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## Book clubs and their effect on mother-daughter relationships

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## Book clubs and their effect on mother-daughter relationships

### Abstract

The purpose of this research paper was to examine book clubs and how they affect the mother/daughter relationship. Thirteen seventh grade girls and their mothers began participating in the book club. The members were surveyed during the initial organizational meeting as to their conversational habits with one another as well as their perceptions of the quality of their mother/daughter relationship. The members then participated in several book club meetings. During the meetings discussions were held which included topics such as characterization, plot, theme, climate, tone, and voice. Mothers and daughters were asked to reflect upon their own life experiences in relationship to each of the characters. The members were surveyed again four months later and the results indicated that the majority of mothers and daughters felt that the mother/daughter book club had opened up a communication line between them and improved the quality of their relationship.

# BOOK CLUBS AND THEIR EFFECT ON MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS

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By  
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Titled: Book Clubs and Their Effect on Mother-Daughter Relationships

Has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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The purpose of this research paper was to examine book clubs and how they affect the mother/daughter relationship. Thirteen seventh grade girls and their mothers began participating in the book club. The members were surveyed during the initial organizational meeting as to their conversational habits with one another as well as their perceptions of the quality of their mother/daughter relationship. The members then participated in several book club meetings. During the meetings discussions were held which included topics such as characterization, plot, theme, climate, tone, and voice. Mothers and daughters were asked to reflect upon their own life experiences in relationship to each of the characters. The members were surveyed again four months later and the results indicated that the majority of mothers and daughters felt that the mother/daughter book club had opened up a communication line between them and improved the quality of their relationship.

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## **ACTION RESEARCH: BOOK CLUBS AND THEIR EFFECT ON MOTHER/DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Chapter One**

#### **Introduction**

As middle school teacher I've had numerous parents express concern about their teenage daughters becoming irreverent, belligerent, and apathetic starting in the seventh grade. Often I would be asked what they, as parents, could do. I would always offer reassurance that their child's behavior was typical of adolescents and the most important thing they could do for their child was to be physically and emotionally available.

I never felt my answer was concrete enough for many parents. They were at their wit's end that the daughter that still played with Barbies last year could be so radically different a few months later. For girls, the toughest teen year is likely to be 13 according to Draper (USA Today, 1992), a child development expert at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

The early teen years are harder than the middle or late adolescent years because the teen is making a dramatic shift from childhood into youth. It involves physical, psychological, social, and even intellectual change. Young teens don't know what's happening to them. (USA Today, 1992, p. 3)

Parents are often just as confused.

I remember this period in my life but not as such a traumatic event. First, I had a twin sister and we were the youngest of four girls. My mother was prepared. In addition, we were book worms. My mother took us to the library frequently and we would check out our limit in books. Then we would read what everyone else checked out after finishing our own. We often debated our opinions over the characters and story line. Mom read too and was our mediator when discussions became heated.

I have always been aware of the impact literature that was shared with my sisters and mother had on me as a reader and a teacher, but only while pondering a research topic

did it occur to me that book discussions could be a valuable way to improve relationships between mothers and their adolescent daughters. Book clubs were fast becoming a popular trend and I questioned whether they could be the concrete suggestion I could offer perplexed parents. Pipher (1995) in Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls stated:

In order to keep their true selves and grow into healthy adults, girls need love from family and friends, meaningful work, respect, challenges and physical safety. They need identities based on talents or interests rather than appearance, popularity, or sexuality. They need good habits for coping with stress, self-nurturing skills and a sense of purpose and perspective. They need quiet places and times. They need to feel that they are part of something larger than their own lives and that they are emotionally connected to the whole. (p.10)

I felt a mother-daughter book club could fulfill that basic need.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

Adolescence is a time of change. Adolescents talk to their friends with greater frequency (Berndt, 1981). Their conversations also become more personal, especially among girls (Berndt, 1979; Berndt, 1982; Crocket, Losoff, & Petersen, 1984). Communication with parents decreases to some extent during this time. Adolescents tell their parents less (Burhmester & Furman, 1987) and they have more difficulty communicating when they do (Barnes & Olsen, 1985).

Other studies have compared adolescents' perceptions of how they communicate to their friends compared to their parents. Adolescents find their parents more controlling (Hunter & Younis, 1982), to be less understanding (Hunter, 1985), and to be less likely to accept the adolescent's point of view (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). It was also found that adolescents believed their parents to be less interesting, stimulating, and self-affirming than their friends (Wright & Keple, 1981). Adolescents feel their friends understand them and allow them to be themselves (Cole & Cole, 1993). Conflict is more likely to occur between mothers and adolescents because they have been more closely involved with their children during preadolescence (Steinberg, 1989). On the other hand, research shows the vast majority of teenagers are likely to report admiration, love, and appreciation, and often turn to parents for advice (Steinberg, 1989). Only 5% to 10% of adolescents experience deterioration in the quality of parenting (Steinberg, 1989).

The Michigan Early Adolescent Survey II (Nelson, Potter, Thompson & Schlabach, 1992) reported about adolescents who belong to youth groups or clubs for the single purpose of being with their friends. Parents wanted their children to be involved in clubs or youth groups to improve their children's social skills and self-esteem, for the skills and challenging ideas that their children learned from the group, and for the fun, relaxation and enjoyment provided by the group.

#### **Book Clubs**

Reading groups, or book clubs, first began as early as 1634 by Anne Hutchinson (Jacobsohn, 1998). They continued into France in the 18th century and the clubs and drawing rooms in the 19th century in London (Saal, 1995). In 1998 there were an estimated half million plus book clubs in the United States (Jacobsohn, 1998). The actual number of reading groups currently in the United States is unknown (Saal, 1995).

Slevak defines book groups as places “where like-minded souls gather; what they have in common seems to be that a) they can read, and b) they like to read, and c) they like to talk about what they read.” Most book groups are formed by adult women (Saal, 1995). Book clubs or reading groups are frequently used in schools for instructional purposes (Gilles, 1989). Book clubs have also been formed for teachers (Goldberg & Pasko, 2000) and for parents (Knowles & Smith, 1997) to become more aware of the reading choices available to adolescents. Literature on mother-daughter book clubs is limited to Dodson’s (1997) The Mother-Daughter Book Club: How Ten Busy Mothers and Daughters Came Together to Talk, Laugh and Learn Through Their Love of Reading.

Most book clubs have a similar structure. Eight to fifteen members is ideal considering a third to half will be absent at each meeting (Jacobsen, 1998; Dodson, 1997; Saal, 1995). The clubs usually meet every four to six weeks with a longer break over the summer (Knowles & Smith, 1997; Saal, 1995; Jacobsen, 1998). The majority of groups meet at members’ homes (Dodson, 1997; Jacobsen, 1998). Food is optional, but usually included before or after the discussion (Dodson, 1997; Jacobsen, 1998; Saal, 1995). Most book clubs aim to keep everything simple. The basic rules are to start on time, be committed to the group, and be willing to exchange ideas (Dodson, 1997; Jacobsen, 1998). Book selection can be accomplished by committee, by members, by consensus or vote, or by a leader (Jacobsen, 1998). A leader may be hired to lead the discussion but natural leaders occur from the person(s) who first organizes the book club. The leader’s job is to stimulate discussion by asking thought-provoking questions. The group’s job is to discuss, examine, and evaluate the author’s ideas as they are expressed in the work (Saal, 1995). Dodson recommends using questions of fact that can lead back to the text, questions of interpretation that answers the question why?, and questions of evaluation that

lead members to agree or disagree. She also suggests asking questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no, examines motives, clarifies details, hypothesizes on characters' emotions, and explores the language.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants**

The participants in this study were from the Avoca-Hancock-Shelby-Tennant (A-H-S-T) school district in southwest Iowa. AHST Middle School had a seventh graded female population of fifteen. The participants were informed of the study through letters sent home with them to their parents. Only those girls who received parent permission and who themselves agreed to participate were included in the study. Thirteen girls and their mothers were participants.

All of the students were enrolled in a Life Science course I taught at the middle school. Five were also in my homeroom and seminar period where I often read aloud. All came from middle class or working class homes in the school district. All were of Caucasian descent. All student names used are pseudonyms.

The mothers who participated in the study lived with and were the biological parent of their daughter. Eleven lived with and were married to their child's biological father. One mother had remarried but shared joint custody with her daughter's biological father. One mother had sole custody with no contact with the biological father. Ten mothers worked full-time outside the home. One mother worked full-time inside the home, one part-time outside the home, and one was a housewife. All were Caucasian descent. All mothers' names used are pseudonyms.

#### **Design and Procedure**

Mothers and daughters were invited to an organizational meeting of the mother-daughter book club at the home of one of the participants. They were asked to bring book recommendations and their calendars. During this meeting each girl introduced their mother followed by each mother introducing their daughter (Dodson, 1997). I then explained my purposes for starting the mother-daughter book club. I stated that I had always loved to read and hoped that a shared love of literature would strengthen their mother-daughter relationship. I also stated other benefits of participating including

providing a feeling of recognition and acceptance that adolescent girls need, giving moms and daughters a chance to express themselves as individuals, enjoying the company of woman and girls with similar interests, and strengthening the critical thinking skills of participants (Dodson,1997).

The mothers were then asked to sign an informed consent statement. Both mothers and daughters were asked to complete a pre-book club survey. The following items were answered independently by each member:

- How much time do you spend in conversation with your mom/daughter Monday through Friday?
- How much time do you spend in conversation with your mom/daughter during the weekend?
- What is the topic you discuss the most with your mom/daughter?
- How would you describe the tone of most conversations with your mom/daughter?
- How would you describe your relationship with your mom/daughter?
- How much time do you spend reading for pleasure each week?
- Do you enjoy reading for pleasure?
- Do you talk about what you read with your mom/daughter? If so, how often do you share?

At that time I stated the two expectations of all group members. First, everyone was to show respect for one another during discussions. Secondly, we discussed commitment to the club in terms of reading the books, attending the meetings, and contributing to discussions. A meeting time and hostess were then chosen. Finally, five books were presented to the group. They included The Midwife's Apprentice by Karen Cushman (1996), The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1987), The Borrowing Room by Paul Fleischman (1993), Letters from a Slave Girl by Mary E. Lyons (1996), and True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi (1992). The group discussed the selections and decided on The Midwife's Apprentice and Letters from a Slave Girl as their first two books. They were asked to bring recommendations for books to future book club meetings.

During subsequent mother-daughter book club meetings a typical agenda began to

form. The mothers and daughters would arrive and begin catching up socially. The hostess served a snack and beverage. I would suggest we start the book discussion. Although I led the first two meetings the members soon began forming their own questions. The following are some typical discussion questions from Letters from a Slave Girl:

- Who was Harriet's first owner in the book? What did she do for Harriet that was so unusual?
- Gran, Uncle Mark, and John are sold at a Public Sale similar to a household/farm auction many of us have attended today. Compare the two types of sales.
- Who gives Gran her freedom? What does that actually mean?
- How does Dr. Norcom feel toward Harriet? Why?
- What is Harriet's solution to the cottage being built? How do you think this changes her entire future?
- Harriet made great sacrifices for her children. Was it worth it? Did she ever fulfill her dreams?
- What qualities do Harriet and Alyce from The Midwife's Apprentice share? What would happen if they traded lives?

We often included a pre-discussion rating, post-discussion rating, and/or assigned a word or phrase that best described each members feelings about the book (Slevak, 1995). The meeting would end by scheduling the next meeting date and place. A book would also be chosen from member suggestions if needed.

At the conclusion of our fourth mother-daughter book club meeting I asked both mothers and daughters to complete a post-book club survey. They were asked to individually complete an identical survey to the pre-book club survey with the addition of the following four questions:

- Describe your overall feeling toward the mother-daughter book club.
- How do you think the mother-daughter book club has changed the length and/or quality of your conversations with your mom/daughter?
- How do you think the mother-daughter book club has changed the quality of your

relationship with your mom/daughter?

- Would you recommend a mother-daughter book club to other girls/mothers? Why or why not?

## **Chapter Four**

### **Analysis**

Pseudonyms used for students in the following analysis include: Pam, Angie, Kandy, Michelle, Lucy, Kris, Laura, Julie, Mandy, and Lisa. Mothers are referred to using their daughter's pseudonym.

During the organizational meeting the girls were quiet. Some sat in groups among themselves on the floor while others sat at the feet of their mother. Few acknowledged their mother's presence. There was little socializing among the mothers. Everyone was ready to start very quickly after arriving.

The mothers and daughters were asked to fill out a pre-book club survey. The results to those questions are as follows:

#### **Conversation Time**

When asked how much time was spent in conversation with their mother/daughter from Monday through Friday answers varied greatly. The girls responded from ten minutes to "a lot, every day!"

Pam commented, "Not much at all! I'm busy, she works."

Angie's statement was typical, "A couple of hours spread out through the week." The majority of girls indicated spending less than five hours during the work week having a conversation with their mother.

Pam's mother agreed with her. "Depends on the week, when I am working and get home late and if she is studying or in bed, not much." Angie's mother also agreed indicating two hours. On the other hand, Kandy's mother, whose daughter had indicated only speaking only 10 minutes, felt they spoke together 10 hours. The remaining mothers and daughters were very close in their estimations, again, with the majority spending less than five hours during the work week in conversation.

In contrast, when asked how much time was spent in conversation with your mother/daughter during the weekend the mothers greatly differed in their estimation in comparison with their daughters. Michelle stated one and half hours to her mother's four



to five. Lucy stated two hours to her mother's six to eight.

Kris commented, "a little in the car in the morning" in contrast to her mother's two to three hours. The majority of girls estimated speaking to their mothers two hours or less on weekends, while the majority of mothers estimated speaking to their daughters two hours or more.

### **Discussion Topics**

Daughters and mothers were very similar on the topics they felt they discussed most with one another.

Kandy stated, "school" while her mother commented, "Her feelings on issues, especially how was school."

Michelle replied, "We don't have a main topic. It varies topics."

Her mother listed, "her social activities, friends, family activities, TV/movies."

Many girls liked to discuss boys with their mothers agreeing. School activities and social relationships were the two most popular answers.

### **Conversation Tone**

The majority of the responses to how would you describe the tone of most conversations with your mother/daughter were positive. "Nice", "pleasant", "normal", and "calm" were typical responses.

Michelle commented, "Most of it is pleasant but there is friction sometimes."

Laura stated, "A quarter of the time is yelling and three quarters of it is talking."

Kandy's mother described their conversations as "almost always positive and caring."

All of the mothers thought their relationship with their daughter was "good", "wonderful", or "close".

Michelle's mother replied, "Wonderful. I appreciate her individuality and recognize her."

Lucy's mother stated, "Pretty open, we're trying to work a lot on trust."

Kris' mother commented, "Close with limits." Most of the daughters agreed.

Pam wrote, "I guess we're sort of close, but fight sometimes."

Susan felt her relationship with her mother was, "A good one. We talk a lot and I can talk to her about anything."

### **Time Reading**

The amount of time spent reading for pleasure each week varied considerably for both daughters and mothers. Many of the girls reported little if any reading for pleasure. Four read daily, sometimes for hours. The same was true for mothers. Most read two hours or less a week. Two read five to six hours.

When asked if they enjoyed reading for pleasure the majority of the girls replied that they did.

Kandy stated, "Not very much."

Michelle commented, "Sometimes, kind of."

All of the mothers said they enjoyed reading for pleasure with many commenting on the lack of time to do so.

More girls talk to their mom about what they share than vice versa although the majority do not discuss literature often. Most that do share limited their discussions to books read during the school year. Mothers were more likely to share newspaper or magazine articles with their daughters than fiction.

Michelle's mom wrote, "Varies with what I'm reading. Books for pleasure- probably not. Magazines- yes, depending on the article."

Julie's mom states, "We will now I hope. We used to discuss the books I read to her (over and over) when she was little."

At the second meeting during which the first book club discussion took place the girls were much more vocal and giggled a lot. They sat in groups with very few sitting near their mothers. Again, they did not speak to their mothers. The mothers were a little more social but were again ready to start shortly after arriving. The book discussion was very choppy. I would ask a question and the girls had to resist the strong urge to raise their hands. Their responses were brief and jumped quickly from one girl to another. Many girls were interrupting the speaker. The mothers responded more personally but had trouble adding to the conversation.

As the number of book club meetings increased the attendance of mothers and daughters decreased. The social time before and after the meetings became longer with casual book discussions beginning immediately. The girls began sitting near or next to their mothers and interruptions were significantly reduced. I continued beginning the discussion with questions, but the members often took over. My question would often lead to other questions and view points. The girls and mothers began listening and speaking with one another. The number of silent reflections also increased. Body language indicated understanding and acceptance. The atmosphere was more cozy, less threatening and provided easier sharing time.

Following our fourth Mother-Daughter book club meeting the members were asked to fill out an identical survey with the addition of four follow-up questions. Again, the attendance had dropped, but the members that continued to participate increased the length and thoughtfulness of their responses.

When asked how much time spent in conversation with their mother/daughter Monday through Friday the girls' estimations ranged from Kris' "whenever we're in the car and other times better" to Julie's "none at all on Tuesdays, all day on Monday and Wednesday during the summer. Thursdays and Fridays for about eight hours." Susan's and Mandy's time slightly decreased. Lisa and Michelle's mothers felt their time spent in conversation had stayed the same. Kris and Julie's mothers agreed with their daughters and the increased time. Susan's mother felt their time had decreased even more significantly than her daughter's estimation.

Weekend time spent in conversation increased or stayed the same for all members except for Susan and her mother. Their time decreased slightly.

Julie's mother commented on their conversations as, "every waking hour--she never stops!"

Kris also remarked, "Whenever I see her (my mom) which is better."

The topic discussed most with their mother/daughter was unchanged with one exception. Many daughters and mothers commented on plans for the day, boys, shopping, clothes, friends, family, and behavior.

Julie wrote, "Lately a lot about the book club, life, and boys."

Susan added, "Boys, shopping, clothes, books, and girl stuff."

There was also little if any change when asked about the tone of most conversations with their mother/daughter. Most members felt their conversations were calm, normal, pleasant, and civil.

Julie stated, "We have little arguments, mostly a normal tone."

Laura's mother described their conversations as, "a civil tone, we have great talks and it has been great this summer."

All members had positive responses when asked how they would describe their relationship with their mother/daughter.

Kris wrote, "Pretty good, gotten better."

Kris' mother agreed, "I think she respects my opinions when it matters and ignores my opinion on trivial fashion issues."

Laura stated, "We're like best friends."

Laura's mother felt, "Great! We are very close to each other." Other typical responses were good, close, or great.

Time spent reading for pleasure each week increased for most members. Responses from the daughters included every day and every night.

Kris commented, "more than I used to." The mothers were also finding more time to read.

Michelle's mother wrote, "Not enough, but I try to at least five hours."

Kris' mother replied, "Not very much, but it is getting higher priority."

Julie's mother also increased her reading time to ten to twenty hours a week.

Every member indicated enjoying reading for pleasure but were split when asked if they talk about what they read with their mother/daughter. Three daughters and one mother said they do not share what they read.

Kris' mother stated, "Yes, when I feel I can get a nickels worth in."

Michelle's mother said, "Yes, two or three times a week." Susan also felt she and her mother shared at least twice a week.

Kris thought, "Yes, more than we used to."

Julie commented, "Yes, every book."

The members were then asked to describe their overall feelings toward the mother-daughter book club.

Susan wrote, "I really like it. It is fun to read the books."

Laura stated, "It's a good thing for kids and their parents to get closer."

"I think it is a good idea and a way to get girls to communicate better with moms, peers, peers' moms, and teachers," replied Mandy.

Michelle's mom commented, "We have enjoyed it. We have discussed the books together."

Susan's mother added, "I am enjoying the books and am especially enjoying getting to know the girls and their moms!"

"Very good idea!" wrote Kris' mom.

The daughters felt there was less a change in the length and/or quality of their conversations as a result of the book club than their mothers.

Mandy replied, "Not much but some. She's always busy or away."

Kris and Susan thought they talked more with their mom. Lisa and Laura felt there was no change.

Kris' mother wrote, "I think it is improving her willingness to open up to me and she is surprised that we would agree on things."

"It has given us another area of interest to share and discuss," added Susan's mother.

Julie's mom commented, "We share our opinions more and appreciate that it is okay if they differ."

When asked how the book club had changed the quality of their relationship with their mother/daughter opinions varied. Three daughters and two mothers felt there was no change in the quality of their relationships. The majority recognized an improvement in quality but varied in degree of change.

Mandy felt, "She sort of understands that I have different subjects that interests

me.”

Susan wrote, “We understand each other more.”

Kris’ mother replied, “I feel she has matured with age and also from this experience and has opened up to me!”

“We discuss more than argue,” was added by Julie’s mother.

In conclusion, the members were asked if they would recommend a mother-daughter book club to other daughter/mothers.

Michelle responded, “Yes, because it is a good experience.”

Lisa agreed, “Yes, it is fun.”

Susan commented, “Yes, I think that they would really like it.”

“Sure, it’s cool,” replied Kris.

Julie stated, “Yes, it helps teenage girls communicate with their mothers.”

“Yes, because it is a good way to get better acquainted with your mom,” said Laura.

The mothers agreed with their daughters.

“Definitely!”, wrote Kris’ mother.

Susan’s mother said, “Yes, I would recommend it mainly because of the relationships forms with the girls and their moms.”

“Yes. It gives you a one on one with one daughter. If I was having problems with my daughter I could see it helping,” responded Lisa’s mother.

Laura’s mother felt, “Yes, it’s nice to get together with all the kids and mothers.”

Julie’s mother agreed, “Definitely, for me, it’s been nice getting to know some of the girl’s mothers that I had never met before.”

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this research paper was to examine book clubs and how they affect the mother/daughter relationship including conversational habits. Thirteen seventh grade female students and their mothers participated in the book club. The members were surveyed during the initial organizational meeting as to their conversational habits with one another as well as their perceptions of the quality of their mother/daughter relationship. The members then participated in several book club meetings. Mothers and daughters were asked to reflect upon their own life experiences in relationship to each of the characters in the novels discussed. The members were then surveyed again.

I held the belief at the beginning of this study that it would be a positive experience for everyone involved. I felt any effort dedicated toward spending more time directly involved in an activity with a family member had to be beneficial. After spending countless hours selecting books to suggest and writing thought-provoking questions in addition to the approximately eight hours in actual book club meetings I strongly believe I was correct. Not only does the survey indicate an improvement in the relationships between mothers and daughters, but the body language and conversational styles displayed during meetings demonstrated to me that a line of communication had opened and strengthened between mother and daughter.

Time spent in conversation with their mother/daughter during the week and on weekends either stayed the same or increased for the majority of members. The topics discussed during this time continued to be normal adolescent concerns with the addition of book club talk. Many mothers and daughters commented at the meetings regarding how they managed sharing the book whether that was trading it back and forth or taking turns reading aloud. I felt this all involved a positive communication line between mother and daughter.

Thankfully, the tone of most conversations was “calm” or “pleasant” for most

participants. Also, their descriptions of the relationship they shared were positive. Although I was encouraged by comments such as “Pretty good, gotten better.” I felt the book club gave many families something neutral and positive to share.

Book reading habits also seemed to improve slightly. Talking about the novels gave the girls a reason for the reading and motivated the mothers find the time in their day. I also felt from their comments they were more willing to share their reading insights with one another. When asked informally at the book club meeting if they had already discussed the book most mothers and daughters confessed that they had.

The follow-up questions on the post-book club survey allowed me to get an idea if the members felt the experience was worthwhile. Most expressed very positive comments and would recommend mother-daughter book clubs to others.

In conclusion, the majority of mothers and daughters felt the mother-daughter book club had some type of positive impact on the relationship they shared. The surveys, discussions, and body language shown at the meetings were illustrative of the power of book clubs. Dodson (1997) states:

The gap we feared would widen between our daughters and ourselves doesn't loom as large or as threatening in our thoughts anymore. As girls once, and mothers now, we know the distance will impose itself during the teen years ahead; it's only natural. But we know, as well, that the bridge of sharing we have established through our Mother-Daughter Book Club can span those years and beyond. The bridge is strong from both sides. The girls' views of us as individuals and their expressions of our role in their lives tell us that love can bridge the gap if you give it a way to get across. (p. 159)

### **Recommendations**

With the growing interest in book clubs, especially those focused on adolescents as members, research should look at the possibility of using them as school promoted activities to meet the needs of this student population.

Schools could provide the format and/or discussion leader to help parents form their own book clubs. This could be beneficial in many ways. Research could look at an



increase in parental involvement, community communication, reading/critical thinking scores, and discipline referrals. Involving parents in education has been a goal for most districts and book clubs could be an avenue to achieve that objective.

In addition, research needs to be done on the length of mother-daughter book clubs on relationships. Are mother-daughter book clubs a long term answer to strengthening the bond that gets tested throughout adolescence? Could mother-daughter book clubs endure through young adulthood and beyond?

Mother-daughter book clubs are a relatively new concept and I feel, with the data provided in this study, one worth exploring further.

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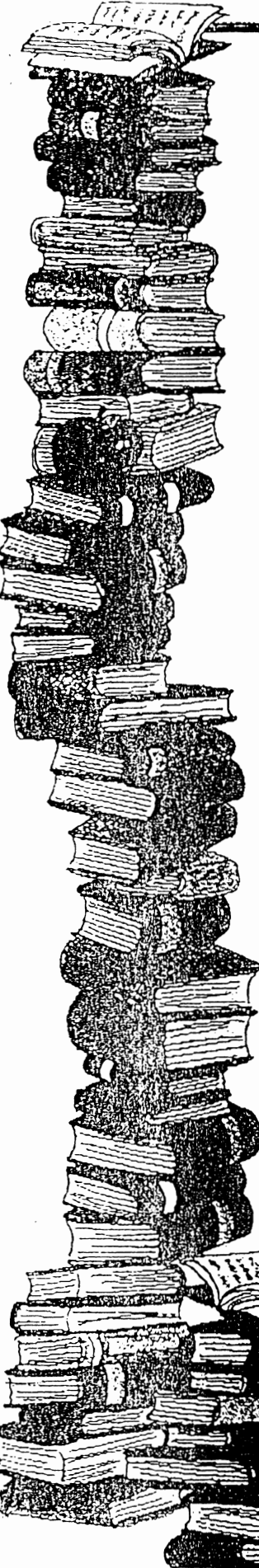
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**Appendix A**  
**Organizational Meeting Invitation**



You are invited to the  
organizational meeting  
of the 7th Grade

## MOTHER-DAUGHTER BOOK CLUB

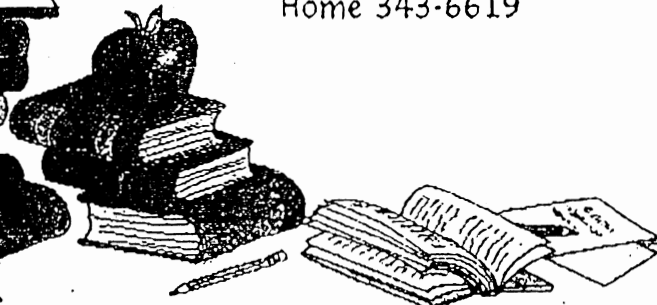
When: Monday, May 1, 2000  
7:00 p.m.

Where: Home of Judy and Jessica  
Williams

408 West Marquardt Street  
Avoca, Iowa  
(big brown house with blue trim;  
Marquardt is a block south of  
Frost Avenue)

Please bring your calendars  
so we can schedule our  
first official  
Book Club meeting!

Questions? Kim Wise  
School 544-2240  
Home 343-6619



**Appendix B**  
**Informed Consent Statement**

## Informed Consent Statement

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I, Kim Wise, am completing an action research project as part of my master's program in Middle Level Curriculum at the University of Northern Iowa. This project will include research on mother-daughter book clubs and how such clubs affect the relationship between the mother and daughter. Your participation in a survey and book club discussions will be confidential. Names will be changed to protect your privacy. All surveys will be destroyed at the conclusion of my research project. You may discontinue participation at any time.

You may contact the office of the Human Subjects Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, (319) 273-2748, for answers to questions about the research and about any rights you may have.

You may also contact me at (712) 544-2240 or my advisor, Dr. Donna Schumacher-Douglas, at (319) 273- 5880.

Thank you for your participation.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of subject or responsible agent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of subject)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Investigator)

## Appendix C

### Surveys



Mother-Daughter Book Club  
Mother Survey  
Organizational Meeting

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

How much time do you spend in conversation with your daughter Monday through Friday?

How much time do you spend in conversation with your daughter during the weekend?

What is the topic you discuss the most with your daughter?

How would you describe the tone of most conversations with your daughter?

How would you describe your relationship with your daughter?

How much time do you spend reading for pleasure each week?

Do you enjoy reading for pleasure?

Do you talk about what you read with your daughter? If so, how often do you share?

Mother-Daughter Book Club  
Daughter Survey  
Organizational Meeting

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

How much time do you spend in conversation with your mother Monday through Friday?

How much time do you spend in conversation with your mother during the weekend?

What is the topic you discuss the most with your mother?

How would you describe the tone of most conversations with your mother?

How would you describe your relationship with your mother?

How much time do you spend reading for pleasure each week?

Do you enjoy reading for pleasure?

Do you talk about what you read with your mother? If so, how often do you share?

Mother-Daughter Book Club  
Mother Survey  
Fourth Book Club Meeting

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

How much time do you spend in conversation with your daughter Monday through Friday?

How much time do you spend in conversation with your daughter during the weekend?

What is the topic you discuss the most with your daughter?

How would you describe the tone of most conversations with your daughter?

How would you describe your relationship with your daughter?

How much time do you spend reading for pleasure each week?

Do you enjoy reading for pleasure?

Do you talk about what you read with your daughter? If so, how often do you share?

Describe your overall feelings toward the mother-daughter book club.

How do you think it has changed the length and/or quality of your conversations with your daughter?

How do you think it has changed the quality of your relationship with your daughter?

Would you recommend a mother-daughter book club to other mothers? Why?

Mother-Daughter Book Club  
Daughter Survey  
Fourth Book Club Meeting

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

How much time do you spend in conversation with your mother Monday through Friday?

How much time do you spend in conversation with your mother during the weekend?

What is the topic you discuss the most with your mother?

How would you describe the tone of most conversations with your mother?

How would you describe your relationship with your mother?

How much time do you spend reading for pleasure each week?

Do you enjoy reading for pleasure?

Do you talk about what you read with your mother? If so, how often do you share?

Describe your overall feelings toward the mother-daughter book club.

How do you think it has changed the length and/or quality of your conversations with your mother?

How do you think it has changed the quality of your relationship with your mother?

Would you recommend a mother-daughter book club to other daughters? Why?