

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

IN PROMOTING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN

FORMAL PRE-SCHOOL TEACHING

by

NEETA GATHIRAM

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Department of Social Work in the
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Promoter : Professor J.B. Mason.

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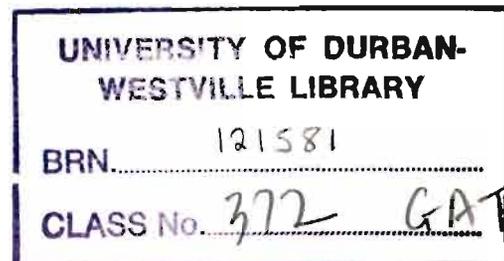
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SUMMARY

The study aimed firstly to explore whether there were any differences in the quality of parent-child interactions in those children who scored high and those who scored low on the Pupil Behavior Rating Scale.

Sixty-five pupils were randomly selected and rated on the Pupil Behavior Rating Scale concurrently by the teacher and the researcher. Ten of the highest performers and 10 lowest performers were then studied predominantly by the use of a questionnaire constructed by the researcher.

However, the results of the study was hampered by the use of the questionnaire in that, unlike participant observation, it only showed differences in a limited number of areas. Much useful information, however, was obtained about the two groups of families, especially relating to socio-economic variables and attitudes to pre-school education.

A second aim was to investigate the role of the social worker in promoting parental involvement in pre-school education. Here, the utilization of a needs assessment profile indicated that groupwork and social work intervention aimed at teachers were possible ways to promote parental involvement in pre-school education. An intervention programme was thus planned and executed by the researcher which confirmed that the social worker can be a useful resource in promoting home-school relations.

Recommendations were made in regard to the role of the social worker, how the school system can be improved to promote parental involvement, and suggestions on future research.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Parental involvement in pupils' scholastic activities has been shown to improve learning, behaviour, as well as the child's ability to socialize and adapt (Boocock, 1980; Munro, 1970). Close contact between the home and school assists in achieving educational goals. Hancock (1982) suggests that social work techniques may be utilized to promote parental involvement in the pupils' school life.

According to Pringle, as quoted by Davies (1980 : 101) pre-school children should be given top priority as a target group for preventive intervention as they are the "seed corn" of the future and their development will determine the success of tomorrow's society. In spite of these proposals, research activity has centred around primary or secondary schools while little attention has been paid to pre-primary education (Reilly, Hofmeyer, 1983). Because of this lack of attention given to the role of social work with the pre-school child, the researcher aimed to demonstrate how social work techniques could be used to promote parental involvement at pre-school level and strengthen parent-child relationships. This research also aimed to discover the quality of parent-child interactions between children who are generally well adjusted and those who are not.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine differences between parent-child interaction for those children who score high on the

Pupils' Behaviour Rating scale (Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois) and those who do not, assuming that those who score high are superior in their general adjustment to those who score low. In searching for reasons for learning and behaviour problems it has been found that complications in the family situation most often form the root of such problems (Fullard, 1981 : 111).

There is a need to understand the implications of this interaction if the social worker is to implement an appropriate intervention programme. Prevention can be planned by studying the social characteristics, the functioning, attitudes and beliefs of a representative group of young families and thereby gathering clues from their present behaviour about future functioning (Geismar, 1969 : 16).

A further purpose of this research is to demonstrate how social work intervention can be used to promote parental involvement in formal pre-school teaching.

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were adopted:

- A There is a qualitative difference between parent-child interaction for those who score high on the Pupils' Behaviour Rating Scale and those who score low.

- B The school social worker can be a useful resource in promoting parental involvement in formal pre-school teaching.

1.4 The study setting

Hillview, Durban Heights and Resmount pre-school classes are supervised by the Reservoir Hills Local Committee of the Durban Indian Child and Family Welfare Society. This committee has a membership of seven volunteers. These classes were established in 1978 as it was felt that pre-school services were inadequate in the Reservoir Hills area to meet the needs of the growing population.

The pre-school classes use the premises of the three respective primary schools between 12.30 pm and 2.30 pm. The principals of the primary schools have overall responsibility for these classes. A total number of six teachers are employed; three at Resmount, two at Durban Heights and one at Hillview. They have no formal qualifications but have had extensive experience working with pre-school children. The teachers are paid on the basis of R2,40 an hour by the House of Delegates. The Local Committee supplements this income. The pupils are not charged a fee, but parents are expected to make a donation of R15,00 a term payable to the Local Committee.

These classes are managed by the pre-school sub-committee of the Local Committee. None of the teachers are members of this sub-committee. The sub-committee meets the teachers once a month to discuss any problems or issues concerning the classes. These meetings are carried out on a fairly informal basis.

The social worker/researcher became a member of the Reservoir Hills Local Committee. She was later elected to the position of secretary of the Pre-school Sub-Committee. The social worker was thus able to

partake in policy making and was able to contribute to decision making. Rocher (1977) is of the opinion that participation in school and education policy-making, is a very important task of the school social worker.

Furthermore, the social worker was attached to the pre-school over a two year period. During the first year prior to the research, time was spent familiarizing herself with the school system and the community surrounding the school. She assisted the teachers in arranging extra-curricular activities, for example, the school concert, graduation, etc and in this way, became an integral part of the school. Because of the practical difficulty of rendering extensive services to the three schools, the social worker undertook casework on a limited scale and dealt only with cases at crisis level. Group work was undertaken with the pre-school children and great emphasis was placed on involving parents. During the second year, attention was given to the research project and the intervention used will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.5 The method of study

Three pre-school classes in the Reservoir Hills area, namely Durban Heights, Hillview and Resmount were chosen for the purpose of this study. There was a total number of 130 pupils, after exclusion of children of single parent families. Single parent families were excluded from the study as they would have different structural arrangements and adaptations to cope with their particular situation which could complicate the analysis of data in this study. Two types

of research methods were employed. During phase I, quantitative strategies were used. Phase II involved qualitative techniques.

1.5.1 Phase I:

Sixty-five children were randomly chosen for evaluation on general adjustment using the Pupil Behaviour Rating Scale, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (PBRs) (Appendix A).

The assistance of the class teacher as well as personal observation of the child over a six week period was used for completion of the rating scale. Pupils were assessed after three months from the time of entering into the pre-school, to ensure that they had adjusted to their new environment. Using the total scores of the rating scale, the subjects were further divided into low performers and high performers.

1.5.1.1 The modified form of the Pupil Behaviour Rating Scale, North Western University, Evanston, Illinois (P.B.R.S.)

A rating scale is an algebraic summation over variable periods of time and numbers of social situations of many discrete observations by parents, teachers or other caretakers in which an unconscious data reduction process operates to produce a global score or frequency estimate (Conners, Werry, as quoted by McMahon, 1979 : 81).

The PBRs measures a child's performance in terms of the following five dimensions:

- (a) auditory comprehension and listening
- (b) spoken language

- (c) orientation
- (d) behaviour
- (e) motion

There is a total number of 24 items. The test has been used on all race groups by the Child Guidance Clinic of Durban-Westville University. It has been found to be relatively culture-fair and no modifications were required in order to use it with the present sample of Indian children.

The respondent was required to rate the child on a five point scale; however when this scale was used by the Child Guidance Centre of Durban-Westville University it was modified to a four-point scale to reduce the incidence of the average answer being chosen.

Each of the five areas were rated without reference to any other. The lower the score, the poorer the performance, the higher the score, the better the performance.

The completion of the PBRS enabled the researcher to allocate the pupils to the two comparative groups.

1.5.1.2 General comments on the PBRS and on the administration

The PBRS rates pupils only on aspects that are observable and measurable. The subjective experience of the child, for example, cognitions and affect were not considered. This could be a possible limitation in the use of this rating scale.

The researcher, in collaboration with the teacher, rated the children. However, there are several viewpoints on who should be the respondents of such rating scales; MacMahon (1979) quotes Achenbach who states that parents are the most important single data source since they have seen the child in a variety of settings and over a longer period of time than teachers or other respondents. Gross (1984) quotes Linham who argues that parents' reports of their children's behaviour are not accurate as they are greatly influenced by social desirability and theories of child rearing. The research design required the parents to be the respondents in the questionnaire that followed (Appendix B). Therefore, if they were involved in the assessment of the child at this stage it may have biased their responses. The researcher's personal view is that the teachers could be more objective assessors than parents. The teacher also has an added advantage of being able to compare the child's behaviour with a larger sample of children so that the developmental aspects of the child were also considered.

Furthermore, according to Gross (1984), an interviewer who consults with a child's teacher and exhibits a sincere appreciation of his or her observations and comments is likely to readily elicit a cooperative response and assistance in the intervention programme.

1.5.2 Phase II:

The top 10 high performers and the lowest 10 on the rating scale were chosen for studying the quality of parent-child interaction. In order to study the quality of the parent-child interaction, a questionnaire was compiled (Appendix B). Discussions were held with the teachers,

psychologist and researcher from the University of Durban-Westville Child Guidance Centre and an extensive literature study was undertaken to isolate the specific areas that should be included in the questionnaire. After the questionnaire had been compiled, demonstration interviews (four) were held in order to test the feasibility of the schedule as well as to familiarize the interviewer with the contents of the questionnaire.

Thereafter, the questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher, over a two week period. The assistance of the mother was enlisted for completion of all questions. Any other relevant observations outside those stipulated in the questionnaire was used as additional data by the researcher. The results obtained were then analysed manually. Appropriate literature studies were also undertaken.

1.6 Possible limitations of the study

Possible limitations of the study can be suggested:

- A The questionnaire (Appendix B) was drawn up by the researcher and had not been used previously.

- B Fathers were excluded from the study.

- C Mothers may not have been truthful in the answering of questions as it involved a sensitive area.

1.7 Definition of terms

In the context of the present study, the terms parent, parental involvement, effectiveness, pre-school class and social work intervention were defined as follows:

1.7.1 Parent

A parent can be mother, father or guardian of the child.

1.7.2 Parental involvement

Parental involvement usually includes offers of help with the school work the child brings home; attendance at school functions and generally becoming familiar with the school and with its standards and values; getting to know teachers and turning to them for help.

For the purpose of this study the above elements are important but the parents' understanding of the development of the child physically, psychologically and socially were also considered to be important. Refer to further discussion in chapter 2.

1.7.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness was defined as the degree to which purposes were achieved.

1.7.4 Pre-school class

A pre-school class in South Africa refers to a class established at a departmental school, which falls under the authority of the primary

school principal. Children attend these classes during the year preceding compulsory school attendance.

1.7.5 Intervention

For the purpose of this study, intervention can be defined as any planned action undertaken by the social worker in an effort to achieve the desired goals.

1.8 Division of report

The remainder of this report is divided into four sections. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature, relevant to this study; Chapter 3 contains an analysis of the questionnaire and the interpretations of results. A description of the social work intervention programme is presented in Chapter 4. The researcher's conclusions are included in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW2.1 Introduction

The survey of literature and research is divided into the following sections:

- 2.2 An overview of the different models of home-school relations.
- 2.3 A summary of parent-school relations with an emphasis on the importance and reasons for such relations.
- 2.4 Basic assumption underlying parent-education programmes; environment vs intelligence controversy.
- 2.5 Examples of home-school programmes that could be used to promote parental education in pre-school.
- 2.6 A description of family typology related to social distance from the school.
 - 2.6.1 The classification system of family types as proposed by Litwak and Meyer.
- 2.7 A summary of the pyramid of collaboration as proposed by Easton and Winters.
- 2.8 Prevention.

There is an abundance of literature on parental involvement in general. The researcher has been selective in trying to relate this information to social work with the child, family and school.

2.2 Models of home-school relations

A Closed door position

Followers of this model assume that a school can handle all the major problems of education within its walls. The viewpoint of the traditional French and German systems illustrates this position, which is often associated with a curricular emphasis on the "3 R's". They state that the presence of parents in the school hampers the educator in the performance of his duties. They regard the strong emotional ties between the parent and child as inhibiting the use of parents as objective participants in the educational process. Emphasis is placed therefore on maximizing the social distance between the family and the school.

B Open-door position

The "pupil-centred" philosophy of education is often associated with this position. Adherents to this model assume that many of the basic educational processes take place outside the school building: in the family, the peer group and the neighbourhood. In their opinion the motivation necessary for learning to occur in school has its source in the everyday life of the child. The family is especially influential and parents should therefore have unlimited access to the school and be involved in every aspect pertaining to school life. From this viewpoint, the school-family-community programmes should be arranged in order to promote closer contact between the family and school.

C Balance theory

Proponents of this theory assert that both intimate and distant school-family relations must be balanced in different degrees, under different circumstances, to optimize educational objectives. This approach notes two kinds of errors which a school-family programme can make. It can either bring the schools and community so close together that professional standards are seriously weakened, or can keep families and schools so far apart that lack of co-ordination causes contradictory influences to emanate from both sides. To avoid these errors the balance theory argues that optimal social distance is a determinable point between the extremes of intimacy and isolation. At such a point the school should be close enough to co-ordinate activities with families but not so close as to impair the performance of professional educational tasks. The authors are of the view that success at school depends to a large extent on the way tasks are handled in the everyday activities of the family. They recognize the family as playing an important role in the educational process. For example, it provides supervision of home study, initiates values that affect attitudes and behaviour in school, exposes children to significant models and in many other ways, make them ready for school.

In conclusion, each of these models has its appeal and probably some validity.

2.3. The importance of parent-school relations

The home and the school share joint responsibility for the socialization of the child. According to Musgrave (1973) if the task

of socialization is to be accomplished there is a need for a link between the first and second major child-rearing agencies within our society. Since young children are dependent upon their immediate environment the influence of the home and parents is of vital importance. Easton and Winters (1983) also stress the importance of working with the systems that surround each child emphasizing the initial role of the family. Reilly and Hofmeyer (1983) propose the view that the need for pre-primary education is based on the idea that the family situation can be extended to include the pre-primary school teachers as co-educator/contributor towards the child's development. Pre-primary education is merely an extension of the home situation. They state further that the degree to which parents become interested participants in decision making and activity aimed at promoting their children's development, is an important determinant of the effectiveness of any educational programme.

In terms of time the school provides only a fraction of the totality of the education experience of the child. Schooling starts at five to six years after the educational experience of the home, neighbourhood and the community (Fullard, 1981).

Parental involvement is important in that it bridges the gap which may exist between the home and school. The pupil brings to school not only his intellectual ability but also his emotional and social circumstances. It is essential to recognize the importance of the parent-child relationship because the pupil brings with him to school the attitudes, responses and values developed at home (Meyerowitz, 1973). Knowledge of the child, in totality, helps the teacher to understand his/her degree of motivation, attitudes and aspirations

towards the educational process, as these factors may either enhance or hamper his ability to take advantage of educational opportunities.

Hess (1968) states that the mother's attitude towards education has consequences for the emergence of motivation to succeed. He states further that maternal behaviour is as useful or better than I.Q or social class in predicting the child's cognitive behaviour.

Another important reason for parental involvement is to secure data for decision making that is not available in school (Weinberg, 1971). For example, the child's behaviour at school may not correlate with his behaviour at home and without contact with parents the teacher may not recognize this fact. Parents can provide the school with feedback regarding the educational problems of their children. According to Weinberg (1971 : 63) if teachers are receptive to such feedback a useful communication network between the home and the school can be developed. Parental involvement should be a two way process with benefits to both school and home. Parents should gain understanding of their child's experience at school and should be able to understand and relate positively to the child and his problems at school.

Parental involvement is essential if skills developed either in the home or school are to reinforce each other. Home and school programmes must be linked and the values of these institutions must be congruent with each other. Musgrave (1973) is of the opinion that a cooperative relationship between home and school makes children feel more secure at school as they then realize that all is right between their two worlds. Karnes as quoted by Apter (1982) reports on a research project which showed that parental involvement in the child's education was

associated positively with the child's progress. In a research project at Illinois, mothers were trained by social workers to be more effective teachers with their own pre-school children. Post-treatment measures showed gains of 7.46 points in I.Q. over a 12 week period, as well as gains in visual decoding, auditory and verbal associations.

There are also indirect advantages of home-school relations. Butler (1974) states that parents who are more involved in pupil-personnel programmes are more satisfied and co-operative with the school than parents who are not. They show greater confidence in the teachers and are more appreciative of the school and its programme. When parents are involved in decision-making in the school they are also more likely to support and adhere to the decision taken. Braustein as quoted by Handel (1970) found that when mothers were involved with their children and their schooling this led to the promotion of opportunities for self fulfilment. This could affect the whole family as the affectional relationships in the home could be improved.

Thus the quoted studies have served to show that the effectiveness of school teaching is to a large extent dependent upon co-operative relationships within the home and between home, school and the community. Weinberg (1971) sounds a warning note however, that other factors such as the child's intelligence, lack of family resources and community factors could hamper the child's progress at school and the possibility of co-operative relationships between school and home.

2.4 Basic assumption underlying parent-education programmes : Environment vs Intelligence Controversy

It is now generally accepted that both inborn intelligence and environmental factors are important for the child's development. Fraser as quoted by Johnson and Ransom (1983 : 19) is of the opinion that the child's environment is likely to play as great a part in affecting educability as is inborn intelligence. Peaker and Coleman as quoted by Raven (1980) hold a similar view and state that two-thirds of the variance in school performance among pupils of the same age could be attributed to home background.

The promotion of parent-involvement programmes are targeted towards helping the parent to provide a stimulating environment for the child in order to enhance development. Fullard (1981) is of the opinion that the rate and pattern of development may be adversely influenced by lack of stimulation and the lack of opportunity for learning. She therefore suggests that parent-education programmes should include knowledge of all aspects of parental care and up-bringing of children and should generally facilitate family living. Parent education programmes are essential in that parents may be clear about what they want for their child but may be lacking in knowledge of the most desirable techniques for attaining these goals.

2.5 Examples of home-school programmes that could be used to promote parental involvement in the pre-school education

Coventry Education Board, in England, in a pamphlet has proposed a number of programmes to enhance home-school relations. Listed below are some of the ideas which, in the opinion of the researcher, could be utilized by pre-schools in South Africa:

A Parents' Room

A room is provided by the school which could be used as a waiting room for parents. A full programme of activities are arranged, for example, courses on effective parenting are offered. Teachers can have access to the room and in this way regular contact between the staff and parents is maintained.

B Home Visiting

Visits are made to the homes of pupils by the class teacher or social worker. These home visits can have many purposes:

- Getting to know the parents
- To discuss possible problems that the child might have
- Visits of an educational nature where organised programmes of work to do with the child is discussed with the parents

C Bookshops

Books for children are sold by the school. Parents are responsible for the running of the shop and ordering books. Recommended books are displayed and discussed with parents.

D Toy libraries

Toys are made available for the parents to borrow. Parents are responsible for the running of the library which could include the buying or making of games and toys. Teachers are made available to discuss the value of play and toys with parents.

E Concerts and plays

Parents are involved in the preparation, publicity and performance of the concert. Parents can also be involved as audience.

F Display of Children's work

General school work is displayed around the neighbourhood, for example, in shops and factories. The aim of this project is to raise interest in the school.

G Open evenings

Parents are invited to school to look around and to discuss their child's progress with the teacher. These evenings can be "do-it-yourself" where parents experience activities which their children learn during the day.

H Parents helping teacher

The curriculum of the school is planned to incorporate the strengths of parents and to involve them in the work of the school. Examples of such involvement could be when the skills of parents are used for the teaching of arts or crafts, or when parents are used to provide personal attention to children.

I School newsletter

Parents, in collaboration with the teacher, are involved in the writing, editing, manufacturing and distributing of a school newsletter. Parents can contribute articles. The newsletter should include articles of community interest and reflect the varied life of the school and its community.

J Ready for school groups

A series of sessions are held with parents of children due to start school. These sessions are aimed at preparing parents on how to make

starting school easier and activities are suggested for parents to do at home with their children.

K Social evenings

Social evenings are held to attract parents into the school. The aim of such events is to break down the barriers between parents and the school authorities. The choice of programme for these evenings should be particularly aimed at getting fathers into the school.

L Coffee mornings

Coffee mornings should be held regularly to give the parents a chance to talk informally to the school staff.

M Curriculum evenings

The aim of curriculum evenings is to inform parents of the school's approach to an aspect of the curriculum. At these meetings working groups may be set up to look at the subject in more depth. The views of the parents on these aspects are taken into account for future planning of the curriculum.

N Take home materials

School work is sent home by the teacher to be finished. The work is devised to be particularly appropriate to be done at home and to involve the family. Parents are given the opportunity to give feedback on how the child copes at home. The work can be amended in the light of parents' comments.

O Open days

School is opened one day per year in order to give the parents the opportunity of observing the teaching methods in action. Teachers are made available to talk to parents about school methods and the individual development of their child. Open day can be staggered on a class or year basis.

P Recreation and leisure groups

Recreation and leisure groups are held to enhance the parents' own development. Example of such groups are keep-fit classes, drama groups.

2.6 Family Typology Related to Social Distance from the School

2.6.1 Litwak and Meyer (1974) have developed an interesting classification system of family types indicating the expected social distance different types of families maintain between themselves and the school. The classification system is based on three variables : values, knowledge and resources. By values, the authors refer to the emphasis the family places on education. The authors believe that the knowledge the family has in terms of the educational processes, school bureaucracy, knowledge about the curriculum and knowledge about factors which indirectly affect education for example, health, or child care, will affect the type of relationship they maintain with the school. Resources refer to the socio-economic position of the family. The authors hypothesize that families who maintain closest contact with the school in terms of being involved in the school life of their child, are those that support the values of the school, have

requisite knowledge of the educational process and have resources for implementing their goals (refer to Table 1).

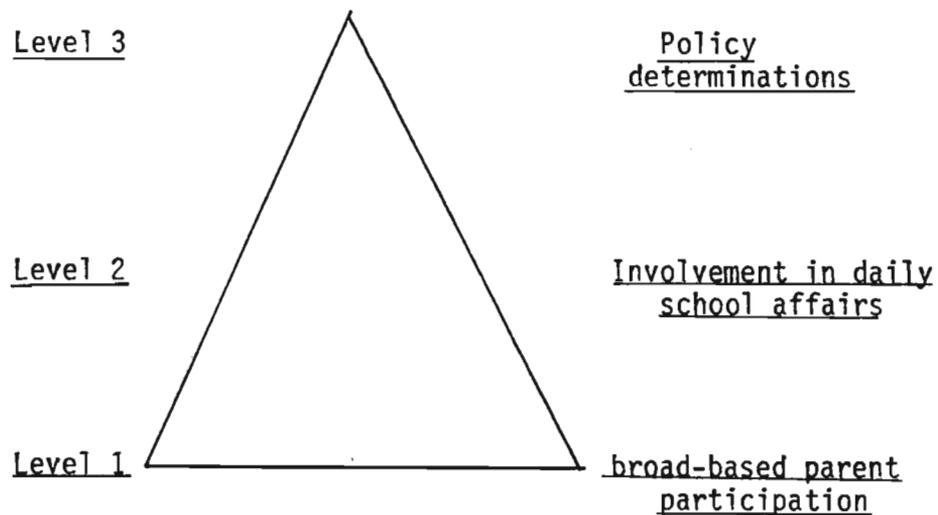
TABLE 1 : FAMILY TYPES

Description of family types	Support for educational values	Knowledge of educational processes	Resource-structure for implementing
1. Well-off, informed, acceptors. Educated, intact, well-off family with kin support, and positive toward school policy	high	high	high
2. Poor, informed, acceptors. Educated, broken and poor family without kin support and positive toward school policy	high	high	low
3. Well-off, uninformed, acceptors. Poorly educated, broken family, poor without kin support, and positive toward school policy	high	low	high
4. Poor, uninformed, acceptors. Poorly educated, broken family, poor without kin support, and positive toward school policy	high	low	low
5. Poor, uninformed, rejectors. Poorly educated, broken family, poor without kin support, and negative toward school policy	low	low	low
6. Poor, informed, rejectors. Educated, broken family, poor without kin support, and negative toward school policy	low	high	low
7. Well-off, uninformed, rejectors. Poorly educated family, intact, well-off with kin support, and negative toward school policy	low	low	high
8. Well-off, informed, rejectors. Educated, intact, well-off with kin support, and negative toward school policy	low	high	high

This classification is of value to the social worker as it could be used to determine appropriate ways to reach out to the different types of parents and guide in the choice of intervention techniques.

2.7 Easton and Winters (1984) propose that a distinction can be made among three levels of home-school collaboration, each of which requires a different degree of commitment and intensity of interaction. They conceptualize these three levels in terms of what they term "a pyramid of collaboration".

FIGURE 1 : PYRAMID OF COLLABORATION
(Easton and Winter, 1983)



At level 1, a large number of parents participate in the general activities of the school, for example, they are involved in fund-raising and attend social functions of the school.

At level 2, a smaller number of parents participate in activities concerning the daily affairs of the school.

Level 3 involves a few parents who are responsible for the determination of school policies. A high degree of commitment is required to function at this level.

The authors state further that all levels of parental involvement operate simultaneously and that level 1 and 2 provide a good foundation for progress to level 3. A process of natural selection occurs at level 3 in that only a few parents would be able to dedicate the time and energy necessary to participate at this level. However, the possibility of inclusion at all levels must be open to all parents wishing to participate.

2.8 Prevention

2.8.1 The promotion of parental involvement in the school life of the child has preventive components. Geismar (1969 :116) defines prevention in social work as:

"actions or interventions in a population which has not yet manifested signs of serious malfunctioning, but for which it is possible to make statistical predictions about the occurrence of problem functioning if intervention is not forthcoming".

Preventive services are services for the early identification, control and elimination of conditions that might impede social functioning (Terminology Committee for Social Work Bilingual Defining Social Work Dictionary as quoted by Rocher, 1985 : 11).

2.8.2 Models of Prevention

Several authors have described different modes of prevention. Apter (1982) has diagrammatically defined prevention in terms of three levels, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. He then analyses these three levels along three dimensions, namely, the target group to whom the preventive measures are aimed, the aim and the effects of the preventive strategy.

TABLE NO 2 APTER'S MODEL OF PREVENTION

	Target group	Aim	Effect
Primary Prevention	what is done for the population at large	eliminating causes of the problem	reducing incidence of new cases
Secondary Prevention	what is done for identified vulnerable groups	reducing seriousness of the problem	reducing the duration of the problem
Tertiary Prevention	what is done by way of treatment and rehabilitation	reducing residual effects	minimizing permanent disability

Albee also discusses a Model of Prevention as quoted by Mahenow and Mani (1982 : 29). Primary prevention is described using the formula:

$$\frac{\text{incidence of mental/physical disorders}}{\text{organic factors} \pm \text{stress}} = \text{competence} + \text{self esteem} + \text{coping}$$

Albee states that if the formula is balanced, that is, all the above factors are equal, there is more of a likelihood that the individual will be able to cope with stress in his life. Organic factors and stress in a person are to a large extent static variables. Competence, self esteem and coping are variables that can be manipulated. Therefore if these factors in

the demoninator can be increased the incidence of mental or physical disorders can be reduced. Albee states further that primary prevention programmes should aim at helping persons in achieving this balance by providing support, skills and information so that they can cope with daily living. Parent-education programmes are aimed to meet the above objectives.

2.8.3 Assumptions behind the notion of prevention

Sullivan, as quoted by Apter (1982 : 214)) outlines five major assumptions behind prevention. They are:

- A Social emotional disorders are preventable.
- B Early experiences influence later life adaptations.
- C The investment of time and resources with young children yields a better investment or pay-off ratio than with older children or adults.
- D Early detection and intervention lowers the probability of more serious problems developing later.
- E Unattended early problems lead to more serious problems later on.

The above assumptions of prevention suggests that the school child, particularly the pre-school child, would be an ideal target for preventive intervention.

2.8.4 Why schools as a target for prevention

According to Cowan (1982 : 59) the school is an ideal target for prevention because: -

- (a) Children spend a great portion of their time in school during their formative years.
- (b) Schools provide a convenient access to large numbers of children.
- (c) Education is both the natural vehicle and backbone for primary prevention programmes.

2.8.5 The pre-school child as a target for prevention

It is obvious that pre-school children are prime targets, because of their early age (5-6 years) at which this group may be involved. Reilley (1978: 39) outlines the assumptions of pre-school education as follows:

- A Early learning is vital as it is the foundation upon which future learning rests. Skills, attitudes, interests, values and personality strengths have their roots in these years.
- B Young children are active agents in their own development and learning.
- C The child and his environment interact to promote or constrain development.
- D The essential driving force of the will to learn has its roots in the quality of relationships available to the child from the beginning of life.

The assumptions of pre-school education suggests that pre-school education is more than a readiness programme for primary school but it is a

education for life. Therefore, in terms of prevention the pre-school child is an ideal target for intervention.

Ramphal (1978) in a study of Indian Primary schools in the Durban area, found that the mean incident rate for maladjustment among boys and girls was as high as 11,78%. He recommended that the first line of attack in terms of preventive intervention should be focussed on pre-school education.

By dealing with the pre-school child, preventive work is also undertaken on another level as it involves families in formation, namely young married couples. Starting school is a moment of transition for both the parent and the child. When the parent is taking the eldest child to school for the first time, he is taking on a new dimension of the parental role (Butler, 1974). Thus preventive intervention at pre-school level is all embracing and should be given priority.

2.9 Conclusion

An analysis of the relevant literature indicates that:

- 1 There are three models of home-school relations; namely, the close door position, the open door position and the balance theory.
- 2 Research evidence has shown that parental involvement has a positive effect on the pupils' progress at school.
- 3 Parental involvement is important in that :

- (a) It helps the teacher understand the child in totality, intellectually, emotionally, socially and psychologically.
 - (b) It ensures that the values of the home and school are congruent so that the child is not exposed to two conflicting worlds.
 - (c) It helps the home understand the child's experience at school and vice versa.
 - (d) Parents are more likely to support the school programme if they are involved in determining policy.
 - (e) It can lead to the acquisition of greater confidence in parents; therefore positively effecting the functioning of the whole family.
 - (f) There are positive gains in the child's I.Q. when parents are involved in the school.
- 4 The concept of parental involvement is based on the assumption that environmental factors are important for the child's development.
- 5 Parents can be involved in school activities at three levels namely participation at a broad level for example fund-raising, and/or involvement in the daily affairs of the school and/or determining policies.
- 6 The pre-school is an ideal target for preventive intervention.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS OF THE STUDY3.1 Introduction

This chapter mainly presents a comparative discussion of the low and high performers in relation to a number of variables including the parent-child relationship. Firstly, however, brief details of the original sample of 65 children will be presented.

3.2 The sample of Sixty-five

The sample comprised of 65 pupils; of these, 32 were boys and 33 were girls. There were 52 Hindus, 4 Muslims and 9 Christians. All families of these pupils were residents of the Reservoir Hills area. Thirty of the pupils were from the Durban Heights School, 23 from Resmount and 12 from Hillview. Their scores out of a possible total of 92, ranged between 8 and 28. The mean score rating was 68.

Of a total of 20 pupils there were 10 subjects in each of the high and low performer categories. The researcher will describe results as representing trends rather than significant differences between the two groups. Furthermore, results will not be described according to question sequence presented in the questionnaire, however, an attempt will be made to group the results of related questions.

3.3 A comparative description of the two performer groups

A. Age

The ages of pupils in the two groups are comparable since statutory legislation demand that pupils fall within the age range of five years and six months and six years and six months to qualify for admission to the pre-school.

B. Sex

There were 10 boys and 10 girls in each group.

C. Religion

The two groups were comparable with regard to religious affiliation, the families in both groups were predominantly Hindu (70%) with Christian (20%) and Muslims (10%) making up the remainder.

D. Age of parents

The median age of fathers of the high performing group were much higher than the low performing group (37,5 years vs 33,5 years). 80% in the former group were in the age range 33 to 41 years and 80% in the latter category were between 27 and 36 years.

Mothers of high performers were generally much older (median = 31, years); 70% of these mothers fell in the age range between 28 and 37. The low performers on the other hand, tended to have younger mothers (median 27,5 years), 100% of them were in the age range 23-32 years.

The difference in age of parents could have contributed to the different quality of relationship between parent and child in the two groups. While it is possible that younger parents relate better to their child's level

of maturity than older parents, it was observed in the present study that these younger parents could not adequately take on the responsibility of parenthood and tended to over-identify with their children. An example to illustrate this point was two of the three parents who experienced problems with the school did not consider how their child contributed to the problem and blamed the teacher completely without making any effort to be objective.

The researcher suggests that there is more of a likelihood that the family is financially stable if parents are older. The mother would also have had a chance to pursue a career and be more self-fulfilled. It is also likely that older parents are more emotionally and psychologically mature than their younger counterparts.

The age of the parents can also be related to marital stability. Thus it is interesting to note that four of the 10 families of low performers were experiencing marital problems. There is great consensus among sociologists that one of the most reliable predictors of marital stability and success is the age of the partners at the time of marriage. In a study done by Knox (1979) as quoted by Stahmann and Hiebert (1980) the results that emerged were that women who married at the age of 25 and men who married at the age of 28, reported greater marital stability than those who married earlier. He concluded that the older the person, the more prepared they are for marriage as they had clarified their values and life goals and were able to work out good relationships with parents and future in-laws. In addition, the older the person is, the more likelihood there is for preparation for the role of parents, thus enhancing the copability of the couple. However, the conclusion one comes to from these studies must be looked at with caution, as for the Indian population group,

cultural expectation is for girls to get married relatively young. The older the female the lower are her chances of finding a suitable partner and there is a loss of the older unmarried girls' self esteem.

E. Education of Parents

Table 3 compares the educational achievement of fathers between the two groups.

TABLE 3

A comparison between the two groups of the educational achievement of fathers

Group	<u>% of fathers who achieved :</u>						
	<u>Class 1 to Std 5</u>	<u>Std 6-7</u>	<u>Std 8-9</u>	<u>Matric</u>	<u>Post-school minus matric</u>	<u>Post-matric</u>	<u>Total</u>
H.A.	0	10	40	10	10	30	100
L.A.	20	10	50	10	10	0	100

In the high performer group, three fathers had post-matric education these fathers were all professionals, while none of the fathers in the lower category had post-matric education. Most of the fathers had passed standard 8 or 9, however, further analysis of the data with regard to occupation revealed that in the higher performer category with this level of educational achievement, three of the fathers were managers and one clerk. In the lower performer group, three were clerks, one a gardenir

supervisor and one a truck driver. The one subject with standard 6-7 education in the high performer group held a managerial post. This is an interesting finding as it could reflect a higher degree of motivation for achievement in the higher performer group despite practical obstacles such as a low standard of education.

Table 4 compares the educational achievement of mothers between the two groups.

TABLE 4

A comparison between the two groups of the educational achievement of mothers

% of mothers who attended:									
Group	Class 1 to Std 5	Std 6-7	Std 8-9	Matric	Post-school minus matric	Matric	Post-Matric	Total n=20	Median
H.A.	0	10	40	0	0	20	30	100	9
L.A.	50	10	30	0	10	0	0	100	5

According to Bayley, Kagen and Moss (1957) as quoted by Lynn (1974), the education of the mother is apparently a better predictor than the education of the father of a child's scholastic aptitude up to the age of 10 years, as the child has more contact with the mother. Figures in Table 4 reflect that the median education level of mothers from the low performer category was standard 5 whereas that for the high performer was standard 9; more significantly, in the latter group, 50% of the mother had either matric or post-matric education.

Possible reasons for the difference in performance between the two pupil groups could be that the mother with lower education would be less capable of assisting her children with their school work. She would, in addition, be less aware of child-rearing theories and thus be unable to provide a stimulating environment for the child.

It was observed in the present study that mothers who had a low level of education had very poor verbal ability. In addition, they lacked confidence in their own ability. One of the mothers who had been educated to standard two, asked the researcher if her sister could be the respondent to the questionnaire, as she would not understand the questions. These mothers with a low level of education provided less suggestions, if any at all, on how parent-teacher contact could be improved. Another mother who attained a low standard of education did not know the birthday of her child and had to consult the birth certificate for this information.

F. Father's Occupation

The majority (60%) of high performer pupils had fathers who were either professional or held managerial posts. On the other hand, children whose fathers were "lower" on the occupational scale, were lower performers. These results are consistent with those of Golden and Burns as quoted by Hetherington & Parke (1975) who found that the father's occupation was related to the level of achievement of the child. Children of professional fathers had an I.Q. of 116, whereas children whose fathers were labourers had an I.Q. of 94 (Golden and Burns as quoted by Hetherington & Parke 1975).

The researcher suggests the difference in the father's occupation status could affect the family-father-child relationship. It is possible that fathers who are higher in occupational status would have a higher self-esteem and are thus able to share a more positive relationship with members of the family. Further, these parents are generally more financially secure and would have more time to devote to family life rather than spend their energy on financial worries. Additionally, the motivation for achievement may be higher in families higher on the occupational scale, as already discussed in regard to fathers' educational levels.

However, one must be cautious in making such generalizations as the value and motivations of the home is generally more important than the social class of the family in itself.

G. The effect of family structure on performer rating scale

The highest proportion of high performers were from household which had 2-3 children (median = 2,5); whereas the majority of low performers were from families which had fewer (1-2) children (median = 2). Most of the low performers were first born and only children. The majority of high performers were second or fourth children.

The researcher suggests that the difference in the size of the families in the two groups could be related to the fact that parents in the low performer group were in a younger age group, who had not yet completed their families.

Another possible explanation could be that first born children are at a disadvantage since parents are learning through trial and error their parenting skills. Parents are also more consistent and relaxed in disciplinary functions with subsequent children, perhaps as a result of self confidence gained from practice in child-rearing. Another disadvantage of being the oldest child is that the parents are the only models for social learning whereas subsequent children have both parental and sibling models. The present study did bring out the importance of siblings in that discussion of school work with siblings occurred with equal frequency in both groups, where applicable, except that more of the lower performers had the handicap of being only children.

It is possible that at times siblings make better teachers than either parents or non-siblings, as siblings have an intimate understanding of each other and can be very frank in their comments. On the other hand, it is possible that having a large number of brothers and sisters may have negative effects on intellectual development, as when the size of the family increases, the overall level of intellectual maturity of a family is lowered because of the greater number of immature minds. Thus late born children in large families may develop in an environment which is intellectually less sophisticated and stimulating. However, the size of the families in the present study was not so large as to have detrimental effect on the children.

H. Working mothers

A higher proportion (50%) of mothers in the higher performer category were in full time employment whereas in the low performer group a higher proportion (90%) were housewives. The mothers who worked in this stud

were more confident in verbalizing their ideas and opinions more frankly and showed more self confidence.

Possible explanations for these observations are discussed below:

- (i) Families with working mothers may be more financially secure thus able to give their children a better quality of life.

- (ii) It is possible that work has a self-fulfilling experience for the mother which led to a more positive relationship with her family. Yarrow, Leew et al as quoted by Nye, Hoffman (1963), in a study in the Greater Washington area, found that non-working mothers who were dissatisfied with not working showed the greatest problems in child rearing. These dissatisfied mothers described more difficulties in the area of control, less emotional satisfaction in relationships with their children and less confidence in their practising as mothers.

- (iii) According to Brofenbrenner as quoted by Handel (1970 : 96) child-rearing practices are likely to change more quickly in those segments of society which have closest access and are most receptive to agencies or agents of change. The working mother is thus more exposed to information on child-rearing skills, for example, because of contact and discussion with other parents in the work situation. More mothers of the high performers bought magazines such as "You Family" and "Living and Loving" than mothers of the low performer

indicating their interest in obtaining information about child-rearing and family relationships.

In general, one can conclude that the quality of the relationship between mother and child was more important than the amount of time spent with the child in this study.

I. Influence of extended family

A comparison of the residence of the extended family in relation to the nuclear families of the two performer groups is presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5

A comparison between the two performer groups of the residence of the extended families in relation to the nuclear families

% of extended families living in :						
Group	same household	outbuilding	main	separate	n/a	Total
H.A.	20	0	10	70	0	100
L.A.	20	10	10	60	0	100

It can be noted from Table 5 that the majority of families lived as nuclear units. This finding is consistent with the results of a study done by Laudau, Griffiths, Mason (1982), who found that the Indian population in South Africa is in transition from extended to nuclear families.

Meer (1969) states that although Indian families are becoming nuclear there is no weakening of "kutum bonds" which often transcend physical alienation. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in the higher performer group 80% of mothers perceived the extended family as having a significant influence in their lives as opposed to only 50% of the lower performers group. The families of the high performers maintained more frequent contact with the extended family than the families of the low performers.

A factor that may be conducive to the higher performance of pupils in this regard could be that children feel more secure when the family has support groups. Another possibility is that the child, by associating with extended family members, may be more exposed to role models over a range of different ages, therefore learning aspects such as sharing, cooperating etc.

Caplan (1976 : 22) shares the view that the grandparent-child interaction provides a situation where the giving and acceptance of information may often be easier because the usual tensions produced by the reality-based obligations of the parent-child relationship are absent or reduced. This can be an additional factor which could account for the difference between the high performers and low performers.

However, the dependence on the extended family by the higher performer groups may be because more mothers were working which necessitated the use of the extended family members to care for the children; 30% of the working mothers in the high performer group left their children in the care of relatives. Unco (1979) as quoted by Nye and Hoffman (1963) in research study, found that care at home with relatives is nearl

universally reported to be the most satisfactory form of child care. Children thrive best when parents are satisfied with their working lives and child care arrangements and when the caretaker is responsible and stable.

J. Ability of child to mix freely in the neighbourhood

All children in the high performer group could mix freely with other children and adults in the neighbourhood. This occurred with slightly less frequency in the low performer group (70%). However, two of the three children in the low performer group who could not mix freely were severely maladjusted in that they could not attend pre-school in the absence of their mother. The researcher observed that these mothers were dominated by their children and followed their orders. In addition, these mothers found excuses for their child's behaviour in their presence. For example, one mother stated that her child was involved in an accident when he was two years old and as a result, was frightened and always wanted his mother in sight. Another mother stated that her sister-in-law had resorted to witchcraft and cast a spell on her family, and as a result, her child had become over-dependent on her. None of these mothers were prepared to seek professional help to solve the problem.

The researcher is of the opinion that maternal over-protection could be a factor contributing to the child's inability to socialize. This could be substantiated by the fact that 80% of parents in the low performer group never went out together as a couple as opposed to 50% of the parents in the high performer group. This finding is consistent with a classic research study done by Levy (1943) who found that in his sample of overprotected children, three-quarters of the husband and wives shared no social life.

K. Degree of freedom given to the child to organise his/her activities.

The degree of autonomy and independence that children are given is important. Parents are required to perform two opposing tasks; to protect children who are dependent on them and simultaneously, teach them to be independent, free of their control and competent to function independently (Gould, 1979 : 1).

In the present study, there was no difference between the two groups of parents with regard to organising activities; 80% of parents in both groups organised activities for their children.

Fullard (1984) in a study found children with low social competence were in a family situation in which there was little opportunity for them to use their initiative and actualize their own unique potential. These children received instructions which were carried out without being given adequate openings to make plans on their own. Therefore, in the present study, one would expect that children in the higher performer group would be allowed more freedom to organise their own activities. The apparent paradoxical results observed in this study may be culturally related. Meer (1969) is of the opinion that children in Indian families are expected to obey their elders and that their behaviour should not flaunt or contradict the views of their elders. This could be a possible explanation for the discrepancy in the present results with other studies.

L. Demonstration of affection

- (i) More intimate demonstrations of affection in the form of touch occurred with greater frequency in the high performer group, and,
- (ii) demonstrations of affection were more in the form of material presents in the low performer category.

The researcher suggests that these results may reflect a poor understanding of child-rearing practices by the parents of the low performers as has been discussed earlier.

M. Modes of discipline

All parents use a variety of ways of disciplining their children, however, many parents rely more heavily on one type of discipline than on another. With reference to methods of discipline in the present study, it may be noted that corporal punishment occurred with a higher frequency (70%) in the case of the lower performers. Corporal punishment was not used to discipline children who were high performers. In the presence of the researcher one of the mothers of the low performers told her child, "to get out of the kitchen or I shall kill you". Gentler forms of punishment, for example scolding and significantly the withdrawal of privileges were used in the high performer group.

The researcher suggests that the possible differences between the two groups could be because parents of high performers by reasoning and explaining to the child why the behaviour is wrong, permit the child to be self-directing and by providing information about alternative socially desirable responses, make it easier for the child to internalize social rules and learn the desired behaviour. Whereas physical punishment could leave the child more confused and insecure as he/she may be unable to

discriminate between appropriate behaviour and unable to find appropriate alternative actions.

N. Previous experience of nursery school

None of the low performers had previously attended nursery school whereas 30% of high performers had been to nursery school; it is possible that these children scored higher on the P.B.R.S. as this rates the pupils on measures aspects of behaviour learnt at nursery school, for example, co-operation, motor skills, etc. However, since the majority of the high performers did not have prior nursery school experience, it may be argued that nursery school attendance did not contribute to the higher performance of the children to any great extent.

Cheyne and Clarke (1979) quote Friedman who state that although there is some suggestion of overall differences between children who attend nursery school and those who do not, it is clear that these differences are very small. Further, he states that those nursery school effects which are statistically significant account for only one to one and a half per cent of variance.

Further analyses of the data showed that the children who had previously been to nursery school had mothers who were in full-time employment. Thus the nursery school might have been a convenient place for these mothers to send their children while they were at work. Therefore the researcher is of the opinion that the difference between the type of parents who chose to send their children to nursery school and those who did not would be of more value for the purposes of the study rather than whether or not the child has been to nursery school previously.

0. Provision of a stimulating environment for the child.

It is necessary for parents to provide the child with a stimulating environment, consisting of varied life experiences as learning occurs through doing. It may be noted that there was a greater variety of family outings in the higher performer group; these taking the form of picnics, visits to places of interest, etc. In the low performer groups, family outings were usually more ritualistic taking the form of attendance to religious ceremonies, which might stifle the child in terms of creative thought. However, the families of the low performers experienced more financial difficulties and had less access to a car which might have contributed to the differences in the type of experiences the two types of families provided for their children.

Significantly, all the families in the high performer group discussed the events after it occurred, whereas in only 70% of families of the low performers did this practice occur. This is an important aspect as Hess and Shipman (1968) quote Deutsch who states that simple exposure to new experiences (such as trips to zoos) is not enough to produce the desired cognitive growth. They state that it is necessary to structure and interpret experiences to children in a way that is appropriate to their developmental level, if cognitive assimilation and growth are to be achieved.

Talking to the child is also important for cognitive growth as:

- (i) It helps develop the child's use of language and verbal intelligence.
- (ii) Provides information and knowledge to the child.

(iii) The way in which parents use talk, will help determine how the child sees the value of spoken language which could have educational implications.

Thus, discussion of events between parents and children are important and this may have contributed to the difference in results between the two groups.

P. Reading to the child

Lomax (1978) is of the opinion that lack of experience with books and stories is frequently cited as an important factor in educational deprivation. He further states, experience of stories helps children develop a positive attitude towards books which becomes an important source of new vocabulary.

It may be noted that reading to the child occurred with greater frequency in the high performer group. The researcher is of the opinion that this could be a possible reason for the differences in performance between the two groups. This could be substantiated by the fact that Farmer as quoted by Lomax (1978) states that reading to a child increases the child's vocabulary ability. During the preliminary stage of this study, the vocabulary ability in the high and low achiever groups were rated (see appendix A); the results are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

A comparison of the vocabulary ability between the pupils of the two groups

Group	Total vocabulary score
H.A.	31
L.A.	17

From the Table 6, it is readily apparent that the vocabulary ability of the high performers was twice that of the low performers.

Q. Assistance with homework

All parents in both categories discussed homework with their children. However, the results are interesting - the following may be noted.

- i There was greater emphasis for joint sharing of responsibility between parents for the assistance with homework in the high performer group.
- ii In the low performer group, greater responsibility in this regard was assumed by the father. This may reflect either the mother being incompetent to assist her child with homework due to her lower scholastic level (Table 4) or the dominant role played by the father in these families. Four of the mothers of the low performers had to consult their husbands before they committed themselves to answering the questionnaire.

R. Family togetherness

In the high performer group the emphasis is centred away from the mother (either joint family or even outside the family) whereas in the lower performer group, the life of the child seems to revolve around the mother.

According to Ferri and Birchdale (1981) there is a need for a sharing of commitment by mothers and fathers in child rearing if the child is to develop his full potential. This could therefore be a reason for the differences in the performance between the two groups.

However, the results are interesting in that the mothers in the low performer group were the child's confidante although in that particular group, more fathers dealt with aspects such as homework. The researcher is of the opinion that the results could probably reflect the authoritarian role of the father or over-protection by the mother, as already discussed.

Meal-time is an important time for family togetherness and family discussions. In some families, discussions took place regularly at meal-times and had almost a ceremonial aspect, that is each one gave detailed reports on behaviour at school, work and social situations. This enabled other members of the family to evaluate not only their own reported behaviour in the light of the family value system, but also the meaning of reactions of the people with whom he/she is involved, therefore using the family as a feedback guidance system.

80% of the families of the high performers eat meals together regularly
One of the families of the high performers did not eat together regularly

because of practical reasons; the father worked night shift. 80% of the families of the low performers eat meals together.

However, interestingly, 90% of the high performer families were satisfied with the level of family interaction and all the families of the low performers were satisfied. The researcher is of the opinion that these results could once again be culturally related and should therefore be analysed with caution. For example, it is traditional in Indian homes that men, women and children eat separately and this could be a reason why the families of low performers are satisfied with their level of family interaction. It was also observed that four of the mothers of the low performers were wearing saris, when the researcher visited the home, whereas all mothers of the high performers were wearing dresses. Therefore, one cannot conclude that for example the eating of meals together, or the mother being the confidante of the child, directly accounts for the differences in performance between the two groups.

S. Problems experienced by the family

Table 7 provides a comparison between the two groups of the problems experienced by the family as identified by the mothers. The percentages tabulated have not been totalled for each group as mothers frequently listed more than one problem. The purpose of the table is only to get an overview of the types of problems facing the family.

TABLE 7

A comparison of the types of problems identified by the mothers between the two groups.

Problem list	H.A. Group	L.A. Group
Financial	4	7
Marital	1	4
Death	1	1
School	0	4
Family	0	2
Illness	1	1
TOTAL	7	18

It is apparent from Table 7 that families of low performers experienced more problems than families of high performers. Financial and marital problems, although experienced by both groups of families, occurred with greater frequency in the low performer group. Only one family of the low performers owned their own home. It was observed that one of the families of the low performers lived in a garage, and shared a communal toilet with two other families. Significantly, families of the low performers experienced problems with school which did not occur in the high performer group. The strained relationship with the school could account for the lower performance of the children in this group, as for the child to benefit fully from the school experience there is a need for a positive relationship between the home and school. The performance of the child

could also be affected in this regard as anxieties of the families would be transferred into the child. Fifty per cent of the parents of the low performers discussed family problems in the presence of children as opposed to 10% of the parents of high performer group.

T. Involvement with school

There was no difference in results between the two groups with regard to the parents' understanding of the reasons for enrolment of the child at pre-school. All parents sent their children to pre-school for them to learn something and the majority of them felt that the main responsibility of the pre-school should be to prepare the child for primary school

A larger proportion of parents from the lower performer group met with the class teacher on four or more occasions. One possible reason for the greater frequency of meeting could be because all of these mothers are housewives and had more time at their disposal to visit the school. However, significantly all contact between parents and teachers for the high performers were parent initiated, whereas 30% of contact for the low performers were initiated by the teacher. However, one must remember that all parents who do not come to school are not necessarily apathetic about their childrens' education and development. Many home-based forms of parental support and interest are invisible to teachers for example supervision of homework.

All mothers in both groups felt that parental involvement in school activities was important. However, only 50% of the parents in the low performer group were prepared to actively assist. All parents in high performer group were prepared to participate in any programme organised

Possible explanations for this could be because parents of low performers do not see themselves capable of assisting because of their poor self concept.

Both groups of parents were of the view that priority should be given to the establishment of a parent-teacher association. Once again the majority of both groups of parents ranked the most important task of parent-teacher association as being involved in the everyday activities of the school and that fund raising was to be the second most important task. Interestingly, however, the majority of parents in both groups ranked "other tasks" as being of third importance although unable to specify what should be included in this category. Only one parent of the high performer group felt that parents should be involved at policy level.

Easton and Winters (1983) are of the opinion that more parents are prepared to participate at level 1, that is in fund-raising in the school, and level 2, in everyday activities of the school. They state that fewer parents are prepared to participate at policy level. The results of this study follow this trend.

The researcher suggests that parental involvement in Indian schools is a novel idea and parents have a stereotypic idea of the role of the parents on such committees. This may reflect a need for parents to be educated on their rights in connection with determination of school policy.

It is interesting to note that all parents in both categories were satisfied with the present level of parental involvement. However, useful suggestions with regard to how parent-teacher contact could be improved were stated as follows:

- (i) All parents in both groups felt there was a need for a parent-teacher association to be established.
- (ii) The school should have regular meetings with parents where discussions could take place regarding the child's progress. These meetings should be held in the evenings when working parents can attend.
- (iii) More frequent contact should be maintained through the use of phone calls.
- (iv) Progress cards should be sent to parents after each quarterly term, so that the parent can monitor the child's progress, especially if the parents are working and are unable to come to school.
- (v) Most parents felt that activities of a social nature should be held over weekends, when both parent and children could participate.

3.4 Summary of the main similarities and differences between the two performer groups.

A. Age

Age of pupils in the two performer groups was comparable.

B. Sex

The two groups were comparable with regard to sex of the pupils.

C. Religion

Religious affiliation of the families in the two study groups was comparable.

D. Age of parents

A greater number of pupils in the lower performer group tended to have parents who were younger than the parents of pupils in the higher performer group.

E. Education of Parents

The majority of pupils in the higher performer group tended to have parents who had achieved a higher educational level than the parents of the low achievers.

F. Occupation of father

A larger number of fathers of the high performers held professional and middle-range status occupations. Most of the fathers of the low performers held clerical or manual jobs.

G. Family structure

The families of both groups of pupils were small-sized. However, the families of the high performer group tended to be slightly larger than those of the low performers. Most of the high performers were second to

fourth children whereas a larger number of lower performers were first born and only children.

H. Working mothers

None of the mothers of the low performers were working. A larger number of mothers of the high performers were in full-time employment.

I. Influence of the extended family

The majority of families in both groups lived in nuclear families. However, more mothers of the high performers recognised the extended family as having a significant role in their lives and met with the extended family more frequently than the families of the low performers.

J. Ability to mix freely in the neighbourhood

All the pupils in the high performer group could mix freely in the neighbourhood. Few of the low performing pupils could mix freely and were severely maladjusted.

K. Degree of freedom given to the child

There was no difference with regard to the degree of freedom given to the child between the two groups.

L. Demonstration of affections

The majority of the parents of the high performers used intimate demonstrations of affections, for example touch, whereas more use was made of buying of material presents to demonstrate affections by families of the low performers.

M. Modes of discipline

Parents of the low performers used corporal punishment most frequently to discipline their children. This method of punishment was not utilized by any parents of high performer group. Instead, withdrawal of privileges and scolding were used with greater frequency.

N. Previous experience of nursery school

None of the low performers had previously attended a nursery school. A greater percentage of high performers had prior experience of nursery school.

O. Provision of a stimulating environment

Family outings, discussion of events, and reading to the child occurred with greater frequency in the high performer group than the low performer group. Both groups of parents rendered assistance with regard to homework to the child. However, significantly this was a joint task, by mother and father in the high performer group. More fathers assisted the child in the low performer group.

P. Family togetherness

With regard to family togetherness, most of the low performers confided in their mothers. In high performer group the confidante of the child was

more varied and included the father, teacher or extended family members. The majority of families of the high performers eat meals together regularly. This practice occurred less frequently in the homes of the low performers.

Q. Problems experienced by the family

Both categories of families experienced problems, however, the families of the low performers generally experienced more problems. Financial, marital, death and family problems occurred in both groups. Significantly, problems related to the school were only experienced by the families of the low performers.

R. Involvement in the school

The parents of the low performers maintained slightly more contact with the school than the parents of the high performers. Significantly however, all the contact made by the parents of high performer group were parent initiated whereas some of the contact in the other category was teacher initiated.

All parents in both groups were of the opinion that parental involvement in the school was important. Fewer of the parents of the lower performer were prepared to commit themselves to actively participate than the parents of the high performers. Parents of both groups made useful suggestions on how parent-teacher contact could be improved.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION USED TO PROMOTE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS.

This chapter contains:

- 1 An overview of the role of the school social worker
- 2 A description of the social work intervention used to promote parental involvement in the schools

In this chapter, the researcher is referred to as the social worker or as group worker where appropriate.

4.1 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

Prior to describing the social work intervention implemented by the social worker it is necessary to describe the role of the school social worker.

The use of social work in the school system has developed through the recognition of two facts (N.A.S.W., 1961):

- 1 Problems presented by the child may be specifically related to the school situation but may be caused or affected by social or psychological circumstances which call for the particular knowledge and skills of the social worker.
- 2 Problems hamper the child in making full use of the instructional programme offered by the school.

4.1.1 Definition

Meyerowitz (1973) quotes Johnson who notes that the purpose of school social work as in social work, is to restore impaired social functioning; to provide resources by mobilizing capacities in the individual and in the community and to prevent social dysfunction.

Costin as quoted by Rocher (1985 : 11) defines school social work as "...an application of social work principles and methods to the major purpose of the school".

4.1.2 The major purpose of the school is, of course, education. This

purpose may be undertaken from pre-school level. The specific goals of pre-school education, as described by Butler (1974) are:

- A To assist the social development of the child, that is the capacity to enjoy relationships and to get along with others.
- B The physical development of the child.
- C Promotion of the emotional aspects of the child, which includes growth in confidence and understanding of the self as a person and growth in ability to express thoughts and feelings and to manage impulses.
- D The intellectual or cognitive development of the child which includes the growth of language competency.

4.1.3 The school social worker at pre-school has the dual task of achieving the above objectives as well as the objectives of social work. Rocher (1977) outlines the objectives of school social work as follows:

- 1 To assist the school child gain maximum advantage from the school experience in preparation for his future role in society as an adult.
- 2 To cater for the pupil's individual needs in respect of intellectual, social and emotional growth.

- 3 To present a preventive service to society having the school as the focal point.

4.1.4 Tasks of the social worker

The National Association of Social Workers (N.A.S.W.) of New York (1983) outlines the role of the school social worker in terms of three relationships.

A Services to pupils and parents

The social worker may :

- Assist the family to understand the child's educational needs and resources within the school.
- Provide information to facilitate the families' use of community resources for meeting housing, clothing, institutional and health needs that are basic.
- Help parents overcome barriers to school attendance and achievement and to promote responsible behaviour.
- Counsel pupils and parents individually and in groups on topics such as problem-solving skills, parenting, family issues on other problems that affect learning.
- Intervene early in problem situations to prevent the development of more serious difficulties.

Costin (1972), states that the social worker should go a step further and educate parents on their rights in relation to the school and act as a catalyst to bring about change.

Rocher (1977) in addition to the above tasks of the school social worker, includes after-care as an integral part of the work with parents and pupils. He also places great emphasis on home-visiting.

B Team work with school personnel

NASW (1983) state that in relation to teamwork with school personnel the social workers may:

- Collaborate with teachers to modify classroom approaches to meet the special needs of pupils.
- Consult with teachers and pupil service personnel about the student's life, home and neighbourhood circumstances.
- Participate in staff conferences related to pupil's behavioural adjustment and academic progress.
- Contribute to staff development on subjects such as parent interviewing, material and linguistic differences in families or any other relevant topics.
- Conduct research and prepare reports.

According to Meyerowitz (1973) working together in a multi-disciplinary team increases the chance that appropriate solutions and courses of action maybe found. Although NASW (1983) does not describe the role of the social worker as including being part of the school team to formulate school policy, both Costin (1972) and Rocher (1977) see this as the task of the social worker.

Sieffert (1976) and Marks (1976) state that parents should be an integral part of the team for the following reasons:

- 1 To reinforce the child's identification with his nuclear family. In the view of the researcher in a South African Indian family, involvement of the extended family members should also be considered.
- 2 To allow parents to exercise their natural rights and obligations concerning their child.
- 3 To make better use of parents' unique knowledge and experience with the child.
- 4 To engage parents in a chosen, more mutually supportive working relationship with the school personnel.

Rocher (1977) states that the child should also be involved in team work.

C School-community relations

Rocher (1977) is of the opinion that the school is a social institution and as such reflects the norms and values of a community. Social conditions impinge on the school and certain community influences may disturb the efficient functioning of the school. The school, has to be aware of the aspirations of the community.

NASW (1983) state that the social worker may:

- Provide information and referral services to appropriate community resources.
- Help the community develop resources to serve the needs of troubled students.
- Make community services more accessible to pupils and families.
- Represent the school system on board and committees of organizations serving school-age children.
- Maintain open communication between school and community agencies to facilitate common objectives.

Hancock (1974) states that school community programmes should consider economic and social reforms as part of their legitimate educational goals as this often has implications for teaching.

Rocher (1977) notes that supervision and education are additional tasks of the school social worker. The school social worker has to interpret tasks of the profession of social work to school personnel, other professionals

of the Department of Education, the school pupils, their parents and the community.

In conclusion, the tasks of the social worker are flexible and have preventive as well as restorative functions. In the present study, the school social worker, in her intervention plan, attempted to put into practice some of the above mentioned tasks when appropriate.

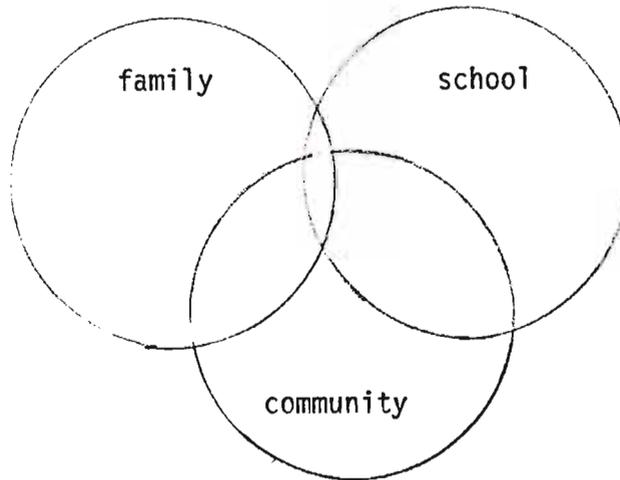
4.2 A DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION USED TO PROMOTE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS

4.2.1 Possible targets for intervention in terms of the ecological perspective

Proponents of the ecological school of thought view the school as a sub-system of the total social system operating on the child. They view the family as being primarily responsible for the child. The school is viewed as having a somewhat lesser influence on the child but still playing a significant role. They see the family and the school in an ideal system, as overlapping. The community is also actively involved in assisting the school and the family in caring for the child.

FIGURE NO 2

The ideal social system operating on the child
(Hobbs, 1978).



Any one of these systems could be targets of intervention. Intervention was based on the following ecological principles:

- A Each child is an inseparable part of the social system.
- B Problems occur because of discordance in the system.
- C Improvement in any part of the system can benefit the entire system.
- D The goal of any intervention is to make the system work without any intervention.

For the purpose of this study, the social worker directed her intervention to promote parental involvement towards the school and thus hoped to benefit the family/school system as a whole.

4.2.2 The planning of intervention : needs assessment

Before the planning of the intervention programme, the social worker undertook a needs assessment. A needs assessment is a process of "taking stock" of both the resources and the problem areas to facilitate the plan

of action (Winters, Easton, 1983). The social worker must understand the social system of the school as each school is unique. This understanding will affect decisions on the kind of work that can be done.

In order to make this assessment the social worker held informal talks with teachers, parents, committee members and pupils in an effort to familiarize everyone with the idea of parental involvement and to identify the type of co-operation required from the school community.

The social worker then administered a questionnaire (appendix C) to each teacher. The purpose of the questionnaire was to judge the present level of parent-teacher contact, in an effort to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the present level of functioning. A further purpose was to gauge the degree of collaboration the social worker was likely to receive from the teachers. However, at this stage, the teachers were not prepared to commit themselves in discussing the limitations of the school (question 12) and refused to complete the questionnaire. The worker then used the questionnaire as a guide in her own observations and held informal talks with relevant people.

The observations that emerged were that no staff-parent organisation existed and there was no co-ordination of parent activities. However, all the teachers regarded parents as an integral part of the school system. Parents shared a good relationship with the teachers and contacted teachers when they were experiencing problems in the home. Parents participated in terms of Easton and Winters (1983) pyramid of collaboration on level one, that is, they were involved in attendance at school functions (concert and graduation) and in fund-raising. The parents were not involved in the everyday activities of the school nor in any

policy making activities. The teachers saw the role of the social worker with the home as being problem-orientated.

In conclusion, a certain degree of parental involvement was found to exist, but there was room for improving the quality of involvement and this could be facilitated by the social worker. There was also a need for the social worker to focus on relationship-building with the staff if their cooperation was to be elicited. According to Fischer (1979). The relationship is an essential variable in social work thus relationship-building should be a valid social work aim.

4.2.3 General problems encountered in instituting the interventive programme

Some problems were encountered when instituting the programme of social work intervention to promote parental involvement in the school. It was difficult to get parents to participate in the intervention programme as they had the misconception that social workers only dealt with families who experienced problems. The teachers shared a similar view. To overcome this, the social worker dedicated time to interpreting the role of the school social worker to parents, staff, committee members and to parents. Van Niekerk (1983 : 162) quotes Lister who notes that "...lack of clarity about roles and attempts to deny role conflicts contribute to inefficiency, duplication and poor resource utilization in healthy systems".

The social worker experienced role conflicts in that she was a member of the management board of the schools as well as involved to a large extent in the daily affairs of the school. However, she adhered to social work

principles and decided that whatever her actions they were to be directed to the benefit of the school child.

Practical problems were also experienced such as lack of office facilities for the social worker and lack of co-ordination of services among the three schools.

4.2.4 Groupwork with parents

Groupwork was chosen as the method of intervention because:

- (a) School social work is a novel concept and it was thought that parents would be less threatened if the intervention was directed at the entire parent population rather than problem-orientated at a 1-1 level.
- (b) Many more parents could benefit from the sessions than if casework was utilized.

Meyerowitz (1973) has pointed out that parents of normal children and those with problems are aware of the growing need to understand their children in totality and often feel that a good way of achieving this is in a group with other mothers and fathers. Parent groups can be of both a therapeutic and educational nature.

4.2.4.1 Models of parent groups

Woods (1982) has outlined three different approaches that can be used when working with parents groups:

A Anticipatory guidance model

Anticipatory guidance is a process whereby both cognitive and affective information is given before a stressful situation arises in anticipation of it so that the individual or system may better cope with the situation (Hane, 1982 : 29). The underlying philosophy of anticipatory guidance is that if parents anticipate that some problems may occur then they will be better able to cope with them if they do, in fact, arise. Anticipatory guidance models can be used with large populations where an in-depth clinical assessment is not part of the programme.

The anticipatory guidance model was adopted in the present study during session 6. During this session, the mothers met the principal of the primary school which most of their children would be attending the following year. The purpose of this activity was, to prepare the parents on how to deal with people in authority so that the transition of their children from pre-school to primary school would be less frightening.

B The parent education model

This model focuses on giving specific solutions to specific problems. This usually includes giving concrete information about normal child development and alternatively, appropriate ways parents can respond to the child. The parent-education model was used as a framework for intervention during sessions 4,5,7 and 8. Examples of the activities of these sessions were discussions on how constructive use could be made of the child's leisure time and how parents could assist in helping their children to learn to read.

C Support groups

In this type of group, individuals experiencing the same or similar stresses give support to each other. The programme is flexible and is taken from one of the group members. Members are encouraged to learn from each other and to share their successes and accomplishments as well as their anxieties and fears.

In the present group the giving of support could be considered as a core condition of the entire group experience.

Features from all three models were used in groupwork with parents in the present study.

4.2.4.2. Skills needed by the group workers for parent groups

For leadership of parent groups the social worker must have knowledge and skills in at least five areas (Auerbach, 1959).

- A Knowledge of normal child development and an understanding of the significance of characteristic behaviour in different stages of growth and the characteristic concerns of parents at these different stages.
- B Understanding of the dynamics of behaviour and diagnostic awareness of emotional health so as to help parents build up their own strengths.
- C Awareness of cultural factors affecting family living and child care practices, as seen in different ethnic and social groups.

- D Understanding the dynamics of adult learning and being able to recognize the importance of emotional factors in parental motivation and in their ability to acquire new understanding.
- E Knowing group processes and the role of the leader in defining group goals and in helping the group to achieve these goals.

The social worker undertook an extensive literature study in order to expand her knowledge in these areas. This theoretical knowledge was integrated with practical experiences of working with groups.

4.2.4.3 Groupwork with the parents in the present study

On completion of the needs assessment it became obvious to the social worker that many mothers brought their children to school and remained on the premises for the two hours while their children attended the classes. There was no activity planned for the mothers during this time. This was the daily routine at all three schools. The social worker obtained the permission of the principal of the Durban Heights school to start a group. This school was chosen partially because of the good relationship the social worker shared with the principal and staff and also because the parents from this school showed the most interest in the formation of a group.

The worker approached the mothers with the idea of implementing a Systematic Training for Effective Parenting programme (S.T.E.P.). The S.T.E.P. programme is a structured programme based on different modules, each module dealing with a specific topic and having definite goals.

Movement from each module follows a particular sequence, each being based on the accomplishment of the other.

Many mothers showed an interest in joining the group but they wanted the sessions to be more flexible and they wanted to be involved in the choice of programme for each session. According to Garvin (1981) some people are able to make use of planned formats while others will not. He states that the option is open to the worker to modify the format. The worker in her assessment sensed that the members were nervous to commit themselves to joining the group as it was their first group experience. She also felt that they were overwhelmed with the terminology of the S.T.E.P. programme and they doubted their own ability in coping with such a situation. The S.T.E.P. programme has been developed for American families and has not been adapted to meet the needs of South African Indian families. The groupworker therefore agreed to modify her original intentions in order to reach out to the members and their level of development.

A The preliminary interview

The groupworker interviewed a total of 12 mothers. Klein (1971) outlines the purpose of the preliminary interview in the formation of a group as follows:

- (a) To acquaint the prospective member with the purposes of the group and why he/she is being asked to participate.
- (b) To allow the prospective member to voice anxieties or other feelings about the group sessions and to ask questions.

- (c) To begin to develop a contract.
- (d) To begin to establish a relationship with the worker.
- (e) To have a person with whom he/she is familiar the first time he comes to the group meeting.
- (f) To be free to refuse or accept the offer.

In addition to the above purposes the first interview was used to interpret the role of the school social worker to the parents. Interviewing skills such as observation, listening, questioning and beginning where the client is were utilized.

B Group size and membership

A total of six members committed themselves to try out the group experience. Klein (1971) states that an ideal group consists of between five to seven members on condition that there is regular attendance by all members. The smaller the group the greater is the intensity of the involvement and the greater is the potential for intimacy (Klein, 1971). Another advantage of smaller groups is that there is greater group pressure on the members, easier access to the worker and more flexibility in modifying goals. The disadvantages are that there are fewer expressed ideas and less changes in the attitudes and responses by members.

In terms of the group in the present study the groupworker believed that the smaller number of members did allow for intimacy to develop. It was necessary for mothers to acquire confidence in themselves, especially

since the members were all housewives and this was their first experience of meeting people in a formal setting. However, as the sessions progressed, this limited number of members was a disadvantage as fewer ideas were being expressed.

C Group membership

The group consisted of four mothers, one aunt and a grandmother. The aunt and grandmother were included in the group because they spent considerable time with the child as mother substitutes, as the mothers were working.

The members were similar in socio-economic status and communicative ability. The age difference between the mothers and grandmother were not seen as detrimental to the group's functioning. Klein (1971) states that in the use of parent groups age per se of the parents is not the important factor but the age of the child because parents find it difficult to relate with one another if the ages of the children differ widely.

D Goals of the group

A group goal is the product of values, experiences, needs and hopes of members (Klein, 1971). Goals determine the extent of motivation to remain in the group. Group goals can only be formulated after the clients share goals within the group and identify similarities.

The worker helped the group members perceive their similarities and enabled them to view their differences with responsibility. Clarification of aim is a vital part of planning of the group as it is a point of reference for everything that happens in the group (Heap, 1979)

All groups have long term goals but should also have short term goals so that members can easily recognize their accomplishment. According to Klein (1971) they must be reached in a specific reasonable length of time.

The long term goals of the group were as follows:

- (a) To enhance the social functioning of the mothers themselves and thus indirectly the pre-school child and the family as a whole. According to Meyerowitz (1973) even a small reduction in anxiety and a small increase in confidence brought about by the parents' participation in a group, strengthens the parents' ability for relationship with the child.
- (b) To assist mothers to cope with parenthood as families with pre-school children have specific developmental concerns and tasks.
- (c) To overcome any problems pertaining to the child or the family. According to Butler (1974) in order for parent education programmes to produce the maximum effects they must use a holistic approach in dealing with families. She states further that parents need help in solving their overwhelming problems before they can be expected to focus on the child and his education. Short term goals were negotiated on a sessional basis.

E Programme activity

The programme based on Klein's (1971) proposals was planned to be non-injurious to members, to minimize the opportunity for control by some members for their own benefit and to be beneficial and growth inducing

The members were to make the choice of the programme. Parental involvement in pre-school programmes in the Republic of South Africa is focussed on rendering of services to the pre-school centre. Few centres implement a definite programme which is primarily aimed at strengthening the parents' capacity to facilitate educational development in their children (Reilly, Hofmeyer, 1983). The group worker attempted to address this criticism in the present study.

Eight sessions were undertaken:

Session one

During this session the contract was negotiated and members got to know one another. The contract was formulated in terms of Douglas' (1976) proposal that a contract is the total and the component arrangements, hidden or explicit, which members of the groups, leaders and institutions make with each other. The short term goals of session one were:

- (a) To ascertain individual and group expectations and then the formulation of the group goals.
- (b) To discuss practical issues such as number of sessions to be held, time, venue.
- (c) To discuss norms of group behaviour and group process.
- (d) To get to know one another.

Sessions 2 and 3

During these sessions there was discussion of problems experienced by the families. The short term goals of these session were:

- (a) To provide group support and allow for catharsis of the problems.
- (b) To assist members overcome the problems.

Session 4

There was discussion on how to get children to make constructive use of leisure time, and an exchange of ideas on how to make cheap educational toys.

Session 5

There was discussion on how mothers could assist their children with how to learn to read. The short term goals of session four and five were to increase the mothers' capacity to stimulate the child's intellectual growth.

Session 6

At this session the members made arrangements for accommodating the guest speaker who was invited to address the group in session seven. Other parents with pre-school children were to be invited to the following session. Butler (1974) states that satisfying involvement on the part of some parents may awaken the interests of other parents. This had a further advantage in that the school social

worker by meeting with parents in groups, had an opportunity of setting a new atmosphere and establishing a new kind of relationship between parents and the school.

In the second half of the session the principal of the primary school had an informal talk with the mothers. The short term goals of this session were

- (a) To draw the members together, through the realization that they had to work cooperatively together to achieve group goals
- (b) to enhance the mothers' self confidence by giving them the responsibility for making all the arrangements for next week, for example, the distribution of invitations to other parents.
- (c) To help mothers familiarize themselves with the principal of the school, since all their children will be attending that primary school next year.

Session 7

A speaker from City Health, Durban was invited to address the group on budgeting in session seven. Other parents were also invited to attend the session. The short term goal of the session was:

- (a) to help the mothers gain education on aspects relevant to daily living.

Session 8

During session eight there was an evaluation of the group experience and suggestions were given on ways in which parents could be involved in the school.

F Phases in the group

Hansen and Warner (1976) outline several reasons why it is important to study phases:

- (i) By understanding the life stages of the group, the worker can place a single event in perspective and help him bring order out of confusion to members of the group.
- (ii) To enable the worker to lead the members through meaningful experiences.
- (iii) To help the worker diagnose blockages and intervene in the process.
- (iv) To prevent the worker feeling confused and anxious which would only compound similar feelings in the group.

The group experience was analysed in terms of group development using the model as proposed by Garland, Jones, Kolandy as quoted by Whittaker (1980). This particular model was chosen as it is fairly simple to understand as well the groupworker felt that the group generally went

through the five stages as depicted by this model. The five phases are as follows:

Preaffiliation phase

Jones, Kolandy as quoted by Whittaker (1980) suggest that during this phase the members of the group experience approach-avoidance conflict and are ambivalent about involvement. The relationships developed are non-intimate and use is made of stereotypic activity as a means of getting acquainted.

Members in the present group were ambivalent about joining the group. They expressed this by not committing themselves to joining the group but stated that they were only trying out the experience for a few sessions. To make them feel more secure the worker attempted to clarify issues such as purpose, role, norms, expectations and her role so that they were aware of what they were committing themselves to, and could then accept or reject the group. The worker did not insist that members should reveal personal aspects about themselves at the first session.

Contrary to Kolandy, Jones et al as quoted by Whittaker (1980) they discussed aspects about themselves at the first session. One member of the group initiated this process by revealing to the other members that she was a widow and married her husband's brother within a few months of her husband's death. The worker sensed that she wanted them to know the truth from the beginning as she was experiencing intense guilt. This was done prematurely as after the first session she did not return to the group.

Other members also dealt with personal problems they were experiencing before aspects of the child were focussed on. The worker did not prevent them discussing their problems at this stage as she felt that they had an urgent need to do so. However, retrospectively the worker feels that this was done too early as members were still too polite to be open and honest about the actions of one another. This had the effect of problems being discussed superficially, and blame was placed on people external to the group rather than focussing on how the behaviour of the group member contributed to the problem.

Power and control phase

Kolandy, Jones et al as quoted by Whittaker (1980) see this as a phase in which issues of power, control, status, skill and decision making become focal. The members test the group worker and attempt to define and formalize relationships and define status hierarchy.

In the present group issues discussed above did become focal. The grandmother took on the leadership role. This could have been by virtue of her age. There is the possibility that this occurred as in Indian homes age is revered. However, there was competition between the grandmother and one of the mothers for the leadership role. There were no sub-groups formed and everyone kept to themselves. They tested the workers genuineness by giving her tasks to do and then seeing if she carried them out. The worker had to use the skill of harmonizing and getting them to accept differences amongst themselves. Other skills such as mediating, pointing out the impact of their behaviour on others, stepping down strong signals and gatekeeping were used.

Intimacy phase

Kolandy, Jones et al as quoted by Whittaker (1980) state that during this phase there is greater personal involvement by the members. There is openness of feelings about members and leaders. At this stage, members can plan and carry out a group project. Members now became aware of the significance of the group experience in terms of personality growth and change.

By the fourth session, a certain amount of intimacy developed. The members realised that the co-operation of all was needed if the goals of the group were to be achieved. Members were able to plan and carry out the group projects. Dependency needs were being met also outside the group experience, for example, members exchanged telephone calls between sessions. Members became aware of the significance of the group experience in terms of personality growth and change. This was demonstrated by regular attendance at group sessions and the completion of homework tasks.

Differentiation phase

According to Kolandy, Jones et al as quoted by Whittaker (1980) during this stage members perceive one another as distinct, the worker as unique and the group as a unique experience. Needs are reality based and cohesion among members is strong and communication is good. At this phase there is freedom for autonomy and intimacy. There is freedom to evaluate the relationships and events in the group on a reality basis. The group becomes its own frame of reference.

Contrary to the opinion of Kolandy, Jones et al as quoted by Whittaker (1980), this phase did not occur naturally in the group in the present study. The group instead of differentiating became over-involved with one another. The worker had to work towards achieving this differentiation, for example, pointing out differences amongst members, stepping down strong emotions and by referring to termination. Cohesion among members was strong and communication open and effective. The groupworker is of the opinion that at this stage they retested her genuineness as a group. At this stage the worker began the termination process.

Separation

According to Kolandy, Jones et al as quoted by Whittaker (1980) at this stage of separation the group experience is complete and the members move apart. They find new resources for meeting social, recreational and vocational needs. Common reactions from members is that of denial, regression, flight and recapitulation of past experiences. Separation did not pose much of a problem in this particular group as it coincided with the end of the school year and the rituals associated with it, for example, graduation and the taking of class photographs. The worker focused on the negative and positive aspects of the group experience. Suggestions were also given on other support groups in the area that would be of interest to the members.

G. The members subjective evaluation of the group

The groupworker realised that some form of baseline data would have been useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the group experience. To partially meet this limitation the members were requested to evaluate the group and

give a subjective account of the main benefits they gained from the sessions. The members stated that they enjoyed the group sessions. They stated the main benefits of the group as being the support they received from group members as well as that the sessions provided an outlet from their daily routine. The mothers felt that they had become aware of the importance of their role in their child's development but found the actual content of the sessions superficial. They saw a need for more in-depth parent education programmes with a larger membership of the group. This recognition was encouraging in that these members at the beginning of the group sessions rejected the S.T.E.P. programme which is an in-depth parent education programme.

H. General comments on the group experience

The groupworker was disappointed because she only managed to recruit five group members. However, Butler (1974) states that even if a small number of parents become interested in the school it is one step forward as it will awaken the interests of others.

Ideally the group should have consisted of both mothers and fathers but because of practical considerations of employment this was not possible. The groupworker in agreement with the group members, felt that the content of the sessions were superficial and that the programme should have been more structured. However, she did feel that the greatest benefit achieved was that the group experience increased the members confidence and that they did become aware of their role in their child's education.

Therefore in conclusion, one can state that the development of group work for promoting parental involvement in the school has great potential and that there is a need for more specific proposals from this pilot study.

4.2.5 The intervention with teachers

Intervention was aimed at promoting a positive relationship between the staff of the school and parents. According to Butler (1974) the attitude of staff and parents towards each other and the relationship which develops between them will be a key factor in the success or failure of any attempt at parental involvement in the nursery situation.

When teachers expand their notion of parental input in the school, parents become more and more supportive of the school (Easton and Winters, 1983 : 113). The purpose of the intervention was to bring to the teachers attention that their attitudes and behaviour is important in shaping the nature and degree of parental involvement. The intervention with the teachers could have been more intense but because of the social worker's lack of time the purpose of the intervention was limited. When working with the teachers the social worker took on the role of educator. Ferri and Birchdale (1981) point out that when teachers work with parents they need training and skills. They state furthermore that careful preparation for this role is needed.

On a one-to-one basis, the social worker stressed the importance of parental involvement and the role the teacher plays in the process. The social worker recommended relevant literature on how teachers can work positively with parents, for example, information on basic interviewing skills and the importance of the first meeting with parents. This

education had to be done within the framework of the relationship so that the teachers did not see the social worker as a threat in terms of their own "professional" ability.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion it can be noted that social work services in the school has both restorative and preventive functions. The school social worker can extend her services to parents and pupils to include teamwork with school personnel and promotion of school community relations. Supervision and education can be seen as additional tasks.

Social work intervention was effective in promoting parental involvement in the school; group work as a method of social work has shown potential in promoting parental involvement. Social work intervention can also be directed at teachers.

CHAPTER 5CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to test the following hypothesis:

- (a) There is a qualitative difference between parents-child interaction for those who score high on the Pupil's Behaviour Rating Scale and those who score low.
- (b) The school social worker can be a useful resource in promoting parental involvement in formal pre-school teaching.

Conclusions with regard to each hypotheses will be discussed separately.

5.2 The qualitative differences in certain areas of parent-child interaction between the two groups

For the purpose of this study, a total number of 20 mothers were interviewed, 10 mothers of the high performers and 10 mothers of the low performers.

Results were obtained via a questionnaire, constructed by the researcher. Any other relevant observations outside those stipulated in the questionnaire was used as additional data by the researcher.

From this study it was not possible to conclude that there were qualitative differences in areas of parent-child interaction except in a limited number of areas between the high performers and the low

performers. Retrospectively, the researcher is of the opinion that this inability to reach only a few conclusions in this regard was the result of the questionnaire being unsuitable to investigate family interaction.

Fullard (1981) in a similar study to investigate differences in family communication between pre-school pupils who possessed high social competence and those who did not, utilized participant observation as her main method of obtaining this information. This was a lengthy process but she overcame this obstacle by enlisting the assistance of post-graduate students to gather this data. This was beyond the scope of the researcher in the present study because of economic and time limitations.

The questionnaire did elicit information in terms of parent-child interactions in regard to the following aspects: amount of freedom given to the child by the parents, the ways in which parents demonstrated their affection, the types of discipline used, family togetherness and problems experienced by the family. However if a total view of the parent-child interaction was to be gained, more probing questions should have been asked to validate the answers to the questions.

Furthermore, these results only reflect trends because of the small numbers involved and thus cannot be extrapolated to make statements of causal relationships; for the latter multivariant analysis with large samples would be necessary.

However, the questionnaire did produce useful information about the two groups of families especially relating to socio-economic variables and attitudes to pre-school education.

Conclusions regarding these dimensions are noted under the following headings:

5.2.1 Biographic, social and economic characteristics of the pupils and their families in the two groups

- (a) All pupils fell within the age range of five years and six months and six years and six months.
- (b) There were 10 boys and 10 girls in each group.
- (c) The families of the two groups were predominantly of the Hindu religion with Christians and Muslims represented similarly as in the general population.
- (d) The median age of the fathers in the high performing group was 37,5 years. The ages of these fathers ranged from 33 to 41 years. The median age of fathers in the low performing group was 33,5 years. The age range of these fathers was between 37 and 36 years.
- (e) The mothers of the high performers were generally much older; median age being 31,5 years. Most of these mothers fell in the age range between 28 and 37 years.

The low performers tended to have younger mothers (median = 27,5 years). All these mothers were in the age range 23 to 32 years.

(f) The educational standard of parents

The fathers of the high performers generally had attained a higher standard of education than the fathers of the low performers. Forty per cent of the fathers of the high performers had matriculated or had post-matriculation education. Only 10% of the fathers in the lower category had completed secondary education (matric); none of them had a post-matriculation education.

The median educational level of mothers from the low performer category was standard 5, whereas that for the high performer group was standard 9. None of the mothers of the low performers had matriculated. Over half of the mothers of the high performers had either matriculated or had a post-matriculation education.

Mothers who had attained a low standard of education lacked self-confidence and had poor verbal ability.

(g) The father's occupation

More fathers of the high performers held professional and middle-range status occupations. On the other hand, most of the fathers of the low performers held clerical or manual jobs. Thus, the father's occupation was found to be related to the level of achievement. These results are consistent with those of Golden and Burns (1978) as quoted by Hetherington and Parke (1975).

5.2.2 The family structure and family influences

The families of both groups of pupils tended to be small. However, the families of the high performer group was slightly larger (median = 2,5) than those of the low performers (median = 2). Most of the low performers were first born and only children whereas a larger number of the high performers were second to fourth children.

5.2.3 The work status of the mothers

More (50%) of the mothers of the high performers were in full-time employment. None of the mothers of the low performers were working. The mothers who worked in this study tended to be more self-confident and were able to verbalize their ideas and opinions frankly. Thus the work status of the mother was found to be related to the level of achievement of the child. These results are consistent with those of Yarrow, Leew et al as quoted by Nye, Hoffman (1963).

5.2.4 Influence of the extended family

The majority of families in both groups lived as nuclear units. This finding is consistent with the results of a study done by Landau, Griffiths and Mason (1982). A larger proportion of mothers of the higher performers perceived the extended family as playing a significant role in their lives, than the mothers of the low performers. Families of the high performers tended to meet their relatives more frequently than the families of the low performers.

5.2.5 The child's ability to mix freely in the neighbourhood

All children in the high performer group could mix freely with other children and adults in the neighbourhood. Three of the children in the low performer group could not mix freely in the neighbourhood. These children showed signs of severe maladjustment.

The behaviour of the mothers of these children tended to provoke or sustain the situation. The behaviour of the mothers may reflect over-protection of the child on the part of the mother.

5.2.6 The freedom given to the child to organise his/her activities in the two groups

Most parents of both groups of children tended to organise activities for their children. This finding may be culturally related (Meer, 1969).

5.2.7 Ways in which parents demonstrate affection to their children

More parents of the high performers used intimate demonstration of affection. The majority of parents of the low performers demonstrated their affections in the form of buying material presents for their children.

5.2.8 The types of discipline used by parents

The majority of parents of the low performers used corporal punishment to discipline their children. None of the parents of the high performers used this method of discipline.

Parents of the high performers tended to make more use of the withdrawal of privileges as a method of discipline.

5.2.9 The child's previous experience of nursery school

None of the low performers had previously attended nursery school. Three of the 10 high performers had been to nursery school prior to attending the pre-school class.

5.2.10 The provision of a stimulating environment for the child

There was a greater variety of family outings in the high performer group, namely picnics and visits to places of interest. Families of the low performers tended to attend more religious ceremonies, but had few other outings.

All the families in the high performing group discussed the family outings after it occurred, whereas this did not occur in all the families of the low performers.

Reading to the child occurred with greater frequency in the homes of the high performers than in the homes of the low performers. Thus the extent to which the child was read to was found to be related to the performance of the child.

These results are consistent with those of Lomax (1978). Farmer as quoted by Lomax (1978) is of the opinion that reading to a child increases the child's vocabulary. The vocabulary of the high performers was twice that of the low performers.

5.2.11 Assistance given to the child for his/her homework

All parents in both categories discussed schoolwork with their children. More fathers of the low performers assumed the responsibility of assisting the child with his homework. Both parents showed the responsibility of assisting their child with homework in the high performer group.

5.2.12 Family togetherness

Most of the low performers confided in their mothers. Fathers dealt with aspects such as homework. In the high performer group the confidante of the child was more varied and included mother, father, teacher or extended family members.

In the high performer group there was more emphasis on the joint sharing of responsibility by mother and father, in the bringing up of the children. This practise did not occur in the low performer group.

The majority of families of the high performers eat meals together. This occurred less frequently in the homes of the low performers.

5.2.13 Problems experienced by the family

Families in both groups experienced problems, however, families of the low performers generally experienced more problems. Financial, marital, death and family problems were the main problems experienced by the families. Significantly, problems related to the school were only experienced by the families of the low performers.

4.2.14 Involvement with the school

- (a) All parents in both the groups sent their children to pre-school to learn something and to prepare the child for primary school
- (b) The parents of the low performers met the class teacher more regularly than the parents of the high performers. All contact between parents and teachers for the high performers were parent initiated. A substantial amount of contact for the low performer group was initiated by the teacher.
- (c) All mothers in both groups stated that parental involvement in school activities was important. All mothers in the high performer group were prepared to be included in possible programmes.
- (d) Both groups of parents were of the view that the establishment of a parent-teacher association should be a priority.
- (e) The majority of parents in both groups ranked the most important task of the parent-teacher association as being involved in the everyday activities of the school. Fund-raising was ranked second. Only one parent was of the opinion that parents should be involved at policy level.
- (f) All parents in both categories were satisfied with the present level of parental involvement.

5.3 Conclusion regarding the school social worker as a resource in the promotion of parental involvement in formal pre-school education

The researcher's conclusions are based on practical experience of social work at the pre-school over a two year period. A literature study was first embarked upon since school social work has rarely been practised formally in South Africa, and the social worker needed guidelines and a framework for her work. The social worker aimed to explore the applicability of some of the findings of the literature study.

Working with parents and the promotion of parental involvement in schools is only one facet of the work of the school social worker (Rocher, 1977, Meyerowitz, 1973). Nevertheless, it is a very important aspect.

5.3.1 Conclusions with regard to the intervention used

Needs assessment

The needs assessment as proposed by Easton and Winters (1983) was a useful tool in gaining an understanding of the social system of the school. The understanding of the social system of the school was necessary to assess resources and problem areas of the system and thus give a guide to the plan of action. The needs assessment provided the worker with ideas as to the present level of functioning and the type of co-operation the worker would receive from the people concerned.

The completion of the needs assessment also provided the social worker with the information that relationship-building was to be the first and most important task if social work intervention was to be successful. Fischer (1979) shares a similar view and is of the opinion that relationship-building is a very important variable in social work.

5.3.2 Major conclusions with regard to the groupwork implemented

Groupwork was found to be effective in promoting parental involvement in the schools. The models of parent groups as proposed by Woods (1982) namely the anticipatory guidance model, parent-education model and support model were useful models in terms of the programme activity chosen by the group. However, it was found that these models could not be used in isolation and all three models were used during the process of any one session.

The giving of support was seen as a core-condition of the group experience. The members reported that the support they had received from members was the main motivating factor to remain in the group.

The Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P.) programme in its original form was rejected by the members. However, the groupworker and the members were of the opinion that a structured programme was important.

5.4 Major conclusions with regard to intervention with teachers

Ferri and Birchdale (1981) hold the view that when teachers work with parents they need training and skills. The present study has shown that the social worker can be involved in this task, for example, in the role of the educator. Intervention aimed at teachers has to be done within the framework of the relationship, so that the teacher does not see the social worker as a threat.

5.5 Recommendations

In view of the major findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1 Education : education should be a task of the school social worker.
This education should be directed at three levels:
 - (a) Education aimed at parents so that they can gain an understanding of their children. Education at this level should also be aimed at enhancing the parents' self-development.
 - (b) Education on the importance of parental involvement.
 - (c) Education to school personnel, pupils, parents and the community on the role of the school social worker.

- 2 An additional task of the school social worker should be pre-school care which could be based on the model of anticipatory guidance. This could prevent over-protection on the part of the parent and make the transition into school easier.

- 3 The introduction of parent-education programme at pre-schools should become priority. The social worker should be the co-ordinator of such programmes.

- 4 Social workers should be employed at pre-primary schools to help pupils overcome problems. Young parents or parents with young children may be seen as a primary focus for preventive intervention, which prevents the development of problems by early contact.

- 5 Parent-teacher associations at pre-school level should be compulsory.
- 6 Schools should be built in such a way so that they have physical facilities to facilitate parental involvement.
- 7 A model of intervention for school social work for South African schools should be formulated.
- 8 More emphasis should be placed on teamwork in parental involvement. Parents, teacher, social workers and pupils should be involved in the team, so as to prevent difficulties in the relationship.

5.5.1 Future research

- 1 Other methods of social work, namely casework, and community work should be tested for its suitability in promoting parental involvement in the pre-school. Effectiveness studies using baseline data should be undertaken with these methods.
- 2 The S.T.E.P. programme should be investigated and adapted to meet the needs of a South African Indian population.
- 3 Further research with larger samples and valid methods of data collection is necessary to collaborate the finding of the present study with regard to parent-child interaction.



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5.6 Conclusion

This study should be seen as a pilot study to be used as a guide for future study in this area.

APPENDIX APUPILS BEHAVIOUR RATING SCALE

(North-Western University, Evanston, Illinois)

1 AUDITORY COMPREHENSION AND LISTENINGA Ability to Follow Directions

- 1 Always confused, cannot or is unable to follow directions.
- 2 Usually follows simple oral direction but often needs individual help.
- 3 Remembers and follows extended directions.
- 4 Unusually skilful in remembering and following directions.

B Comprehension of Class Discussions

- 1 Always inattentive and/or unable to follow and understand discussions.
- 2 Listens but rarely comprehends well, mind often wanders from discussions.
- 3 Understands well and benefits from discussions.
- 4 Becomes involved and shows unusual understanding of material discussed.

C Ability to Retain Information that He/She Hears

- 1 Almost total lack of recall; poor memory.
- 2 Retains simple ideas and procedures if repeated often.
- 3 Remembers procedures and information from various sources, good immediate and delayed recall.
- 4 Superior memory for both details and content.

D Comprehension of Word Meanings

- 1 Extremely immature level of understanding.
- 2 Fails to grasp simple word meanings; misunderstands words at grade level.
- 3 Understands all grade level vocabulary as well as higher level word meanings.
- 4 Superior understanding of vocabulary; understands many abstract words.

2 SPOKEN LANGUAGE

A Ability to Speak in Complete Sentences using accurate sentence structure

- 1 Always uses incomplete sentences with grammatical errors.
- 2 Frequently uses incomplete sentences and/or numerous grammatical errors.
- 3 Uses correct grammar, few errors of omission, or incorrect use of prepositions, verbs, tense, pronouns.
- 4 Always speaks grammatically correct sentences.

B Vocabulary Ability

- 1 Always uses immature improper vocabulary,
- 2 Limited vocabulary, including primarily simple nouns; few precise descriptive words.
- 3 Above average vocabulary, uses numerous precise descriptive words.
- 4 High level vocabulary, always use precise words to convey messages, uses abstractions.

C Ability to Recall Words

- 1 Unable to recall exact word.
- 2 Often gropes for words to express himself.
- 3 Above average ability; rarely hesitates on a word.
- 4 Always speaks well, never hesitates or substitutes words.

D Ability to Tell Stories - Relate Experiences

- 1 Unable to tell a comprehensible story.
- 2 Has difficulty relating ideas in logical sequence.
- 3 Above average; uses logical sequence.
- 4 Exceptional ability to relate ideas in a logical, meaningful manner.

E Ability to Formulate Ideas from Isolated Facts

- 1 Unable to relate isolated facts.
- 2 Has difficulty relating isolated facts; ideas are incomplete and scattered.
- 3 Relates facts and ideas well.
- 4 Outstanding ability in relating facts appropriately.

3 ORIENTATIONA Promptness

- 1 Lacks grasp of the meaning of time; always late or confused.
- 2 Poor time concept, tends to dawdle, often late.
- 3 Prompt; late only with good reason.
- 4 Very skilful at handling schedules; plans and organizes well.

B Spatial Orientation

- 1 Always confused; unable to navigate around classroom or school, playground or neighbourhood.

- 2 Frequently gets lost in relatively familiar surroundings.
- 3 Above average ability; rarely lost or confused.
- 4 Never lost, adapts to new locations, situations, places.

C Judgement of Relationships, Big, Little, Far, Close, Light, Heavy

- 1 Judgement of relationships very inadequate.
- 2 Make elementary judgements successfully.
- 3 Accurate judgements, but does not generalize to new situations.
- 4 Unusually precise, judgements : generalize them to new situations and experiences.

D Learning Directions

- 1 Highly confused, unable to distinguish directions as right, left, North and South.
- 2 Sometimes exhibits directional confusion.
- 3 Good sense of direction - seldom confused, uses right vs left, North, South, East, West.
- 4 Excellent sense of direction.

4 BEHAVIOUR

A Co-operation

- 1 Continually disrupts classroom, unable to inhibit responses.
- 2 Frequently demands the "spot light", often speaks out of turn.
- 3 Work fair - co-operates well - above average.
- 4 Co-operates without adult encouragement.

B Attention

- 1 Never attentive, very distractible.

- 2 Rarely listens; attention frequently wanders.
- 3 Almost always attends.
- 4 Always attends to importance aspects; long attention span.

C Ability to Organize

- 1 Highly disorganized.
- 2 Often disorganized in manner of working; inexact, careless.
- 3 Ability to organize and complete work, consistent.
- 4 Always completes assignments in a highly organized and meticulous manner.

D Ability to Cope with New Situations : Parties, Trips, Unanticipated Changes to Routine

- 1 Becomes extremely irritable, totally lacking in self control.
- 2 Often over-reacts; new situations are disturbing.
- 3 Adopts easily and quickly with self confidence.
- 4 Excellent adaptation, utilizing initiative with independence.

E Social Acceptance

- 1 Avoided by others.
- 2 Tolerated by others.
- 3 Well liked by others.
- 4 Sought by others.

F Acceptance of Responsibility

- 1 Rejects responsibility, never initiates activities.
- 2 Avoids responsibility, limited acceptance.
- 3 Enjoys responsibility. Frequently takes initiative or volunteers.

- 4 Seeks responsibility; almost always takes initiative with enthusiasm.

G Completion of Assignments

- 1 Never finishes even with guidance.
- 2 Seldom finishes even with guidance.
- 3 Can follow through on assignments and complete.
- 4 Always complete assignments without supervision.

H Tactfulness

- 1 Always rude.
- 2 Usually disregards other's feelings.
- 3 Tactfulness rarely socially - inappropriate.
- 4 Always tactful - never socially inappropriate.

5 MOTOR

A General Co-ordination : Running, Climbing, Hopping, Walking

- 1 Very poorly - co-ordinated - clumsy.
- 2 Below average co-ordination, awkward.
- 3 Average co-ordination for age outstanding but graceful. Above average, does well in these activities.
- 4 Exceptional ability - excels in this area.

B BALANCE

- 1 Very poor balance.
- 2 Below average : falls frequently.
- 3 Does well in activities requiring balance.
- 4 Exceptional ability ; excels in balancing.

C Ability to Manipulate Utensils and Equipment : Manual Dexterity

- 1 Very poor in manual manipulation.
- 2 Awkward in manual dexterity.
- 3 Manipulates well.
- 4 Almost perfect performance : readily manipulates new equipment.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

1 Name of Pupil :

2 Date of Birth :

3 Sex	1	2
	MALE	FEMALE

4 Religion:	a	Hindu	1
	b	Moslem	2
	c	Christian	3

5 Mother's Age at Last Birthday

18 - 22	1
23 - 27	2
28 - 32	3
32 - 36	4
37 - 41	5
41 +	6

6 Father's Age at Last Birthday

18 - 22	1
23 - 27	2
28 - 32	3
32 - 36	4
37 - 41	5
41 +	6

7 Sibling Composition:

Ch 1

1	2
Male	Female

Sex

Position in Family :

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Age:

Ch 2

1	2
Male	Female

Sex

Position in Family :

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Age:

Ch 3

1	2
Male	Female

Sex

Position in Family :

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Age:

Ch 4

1	2
Male	Female

Sex

Position in Family :

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Age:

8 Present Occupation of Father

Professional	1
Managerial, Administrative	2
Clerical	3
Sales	4
Transport	5
Artisan (Craftsman, Manual)	6
Service	7
Unemployed	8

9 Highest Educational Level Passed

	F	M
Cl 1 - Std 5	1	1
Std 6 - Std 7	2	2
Std 8 - Std 9	3	3
Matric	4	4
Post-school qualification without matric	5	5
Matric	6	6
Post-Matric Qualification	7	7

10 Does Mother Work?

Full Time	1
Part Time	2
N/A	3

11 Has your child been to a nursery school previously?

Yes	1
No	2

12 If mother works, how is child cared for?

Maid	1
Relative	2
Child Minder	3
Neighbour	4
Other	5
N/A	6

13 Where does the extended family live?

In same household	1
In outbuilding	2
In main building	3
In separate household	4
N/A	5

14 How often do you see your extended family?

Daily	1
Once a week	2
Less than once a week	3
N/A	4

15 Would you say, that the extended family plays a significant role in your child's life?

YES	1
NO	2
N/A	3

16 Who supervises the homework of the child?

Mother	1
Father	2
Joint	3
Extended	4
Other	5
N/A	9

17 Do you discuss work done at school with the child?

YES	1
OCCASIONALLY	2
NEVER	3

18 Do siblings discuss work done at school with pre-school child?

YES	1
NO	2
N/A	3

19 Do you have meals together as a family?

SOMETIMES	1
ALWAYS	2
N/A	3

20 Do you read to your child at night?

SOMETIMES	1
ALWAYS	2
NEVER	3

21 Are household duties shared?

YES	1
NO	2

22 Do you do things together as a family?

YES	1
NO	2

23 Which of these would you say are important events in your family's life?

Religious Festivals	1
Birthdays	2
Family outings	3
Other	4
More than one	5
N/A	9

24 Do you discuss with the child, the important aspects of these occasions?

YES	1
NO	2

25 Do you organise activities for the child during his leisure time?

YES	1
NO	2

26 All families have problems. Have you experience any of the following problems?

Financial	1
Marital	2
Death	3
Serious illness	4
School	5
Family	6
Other (specify)	7
N/A	9

27 What did you think of doing about the problem?

Solve it on your own	1
Seek professional advice	2
Contact religious guid	3
Hope it will go away by itself	4
Contact teacher	5
Consult extended family	6
N/A	9

28 Do mother and father discuss problems in front of children?

YES	1
NO	2

29 Are you satisfied with amount of things you do together as a family?

YES	1
NO	2

30 Who does the child confide in most often?

Mother	1
Father	2
Joint	3
Sibling	4
Extended	5
Teacher	6
Other	7

31 In what ways do you demonstrate your affections?

Touching, cuddling	1
Verbally	2
Material eg buying gifts	3
More than one of above	4
Other (specify)	5
None	9

32 What is the main form of discipline?

Corporal	1
Verbal	2
Withdrawal of privileges	3
More than one of above	4
Other (specify)	5

33 How often do parents go out together without children?

Regularly	1
Sometimes	2
Never	3
N/A	9

34 Does your child mix freely in neighbourhood, exchange visits with friends, etc?

Yes	1
No	2

35 How often have you formally met the school teacher this year?

0	1
1-3	2
3-4	3
4+	4
N/A	9

36 How was this contact initiated?

By parent	1
By teacher	2
N/A	9

37 Are you satisfied with the present level of parent-teacher contact?

YES	1
NO	2

38 What is the main reason for enrolling your child at pre-school?

To have someone take care of him/her	1
She/he was becoming too naughty	2
She/he was lonely and needed company	3
I wanted my child to learn something	4
Other (specify)	5

39 What should be the most important responsibility of the pre-school?

Teaching basic subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic	1
Teaching manners and how to behave	2
Preparing the child for primary school	3
Teaching the child to be friendly and learning to share	4

40 What should be the second most important responsibility?

1
2
3
4

41 What should be the third most important responsibility?

1
2
3
4

42 What should be the fourth most important responsibility?

1
2
3
4

43 Do you think that parents should be expected to help around the school?

YES	1
NO	2
N/A	3

44 Would you be prepared to become involved in helping around the school, eg baking for cake sales, etc?

YES	1
NO	2

45 Do you think that the pre-school should hold social activities over week-ends and during holidays?

YES	1
NO	2

46 Do you know that the pre-school is run by the Reservoir Hills Local Committee of the Durban Indian Child Welfare Society?

YES	1
NO	2

47 Do you feel the establishment of a PTA should be the priority of the school?

YES	1
NO	2

48 What should be the most important responsibility of the PTA?

Fund raising	1
Policy determination (eg fees, salaries of staff)	2
Involvement in everyday affairs of school	3
Other (specify)	4
N/A	9

49 What should be the second most important responsibility?

1
2
3
4

50 What should be the third most important responsibility?

1
2
3
4

51 In what ways do you think parent-teacher contact can be improved?

APPENDIX C
NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROFILE

- 1 NAME OF PRE-SCHOOL CLASS:
- 2 NUMBER OF PUPILS IN CLASS:
- 3 NAME/STATUS OF PARENT - STAFF ORGANIZATION CONNECTED WITH CLASS:
- 4 WHO IS IN CHARGE OF CO-ORDINATING PARENT ACTIVITIES?
- 5 Do you see the parent as an integral part of the school?

YES
NO
- 6 Are you satisfied with the present level of communication between school and the parents?
- 7 List some of the factors that limit your contact with parents?
- 8a Do parents contact you about problems in the home, etc?
- 8b If yes, how many?
- 9 Do you think the fees paid by the pupils are adequate?
- 10 If no to (9), by how much should it be raised?
- 11 Is this an area which could be dealt with by the parents committee?
- 12 What are the chief limitations in the school?

Inadequate finance
Inadequate control/supervision
Inadequate parental involvement
Lack of equipment
Overcrowding

13 Survey of parent activities in school during the current or past year

How many held	No. of Parents Participated	No. of Staff Participated	How effective it was
General			
Open day			
Fund-raising			
Workshop for Parents			
Social events, plays			
Excursions			

14 Is regular informal contact kept?

YES

NO

15 If yes to (14), what type and frequency?

16 Do any parents volunteer in the school? If so, how many volunteers for:

1	Playground duty
2	Library
3	Class parties
4	Excursions
5	Hobby groups
6	Tutoring children
7	Work in class rooms
8	Other

- 17 Have any parents served on the school committee to determine the following needs?

1	Personnel needs
2	Curriculum Directions
3	Discipline procedures
4	Overall running of school
5	Other

- 18 List parental activities you would like to see in your school
- 19 What do you see as the role of the school social worker in linking the home and the school?
- 20 Would you like to join as a group to discuss, children who have problems at home and how to cope with them?

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