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Initiating a Home Visitation Program

Wanda F. Miller

Eastern Illinois University

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INITIATING A HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

(TITLE)

BY

Wanda F. Miller

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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INITIATING A HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

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Wanda F. Miller

for

Education 602

Eastern Illinois University

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INITIATING A HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

SECTION I--INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE of the paper: The purpose of this paper is to provide background material to the teacher who would dare to become a home visitor and to provide him with a handbook as a source of information and training for such a task.

NEED for the paper: Where does the home stop and the school begin in the growth and education of the child? The education of elementary school children is a responsibility shared by home and school. Planning to accomplish mutual purposes and continuing face-to-face relationships is necessary to implement this mutual responsibility.¹

In order to foster this mutual responsibility it is necessary to have good home-school relations. There are two broad goals of home-school relations which need to be accomplished: (1) "To bring about a better understanding, between teachers and parents, of what children are like; and (2) To bring about a better understanding between teachers and parents of good education."²

When these goals of good home-school relations are achieved, parents and teachers work together as a united team. The task is to keep welding a tighter parent-teacher

team and to keep that team in shape and on the job continuously. The more unity there is, the more the child will benefit.

The truth for home-school relations is: "Love my child, and I will love you."³ A parent is ever ready to sacrifice his needs in behalf of his children's. This is the parent you work with in home-school relations--he carries a prized picture in his pocketbook, a lump in the heart, a warm love, and a great good wish for youngsters. Feel the same love, and that parent is your friend. Show your interest and your love, and that parent is on your side.⁴

The love each parent feels for his child makes him want the best for that child. Parents' love for their children creates a latent eagerness to do the right thing and to cooperate with all who seek their children's well-being. Everything you do in home-school relations touches on sacred soil--on the child and on the parent himself. In this field, tread lightly. You are not talking about the weather, but about parents' children, parents' efforts, and parents' hopes.⁵

Parents are eager to keep in touch with what is going on. The youngsters go to school early in the morning and come home late afternoon. What goes on? What do they do? How do they act? How do they get along with others? The children tell a little; the parent guesses a little; and reports and materials brought home convey a little. But, if you

have a child, if you love that child, there is a thrill in knowing fully. This is your youngster's life and you want to share in it. Parents accept the fact that a child must be away for a large amount of time. They are deeply grateful, however, when they are not kept in the dark.⁶

It is essential that parents and teachers fully trust each other, and they must be able to agree on a definition of good education. In order for the school to do a job of quality education, it must have essential information about the child. The home must help the school to understand the child and the aspirations his parents have for him. Only when mutual trust and understanding exist will home and school find their creative energies, unplagued by doubts, arguments, and suspicion, released to work for children.⁷

One avenue to be explored to help release these creative energies is that of home visits. In the United States thousands of home visits are made by elementary and secondary teachers each year.

One parent in Ohio asks, "Just what's the idea of all these home visits, anyway? Do teachers want to see what kind of furniture we have?"⁸

"No, but we would like to get better acquainted with the parents and try to understand our students better,"⁹ replies Mercedes Petry.

In order to understand the students better it is necessary that the teacher see his pupils in a variety of situations to recognize the diverse facets of each child's life. It is important that the teacher know each pupil in relation to his total environment. Probably the strongest force in a child's life is his home environment where personality traits and attitudes have their roots. Home visits can provide the teacher with valuable information about those relationships with members of his family that influence and form the pupil's relationships with members of his classroom, thereby leading to better understanding of the pupil as a person and the reasons for his general behavior.

This understanding enables the teacher to meet the pupil at his point of need with learning experiences and social adjustment techniques to equip him for a satisfying and productive life.

However, a mutual responsibility for the welfare and education of the child should be shared by the parent and the teacher. A key word here should be communication.¹⁰ Home and school must cooperate by communicating with each other in the following ways:

1. by maintaining a flow of information about the child from the home to the school.

2. by supplying a flow of information about the school, its policies, and operations, from the school to the home.

3. by providing periodic progress reports of pupil achievement from the school to the home.

4. by quickly contacting each other as soon as special problems are discovered by either home or school.

It can readily be seen that one way of implementing this two-way communication between home and school would be the home visit. At this point many teachers tend to agree, but will also shrink back from the situation, saying, "I think it is a good idea, but I don't know how to go about making a successful home visit." The body of this paper will deal with just that situation. A handbook to be used by the home visitor will be found in Appendix A. This handbook developed from previous experience of the author, research, and purusal of other handbooks.

SECTION II--HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

If a program of home visits were considered for a given school, the first step in establishing such a program would be to launch a study to assess the present relationship of the home to the school.

After evaluating the study made to ascertain the areas of home-school relationship needing improvement, a home visitation program should be established to meet those needs.

First, the visit should solicit from the parent a willing commitment to keep the teacher informed throughout the year concerning the needs and problems of the child. "Parents know their individual children. They know their strengths, the budding interests, the beginning inclinations that mark one child off from all others. They can recite the intimate details of a child's past: his fears, illnesses, the exciting experiences, the good and the bad that made the child what he is today."¹¹ Of course, the visit itself will bring such enlightenment; nonetheless, the continuing cooperation of the parent in this regard is of vital importance. In most cases, the parent, ever ready to sacrifice his needs in behalf of his child's, will eagerly ally with a teacher who shows by home visitation his sincere concern for the benefit of that child.¹² The aim, then, is to weld a parent-teacher team.

Second, the visit should provide the parent with information about the school, its goals, policies, and operations. As was stated earlier the youngster goes to school early in the morning and comes home in late afternoon. He tells a little; the parents guess a little; and the reports and materials brought home convey a little. Too many times the "little" that the parent knows about the school is distorted as it is brought to him through the immature eyes of his child. Warped information can be worse than no information, producing suspicion and antagonism.

The best way to avoid suspicion and antagonism and establish mutual trust is to supply the parent with full answers to his every question--including those unasked.

In this sense, the teacher must remember that he is a representative of the school. The English spoken, the evidence of general intelligence, and the ability to give information on the total school program--all contribute to the success or failure of the call. As a result of the call, the parent will form opinions of the fairness, the open-mindedness, the culture, the humanity of the teacher, and the effectiveness of the school in educating his child.¹⁵

Third, the visit should elicit from the parent a willingness to contact the school as soon as special problems are observed and should give the parent assurance that, in case

the problem is discovered by school personnel, the same courtesy and cooperation will be extended from school to home.

The preceding points out that to plan a program of home visitation, ways must be found to establish dependable communication lines between school and home.

A plan of home visitation can be devised and set forth on paper, but putting that plan into action is quite a different matter. It would probably be advisable for the school system to provide a supervisor to help implement this plan.

The first and most important task of the supervisor with such a plan is to SELL THE TEACHER! If home visitation is to be successful, the visitor must dogmatically believe in the value of the mission. To bring about the level of enthusiasm, the supervisor must demonstrate beyond question four points of benefit established by home visits:

1. The benefits received by the teacher.
2. The benefits gained by the school.
3. The benefits produced for the parents.
4. The benefits given the child.

In selling the program, it is important to be aware of the differences in "building personality" from one faculty to another within a unit. Thus, it is advisable to present the "pitch" to one school staff at a time.

Another pitfall the supervisor must anticipate is extreme rigidity of program. What will be effective with one group of teachers may fail with another. This does not mean that the program should be allowed to lose its shape through disintegration of the main structure, only that there be enough flexibility to make it adaptable to each school. Such flexibility will make the task of selling much easier for the supervisor.

The second supervisory step in implementation is to equip the teacher. Every salesman knows the value of well designed, colorful sales aids that present his product in a clear and forceful manner. A student-parent's handbook presented by the visiting teacher would have "ice breaking" value while providing important information for the parent--information that could be referred to again and again to answer questions that might otherwise result in conflict.

A third move in implementation is to train the teacher. An important part of this training is to prepare a manual of instruction. [See Appendix A] In this booklet, the benefits of home visitation should be clearly presented as an introduction that sells the program. The remainder should contain correct methods of visitation.

To help further in training, a workshop or seminar might be conducted using outside speakers who have had experience

in home visitation. Also, they could suggest role playing as an effective means of practice for home visits.

The various building principals must be thoroughly oriented to the program and taught to implement it through their teachers.

The final step is to actually send the teacher. It is here that the supervisor must be prepared to make some administrative adjustments. "Some schools want all the good they can wring out of home-school relations. ...but...not... enough to make any major readjustments. They are glad to talk about working with parents. When it comes to the doing, they want the easy way out."¹⁴

For example, the words "home visit" can be said in a flash, but the time involved in visiting every pupil's home may consume many hours. Foreseeing is the supervisor who will make school time available for visitation just as conscientiously as he plans for institutes and workshops. Perhaps half-day blocks of time early in the year could be given the teacher for home visitation by paying substitute teachers.¹⁵ Other procedures may better suit a particular school unit-- the point is that the already overloaded teacher should not be expected to work home visitation into his crowded time schedule.

Furthermore, there is the question of transportation. Is the visitor expected to use his own car without remuneration? Perhaps a school auto could be provided for visitation. In any case, the supervisor must plan to meet this responsibility to the teacher.

Other points of a similar nature may confront the supervisor, forcing frequent readjustment. Thus, the word flexibility must be re-emphasized. A school cannot expect to implement a new concept and still go along in the "way we've always done it."

After the visits are made, if there are no provisions for conserving the information and benefits gathered from each call, the program is as ineffective as the foolish hen in this anecdote.

Once upon a time there was a hen who gathered corn to fill her house. She worked hard and spent much time and effort getting in the tender young kernels. She counted them as she brought them in and put the tally on a board. She encouraged all her friends to help her. But at the back of her house was a hole, and an evil rat carried away corn as fast as she brought it in.

"Why," asked a friend, "don't you plug up the hole? Aren't those kernels the rat carries away worth as much as the new ones you gather?"

"How can I take care of that? It takes all my time and energy to get the corn in!"

What are some methods the supervisor can include to conserve the benefits of home visitation? First, he can

provide the teacher a visitation report form on which to record his findings. The report, preferably made in duplicate, should contain such questions as:

1. Is the attitude of the parent toward the school a good one?¹⁶
2. Is the relationship between the parents and the child a healthy one?
3. What kind of home environment does the child have?
4. What special needs does the pupil seem to have?
5. Do you have any suggestions for bettering the home-school relationships of this family?
6. What plan of action was agreed upon by the parents and teacher to be of most benefit to the child?

With the visit made and the report prepared, the next step for the supervisor is to provide adequate housing for the information. Each teacher should have immediate access to these reports in order to recall the impressions formed during the visit; thus, one copy should be kept in a file in the school building where the principal may also make use of it. The second copy should be available to the supervisor who must also maintain a file. In this manner, he may evaluate the program from time to time, recognize a problem family through reports on various pupils from one family, and evaluate the attitudes and efficiency of the various teachers in his care.

SECTION III--SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Current attacks on education make it more desirable than ever that parents get to know teachers as individuals who are earnestly trying to serve the best interest of the pupils in their classes. Parent-teacher meetings do not reach the critics who do not attend. Home visits do. However, teachers often resist visiting their pupils' homes because they fear they won't be welcome or they don't know how to go about making the visit. This paper has provided plans for initiating a home visitation program in a school system. In addition, a handbook for the teacher to be used as a guide for successful home visits has been included.

If home visits have never been conducted in your school system, formulate a definite plan of action and work the plan.

In summary, if a successful home visitation plan is operating in a school one may hear:

"Talking with parents has helped me to understand each child a little better."

"After the home visits were made, a survey was conducted and all parents thought they were worthwhile and preferred them to conferences at the schoolhouse."

"As a result of home visits, a degree of sympathy was developed for the children. This sympathy did not cause

standards to be lowered or demands for improvement to be diminished. It became crystal clear that ... an entire re-adjustment be made of my concept of teaching. There was more to the child's world than his hours in my classroom."¹⁷

Complaints like these—"I am too busy to come up to school," or "My Johnny is a good boy, the other boys are picking on him,"¹⁸ became less and less frequent when the teacher visited.

Home visitation is not offered as a panacea. It will not solve all the problems between school and home. It is highly probable that it will not work for all teachers. However, if we are, as one principal put it, "dedicated to the proposition that these are our children; that out of them, if we work hard and intelligently enough, can and will come great men and women,"¹⁹ we must of necessity consider this approach.

FOOTNOTES

¹Mary B. Lane, "Community-School Relations," National Education Association Journal, LI (September, 1962), 50.

²James L. Hymes, Effective Home-School Relations (New York: Prentice Hall, 1953), 9.

³Ibid., 15.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 17.

⁶Ibid., 18.

⁷Ibid., 47.

⁸Mercedes Petry, "Parents, Teachers, Attitudes," Instructor, LXIX (October, 1959), 80.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Gerald F. Kowitz and Norma G. Kowitz, "Improving Home-School Relations," National Elementary Principal, XLIII (April, 1964), 22.

¹¹Hymes, op. cit., 22.

¹²Ibid., 9.

¹³Hugh Bonar, "Every Teacher a Visiting Teacher," Journal of the National Education Association, XXX (January, 1941), 4.

¹⁴Hymes, op. cit., 141.

¹⁵Ibid., 142.

¹⁶Petry, op. cit., 86.

¹⁷William H. Finch, "Bringing Together Family and School," Chicago School Journal, XLIII (November, 1961), 86.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

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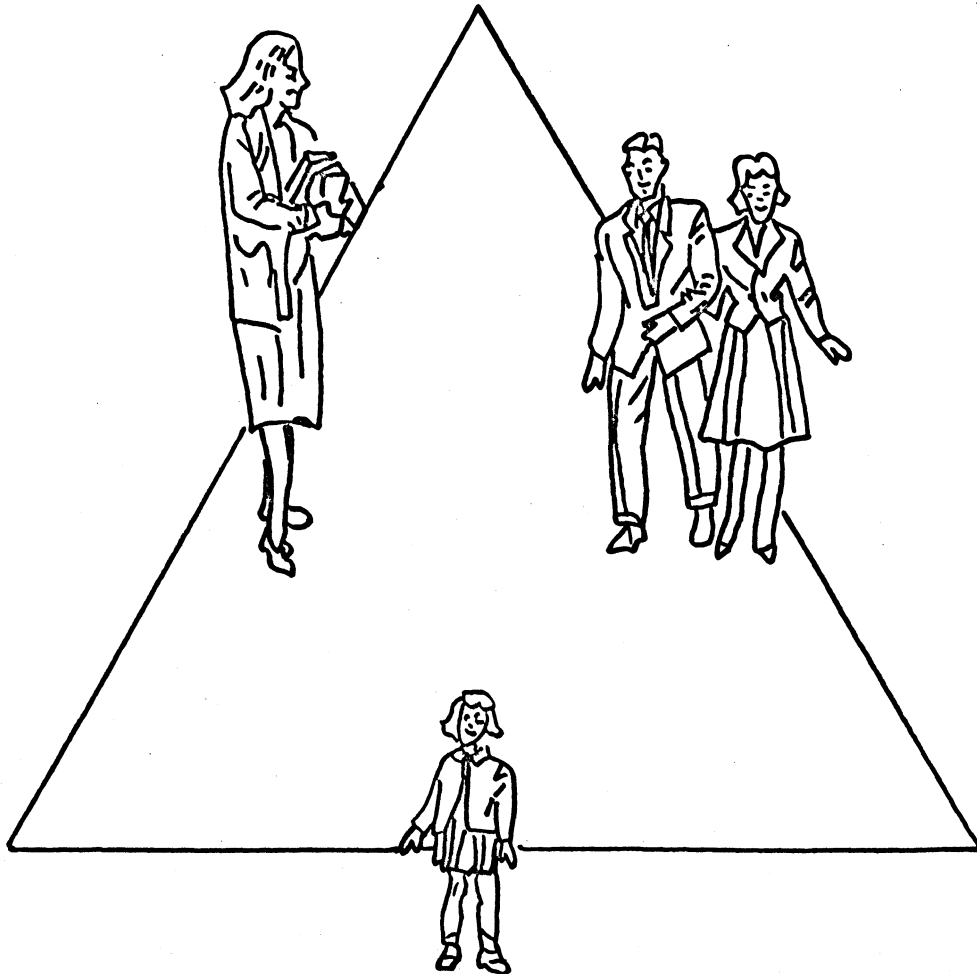
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APPENDIX A

HANDBOOK FOR THE HOME VISITOR

HANDBOOK for the HOME VISITOR



A Teacher's Guide to Successful Home Visits

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Why Visit?

The school recognizes the role of parents in the educative process. Both the home and school share responsibility in the development of the child. A parent who understands the aim of the school in relation to his own child can be an active partner in the school program. In order to make parents active partners, individual parent-teacher conferences in the form of home visits are needed in addition to the report card.

Several years ago a note from the teacher requesting the opportunity to visit a child's home meant sure trouble. But, today this is no longer true. These notes carry the connotation: "Let's be partners in this business of education. If we do our jobs well, your child will profit most of all."

These visiting conferences provide a two-way exchange of information about a child. It generally will be a supplement to the report card, and can be much more revealing and effective.

After one or two successful home visits, the parents will eagerly await the next visitor. They like the feeling of playing a deeper role in their child's education and training. Their child likes the idea, too. He likes to feel that his teacher and his parents are teamed together "for" him rather than working at cross-purposes "against" him.

The experienced visitor knows that time spent in the students' homes is really time saved, because it helps to eliminate many problems in the classroom. The student really becomes an ally of the teacher since he was willing to care enough to visit his home.

As a matter of fact, the whole school system benefits from an effective home visitation program. The public relations value alone pays rich dividends. It is amazing how many favorable things parents say about a teacher, principal, a school, or a school system which they have come to understand and be a real part.

✓ CHECK THE BENEFITS

--received by the teacher:

- A building of trust, in both parents and children because the teacher is a human being who cares enough about the child to visit his family.

- Observing and talking about the child at home helps the teacher understand him better. The parent, being at home, is likely to do more talking about the child's behavior and attitudes in the home. Home and school are complementary learning environments. Parents and teacher share responsibility for keeping track of where a child is in his learning, knowing what he can do and what he can't and what his interests are. This sharing is more likely to occur in the home.

- Acquaintance with the family may offer clues to why the parents raise the children as they do.

- The teacher is respected as an expert and will be asked by the parents what they can do to help with their child's learning. This gives the teacher an opportunity to explain his goals and expectations with the parents while going over ways the parents can help. Also, the teacher may be able to help parents enrich the home as a learning environment for their children.

- The teacher will gain many insights into the developmental stages of the children.

- The teacher can know and understand the pupils better by seeing them in their own environments.

•The teacher will have a longer time to discuss any problem with the parents.

•The teacher can work more effectively if he knows the out-of-school experiences of the students.

•There will be more of a flow of information about the child to the teacher.

•The teacher may discover that some children are doing a wonderful job in school in the face of almost overwhelming odds.

•A visit destroys the idea of blaming troubles on the teacher because "the teacher doesn't like me" when he has spent his own time visiting his home.

•A working relationship will be established with the parents so both teacher and parents may understand and respond to the needs of the child.

•Visits will eliminate remarks such as, "The teachers as a whole are not concerned enough about their students' work, attitude, and welfare. Very seldom do they contact the parent to talk things over, and the parent may never know of things that could have been corrected."

•Through the visits a relationship may be established with the parents so as to influence them to try other ways of guiding the child.

•Parents and teachers become a united team.

- The child will come alive to the teacher, so the program can be tailor made to fit each child.

- Some teachers make visits because they feel that their work is lightened in the long run.

- The teacher gains in physical and mental health because there are fewer problems.

--gained by the school:

- The school will gain intelligent support from the community.

- Experimental programs are more likely to be supported by parents who have been visited.

- Necessary administrative forms to be filled out will be completed more willingly.

- Parents will no longer fear the authority of the school when they become a team partner.

- Parents' attitudes toward school will be positive and since the child's attitude is a reflection of his parents, his attitude toward the school should also be more positive.

- Less time is spent defending before school administrators practices the teacher resorted to in cases of unsympathetic and unremonstrating parents.

- The school policies are less likely to be attacked by parents.

--produced for the parents:

- A more positive attitude on the part of his child will be observable.

- The child will be eager to attend school where he knows the teacher thinks of him as an individual.

- Parents become a part of a united team working for the full development of their child.

- Happier home relations result because the boys and girls are better adjusted and more successful in their school environment.

--given the child:

- There is a richer, fuller, more nourishing life, in school and out, than would otherwise be open to him.

- There is more consistent guidance in school and out; therefore, the child stands a better chance of living up to the peak of his powers.

- When parents and teachers agree on good education, children experience the consistency of treatment needed for their full development.

- The child comes alive to his teacher.

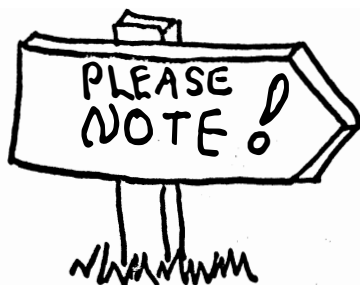
- The school program will be tailor-made for every single child including his interests, his strengths, and his needs.

- The child will be better adjusted and more successful in his school environment.

•There is apt to be less physical and mental illness among the children because of successful experiences.

•Standards of school and home toward the child are likely to be more in agreement.

•Better learning climate will be experienced by the child at home and school.



How to Make that Home Visit

Many teachers will readily agree that the idea of the home visit is a good one. However, the first question that comes to mind is--"HOW do I go about making a home visit?" This section is included to help those teachers who will dare to take that initiative.

Home visits are to establish a friendly relationship and develop a mutual interest, trust and understanding; therefore, they should not be arranged or carried out in a brisk, business-like way as a kind of professional obligation. Rather, the approach is one quite similar to visits one makes to new neighbors, new colleagues, or other friends and acquaintances.

It is important that the teacher goes with a genuine desire to get acquainted with someone who is pretty important in the life of the child he teaches, and demonstrates his interest in that child.

Home visits should never be forced on parents. A choice should be given to the parents stating whether they prefer a home visit or some other type of conference. In the event that a home visit is preferred this should never be a surprise visit. Parents have the right to know when the teacher will be coming and indicate the time that such visits will be most convenient. All visits should be scheduled

so that the parents know at least one day in advance. Schedules should be worked out to honor a certain time and date desired by a parent.

When the teacher arrives at the home she should be warm and friendly to the parents. It would be well to find something to be complimentary about--possibly a picture, drapes, etc. This is to put the parent at ease and feel the teacher really is a friend. A word of caution here would be, never show disgust or astonishment at any unlovely surroundings. The lowly home may be only a temporary condition; friendship is forever.

Always assure the parents of your interest in their child. Encourage parents to talk. Listen and seek to understand the reasons for their viewpoints. Present evidence of the child's educational progress. Express appreciation for the parents' contributions to the pupils' well-being and educational accomplishments. If the child's difficulties are discussed, interpret them as normal limitations and assure parents that more progress can be made. Invite parents' help, but avoid comment which may be interpreted as criticism of a pupil or an inference that you lack confidence in him.

The outcome of the visit is entirely the teacher's responsibility.



? Questions Parents and Teachers Might Ask

QUESTIONS PARENTS MIGHT ASK

- Is my child doing as well as he should in school?
- What group is he in, and why?
- What subjects will my child be studying this year?
- How is he getting along in the individual subjects?
- May I see some of his work: (Be sure to have several samples of work done in various subjects.)
- How much emphasis is placed on reading, writing, and arithmetic?
- What are some of the pertinent school rules and procedures?
- Does my child get along with the other children?
- What are your discipline policies?
- Does my child obey you?
- Does he respect the rights and property of others?

- Would you please explain your grading system?
- Have you noticed any special interests, aptitudes, or abilities in my child?
- What is my child's IQ? (Explain in terms of average, above average, etc. Be sure you know your district's policy on releasing information about IQ scores.)
- How can I help my child to learn?

A word of caution to the teacher about the language you use in answering the parents' questions--use words parents understand, not your professional jargon!

QUESTIONS TEACHER MIGHT ASK

- What do you most want the school to do for your child?
- What seem to you to be his strongest points, his greatest assets?
- In what is he most interested?
- In what areas do you think he needs the most help?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know about him?
- Are there any ways in which you think that you might help us, or we might help you, to do whatever will be best for him?
- What is the child's response to rules and regulations in the home?

•What discipline works best with the child at home?

•Does he have any home responsibilities?

•Does he have a suitable place to read or work?



Conferences at Home

Any parent-teacher conference begins where other reporting methods end. The parent has very special understandings of what the child is like at home. The teacher has an insight of what the child is like at school. With these two perspectives in focus, everybody gains--especially the child.

Individual conferences held at home require much preparation. If they are well planned and conducted, the parents will readily welcome your presence again. These visits help both you and the parents understand the child, and should result in cooperative planning for the child.

--Preparing the Child

The child in school often serves as "special delivery" boy taking the note to his parents about the home visit. He will probably bring the answer back. However, he should have more of a role than a postman. He should know that the sole aim of the visit is to help him. To allay any apprehension, talk over the visits with your pupils several days ahead of time. You might ask, "What do you think I should talk about with your parents?" Then you might

share some of the things you plan to talk about with the parents.

--Preparing the Parents

Parents want to hear about their child, but at the same time they are sometimes afraid of what the teacher may say. The visit will be about the child, but parents often feel it is really a reflection of themselves that may not always do them justice. Here are some ways to help prepare the parents.

- Confirm the home visit appointment with a letter containing questions to guide the discussion. Be sure to state that the parents should feel free to use all, part, or none of the questions, as they see fit. This helps put the parents at ease and avoids the sometimes "awkward" first few minutes.

- A brief newsletter might be sent to parents explaining what the conference at home is, why you chose it, what parents can contribute, what information they can expect to get, and a list of possible topics for discussion.

- Let the parents know in advance you are on a schedule and how much time is set aside for your visit to their home. (Usually fifteen to twenty minutes is sufficient. Don't overstay!)

--Preparing Yourself

You will want plenty of information about each pupil in your class. Study the cumulative record folders and make any notes on cards to take with you. You should know each child's

ability in terms of average, superior, and so on. (Parents normally have trouble interpreting IQ's accurately). Be ready to share with the parent whether his child is working up to grade level and where he is strong and weak.

- Prepare a folder of each pupil's work to give to the parents. Include samples of work done from the very beginning until the time of the visit. You could write a brief comment on the outside of the folder about the child's progress.

- Make a check sheet of the various skills and attitudes you want to discuss during the visit.

- For the more adventuresome, consider making a tape recording of each pupil's work during a reading lesson. Parents will always want to hear their child read. This makes a good icebreaker for the discussion.

- Be sure to allow enough time between visits to fill out your evaluation sheet and make any special notations pertinent to the visit.

--Visitation Techniques

Be sure to arrive on time, introduce yourself if you are strangers, and make a favorable comment about the home. This is to put the parent at ease.

- Express appreciation for being invited into their home to talk about working together for their child's benefit. Begin--and end--the visit with a positive comment about the child.

•Try not to take notes during the visit. Complete the evaluation sheet immediately afterward.

•Be truthful, but remember you are talking to a parent about his most precious possession. Be tactful. Try to put yourself in the parent's place and imagine what effect your remarks will have.

•Don't get bogged down in generalities. Be specific about what their child is or is not doing.

•When you feel it necessary to offer suggestions to the parents it is wise to offer alternatives so the parents may decide which to use.

•It is important to find out how the parents think and feel about their child.

•If a parent tells you why he thinks a child acts a certain way, accept it but direct the conversation to other possible causes.

•Avoid any tinge of an argument.

•Be on your guard for any signs of emotion.

•If certain personal facts are divulged to you, assure the parents that your profession requires you to keep all information about pupils and parents confidential.

•Concentrate on two or three things on which you and the parents can work together to help the child.

- Be careful how you handle a comment about a previous teacher the child had.

- Show a wide range of the child's work. Hopefully, you can show how the work has improved or changed.

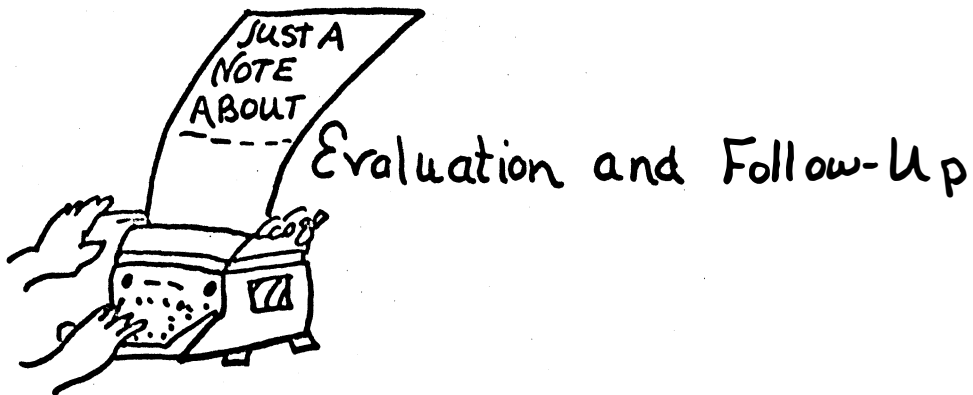
- Use terms that parents can understand.

- When you feel that you have covered all the areas you planned to discuss, thank the parents for the opportunity of visiting with them in their home.

- Summarize the major areas discussed.

- Agree upon the action needed and the steps to be followed.

- Depart with a smile and an invitation to visit school anytime.



Immediately following your visit with the parents, you will want to complete the "Visitation Report Form." This form is to be completed in duplicate--one for your file and one for the building principal.

Hold a conference with the child the following day. Let him know his strengths and weaknesses which were discussed. Explain how you and his parents plan to work together for his benefit.

As a follow-up contact with the parents, send a short note of thanks and include additional suggestions on how you plan to help their child learn and hopefully enjoy school.

At the end of the year you might send a letter summarizing your home visit and the progress and weaknesses of the child. This stimulates school-parent relations and may help the child's next teacher. A carbon of the letter should be put in the child's cumulative folder.

VISITATION REPORT FORM
(Make in duplicate)

1. Is the attitude of the parent toward the school a good one?
2. Is the relationship between the parents and the child a healthy one?
3. What kind of home environment does the child have?
4. What special needs does the pupil seem to have?
5. Do you have any suggestions for bettering the home-school relationships of this family?
6. What plan of action was agreed upon by the parents and teacher to be of most benefit to the child?