cardinal Stritch College Research Paper, No. 277 RP (May, 1975), 1-32.

ted to immediately present a desirable consequence, pairing this with praise when the smiling face was indicated, and to make no comment when the card was marked with the frowning face or when the card was not brought home.

There were five sets of parents attending two one-hour conferences where they were given basic instructions plus additional behavior management information; six sets of parents attended a fifteen minute conference and were given the basic instructions; and five sets of parents received basic instructions through a letter.

It was found that the use of reinforcers increased each group's median percentage correct from 47 per cent to 100 per cent for the two-hour group, from 77 per cent to 91 per cent for the fifteen minute group, and from 58 per cent to 100 per cent for the instructional letter group. A reversal condition of no reinforcers brought about a decrease in median percentage correct for all groups.

It is important to note that the median percentage correct for the rest of the pupils in each of the three classes also rose above the class baseline data during the presentation of consequences. Changes in the teachers' motivational techniques may account for some of the variability. The pupils chosen for the experiment also may not have been as deficient in arithmetic skills as in general classroom behavior.

The experiment does lend support to the observation that parents can be facilitative in increasing the academic performance of some children with a minimal time investment from

professionals.<sup>1</sup>

There were three seven to eight year old second grade boys selected as subjects in a behavior modification program designed to be used by parents to help their children read and spell more accurately. Reading materials were selected from the grade two level of the Science Research Associated Reading Laboratory, Elementary Edition. Spelling material consisted of words taken from late grade one level readers (On Cherry Street, from the Ginn Basic Readers Series, and We Three, from the Gage Curriculum Foundation Series).

The mother's reading training consisted of three group meetings covering the basic concepts of reinforcement and a detailed explanation of the reading program. The reading program was divided into sections of vocabulary words, oral reading, and silent reading with comprehension. The procedures described were all modeled by an E and practiced by the mother who administered the procedures to the E. The program was to be administered at home one-half hour per day for forty-three days after being monitored for a few days by the E.

At the conclusion of the forty-three day program, a meeting was held to explain the spelling program. It consisted of fifteen lists of six words each. A system was used whereby the S was required to correctly copy the word on a sheet of paper. The paper was folded to hide one letter and the S was required to fill in the missing letter. The paper was then folded to hide two letters,

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<sup>1</sup>R. J. Karraker, "Increasing Academic Performance Through Home-Managed Contingency Programs," Journal of School Psychology, X (June, 1972), 173-79.

then three letters, etc., until the S was required to print the entire word.

A token system of reinforcement was used in both programs with three different values assigned to three different colors. Higher value tokens were given for correct responses requiring no prompting. At the end of each session the points were counted and the S was allowed to purchase different items in a box or save the accumulated points for a higher value item.

It was found that the mothers performed effectively throughout the program. They were able to learn how to administer the program with no more than a highschool education.

The cost of reinforcers for the nine week period was approximately \$3.50 for each child; none of the parents expressed objections to providing these back up reinforcers.

All S's enjoyed the reading but not the spelling program. The reading program had many parts to each lesson and intrinsic reinforcement value. At the end of each lesson the S read an entire selection without interruption or correction. The spelling lesson lacked any comparable feature.<sup>1</sup>

A ten year old autistic boy, J, with essentially no intelligible speech was trained by both mother and father using modeling and reinforcement procedures. Parents began training after six sessions with the clinician. Training took place at the dinner table where a portion of the evening meal on a spoon would be delivered to J when he responded by closely imitating the parents'

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<sup>1</sup>Jacqueline Tritt Koven and Michael D. LeBow, "Teaching Parents to Remediate the Academic Problems of their Children," The Journal of Experimental Education, XLI, No. 4 (1973), 64-73.

correct pronunciation of the stimulus word. Four stimulus words were presented each day and a word was replaced with a new one when it was correctly pronounced three consecutive times on a single day. These acquired words became review words and were alternated with the four new words to ensure continued correct performance. A supervision session was conducted after every five sessions via a tape recorder.

J learned to articulate 83 words acceptably, to label pictures of objects, and to use a few short phrases after 125 sessions, 45 minutes in length, each. J's improvement cannot be unequivocally attributed to the conditioning program because there were no controls for additional variables which could have influenced the changes. However, it can be stated that modeling-reinforcement procedures for language training can be satisfactorily taught to parents of at least average intelligence. Once procedures are learned, parents must be highly motivated to spend the necessary amount of time. The progress records seem to provide high motivational effects.<sup>1</sup>

The technique of using "parent-clinicians" (Goldstein and Lanyon's term, 1971) was further explored in a program designed to train four mothers to use behavior change techniques for language therapy in the remediation of their children's communication disorders. One and one-half days were spent at a training workshop, covering basic concepts of behavior modification, normal language development, collecting and recording behavior data, basic

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<sup>1</sup>Sondra B. Goldstein and Richard I. Lanyon, "Parent-Clinicians in the Language Training of an Autistic Child," Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders, XXXVI, No. 4 (1971), 552-60.

components of the lesson plan to be used at home, and a mini-practicum where the mother first watched a clinician work with her child and then was videotaped working with her own child. Thereafter, progress was monitored via mailed in lesson plans and telephone calls.

After approximately two and one-half months the mothers were asked to return to the clinic. Three of the four mothers were successful in using the program and one of the mothers had much difficulty apparently because of her tendency to become easily confused. One of the three successful mothers was irritable about the child's slow progress. This child's level of ability was so low (severe mental retardation) that perhaps he should not have been included. He may not have been ready for even the prerequisites to communication.

Conclusions were drawn that using parent-clinicians cannot be useful for all children and for all parents, but it does attempt to provide something beyond counseling and something beyond just telling a parent what to do.<sup>1</sup>

#### Parents and Language Development

The last two pieces of research have combined the use of Behavior modification techniques with language therapy in parent training programs.<sup>2, 3</sup> Parents are naturally the first teachers of language until the responsibility is relegated to the schools.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Carpenter and Lloyd E. Augustine, "A Pilot Training Program for Parent-Clinicians," Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders, XXXVIII, No. 1 (1973), 48-58.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Goldstein and Lanyon, "Parent-Clinicians," 552-60.

As with all teachers, many aspects of their teaching can be improved. With linguistically different children this improvement is very necessary. The next two pieces of research explore parental participation with language learning in Down's syndrome children.

The mothers of eleven Down's syndrome children and normal children, age twenty-four months were instructed to teach their children about different toys, during which time the mother's language was analyzed.

The Down's syndrome children were exposed to (1) a higher number of utterances, yet a lower mean length of utterance; (2) a higher number of sentences, yet a lower mean length of sentence; and (3) a higher frequency of grammatically incomplete sentences, imperative sentences, and single word responses.

Within a current theory of language development it can be concluded that Down's syndrome children must operate on linguistic data that is somewhat different from normal children.<sup>1</sup>

Down's syndrome children were the subjects of an experiment to investigate the training of a functional, spontaneous language by the subjects's parents. The experimental design was provided by the program, Environmental Language Intervention Strategy (ELIS), (MacDonald and Blott, 1974) which effects a generalized functional language in children whose language consists of primarily one-word utterances.

The program ran for approximately five months in two phases. Training in phase I was held at the clinic with parents continuing

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<sup>1</sup>Nissam Buium, John Rynders, and James Turnure, "Early Maternal Linguistic Environment of Normal and Down's Syndrome Language Learning Children," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, LXXIX (July, 1974), 52-58.

language sessions in the home, daily. Phase II consisted of at-home sessions at least three times per week with monthly follow-ups at the clinic.

Results indicated marked increases in utterance length and grammatical complexity in imitation and conversation for all experimental subjects but negligible changes for controls.

The subjects were also matched with normally developing children for mean length of utterance. After three months of the home program, comparable growth was found between each of the matched pairs. Thus, the three children with Down's syndrome increased their utterance lengths with parents as the sole language trainers, at the same rate at which normally developing children (chronologically younger) advanced over the three month period.

As an epilogue, the study was replicated with the three controls and with the same results.<sup>1</sup>

#### Parents and Perceptual Development

As with language, perceptual development is another area of early learning which parents quite naturally help teach their children before school age. When children develop slowly in this area, it is quite possible for parents to improve their teaching style to bring about a quicker improvement.

The following two research articles are concerned with parent intervention programs in perceptual development for children of kindergarten and pre-kindergarten ages.

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<sup>1</sup>James D. MacDonald, et al. "An Experimental Parent-Assisted Treatment Program for Preschool Language-Delayed Children," Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders, XXXIX (November, 1974), 395-415.



Academically high-risk children, ages four to five were chosen as the subjects for a teacher-mom program to remediate deficits in visual perception. Twenty-five children were randomly assigned to the control group and twenty-five to the experimental group. Mothers of the experimental group attended three pre-intervention parent training sessions to learn to use the Frostig (1968) Program for the Development of Visual Perception. Following training they worked with their children in the home for twenty minutes each day, five days per week over a ten week period.

The experimental group demonstrated significant gains at the 95 per cent level of confidence. Extra benefits gained from the study were increased parent confidence and favorable attitude toward continued participation in the education of their children.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of a parent intervention program upon the perceptual development of kindergarten pupils was evaluated for the purpose of developing a readiness inventory effective in identifying potential learning disabilities, initiating a program of intervention, and studying the effects of the intervention upon school progress.

From the results of the inventory, notices were sent to the parents of 67 of the 255 children in a kindergarten program explaining to each parent their child's particular weakness and asking them to participate in a perceptual training program.

Two workshops were held with thirty-three participant parents at which time specific methods for developing perceptual skills

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<sup>1</sup>David A. Sabatino and John C. Abbott, "Home Instruction Utilizing Teacher-Moms with Academic High-Risk Pre-School Children," Psychology in the Schools, XI (October, 1974), 433-40.

were explained. The thirty-four children of the parents who chose not to attend became the experimental non-participant group. A control group was randomly selected of thirty-four children not considered to be potentially learning disabled. The parents of the experimental participant group were asked to work with their children for short periods of time, several times per week.

In May a retest using the Bender Designs, Goodenough Figure Drawing, and the Metropolitan Readiness Test resulted in significant changes for the Bender Designs beyond the 99 per cent level of confidence according to the Mann-Whitney U Test. Results from the other measures were in the predicted direction although not significantly. Participant children made more language gains than non-participants in all three measures. It can be concluded that parents can bring about improvement in their children through a program of planned exercises and activities.<sup>1</sup>

#### Reading to Children

A simple, most natural form of parental involvement in education may possibly lie in reading to one's own exceptional--or unexceptional child. Teaching parents how to read to children for the purpose of increasing the learning potential of the situation has the possibility of allowing parents to remain in the parent role--as opposed to parent as teacher, as aid, as tutor,--while giving great educational benefits to their children.

The benefits children derive from having parents read to

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara R. Slater, "Perceptual Development at the Kindergarten Level," Journal of Clinical Psychology, XXVII, No. 2 (1971), 263-66.

them in preschool years has long been taken for granted. Early studies have used a simple criterion to judge the mother-child interaction----either the mother read to the child or she did not.

Gallup (1969) studied 1,045 mothers and found that 70 per cent of high achieving first graders were read to regularly in their early years, while only 49 per cent of low achieving first graders were read to by their mothers. Gallup concluded that children who were read to regularly at an early age did better in school than those who were not.

Irwin (1967) persuaded 55 mothers of one year-old children to read aloud to them for at least ten minutes a day. Although the one year-olds presumably did not understand what they were hearing, their speech development at 20 months of age was advanced beyond that of a comparison group which had not been read to by their mothers.

In the seventies, the quality of the interaction between mother and child is being scrutinized. The present study evaluated the quality of the teaching interaction at two Parent Child Centers by developing an instrument, Parent As Reader Scale (PARS), which rated the parent-child interaction as the parent showed the child a story book.

The children were tested using the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (BSID) or the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) depending on the child's age. Directly after the IQ test, the tester handed a book to the mother and asked her to "Please show the book to your child." The PARS ratings were made at this time. After this the mother was interviewed concerning her attitudes toward the parent child center.

The PARS consisted of ten different rating scales each with a possible score of one to five.

1. Does the parent introduce the book to the child?
2. How specific is the language of the parent when talking to the child?

3. Does the parent attempt to get verbal response from the child related to the book?
4. Does parent read words in the book?
5. How much does the parent elaborate on the pictures?
6. How much does the parent elaborate on the sounds that were presented in the book?
7. What kind of feedback does the parent give the child?
8. How much does the parent point at things in the book?
9. What is the emotional climate between parent and child?
10. Does the parent seem to have a sense of humor while reading to the child?

The total score obtained on the PARS correlated significantly with the measure of IQ at the 95 per cent level of confidence.

The importance of the PARS lies in that it may serve as a guide to help parents develop skills in reading to their children.<sup>1</sup>

#### Low Income Families

The next four pieces of research look at low income families; the effects on children's learning and the parents' participation in educational programs.

Teaching specificity and task focusing behavior for mother and child pairs in urban Negro families were correlated with four different classes of socioeconomic status.

Mothers were to teach the sorting of blocks by their attributes--color, shape, height, and mark. Observers recorded specific

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<sup>1</sup>Barry J. Guinagh and R. Emile Jester, "How Parents Read to Children," in "Parents are Teachers; Symposium," ed. by Ira J. Gordon, Theory into Practice, XI, No. 3 (1972), 171-77.

verbal labeling and task focusing behavior as produced by the mother.

It was found that the group of middle class mothers exceeded the three groups of lower class mothers significantly in the degree of teaching specificity. Most of the differences were statistically significant and many were of considerable size.

With regard to the question of socioeconomic status differences in cognitive stimulation, these findings are consistent with the argument that crucial differences are not just in amount of stimulation, but in the way the stimulation is organized in the home. The total input of all of the differences in socioeconomic status tend to combine and accumulate in the same direction to result in the situation called "cultural disadvantage."<sup>1</sup>

The interaction between mother and child during a teaching situation was studied as related to either low or middle socioeconomic status (SES). A block sorting task was given to thirty-nine middle SES mothers and thirty-two low SES mothers to teach their children.

It was found that there were marked differences in the teaching styles of mothers as a function of socioeconomic scale. Significantly more middle SES mothers (1) provided information to the child concerning what was going to happen; (2) gave detailed information on the attributes of the blocks; (3) made more four-part groupings; (4) gave the child reasons for the corrections; and (5) used positive control strategies. Other significant differ-

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<sup>1</sup>Jere Edward Brophy, "Mothers as Teachers of their own 'Pre-school Children: The Influence of Socioeconomic Status and Task Structure on Teaching Specificity," Child Development, XLI, part 1, No. 1 (1970), 79-94.

ences concerned the amount and variety of conversation of both mother and child.

These results are consistent with the findings of other researchers.<sup>1</sup> The fact that mothers' teaching styles are so clearly a function of socioeconomic background should indicate why some low income children have difficulty adapting to the typically middle income school system and structure. Thus to enhance the child's adaptation, the first step is to identify mothers and improve the teaching behaviors of some low SES mothers.<sup>2</sup>

In another program not directly concerned with exceptional children but rather with children from the inner city, strategies were developed to obtain and maintain instructional support from a large proportion of parents.

Approximately one hour was required to train parents to administer the Parent-Assisted Learning (PAL) exercises and games (published by Ginn). The three components of the training sessions were (1) a thirty minute slide-tape presentation with all instructional procedures; (2) a role playing exercise whereby one parent tutored another and received feedback as to whether he was following recommended procedures; and (3) a ten-page guide containing the procedures presented on the filmstrip.

The study was conducted in the kindergarten classes from four inner city schools. After the program supervisor and kindergarten teachers received training, the schools were to schedule

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<sup>1</sup>Brophy, "Mothers as Teachers," 79-94.

<sup>2</sup>Patricia P. Olmsted and R. Emile Jester, "Mother-Child interaction in a Teaching Situation," in "Parents are Teachers; Symposium," ed. by Ira J. Gordon, Theory into Practice, XI, No. 3 (1972), 163-70.

at least two parent training sessions, and to train as many remaining parents individually at school or in the home as possible. Parents who could not be reached individually were sent only the ten page booklet. To maximize parent attendance at the group meetings, the schools were encouraged to (1) provide one training session in the late afternoon or evening to accommodate working parents; (2) provide child care during the meeting; (3) request parents to RSVP; (4) provide transportation; and (5) telephone parents to remind them of the meeting.

After parent training had taken place, teachers sent out exercises to all parents each week for the remainder of the year. One-half of the parents were randomly assigned to a parent accountability group where they were to sign and return the completed exercises each week.

Sixty-one per cent of the parents were trained through personal contact and 39 per cent were sent the parent guide. Schools providing transportation to the group meetings substantially increased attendance at the meetings.

The end of study questionnaire was returned by 53 per cent of the parents. Of these participant parents, the parent accountability group indicated completing a significantly greater amount of exercises than the non-accountability group,  $p = .05$ .

This study indicated some effective ways of obtaining and maintaining the instructional support of inner city parents. Finding ways to actively involve parents is more feasible if there is an effective instructional system to begin with.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fred C. Niedermeyer, "Parent-Assisted Learning in the Inner City," Urban Education, VIII (October, 1973), 239-48.

An educational intervention program was implemented with fifteen mothers of infants one to two years of age in another study of disadvantaged children. Over a two year period the mothers attended weekly two-hour training and discussion meetings. They were paid \$1.50 per hour for babysitting and transportation was provided. In addition, their baby received the educational toys used in the program. Monthly home visits by staff members served to reinforce teaching principles and to help each mother establish a positive working relationship with her baby.

Scores on the Binet IQ and ITPA were significantly superior to the control group scores. A sibling control comparison between six experimental children and their siblings was also significant at the .05 level. However, the results of this program must be interpreted with much caution as the control group was not established at the beginning of the study but at the end, as it was not possible to maintain a control group for a period of two years. Also it is not known how long the gains of the experimental group will be maintained. It is hoped that the gains obtained by intervention through the mother will affect the child's entire environment and will be more stable than the transitory gains made in other preschool programs for the disadvantaged.<sup>1</sup>

Children enrolled in another compensatory preschool program were divided into three matched groups to measure the effects of different levels of maternal involvement in the program.

Group A, comprised of twenty-eight children, were offered

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<sup>1</sup>Merle B. Karnes, et al. "Educational Intervention at Home By Mothers of Disadvantaged Infants," Child Development, XLI, part 2, No. 4 (1970), 925-35.



an enriched class program four half days per week for nine months. In addition they received bi-weekly home tutorial sessions conducted by the classroom teacher, where the mothers observed and were encouraged to participate with similar activities between visits. Group A mothers were also actively sought for participation in weekly small group meetings which focused on childrearing practices. Group B, with twenty-two children, were offered the enriched curriculum and home tutorials but the mothers were not invited to participate in the group meetings. Group C, with twenty-one children were offered only the enriched curriculum.

No significant differences were found between the means of groups A, B, or C on the Binet or Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test IQ at the end of the nine month program. However, on a follow-up study, using the PPVT, one year later (after kindergarten), the mean of group B was significantly higher than group C, at the 95 per cent level of confidence. The difference between groups A and C at this time approached significance at the 90 per cent level of confidence. Desirable changes in the mothers' attitudes were also found for groups A and B, but not for group C.

The findings of this study suggest that parent education is important if the child is to continue to benefit academically from a compensatory preschool education program, although there may be no immediate effect on the children. The intellectual growth during an enriched class may already be at maximum; however, the desirable changes in mothers' attitudes may serve the child's intellectual functioning in the future.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Norma Radin, "Three Degrees of Maternal Involvement in a Preschool Program; Impact on Mothers and Children," Child Development, XLIII, Part 2, No. 4 (1972), 1355-64.

### Three Options For Parent Training

Limited amounts of professional time and money in programs for parents of exceptional children are problems which affect the quality and success of these programs. The next three articles in particular suggest means by which these difficulties can be overcome.

Clinicians cannot realistically use portions of time to train parents because of the strict rules governing funding of programs and because they generally feel that they do not want to decrease their time with the children. However, research has strongly suggested that untrained parents are not productive teachers of their children, whereas trained parents are. The present study, involving children with functional articulatory disorders, was designed to train parents by allowing them to observe the clinician working with their children.

Group I parents were not asked to attend in-school training sessions but agreed to help the child five minutes per day if regular assignments were sent home. Group II-A attended sessions once per month and agreed to work with their children five minutes per day. Group II-B parents attended sessions once per week and agreed to work with their children five minutes per day.

After sixteen weeks of program implementation, the administration of the Arizona Articulation Proficiency Scale resulted in a significant difference at the .001 level of confidence between groups I and II. No significant difference was found between groups II-A and II-B.

It may be concluded that training parents by allowing them to observe the school program may possibly be an answer to the

problem of conserving a clinician's time.<sup>1</sup>

The Mother-Child Home Program, aimed at the prevention of educational disadvantage, has already shown to be effective in five years of laboratory investigation. It was replicated from September 1970 to June 1971 by four different service organizations in four different geographic locations of the United States.

There were a total of thirty-seven preschoolers in the replicator study and thirty-seven preschoolers entering the model program at the same time.

The program calls for Toy Demonstrators (TD's) who are not professionals, to visit two-year-olds and their mothers together in their homes, twice a week for forty-six sessions, October to May, for two years. The TD demonstrates to the mother, through verbalized play with the child, how to interact verbally with the child, to foster his conceptual growth. Each week the TD brings a gift of a carefully selected toy or book which acts as Verbal Interaction Stimulus Material (VISM). The TD involves the mother early in the session with the aim of rapidly transferring to her the main responsibility for promoting verbal interaction with her child.

The children were pretested using the Cattell (general) and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). After one year of the program they were post-tested using the Binet (general) and the PPVT. The model program achieved a 17.5 point gain. The Cattell pre-test versus the Binet post-test was significantly dif-

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<sup>1</sup>Phyllis Levenstein, "But Does It Work in Homes Away From Home?" in "Parents are Teachers; Symposium," ed. by Ira J. Gordon, Theory into Practice, XI, No. 3 (1972), 157-62.

ferent ( $p = .025$ ) and the 5 point gain on the PPVT was also significant ( $p = .001$ ). The replicator program group gained 16.3 points on the pre- versus post- IQ tests ( $p = .001$ ) and 10.3 points on the PPVT ( $p = .001$ ). Over a period of one year the program has been successfully replicated in four different settings.<sup>1</sup>

Each area of exceptionality requires professionally trained personnel, trained in a specific area of exceptionality, to do the best job for child and parent. The cost to maintain a diverse and well trained staff is beyond most school systems. This particular study, on the preschool mentally retarded, is of value as an example to the professionals of other areas of exceptionalities that they may develop similar programs to cope with the shortages in professional time and funding while still maintaining a high standard parent training program.

The training package described in this program was monitored by a public health nurse and consisted of a four part slide-sound presentation administered over a two week period. It covered (1) behaviors; (2) cues; (3) reinforcement; and (4) programing and recordkeeping.

A workbook and other related materials accompanied each presentation and were furnished to each subject to be used according to taped instructions.

The subjects were forty sets of parents of preschool mentally retarded and multiply handicapped children, randomly assigned by couples to an experimental and a control group. Children of both

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<sup>1</sup>Janet Barker Fudula, Gene England, and Laura Ganoung, "Utilization of Parents in a Speech Correction Program," Exceptional Children, XXXVIII (January, 1972), 407-12.

groups were pretested and post-tested using the Student Progress Record (State of Oregon, 1970) to measure ability in sight-skill areas of self feeding, toileting, handwashing, toothbrushing, removing coat, putting on coat, putting on stockings, and putting on shoes.

Significant differences between groups were found in three areas, differences in two areas approached significance, differences in two areas were in favor of the experimental group, and in one area there was no difference between groups.

The results tend to support the proposition that parents of preschool mentally retarded and multiply handicapped children can be taught via a mediated training program to effectively teach their children basic self help skills in the absence of professionally trained special educators.<sup>1</sup>

#### Non-Research Articles

Parent education will have to begin at the most elementary level, and each subsequent aspect of their training should be geared to the level of the parents' comprehension.<sup>2</sup>

#### Parent Counseling

An initial step in involving parents of exceptional children with the school is to provide parents with information on their children's handicap, counseling for emotional adjustment, and child management techniques. One such program in Connecticut, undertaken

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<sup>1</sup>Glenn Latham and Alan Hofmeister, "A Mediated Training Program for Parents of the Preschool Mentally Retarded," Exceptional Children, XXXIX (March, 1973), 472-73.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph A. Magnus, "Teaching Parents to Parent: Parent Involvement in Residential Treatment Programs," Children Today, III (July, 1974), 25.

by a state health care agency, involved ten inner city families with preschool children for a period of ten months. The issues surrounding the raising of a handicapped child were explored in the group and basic principles of education were taught to all mothers. Regular opportunities for group and individual counseling were provided.<sup>1</sup>

Some parents prefer the anonymity of large groups where they can gain information without identifying themselves, while others gain more from the intimacy of a small group relationship where time is allotted for talking out problems. When trying to involve parents in groups, it is important to meet the personal needs of each member of the group to help insure their continued attendance.<sup>2</sup>

It is also helpful and important to (1) help parents feel they are receiving enough information; (2) emphasize our desire for their assistance and cooperation; (3) arrange for necessary transportation and babysitting; (4) set up convenient meeting times; (5) provide time for individual counseling; (6) visit the home if necessary; (7) involve group members in telephoning prospective new members; (8) intercede with employer on parents' behalf; and (9) arrange assistance through other various social services.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than impose an external set of goals onto the group, it is wiser to listen to the parents to see what it is they hope

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<sup>1</sup>Teresa A. Nellans, et al. "Maternal Participation in a Preschool Project for Disadvantaged Handicapped Children," Training School Bulletin, LXVIII (February, 1972), 207-11.

<sup>2</sup>Merle B. Karnes and R. Reed Zehrbach, "Flexibility in Getting Parents Involved in the School," Teaching Exceptional Children, V, No. 1 (1972), 6-19.

<sup>3</sup>Ralph A. Magnus, "Teaching Parents," 25-27.

to gain from the group and set up the objectives from their viewpoint.<sup>1</sup>

### Parent Training

Some parent programs seek to train interested parents to become more effective teachers of their own children. The objectives of these more ambitious programs are (1) to increase parents' educational potential; (2) to facilitate their interest in improving legislation; (3) to become active in fund raising; (4) to disseminate information; and (5) to be understanding of the child's problems, limitations, and needs.<sup>2</sup> Five levels of parent involvement have been suggested: (1) audience; (2) teacher of the child; (3) volunteer; (4) trained worker; and (5) participant in decision making.<sup>3</sup>

A general parent education class in learning disabilities followed this particular outline for six sessions: (1) overview of LD and definitions; (2) laterality and directionality; (3) visual perception problems; (4) auditory perception and discrimination; (5) perceptual motor issues; and (6) sensory problems and a review.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Boyle, "A Learning Experience in Helping Parents Get What They Want; Desire Community School for Exceptional Children," with epilogue by Dorothy Randolph, Children, XVII (July, 1970), 126-32.

<sup>2</sup>Sharon Cooke and Thomas Cooke, "Parent-Training for the Early Education of the Handicapped," Reading Improvement, XI (Winter, 1974), 62-64.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon E. Greenwood, William F. Breivogel, and Hattie Bessent, "Some Promising Approaches to Parent Involvement: Florida Follow Through Program," Theory into Practice, XI, No. 3 (1972), 183-89.

<sup>4</sup>J. Jeffries McWhirter, "A Parent Education Group in Learning Disabilities," Journal of Learning Disabilities, IX (January, 1976), 16-20.

This type of parent education class in learning disabilities allows broad coverage of the topic but does not allow training for individual treatment of a child's specific learning problems.

One parent training model which is geared to the teaching of specific strategies uses a videotape session where the parent tries out his newly acquired techniques. The instructor and parent then view the tape together and analyze the parent's teaching methods.<sup>1</sup>

Another method of teaching parents used two three-hour workshops. Its purpose was to provide individualized instruction for trainable mentally retarded children, five to eight years of age. A behavioral objectives sheet allowed charting of the progress for (1) self care skills; (2) knowledge of basic colors; (3) numbers; (4) language; and (5) fine motor--coloring, pasting, use of scissors. After eight and one-half weeks of program implementation with two one-hour sessions each week, the children were meeting most of the objectives.<sup>2</sup>

The use of praise and modeling was taught to Mexican American mothers in a program to develop question asking behavior in first grade children. Emphasis was given to causal questions (why and how come) as it was postulated that learning to ask these questions would benefit the children's future academic career.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frank E. Nardine, "Parents as a Teaching Resource," Volta Review, LXXVI (March, 1974), 172-77.

<sup>2</sup>Jo Benson and Linda Ross, "Teaching Parents to Teach Their Children," Teaching Exceptional Children, V, No. 1 (1972), 30-35.

<sup>3</sup>Angela Garcia, Huntly Hoffman, and Ed Lauritsen, "Description of a Program to Train Parents to Influence the Development of Question Asking Skills in Their Young Children," Arizona University, Tuscan. Arizona Center for Early Childhood Education, (1972) Bethesda, Maryland: Leasco Information Products, Inc./ERIC Microform, ED 089-853, 46 pp.



A three dimensional approach to helping parents of children with learning disabilities concerns itself with (1) educative counseling; (2) interpretive counseling; and (3) habilitative involvement. The educative counseling consists of teaching the importance of routine (structure of time-space movement), regularity (planning each day in the same way every day), and repetition (rub-in technique of positive conditioning). The interpretive counseling is geared to helping parents learn how to listen to and interpret what the child is doing and saying and why. Habilitative involvement involves parents as part of the team to teach their children.<sup>1</sup>

Parents rated three two-hour evening workshops as extremely helpful for working with their LD children. Four stations were set up the first night consisting of (1) games for visual discrimination; (2) games for auditory discrimination; (3) attributes and classification of Learning Disabilities; and (4) gross motor activities. Parents were given handouts on how to make and use the games and how to gauge the child's progress.<sup>2</sup>

A successful toy-lending library was implemented for families too affluent for head start programs but not affluent enough to afford a private nursery. Preschool children need an understanding of size, shape, position, color, and patterns. Short training sessions were set up to teach parents how to select an appropriate toy, how to use the toy, and what behaviors to expect from the

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<sup>1</sup>William C. Adamson, "Helping Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities," Journal of Learning Disabilities, V (June, 1972) 326-30.

<sup>2</sup>Cheryl Rubin, et al. "A Beginning; Teachers and Parents of Learning Disabled Students Work Together," Academic Therapy, X (Summer, 1975), 495-97.

child<sup>1</sup>

Parents were very interested in a home program designed to reach preschoolers, three to five years old, who qualified for the Title I program. In the Superior, Wisconsin School District, mothers observed while a teacher interacted with her child in a learning situation held at the family kitchen table. Of the first twenty eight 'graduates', nineteen children were placed and did well in regular kindergarten, one child was placed in a learning disabilities room, and eight children needed an extended kindergarten.<sup>2</sup>

Other programs explain to parents how to use the child's environment to teach concepts and language in the preschool years.<sup>3</sup>

School systems can guide parents who are interested in their child's reading program. In a New Haven (Connecticut) Public School System parents and siblings are first recruited and secondly given tips and techniques to reinforce reading at home. Extremely helpful have been specially written short stories following a preprimer or primer series which allows the child to 'show-off' his newly acquired skill to his parents and siblings. Also valuable have been workshops teaching parents to make and use specific reading games and devices, such as word wheels from paper plates, hand puppets from paper bags, and pictures pasted on oaktag to make

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<sup>1</sup>Phyllis McDonald, "Parents: A New Resource, " Teaching Exceptional Children, III (Winter, 1971), 81.

<sup>2</sup>Sharon J. Marcovich, "Waiting in the Window for Teacher; Education of Preschool Children at Home," American Education, XI (July, 1975), 9-12.

<sup>3</sup>Marion J. Rice, "How Parents May Use the Physical and Cultural Environments to Teach Others," Journal of Research and Development in Education, VIII, No. 2 (1975), 70-82.

puzzles.<sup>1</sup>

### Criticisms and Difficulties

In the issue of parent involvement with exceptional children, there are justifiable criticisms and realistic difficulties.

In a program of the sixties in the Elmont (N.Y.) School System, teacher-moms volunteered on a one-to-one basis to teach emotionally and mentally handicapped children in the existing system. No training programs or guidelines were set up. It was postulated that these children would benefit more from a woman whose only training was past experience as a mother than from a degreed professional teacher. The program has since been criticized for its unprofessional approach.<sup>2</sup>

Parent participation programs have also been recently criticized by some as being merely symbolic in that parents are taken out of their roles as parents and placed in other roles--volunteers, aides, tutors, which are parent in name only. This criticism suggests that parent participation programs mollify the public and do nothing exceptional other than contribute to maintaining the "progressive status-quo."<sup>3</sup>

Some of the difficulties in home programs are the "high-risk" family types. The first type identified here is where the mother

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<sup>1</sup>Nicholas P. Criscuolo, "Reading--the Family Way," source unknown, 2 pp.

<sup>2</sup>Carl Fenichel, "MAMA or M.A.? The Teacher-Mom Program Evaluated," Journal of Special Education, I, No. 1 (1966), 45-51.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard Farber and Michael Lewis, "The Symbolic Use of Parents: a Sociological Critique of Educational Practice," Journal of Research and Development in Education, VIII (Winter, 1975), 34-43.

gets little or no support from the father and his attitudes gradually erode away the mother's determination. It is important that the parents present a united front. In the second type there exists a power struggle between mother and child. The home program becomes just another area for disagreement. Multiple family problems such as marital or financial identify the third type of high-risk family, and a large family with too many demands placed on the mother identifies a fourth high-risk family type.

The opposite family types seem to provide the ideal situation for parent participation: (1) interested father; (2) good mother and child relationship; (3) no other family problems; and (4) small families.<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

The success of parental involvement programs is measured by the effects on the child's educational achievement. The review of research presented here has shown that a wide variety of parental involvement programs on various levels have been successful.

The attitudinal survey follows in Chapter III.

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<sup>1</sup>James T. Neifert and William F. Gayton, "Parents and the Home Program Approach in the Remediation of Learning Disabilities," Journal of Learning Disabilities, VI (February, 1973), 85-89.

## CHAPTER III

### LEARNING DISABILITIES TEACHERS: AN ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

An attitudinal survey of the Milwaukee Public School learning disabilities teachers was undertaken in the spring of 1976 by the writer in hopes of gaining some insight into the reasons for the limited amount of parent involvement in the learning disabilities programs of the Milwaukee Public School Systems. At the time of this writing there were no parent involvement programs other than what the individual teachers had undertaken.

#### Survey Format

There were three parts to this survey in addition to the cover letter to the teachers. (See Appendix I for a copy of the letter and survey.) The first part consisted of basic information concerning the type of program (intact classroom, resource program, or self-contained and integrated); the type of school (city, inner city, suburban); the level at which the teacher taught (elementary, jr. high, highschool); the amount of teaching experience; and whether the teacher was certified in learning disabilities.

The second part consisted of four basic multiple-choice questions with additional probe questions asking the teacher to state personal reasons, opinions or ideas on each question. The four questions were concerned with (1) whether the teacher feels parents can help their youngster; (2) whether the teacher involves

parents in the LD program; (3) whether the teacher feels parent training sessions should be held to help parents learn how to work with their youngster; and (4) whether the teacher is a parent involved with his or her own child's school program.

The third part contained a list of statements concerning attitudes surrounding the issue of parental involvement. The teachers were asked to respond by agreeing or disagreeing with each statement. This section was employed as a check on the internal consistency of the responses given to the questions in part two.

#### Method

A list of the LD teachers in the Milwaukee Public School system was obtained from the Department of Learning Disabilities. The questionnaire, cover letter, and self-addressed stamped envelope was then mailed directly to each teacher at the school.

From the eighty-nine questionnaires sent out, there was an initial return of sixty-two. After three weeks a follow-up postcard was sent to the remaining twenty-seven. (Appendix II) One teacher called to say that the questionnaire had been mailed, but she would be reluctant to fill it out again. Three teachers called to say that they were not allowed by their principals to complete the questionnaire due to the fact that it had not been approved by the MPS Department of Educational Research and Program Assessment. Unfortunately, the researcher was not made aware of the necessary approval by this department until after the initial return had come in. However, with an additional four completed questionnaires being returned there was a 74 per cent return.

Results

The first section yielded the following information about the group of sixty-six LD teachers and the programs in which they teach.

## Type of school in which they teach

71 per cent city  
 23 per cent inner city  
 3 per cent suburban  
 3 per cent no response

## Level at which they teach

80 per cent elementary (of which 73 per cent are intact classes, and 7 per cent are resource)  
 18 per cent Jr. high and highschool  
 1 per cent all levels  
 1 per cent no response

## Type of Learning Disability program

57 per cent intact classrooms  
 26 per cent resource  
 11 per cent self-contained and integrated  
 5 per cent intact with part time resource

## Teaching experience

66 per cent 5 years or less  
 34 per cent 6 years or more

## Learning Disability teaching experience

44 per cent one year or less  
 53 per cent two to five years  
 3 per cent 6 years or more

In addition, 85 per cent of the teachers responding were certified in learning disabilities, while the remaining 15 per cent indicated they were not certified as yet.

In the second section when asked the question "Do you believe parents can help teach their LD youngster?" teachers responded by circling 'never, occasionally, often, or always'. The response, 'never' was not chosen by any teacher. 'Occasionally' constituted

24 per cent of the response; 'often', 52 per cent; and 'always', 23 per cent; with 1 per cent not responding.

When asked the question, "In what ways can parents help their LD youngster?", the ideas which appeared with the most frequency were (1) reinforcing school activities, drill; (2) emotional support, encouragement, patience; (3) talking, reading, listening to child; and (4) use of spontaneous learning situations. (For a complete list of the ideas and responses given by the teachers see Appendix III.)

Question two required a yes or no response to "Do you think you and your department should hold training sessions to help the parents learn how to work with their youngsters?" The majority, (77 per cent,) responded 'yes', while 14 per cent responded no. Nine per cent did not respond to this question.

Teachers were then asked for their suggestions for getting parents to attend the training sessions. Fourteen teachers responded that it should be made a requirement or prerequisite for the child's participation in the program, whereas two teachers responded that it should be voluntary. Other frequent responses were (1) send letter, (2) phone calls, (3) individual conferences; (4) tell parent it would help child's progress; (5) personal contact or home visit by teacher; and (6) make it informal.

Teachers were also asked "What three topics would be most important to cover?" Most frequent topics given were (1) review of school work--tutorial, teaching at home; (2) coping with, understanding, and accepting your child; (3) explanation of LD; (4) discipline, behavior; (5) behavior management techniques; (6) social



development; (7) reading and math skills; (8) perceptual skills; and (9) praise and positive reinforcement.

When teachers were asked "Do you involve parents in your LD program?" 6 per cent indicated that they never involved parents, 50 per cent indicated that they sometimes involved parents, 38 per cent stated that they often involved parents, and 6 per cent did not respond to the question.

The ways in which LD teachers most frequently involved parents in their programs were (1) daily and weekly reports to the home; (2) telephone calls; (3) parent conferences; (4) field trips; (5) home teaching activities; (6) observation of the class, (7) home visits; and (8) behavior control.

When asked why they didn't involve parents, the one most frequent response was that parents don't care, are not interested, or lack concern.

Slightly more than one third of the teachers were themselves parents, 88 per cent of whom participated in their own child's school program. The majority of these teachers indicated that they attended all programs, open houses, conferences, and helped in other projects. Other means of involvement indicated were (1) assistance in subject matter at home; (2) communication with child's teacher; (3) reviewing child's work; (4) encouraging reading, (5) active participation in PTA; and (6) help with money making projects, arts, and school plays. The remaining teachers who did not participate in their children's school program gave reasons of the child being either too young or too old for school.

Summary

An attitudinal survey of the Milwaukee Public School learning disabilities teachers undertaken in the spring of 1976 yielded information on LD teacher attitudes towards parents' participation and some of their current means of involving parents. The N was not large enough to make any significant correlations between the variables.

Conclusions from the review of research and the attitudinal survey follow in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that parents, trained in educational procedures, have a measurable, positive effect on their children's learning achievement. However, there are a number of variables which are not so easily measured by scientific procedures and which are slowing down the rate of increasing parent involvement in the education of exceptional children. The most offending of these are time or money and commonly held attitudes or beliefs.

Professional time involvement has two aspects; the need to justify spending for the purpose of government funding, and the teacher attitude of trying to give the needy child the most of an already limited amount of teacher time. Direct help to the child is easily justified; indirect help to the child through time spent training parents is not.<sup>1</sup> However, early preschool intervention programs which educate parents are showing themselves to be extremely valuable in preventing educational disadvantage. <sup>2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> Which

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<sup>1</sup>Fudula, England, and Ganoung, "Utilization of Parents," 407-12.

<sup>2</sup>Brophy, "Mothers as Teachers," 79-94.

<sup>3</sup>Guinagh and Jester, "How Parents Read," 171-77.

<sup>4</sup>Karnes, et al. "Educational Intervention," 925-935.

<sup>5</sup>Levenstein, "Does it Work," 157-62.

<sup>6</sup>Radin, "Maternal Involvement," 1355-64.

<sup>7</sup>Sabatino and Abbott, "Academic High-Risk Preschool," 433-40.

'time' is better spent, prevention time or remediation time?

Another controversial aspect of parent involvement in the education of exceptional children has to do with the difficulties, imagined and real, encountered when trying to involve parents. Getting parents involved, especially inner city and low income groups is a real difficulty. Reimbursement for babysitting or provisions for babysitting and transportation to programs have shown to be extremely useful in maintaining parent attendance.<sup>1</sup> Whatever problems are encountered, it cannot be stressed too often that children whose parents are trained in educational strategies benefit significantly.

It is interesting to note the ways in which LD teachers who are parents answered the question of how they support parent involvement. Only four of the responses--assistance with subject matter at home (2 responses); reviewing work (1 response); and encouraging reading (1 response) really had anything to do with actually educating their own children.

The same general prevalence of positive teacher attitudes toward parent involvement in conferences or programs, etc., rather than toward parent as educator is found throughout the opinions given in the survey. It may be concluded that the LD teachers surveyed generally have positive attitudes toward parent involvement. However, these teachers generally do not see parents (themselves included) in the role of participant educator of their own children.

On the positive side, there are many possible programs for parent training which give maximum benefits to children with min-

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<sup>1</sup>Niedermeyer, "Parent-Assisted Learning," 239-43.

imal time and energy investment from professionals such as mediated training programs<sup>1</sup> and parent observation of the child in a learning situation.<sup>2,3</sup> Another program with interesting possibilities is teaching parents how to read to their children for maximum educational development.<sup>4</sup>

#### Implications for the Future

Thus far into the 1970's it seems parent involvement has become a real issue and one in which teacher attitudes are progressing favorably. The validity of parent training programs for exceptional children is being substantiated by the favorable outcomes in research. The teacher attitudes, however favorable to parent involvement are not quite to the level as would be necessary to make the research and experiments of the 70's into the realities of the 80's. Perhaps now in research a thrust is needed not in parent education, but in teacher education as to the values, responsibilities, and capabilities of parenthood.

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<sup>1</sup>Latham and Hofmeister, "Mediated Training Program," 472-73.

<sup>2</sup>Fudula, England, and Ganoung, "Utilization of Parents," 407-12.

<sup>3</sup>Levenstein, "But Does it Work," 157-62.

<sup>4</sup>Guinagh and Jester, "How Parents Read," 171-77.



STITCH

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APPENDIX I

SURVEY AND COVER LETTER

Dear Learning Disabilities Teacher,

I am a graduate student in the Masters program at Cardinal Stritch College. As part of my course requirements, I am doing research on parental involvement in the Learning Disability programs. I would like to request about fifteen minutes of your time in completing the attached questionnaire, which has been reviewed and approved by the office of Mr. Jensen--Learning Disabilities Program Administrator, Milwaukee Public School System. Please mail the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by April 19, 1976.

If you would be interested the the results of my research (which would be available at the beginning of the fall semester, 1976), please provide a mailing address here.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank-you so very much for your co-operation!

Sincerely,

Eileen L. Ziesler  
Graduate Student

A SURVEY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT  
IN LEARNING DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Type of school in which you teach:           inner city / city / suburban

Type of LD program:                           intact classroom / resource center  
other (explain if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have taught:           \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a certified LD teacher?           yes / no

Number of years you have taught  
as an LD teacher:                           \_\_\_\_\_

Level you presently teach:                   Elementary / Jr. High / Highschool

1. Do you believe parents can help teach their LD youngster?  
(circle response) never / occasionally / often / always  
In what ways? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. Do you think you and your department should hold training sessions  
to help the parents learn how to work with their youngsters?  
(circle response) yes / no  
What three topics would be most important to cover? 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Your suggestions for getting parents to attend. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. Do you involve parents in your LD program?  
(circle response) never / sometimes / often  
In what ways? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If you don't, why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you a parent?  
(circle response) yes / no  
Do you personally support parent involvement in your child's school  
program? yes / no  
If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The following questions pertain to your experiences with LD children and their parents. Please answer by checking the agree or disagree column.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1. Most parents desire to help their LD children.	_____	_____
2. Most parents are involved in their child's learning program.	_____	_____
3. Children who have real problems have parents who have problems.	_____	_____
4. Part of the job of the LD teacher is to involve the parents.	_____	_____
5. Your colleagues feel about parents much as you do.	_____	_____
6. The LD teacher is best able to teach the LD youngster; parents generally do more harm than good.	_____	_____
7. You have one or two parents who really get on your nerves.	_____	_____
8. Before some children could be helped, the home situation would have to be drastically improved.	_____	_____
9. You would be willing to devote one evening a month to counseling the parents of the children you work with.	_____	_____
10. The parents are the cause of most of the child's problems.	_____	_____
11. Parents should not teach reading to their child.	_____	_____
12. You see the parents more than is required.	_____	_____
13. LD teachers generally find parent teacher conferences to be a waste of time.	_____	_____
14. You have a real interest in parent involvement.	_____	_____
15. Parents have asked you for specific ways to help their youngster.	_____	_____
16. Parent involvement is not a realistic issue.	_____	_____
17. One way of involving parents in their child's education is through parent group meetings.	_____	_____
18. It would be extremely difficult to teach parents how to teach their child.	_____	_____
19. Children whose parents are involved show the most improvement.	_____	_____



APPENDIX II

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing in regard to my survey on parental involvement in learning disability programs. I understand how busy you are and filling out a survey would certainly be last on a list of priorities. Would you please try to pick it up now, quickly fill it out, and return it to me in the SASE. If you have any questions or need another survey, please call me at 444-2636. Thank-you!

Eileen L. Ziesler

APPENDIX III

TEACHER RESPONSES

I. In what ways can parents help teach their LD youngster?

(response)	(number of teachers indicating response)
1. Reinforce school activities, drill	(31)
2. Emotional support, patience, encouragement	(13)
3. Talking, reading, listening to child	(12)
4. Use of spontaneous learning situations	(10)
5. Understanding problem	(5)
6. Child's socialization	(4)
7. Specific assignments from parent teacher conferences	(3)
8. Structuring home environment	(1)
9. Coming to classroom to work with child	(1)
10. Showing an interest, becoming involved	(1)

II. Your suggestions for getting parents to attend.

1. Make it a requirement, a prerequisite (14)
2. Send letter (6)
3. Phone calls (5)
4. Individual conferences (4)
5. Tell a parent it would help child's progress (4)
6. Personal contact or home visit by teacher (4)
7. Make it informal (4)
8. Interesting topics (3)
9. Refreshments served (3)
10. Provide babysitters (3)
11. Should be voluntary (2)
12. Home meetings (2)
13. Good Question!!! (2)
14. Get parents involved in the classroom (2)
15. Provide rides (2)
16. Small groups with children and teacher (1)
17. Should be parent initiated (1)
18. No fee (1)
19. Advance notice (1)
20. Have Milwaukee Parent Association for LD Children  
contact parents (1)
21. Have group meeting on conference day (1)
22. Have meeting at night (1)
23. Teacher should request it (1)
24. It would be very difficult (1)

III. What three topics would be most important to cover?

1. Review of school work--tutorial, teaching at home (24)
2. Coping with, understanding, and accepting your child (18)
3. Explanation of LD (13)
4. Discipline, behavior (12)
5. Behavior management techniques (11)
6. Social development (8)
7. Reading and math skills (7)
8. Perceptual skills (6)
9. Praise and positive reinforcement (6)
10. Learning expectancies (4)
11. Academic problems (3)
12. Games as educational tools (3)
13. Motor skills (3)
14. Language (3)
15. Parenting, loving (2)
16. Emotionality (2)
17. Praising and positive reinforcement (2)
18. School Program (2)
19. Child understanding his assets and deficits (2)
20. Remediation (1)
21. Materials to use (1)
22. Programming (1)
23. Health (1)
24. Objectivity (1)
25. Communication (1)
26. How not to escalate problem (1)
27. T. A. for tots (1)
28. Approach (1)
29. Not to frustrate (1)
30. Motivation (1)
31. Learning general information (1)
32. How to compensate (1)
33. Plan for success (1)
34. Task analysis (1)
35. Chapter 115 (1)

36. Exact disability (1)
37. Child's way of learning (1)
38. Self-analysis (1)
39. Listening (1)
40. Mainstreaming (1)
41. Vocational training for adolescent (1)
42. Developmental stages (1)

IV. In what ways do you involve parents in your LD program?

1. Daily and weekly reports (17)
2. Telephone calls (14)
3. Parent conferences (11)
4. Field trips (11)
5. Home teaching activities (10)
6. Observation of class (8)
7. Home visits (8)
8. Behavior control (8)
9. Come to class and work with child (6)
10. Specific teaching suggestions (5)
11. Parent group meetings (3)
12. Demonstrate with child what we do (3)
13. Parties, programs (3)
14. Encourage child (3)
15. Give them books on LD (2)
16. Cub scout den (1)
17. Stress praise and reinforcement (1)

V. If you don't involve parents, why not?

1. Parents don't care, are not interested, lack concern (8)
2. Too distracting for children to have parents in room (2)
3. Parents work (1)
4. Younger children prevent participation (1)
5. Parents don't need any more responsibility (1)
6. Children come out of district (1)
7. Lack of time in my first year of teaching (1)
8. Can't be pushed into involvement (1)
9. This is a resource program, one-half hour per day (1)
10. Response is frustrating (1)
11. I don't take the necessary time (1)

VI. How LD teachers who are parents support parent involvement in their children's school program.

1. Attend all programs, open houses, conferences, etc. (14)
2. Personally help with arts, plays, money making projects (4)
3. Active teacher-parent communication (3)
4. Child too young or too old (2)
5. Assistance in subject matter at home (2)
6. Review work (1)
7. Encourage reading (1)
8. Active in PTA (1)



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