A parent involvement program for the parents of elementary students in the Algona Community School District

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A parent involvement program for the parents of elementary students in the Algona Community School District

Abstract
Throughout history, education has been closely linked to the family and the economy. The family was the primary educator of children prior to the establishment of formal schools. Because the economy was a subsistence economy, parents taught their children the necessary skills to survive and children were viewed as important contributors to the business of making a living. Each family's livelihood was closely tied to the home and members of the family were building blocks of the society's economic organization. All the activities and training necessary for adulthood took place within the household or in easy distance from it (Coleman, 1987). Because parents taught their children, home and school were thought of as one unit.
A Parent Involvement Program for the Parents of Elementary Students in the Algona Community School District

A Graduate Project
Submitted to the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
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requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Education.

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Date Approved

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, education has been closely linked to the family and the economy. The family was the primary educator of children prior to the establishment of formal schools. Because the economy was a subsistence economy, parents taught their children the necessary skills to survive and children were viewed as important contributors to the business of making a living. Each family's livelihood was closely tied to the home and members of the family were building blocks of the society's economic organization. All the activities and training necessary for adulthood took place within the household or in easy distance from it (Coleman, 1987). Because parents taught their children, home and school were thought of as one unit.

As the base of the economic structure changed from a rural one to an industrial one, the family also changed. As women and men became employed outside the home, the education of children was also altered. Youth were no longer taught the family business because the family was now dependent on other means to survive. The Industrial Revolution which occurred during the latter half of the 19th century prompted changes in the educational system and formal schooling began to
emerge as a separate entity of society (Coleman, 1987).

Although parents were entrusting the education of their children to an individual outside the family, they continued to influence what was taught. The earliest public school teachers in the United States were hired by the community (the parents), told what to teach, and closely monitored by the community (Gordon & Breivogel, 1976). The home and school communicated closely about the educational process. Teachers taught basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic while families taught the basic moral and social development skills necessary to survive in the world (Kapan, 1984).

During the late 1800s public education gained momentum in the United States. The first American kindergarten was established in 1856 and was based on the principles of Friedrich Froebel (Hepworth Berger, 1991). Froebel, the Father of Kindergarten, believed in the concept of unity—a child unfolded naturally and the mother assisted in this process: Froebel (cited in Hepworth Berger, 1991) recognized the mother as the first educator of the child. The importance of the family continued into the 1900s. Roles were defined; the father provided financial support and the mother controlled the home environment. Children attended schools in their community in order to learn skills that would enable them to
secure employment after finishing school. The roots of the public schools were tied to the neighborhood, the community, and the home. Industrialization and urbanization brought diversity to communities and schools began regulating curricula to unite the various populations (Kapan, 1984).

The mid-1900s brought changes to the economic structure, and consequently, to the institution of education and the structure of the family. Families became primarily dependent on outside sources for income and were more mobile. More women joined the work force. The extended family became a thing of the past. As families moved from rural to urban areas, the separation of school and families increased. Teachers no longer lived close to the school where they taught, and also, families lived farther from the schools where their children attended. Parents turned the responsibility of teaching over to professionals. The curriculum components expanded beyond basic academics to non-academic issues such as societal values, character development, and technical skills (Gordon & Breivogel, 1976; Hepworth Berger, 1991).

During the 1960s the federal government became politically aware of relationships between poverty and academic achievement. Programs were initiated to assist low socio-economic families as federal
funds were made available to explore ways to improve the educational environment. Gordon and Breivogel (1976) noted that "Only painfully and slowly was the knowledge acquired that responsibilities for difficulties in school rested partly on the school as well as on outside forces" (p. 4). Head Start was established and, later, the Follow Through Program was created. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1965 resulting in school desegregation and forced busing. It also prompted parents to question school programs and their participation with schools and relationships with teachers (Hepworth Berger, 1991). That same year the Elementary and Secondary School Act was passed which provided funds for Title 1 and increased the amount of federal monies available for grants. All these programs included a parent participation component, but they did not address the total school population. As families put more energy into dealing with the pressures of financial security, securing adequate childcare, and complex family schedules, the separation between home and school became even greater (Chavkin, 1989).

In 1975 the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142 was passed. This law mandated free and appropriate education for handicapped children. A follow-up to P.L. 94-142 was P.L. 99-457, passed in 1987, which was designed to serve handicapped and
developmentally delayed children from birth until 2 years of age. Because of these laws, family input was increased in educational programs serving handicapped children.

While federal programs targeted special populations, a movement was initiated to make American schools superior to all other schools. On April 26, 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented its report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. This report sparked widespread public response to the criticisms and challenges made by the commission (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983). *A Nation at Risk* informed the world that students in the United States did not perform as well, nor could they expect to perform as well, as students in other countries, if the American schools continued their present educational programs. It also stated that America's position as world leader was at risk due to mediocre student achievement and attitudes (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983; Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984). The Commission recommended changes in curriculum content, academic standards and expectations, time spent learning, and professional teaching issues. In order to achieve the recommended reforms, the Commission called for leadership from educators, citizens, and elected officials.
During his State of the Union address to Congress on Jan. 31, 1990, President George Bush announced America's educational goals for the future: By the year 2000, children must start school ready to learn; there should be a 90% high school graduation rate; student achievement in math and science must be first in the world; every American adult must be a skilled, literate worker and citizen; and school environments must be drug-free and enhance learning. President Bush called for all Americans to work together to meet these goals (State of the Union address, 1990).

Statements in these reports addressed several changes in education during the current post industrial era. The school curriculum is much more extensive than the teaching of basic skills: academic content can be determined by pressure from universities, society and other countries; schools are dealing with non-academic issues; and parents are being asked to assist in the process of learning. Implicit is the notion that teachers cannot meet these challenges alone and that parents have not been involved in the educational process for some time. These reports also called for a partnership between school, home, and community to improve schools and student achievement (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983; United States, 1984).

The focus of current educational programs involving parents has
been low socio-economic families and/or families having a disabled child. Research was shown that all students can benefit from parental involvement, not just economically or otherwise disabled children. Melnick and Fiene (1990) reported a direct relationship between parents' attitudes and student achievement. Children of parents with positive attitudes toward school effectiveness and involvement in school programs had higher achievement scores than children of non-involved parents with low attitudes toward school.

In research conducted by Roberta Rubin (1983), the long-term effects of the Parent Education Follow Through Program were examined. The Follow Through Program is a federally funded national model which focuses on parent involvement and participation in the educational system. From a sample in Richmond, Virginia, Rubin determined that students had a lower dropout frequency than siblings who had not participated in the program. Although not statistically significant, decreases were also noted in the frequency of grade retention and time spent in special education programs. Chavkin (1989) found similar benefits of parent involvement. In addition to increased student achievement, Chavkin noted decreased drop-out rate, positive parent-child communication, improvement of student attitudes and behaviors,
and more parent-community support of the school.

Herman and Yeh (1980) found that parent involvement in schools is beneficial. The degree of parent interest and participation in school activities is positively related to student achievement. Parental resources enabled schools to improve their instructional program and this resulted in more student success. When parents were given some influence and involvement in the school program, the school and parent shared responsibility for the instructional program.

According to Willard Daggett (1992), society is becoming more and more technological. Educators must adapt curricula and methods to enable students to survive when they leave school. To meet this challenge, school systems must work collectively with parents. Gordon and Breivogel (1976) have stated that "...bigness and technology have destroyed the traditional relationships..." (p.3) between home and school. New challenges and new opportunities exist for both home and school. New methods must be found to tie these two components together.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project is to develop a program that elementary teachers in the Algona community School District can use to involve parents in their child's academic program. To achieve this
purpose the following questions will be asked and answered:

1. What are the needs of the parents of elementary students in the Algona Community School District?

2. What resources are currently available to parents and staff?

3. What are the barriers to parent involvement and how can these barriers be broken down?

4. How can current practices be changed to improve parent involvement?

Need for the Study

If schools are to accomplish the reforms needed to improve student achievement, partnerships must be formed between the home, the school, and the community (Seeley, 1984). Improvements made must ultimately produce successful learning relationships between teachers and students with the students as the focus of intervention. Because students are members of a family, a peer group, and the community, all can affect a parent involvement program.

Research has shown that involving parents is beneficial to student achievement (Herman & Yeh, 1980; Melnick & Fiene, 1990; Rubin, 1983). There are approximately 940 families with children attending school in the Algona Community School District. The Parent Teacher
Organization (PTO), the only formal home-school organization in Algona, has a membership of only 150 families. Clearly, there is a need to involve more parents in the educational process. Many programs have been developed to increase parent involvement in this process. In order for a parent involvement program to be most effective, it must be designed to meet the specific needs of the school district using the program. This paper will set guidelines for a program utilizing components of select programs, successful practices of parent intervention, and previously used activities that will be most beneficial to parents in the Algona Community School District. The program will be individualized to meet local needs, overcome local barriers, and improve the overall level of parent participation.

Limitations

This plan will propose topics and methods for intervention. Without an actual needs assessment of elementary staff and parents it is unknown whether the topics/methods selected would be appropriate. Contents of this plan were chosen based on discussions with other elementary teachers, parents of elementary students, PTO members, PTO surveys, school board members, and recommendations deduced from research in the area of parent involvement. It would be beneficial to
have additional input from the local business community, parents, and teachers.

A second limitation is lack of funds to produce handouts, hire presenters, and provide materials to parents for home activities. With this in mind, the proposed plan will use existing resources and donated materials.

A final limitation is the inability to implement all of the suggested program activities. It will be impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of this program prior to implementation.

Definitions

The following terms will be defined in this study to mean the following:

**Parent involvement** refers to a parent's active participation in the school program in the following ways:

1. observing of his or her own child.
2. teaching his or her own child.
3. volunteering in the school.
4. making and/or providing materials for the school or classroom.
5. making decisions about his or her child’s program.
6. acting as an advocate of the school.
7. being a liaison between school and home to support homework and awareness of school activities (Gordon & Breivogel, 1976; Hepworth Berger, 1991).

**Staff** refers to the certified elementary teachers, paid classroom assistants, principals, and the superintendent of the Algona Community School District.

**ACSD** refers to the Algona Community School District which is composed of the School Board, administrative and teaching staff, and the families of children attending school in Algona.

**PTO** refers to the Parent-Teacher Organization, a volunteer program in the ACSD run by parents in partnership with ACSD staff.

**Elementary** refers to the early childhood, special education, kindergarten, first, second, third, forth, and fifth grade classes at Bryant, Lucia Wallace, and Bertha Godfrey Elementary Schools.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT

In order to determine the components of an effective parent involvement plan, four factors must be examined: 1. What are the needs of the local parents and teachers? 2. What are the current practices and resources available? 3. What are the existing barriers that hinder parent involvement? 4. What are the components of successful, established parent involvement programs?

Barriers to parent involvement:

Recent articles discuss barriers to parental involvement. It is important to examine these barriers as they impact the ACSD. Most of the barriers stated in the literature can be found in the ACSD. Numerous changes in family structure contribute to home-school difficulties. These include an increase in the divorce rate, an increase in the number of double-income families, a rise in the number of single-parent homes, and an increase in the number of families living below the poverty level (Chavkin, 1989). Other barriers include lack of time for both parents and teachers, difficulty coordinating schedules, inadequate childcare, inflexible employer-leave policies, negative attitudes of teachers toward parents, negative attitudes of parents toward school, lack of materials,
and lack of knowledge and training about methods of working together (Chavkin, 1989; Espinoza, 1988; Leitch & Tangri, 1988).

Seeley (1984) identified four problems facing school reform. These issues affect the school and parents. He stated inadequate funding, setting of academic standards, indecision about which grade level to begin reform, and the interaction of public relations and political strategy are the keys to forming an educational partnership to improve schools. Seeley believes that with a partnership model, blame for inadequacies will decrease as responsibility is shared by home, school, and the community to improve the existing program.

A final barrier to forming solid partnerships between home and school is the lack of training teachers receive regarding techniques for working with parents. Chavkin and Williams (1988) found 86% of teachers surveyed in a research project felt training was needed for working with parents. Although teachers and principals felt related coursework would be beneficial, only a small percentage of teachers had received training to work with parents at the undergraduate level.

Needs of parents and teachers:

In a survey completed by 235 elementary parents in Algona, the following items were identified as needs:
a) Desire to understand their child's curricula in order to assist with homework.

b) Difficulties arranging personal schedules, time off from work and/or child care to attend school activities.

c) Not enough time to discuss their child with the teacher at conferences.

d) Feeling uninformed about what happens at school.

e) Feeling decisions are made without parent input (global and specific to own child).

f) Ignorance about the programs the school has available and how children qualify for such programs.

g) Feeling the teacher is not sensitive to individual family situations, feeling uncomfortable sharing personal information with the teacher.

h) Assistance is requested in limited manner (clerical, field trips, special activities) from the school.

i) Desire to learn ways to help own child learn and feel better about self.

j) Learn ways to improve family cooperation, discipline techniques, parenting suggestions.
Needs of Algona elementary teachers identified from surveys completed by 43 elementary teachers were:

a) Lack of time to complete required paperwork.

b) Needing assistance on field trips, special activities.

c) Needing classroom volunteers to reinforce and/or review concepts taught by the teacher.

d) Assistance to correct papers, make learning materials, put up bulletin boards, reproduce materials.

e) Desire guest speakers to make classroom presentations.

f) Lack of time to meet with parents.

g) Difficulty communicating with parents (interaction between home and school, parents not attending meetings, lack of follow-through on intervention plans).

h) Feeling uninformed about effective ways to involve parents.

Current practices:

The following practices are currently in place to foster communication between schools and parents and encourage participation in the ACSD. At the district level, most of these practices place the parent in the observer or receiver of information role. At the elementary level, parents have more opportunities to be actively involved
in the learning program. District-wide practices are:

a) Parent-Teacher Conferences held 2-3 times a year, 15 minutes per conference.

b) An all-school musical program, one for each elementary building.

c) Weekly newsletter, the Alert, is distributed covering events affecting preK-grade 12.

d) Monthly newsletter, the Elementary Ed, sent out from each elementary building with stories specific to that building.

e) Open House visitation one evening each fall.

f) Adopt-a-School Program whereby two or three local firms are linked to each elementary school.

At the elementary level teachers involve parents in a variety of ways. Some rely on written correspondence, others make telephone calls, and a few conduct home visits. Practices are not consistent between all three schools and all teachers do not follow identical methods when working with parents outside of the district guidelines for conferences, music productions, and newsletters. Each elementary school has tried a whole-school activity: one held a Parent Workshop evening during which parents attended several mini-sessions on
academic, parenting, and social skills issues; another held parent-child
activity nights centered around an academic theme; and a third
emphasized school pride. Most teachers have students perform some
sort of production (play, science exhibit, holiday feast, etc.) and invite
parents to attend.

The PTO initiated a volunteer program at one elementary school
during 1991-92 and plans to extend the program to all three buildings for
the 1992-93 year. Current PTO activities are:

a) Volunteer program utilizing parents and local citizens.

b) Blue Star Homes located near elementary schools to provide
assistance to children.

c) Information questionnaire and flier distributed to parents at fall
registration.

d) Quiz Bowl event held in the spring.

Components of established programs:

Numerous programs are in existence across the country to
increase parent involvement in school programs. Several aspects are
common to these programs and deserve to be mentioned:

a) Teacher training to learn how to work with parents.

b) Parent workshops to learn how to work with teachers and their
own child.

c) Some type of activity packet/home activities for parents to use at home with their child.

d) Information sharing through parent-teacher conferences, resource centers set up at school, parent peer groups, meetings, newsletters.

e) Public relations component--radio, television, and newspaper spots concerning local school issues.

f) Advisory committee composed of parents, teachers, and local citizens.

g) Home visitations.

h) Active and committed administration.

i) Social and emotional support--appreciation teas, letters, community resources.


Synthesis of factors affecting content:

An effective parent involvement program for the Algona Community School District must incorporate several components to be
successful. A strong community tie is lacking in current practices and an
effort must be made to strengthen this aspect of parental involvement.
Both teachers and parents express a desire for more information,
training, and programming in several areas—home activities,
communicating with each other, easing schedule conflicts, and
awareness of issues affecting home and/or school environments. Efforts
by staff appear fragmented and a more unified plan must be developed.
Because of the small percentage of parents active in the Parent-Teacher
Organization, it would be worthwhile to coordinate activities with this
group to foster increased levels of participation. The PTO could create a
parent advisory board, an aspect of many successful programs.

Considering the aforementioned issues, the Parent Involvement
Program for the parents of elementary students in the Algona Community
School District will include the following components:

1. Opening the lines of communication.
2. Increasing community involvement.
3. Forming a partnership between parents and teachers—teacher
and parent training.
CHAPTER III
SYNTHESIS OF CONTENT INTO OUTCOME STATEMENTS

After the implementation of this Parent Involvement program, benefits will be observed in several ways. Improvements will be observed in each discipline of home, school, and community.

The community employers will be more receptive to parental needs which are related to school issues. Local firms will be more actively involved in the educational process and more receptive to the needs of the school system. Local citizens will be more aware of events in the school and more receptive to the requirements necessary to provide a quality education.

Parents will have more knowledge of what is taught at the various grade levels and more understanding of the sequence of skills, developmental skills necessary to complete tasks, and testing tools used by the school system. Special programs available through the school system will be understood by parents and parents will know where to go to receive services (in school or in the community). Parents will also learn techniques for discipline, homework assistance, and communicating with school personnel. Because of increased parent
involvement, children will begin to view parents as an integral part of school. Since parents are more involved, student achievement levels are expected to improve.

Elementary staff will learn to team with parents to teach students. Teachers will be more sensitive and understanding of the issues affecting families of students. School staff will communicate more effectively with parents.

A decrease in the barriers to parent involvement will be noted after the implementation of this program. The home, school, and community will work more effectively together to improve student achievement and school challenges.
CHAPTER IV

DESIGN OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

The Parent Involvement Program for parents of elementary students in Algona will be an on-going one. After an initial needs assessment in September, activities will be scheduled throughout the school year (see Appendix A). The type of activities scheduled will be altered dependent on the results of the needs assessment and formative evaluations conducted during the year. This program is designed to improve communication between parents and teachers, increase community involvement in the educational process, and to help teachers, parents and local business firms work together more effectively. Current practices within the ACSD will be utilized in conjunction with new practices to improve parent involvement.

Program Components:

The Parent Involvement Program will continue the current practices of parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, all-school music programs, and Open House visitation. Three new practices will be (1) a Resource Center for parents within each elementary building, (2) a monthly Brown Bag lunch series for parents, and (3) large group evening parent meetings. All of these components will include a community
aspect. More effort will also be made to inform the community on a more regular basis about school events.

Resource centers will be established in each elementary building to provide a place where parents can check-out books and learning activities, network with other parents, and learn more about school and community resources. Each center will be set up by the building staff and parents (See Appendix B).

The Brown Bag lunch series are half-hour sessions designed to provide parents with home activity ideas, information about the school curricula, and suggestions on how to foster their child's development. Session topics will be determined by the needs assessment administered to parents and teachers in September. These sessions will be held at three local business locations which are employers of elementary parents. The sessions will be open to the general public and scheduled at times employees are on lunch breaks. Sessions will be led by persons with expertise in the topic area (see Appendix C). Activity ideas will be compiled from teacher suggestions and resource books (Jones, 1990; , 1991).

Evening parent meetings will be offered three times during the school year. Meetings will be organized with input from parents,
teachers, and community resource persons. The parents and teachers will have the opportunity to exchange ideas and to understand each other better. Meeting topics will be selected based on PTO surveys and the September needs assessment (see Appendix D).

Timeline for activities:

The timeline for program activities for parent involvement is outlined in Appendix G. Brown Bag Lunches for parents will begin in October and four parent meetings will be scheduled every other month during the school year. Monthly publicity and planning activities will be related to these events.
CHAPTER V

FORMATIVE EVALUATION PLAN

Program components were determined based on current research and discussions with local school personnel (Buchanan, 1992; Prior, 1992; Wymore, 1992). To evaluate the effectiveness of the Parent Involvement Program pre and post data, as well as ongoing data, will be analyzed. A needs assessment will be given to parents and staff in September and in May. Feedback will be requested about each aspect of the program: the Brown Bag series; publicity spots; parent meetings; the school Resource Centers; and overall satisfaction of home-school relationships (see Appendices A, C, and D). Because minimal data exists about the level of parent involvement from previous years, an informal comparison will be made between the 1992-93 school year and the 1991-92 school year.

Each parent meeting and Brown Bag session will be evaluated. Participants and activity leaders will be requested to complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of each activity (see Appendices C and D). The results of these evaluations will be compiled to determine the effectiveness of the activity; then, the information will be used when planning successive activities.
Two meetings will be held mid-year, one with parents and one with staff, to gain feedback about activities that have occurred to date. This information will be used to plan and/or alter future activities. The local business firms hosting the Brown Bag sessions will be contacted in January to gain feedback about their perceptions of this activity.

The program coordinator will compile ongoing data for the 1992-93 activities. Vital data will be: (a) number of participants at each activity, (b) who attends each activity, (c) age(s) of child(ren) of activity participants, (d) participant satisfaction with each activity, (e) amount of time required to plan/organize each activity, (f) funds spent on the program, and (g) persons who assist in planning and/or leading the activities (see Appendix F). This data will be compiled monthly and summarized at the end of the school year. A year-end program summary will be given to the local school board, the newspaper, Algona CEO managers, the parents, and the elementary teaching staff in Algona.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

A parent actively involved in the education of his or her child accomplishes many things: The partnership of home and school (parent and teacher) is strengthened; The parent sends a message to the child that education is important; The parent better understands the duties of the school and invites the school to understand better the duties of the parent. Improved understanding and awareness allows the educational system to program for the child more effectively. When the child receives more appropriate programming, his or her achievement level should improve.

The Parent Involvement Program developed here strives to increase the level of parent involvement in the educational process in Algona. As parent involvement increases, staff awareness and effectiveness will also increase. Together, a more cooperative and stronger partnership will be formed between Algona parents and elementary teaching staff.

Although parents are the main focus of this project, an effort is also made to improve community support and awareness of the needs of the
educational system. In the first year of this project the school system is
initiating more involvement with the business community. It is hoped that
this first step will foster future cooperation and increased active support
from employers of parents.

Conversations about this project with the local PTO president,
teachers, school board members, principals, and the school
superintendent have been encouraging and several components of this
program will be implemented on a trial basis during the 1992-93 school
year. During the 1992-93 school year parent surveys and teacher
surveys will be distributed to elementary parents and staff. The data
collected will be used to meet the needs of local parents and teachers
more effectively. The Brown Bag Lunch Series will be implemented at
two sites in Algona during the first year of this project. Parent Meetings
are scheduled at all elementary buildings giving parents the opportunity
to learn about issues related to parenting and to share opinions about
current practices in the Algona Community School District. The Algona
School Improvement Team, a committee of teachers, administration
persons, and school board members, has several "Town Meetings"
scheduled during the 1992-93 school year to gather input about school-
related issues from Algona citizens.
Conclusions

The following conclusions can be made from the planning and implementation of this project:

1. Parents are receptive to work-site programs which offer information of methods to work with children at home and activities to use which supplement school activities.

2. Parents are receptive to occasional evening meetings offering parent workshops, contact with other parents, and information from professionals dealing with children.

3. Teachers are interested in improving parent-teacher communication.

4. The school administration is committed to improving parent-school-community relations.

Goals for school improvement target parent involvement and the program outlined here will supplement several projects being planned for the school district. The support and commitment of the school administration will assist in the implementation of an effective parent involvement program. Working together, schools, parents and the community will better serve students and enable them to succeed when they leave the formal educational system.
Appendix A
Parent Needs Assessment

Directions: Please rate the following items according to your opinion of their importance. A scale from 1 to 5 is provided with (1) being the lowest or of little importance, and (5) being the highest or of greatest importance. Circle the rating you consider to be appropriate.

1. Information about the development of children:
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Information on your child's progress:
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Information about the school curriculum:
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Newsletter concerning school activities:
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Meetings for groups of parents on educational topics:
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Social activities for families:
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Receiving a monthly calendar of activities:
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Information concerning handicaps/disabilities:
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Suggestions for developing family communication:
   1 2 3 4 5

10. Suggestions for communicating with teachers:
    1 2 3 4 5

11. Opportunity to assist in your child's classroom:
    1 2 3 4 5
12. Observation of your child's classroom:
   1 2 3 4 5

13. Suggestions for home activities related to academics:
   1 2 3 4 5

14. Techniques for managing your child's behavior:
   1 2 3 4 5

15. Information about community resources available:
   1 2 3 4 5
Date: ______________________________

Parent Attitude Survey

Directions: Please rate the following items according to your opinion of their importance. A scale from 1 to 5 is provided with (1) being "no" or not at all, and (5) being "yes" or most of the time. Circle the rating you consider to be appropriate.

In my opinion, the Algona Community School District and staff...

1. Understands my needs as a parent:
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Is sensitive to my responsibilities as an employed parent:
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Informs me about school events:
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Explains to me what my child is taught, and why:
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Is sensitive to my child's needs:
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Involves me in decisions affecting my child:
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Offers enough opportunity to discuss my child's progress:
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Gives me ideas on how to help my child at home:
   1 2 3 4 5
9. Provides me with a variety of ways to be involved in my child's education:
   1  2  3  4  5

10. Keeps the whole community aware of the importance of a good education:
    1  2  3  4  5

Please make any comments or suggestions about the school district and/or the teaching staff:
Teacher Attitude Survey

Directions: Please rate the following items according to your opinion of their importance. A scale from 1 to 5 is provided with (1) being "no" or not at all, and (5) being "yes" or most of the time. Circle the rating you consider to be appropriate.

In my opinion, parents...

1. Understand my duties as a teacher:
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Are sensitive to my responsibilities to my entire class:
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Keep me informed about family events that could affect their child's school performance:
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Tell me what they feel is important for their child to learn:
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Can effectively assist in planning a school program for their child:
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Follow-through on suggestions I have made:
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Want more opportunity to discuss their child's progress:
   1 2 3 4 5
8. Want to be more involved in the education of their child:
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Are supportive of the job I do and the school district:
   1 2 3 4 5

Please make any additional comments or suggestions regarding parents:
Teacher Needs Assessment

Directions: Please rate the following items according to your opinion of their importance. A scale from 1 to 5 is provided with (1) being the lowest or of little importance, and (5) being the highest or of greatest importance. Circle the rating you consider to be appropriate.

1. More time to complete required paperwork during the school day:
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Additional assistance on field trips:
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Parent volunteers in the classroom:
   1 2 3 4 5

4. More time to make learning materials and bulletin board displays:
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Guest speakers for the classroom:
   1 2 3 4 5

6. More time and opportunity to meet with parents to discuss their child's progress:
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Training on how to work effectively with parents:
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Time and opportunity to network with other teachers:
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Community involvement in education:
   1 2 3 4 5

Please may any additional comments about needs you have:
Appendix B
Dear Parents,

We are setting up a Resource Center for parents in our school. This will be a place designed with you in mind. The Center will be located in the lobby by the main entrance to the building. The Resource Center will offer a variety of things:

-- a place to meet other parents

-- books to check-out about child development, home activities, behavior problems, and more

-- information about community services, school programs, and other resources

-- an area to check for activities happening at our school

-- a Lost & Found Box

-- an "All About Us" board featuring different families

We would like your help setting up this Center. If you have any books, games, or other materials you would like to donate to the Center, please bring them to the school. If you would like to help make bulletin board displays, catalogue material, or set up the center, let us know.

We're excited about this addition to our school and hope you will be, too!

Sincerely,
Suggested Furnishings and Material for Resource Center

2 chairs

1 small table

small bookshelf

wall calendar

bulletin board(s)

crēncils/pens and container

Lost & Found box

Swap Box (for exchanges)

boxes/buckets for donated materials

polaroid camera

suggestion box

Books on:  child development, home activities, family communication, behavior management

Displays for:  Featured Families, pamphlets about community resources, volunteer services, materials to donate
Suggested Books for Resource Center

Algonia Community School Elementary Curriculum

**Games for Learning**, by Peggy Kaye  
Noonday Press, New York

**Games for Math**, by Peggy Kaye  
Noonday Press, New York

**Games for Reading** by Peggy Kaye  
Noonday Press, New York

**Parents are Teachers, Too: Enriching Your Child's First Six Years**, by Claudia Jones  
Williamson Publishing, Charlotte, VT

**More Parents are Teachers, Too**, by Claudia Jones  
Williamson Publishing, Charlotte, VT

**The Kids' Nature Book**, by Susan Milord  
William Publishing, Charlotte, VT

More books to be added after input from staff and parents.
Information for the Algona CEO Managers:

Brown Bag Lunch Series

In an effort to improve parent involvement in the education process, the Algona Community School District is initiating a Brown Bag Lunch Series for parents. Because it is often difficult for working parents to attend school meetings during the day or evening, with this series the meetings will be brought to the parents. It is our hope that by offering sessions at places of employment, parents will become more actively involved in their child's education.

Each Brown Bag session will be one-half hour in length. A two-person team will lead the presentations on school-related or parenting issues. Each session will provide parents with home activity ideas to try with their elementary-aged child(ren). The following topics are tentitively scheduled for the 1992-93 school year:

Oct: Helping Your Child Read
Nov: Math Can Be Fun
Dec: Winter Survival Ideas (Help for Parent Sanity)
Jan: Who's the Boss? Tips for Effective Discipline
Feb: Right-on for Writing
March: Fun with Science
April: The World All Around--Geography Near and Far
May: Problem Solving--a Life Skill

Brown Bag sessions will be held on three Mondays each month (the same topic will be presented three times). Each Monday session would be hosted by the same business each month. For example:
1st Monday of the month: Druggist Mutual
2nd Monday of the month: Snap-On Tools
3rd Monday of the month: Hormel
The three business sites would remain constant throughout the year and would always host the same Monday. All sessions would be open to the public so other parents would have access to the series.

Each host site would need to provide a large room for meeting, chairs for participants, a table for session materials, and a chalk board (or similar board). Session leaders will provide the materials for each meeting.

Effective education is a partnership between home, school, and community. We hope you will be interested in being an active part of this partnership. If your business is interested in hosting the Brown Bag Lunch Series, please indicate with the name of your firm, contact person, and the best time for the session.

Thank you,

Holly Filson/Heath
BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

TOPIC:

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

Come and learn activity ideas to encourage your child's learning! These activities are geared for elementary-age children. Sponsored by the Algona Comm. School District.
Brown Bag Sign-in Sheet

Date: ________________

Location: ________________

Topic: _______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address &amp; Phone</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade of Child(ren)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Please put a check by your name if you are not employed by the business hosting this session.
Presenter Guidelines for Brown Bag Sessions

Topic: "Helping Your Child Read"

Introductions

(a) Group leaders introduce themselves to the group. Leaders should give a little background information about themselves (grade level taught, years of experience, years in Algona, etc.).

(b) Group participants introduce themselves to person(s) sitting beside them and sign the session sign-in sheet as it circulates the room.

(c) Group leaders ask, by show of hands, what grade children are in at school.

Topic: Helping Your Child Read

(a) Why: Group leaders explain why this is an important skill: say..."Reading is a life skill. Your child will use reading to complete most school activities, find employment, and enjoy leisure activities. For some children, reading is easy and for other children it is more difficult." Group leaders may wish to give examples of how important it is to read: "How many things have you read just since you entered this room? Do you need to know how to read to cook...assemble a bicycle...find your way in a strange town...?"

(b) How: Group leaders will preview the session content: say..."What we will give you today are some activities you can do with your child to encourage reading and help your child feel good about his or her abilities. These activities are not intended for drill work--these are 10 minute skill reinforcers for FUN. If your child is not interested or says he or she is bored, stop the activity. During our presentation, if you have comments or questions, please interrupt us. At the end of our presentation, we would welcome any activity ideas you have found successful when working with your child."
(c) What: Group leaders will pass out the hand-out with the reading activities and then proceed to demonstrate them. The reading activities are:

1. Word Links
2. A Label a Day
3. Roadblock
4. Pyramid
5. Read Aloud
6. Lettercard Phonics
7. Taped Stories
8. Newspaper Search
9. Matching Letters
10. Library Trip

Activities 1-5 are from Games for Learning by Kaye; activities 6-8 are from Parents are Teachers, Too, by Jones; and activities 9 & 10 are from teacher suggestions.

Evaluation

Group leaders will pass out the session evaluation form and pencils and the participants will fill them out.

Closing

Group leaders will ask for any suggestions of home activities the parents have tried and their child has enjoyed. Leaders will remind participants to talk to their child's teacher for more suggestions or if they have concerns about their child's ability to read. The participant with an "X" on their handout will receive a 'Roadblock' gameboard as a door prize. Leaders will thank everyone for coming and collect the evaluation forms as participants exit the room.
Chalk/slate markers

Name tags for leaders

Pencils (for participants)

Paper

Books to demonstrate reading aloud
   (one simple picture book, one second grade book, and one fifth grade level book)

2 sets of index cards with the alphabet letters on them (one letter for each card)

1 Newspaper

Reading/spelling list from a second grade teacher and a fifth grade teacher

Game boards for Roadblock and Pyramid

Game board for Wordlinks (use a write-on slate)

Index cards to use for labels

Sign-in Sheet

Evaluation Sheet
1. Wordlinks

Draw eleven linked circles on a piece of paper. Ask your child to say the first word that comes into his or her mind. Write it in the first circle. Now you say a word that you think of after hearing your child's word; write it in the next circle. Alternate turns until all the circles have words in them. Read the list to your child, pointing to each word.

2. A Label a Day

Use index cards, or cut up paper to form labels. Every day or so you and your child will decide on a new label for the child's room. Write the word on the card and tape it to the actual item. Some days, if your child is interested, s/he can write the label. Let him/her trace over your work if s/he is unable to write.

3. Roadblock

On a blank sheet of paper, draw a road subdivided into 10-15 sections. In each section of the road, write a word (from your child's reader, spelling list, or just an alphabet letter). Use a paper clip, car, etc., for a marker. Read each word aloud for your child. Then, challenge him/her to travel down the road. Roadblocks appear (your finger) when there's a word your child doesn't know. Say the word aloud, have your child repeat it; Go back to the beginning again and see if your child can travel farther down the road.

4. Pyramid

Draw two pyramids, ten blocks to each. Write words on pieces of paper; lay the papers face down. Your child selects a word card. Challenge your child to read the word before you count to ten (count silently). If your child can read the word, s/he can color a block on her/his pyramid. If not, you get to color one on your's.

5. Read Book

Select a book with your child (if your child chooses a book above his/her level, help choose one that is more appropriate). Set a special "Book time" and read the book aloud with your child. Be sure to ask questions, discuss any pictures, and discuss the story. Part of "Book time" should be a few minutes you each read a book to yourself.
6. Lettercard Phonics

Make a set of letter cards by writing individual letters of the alphabet. Say a word and have your child pick out from several cards the letter whose sound is heard at the beginning of that word. This game can also be played for ending sounds.

Hold up one letter card at a time. Your child "wins" each card for which he/she can think of a word that begins with that letter (or ends with that letter).

7. Tape Recorded Stories

Select a book with your child. Make a tape recording of you, or your child, reading the book. Find a bell or make some kind of noise to indicate when to turn the page. Older siblings can make a recording for a younger brother or sister.

8. Newspaper Search

Using a newspaper, have your child find different parts of the paper. Can you find a headline? Using the index, on what page will you find the comics? Can you find the letter "n" or can you find the word "nation"? Find the classified ads--which job listed would you like to have? Look at the photographs--write captions.

9. Matching Letters

Make two sets of upper case letter cards. Have your child match the cards. Do the same with lower case letter cards. Then, have your child match upper case to lower case letters.

10. Library Trip

Teach your child how to use the public library. Go together to the library, use the card catalogue to find books about specific topics. Make sure your child has a library card--and that you do too!

The Read Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease
This book has suggestions of good books to read aloud to children of all ages.

Activities from Games for Learning, by Peggy Kaye and More, Parents are Teachers, Too by Claudia Jones.
1. **Counting All the Time**

Count a little bit every day. Simply ask your child to count the number of a certain item in your home and to report back to you. Examples: shoes in a closet, the stuffed animals on the bed, pencils on the desk. You can also continue counting when you are not at home: blue cars, billboards, cars with dogs, bicycles...

2. **Hunt for Numbers**

Tell your child a specific number, if necessary, write that number down on paper. Challenge your child to find that number in the room. Remember to let your child select a number for you to find, too.

3. **Target**

Draw a target on a blank piece of paper. Make a target scorecard for each person playing. Throw nine paper clips onto the target. If a clip misses a circle, pick it up and throw it again. When all nine clips are properly located, you have to fill out the scorecard, beginning at the center of the target. Who has the highest number?

4. **The Rearrange Connection**

Make a game board and game cards. Get 18 markers for two players. Turn over a card, study the rearranged number. Figure out the original number, find it on the board, and cover it with one of your game markers. Continue taking turn until one player links up 4 of their markers.

Make game cards showing different addition and subtraction problems. The answer should correspond to one (and only one) space on the game board.

5. **Numberbow**

Make two identical boards. Roll two dice, add up the numbers and whatever answer you get, you color that number. If your number is already covered, pass the dice to the other person. Each take ten turns, and then compare to see who has the most colorful rainbow. To increase the difficulty, add more dice and draw a gameboard to match the sums possible.
6. Take a Risk Or 10,000

Goal: to reach 10,000 first.

Scoring: 
1 = 100  
2 = 0  
3 = 0  
4 = 0  
5 = 50  

3 of a kind on one roll = 100 x #  
4 of a kind on one roll = (100 x #) x 2  
5 of a kind on one roll = (100 x #) x 3  
1,2,3,4,5,6 on one roll = 1,000

To get on the scoreboard you must have 750 points on one turn, then you can stop your turn at any time. To play you roll all 5 dice. Move any 'counters' off to one side and then roll the remaining dice. You keep a running total of your score. If all 5 dice become 'counters', you scoop them all up and begin rolling again, and keep adding your score up. If no dice worth points are rolled, your turn is over and you do not get any points for that turn. You can decide to stop rolling, take your accumulated points, and pass the dice to the next person. When one person reaches 10,000, the remaining players have 1 turn to try to beat that player.

7. Suits Up, Suits Down

Use one suit of playing cards, the ace through ten. Shuffle the cards and stack them face down. Turn over top card. Turn over the second card and add it to the first card. When you add the last card, you should have exactly 55. Reshuffle the cards each time you play--no using pencil and paper.

Start with a score of 55. Use the same ten cards. Subtract as you turn over each card. When you subtract the last card, you should hit zero. To make this game more difficult, add another suit of cards (110-0).

8. Estimation

Ask your child to estimate the width of a particular room. Then have her/him measure it to get the exact width. As long as the tape measure or yard stick is out, estimate and measure other areas of the house.

9. Tangrams

Reproduce the puzzle design on a 3 or 4" square of construction paper, cardboard, vinyl placemat. Cut along the lines and let your child play with the 7 puzzle pieces for a while. Challenge your child to make different shapes using 2 pieces, 3, 4, etc.
10. **Money--Cash Register**

After going to the store, hand your child the cash register tape. As you unpack items, have your child locate and check off each item. Have him/her read aloud the price of each item.

Name a dollar amount. Ask your child to pick three items you could buy with that much money; ask how many of one specific item you could buy.

**Tangrams**

**4. The Rearrange Connection**

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Brown Bag Lunch Series
Topic: "Winter Survival Ideas"
(Help for Parent Sanity)

1. **Fruit Loop Necklaces**

   Tape the end of a piece of string. Give your child the string and a bowl of Fruit Loop cereal. Have your child string a necklace—no eating until the necklace is finished (broken cereal can be eaten at once).

2. **Playdough**

   Let your child mix up a batch of homemade playdough:
   - 1 cup salt
   - 2 cups flour
   - approx 1 cup water with food coloring
   Mix until the consistency of dough. Knead, pound, and shape. If desired, the dough can be baked in a warm oven to harden.

3. **Snow Painting**

   Fill empty spray bottles, dishwasher bottles, etc., with colored water. Your child can "draw" pictures in the snow by squeezing the colored water out of the bottles.

4. **Matching Numbers**

   Take a blank piece of paper and write the numbers one through ten randomly, all over the page. When you're done writing this first set, write a second set 1-10, also scattered randomly over the page. Your child must draw lines to connect number twins. S/he cannot cross any lines. To make it more challenging, increase the range of numbers.

5. **Words in a Word**

   Write a word on a piece of paper (Christmas Eve, George Washington, Independence Day). Have your child see how many smaller words s/he can make from that word.

6. **Cooking Activity**

   Look up a new recipe (in a book you check out from the library together) and make it. Remember, part of cooking is cleaning up!
7. **Make a Busy Bottle**

Take 20-30 pieces of paper and write down activities that are acceptable to you and your child, one on each piece of paper. Fold and place the papers in any empty bottle. Your child can pick an activity when "there's nothing to do".

8. **Alphabet Clothespins**

Write one letter of the alphabet on each of 26 clothespins. String up a line between 2 chairs. Your child needs to find an item that starts with 'A' and hang it up using the A clothespin. Continue for the rest of the letters. If no actual object can be found, your child may draw a picture of something.

9. **Repairshop**

Give your child an object that needs to be fixed (an old Dustbuster, old stereo, radio, etc.). Ask her/him to see if she/he can fix it or what else can be made from the parts.

10. **Matching Mittens**

Make pairs of mittens out of wallpaper, construction paper, etc. Use them to play a matching game (like Memory). Make 4 mittens of each pattern and hang them on the clothesline making patterns (white-red-white-red- ??).

Books:

- **Mudworks** by MaryAnn F. Kohl
  Bright Ring Publishing
  P.O. Box 5768
  Bellingham, Wa 98227

- **Kids' Snacks**
  Better Homes & Gardens
  Meredith Corp.
  Des Moines, IA
This session will be jointly led by an elementary teacher and an elementary school counselor. The parents will have the opportunity for a question/answer period and the group leaders will present a variety of tried-and-true methods to manage behavior. The group leaders will also role model typical situations that occur at home when parents try to discipline (positive and negative)

Discipline Techniques:

1-2-3 Magic (counting and time-out)

Natural and Logical Consequences

Contracts

Family Meetings

Words of Praise
Goals of effective discipline:

(1) to stop obnoxious behaviors
   arguing       pouting
   whining       tantrums
   screaming     disrespect
   fighting

(2) to encourage more positive behaviors
   go to bed nicely, eat and behave at meals,
   get up in the morning, do what is requested,
   behave in public places

False assumptions about children:

Children are "little adults" who are reasonable, sympathetic, and unselfish.

Reality:

Words and reasoning don't usually work to change a child's behavior.

2 biggest mistakes:  1) too much talking
                     2) too much emotion

In order to change any behavior you must...

   BE CONSISTENT!

   Know what specific behavior(s) you want to change--don't keep changing the rules.

   Reinforce the positive behaviors you see.

   Target only one or two behaviors to change at one time.

   Hang in there--behaviors often get worse before they get better.
THE 1 - 2 - 3 MAGIC

Before implementing this program...

select a space for time-out
remove any items from the time-out space
that your child might break or that
could harm him/her
decide what specific behaviors you want
to change

Basic rules:

1. Give one explanation of what behavior is expected.
2. Give vocal (voice) and visual (hold up fingers) cues
   when your child misbehaves: "That's 1."
3. If your child continues to misbehave, continue counting.
4. No extra talking between counting!!
5. Refrain from showing emotion.
6. You as the parent are the authority.
7. Punishment is short and sweet—time out one minute for each year of age. Time out period begins once your child is quiet and in the time-out area.
8. After the 5 minutes is over, tell your child s/he can come out—do not discuss the incident further.

NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The punishment for misbehavior should fit the situation. For example: if your child is not eating supper s/he will not get any food until breakfast the next morning. Or, if toys are not getting picked up, those toys are put away (out of reach) for a few days.

Identify who owns the problem. If two children are fighting, do you need to become involved? Let them settle the problem themselves (if they are able), select a solution that will involve you as little as possible or not at all.

Be sure the natural consequence is one that you can actually follow-through on: your child cannot stay home when you are leaving town because s/he was not getting dressed. Be flexible your plans when you are trying to change a behavior. It may be necessary for you to shop at another time, arrange for a babysitter while you do errands, etc.
FAMILY MEETINGS

Set up a time and place once a week for a Family Meeting.

Begin your meeting with something positive.

Have someone take notes to review what was discussed and to refer to at a later time, if necessary.

Set rules and stick to the issues.

Be careful when discussing personal or embarrassing issues.

Follow-up. Make sure everyone understands why certain decisions have been made and how they are to follow new rules.

Once you have established a Family Meeting routine, try to always hold the meeting (it should not be just a meeting because there is a problem).

----------------------------------------------

CONTRACTS

Discuss with your child what behavior will be targeted.

Jointly define the behavior and the acceptable limits.

Discuss and decide a reward for successfully meeting the contract.

Discuss and decide the consequences for not meeting the contract.

Set a time-line for the contract.

Write and both sign the contract.

Example: John will make his bed every morning before he leaves for school.

Beginning date: ____________________________

Ending date: ____________________________

Signed: ____________________________ date __________

Signed: ____________________________ date __________

----------------------------------------------
WORDS OF PRAISE

Always be immediate with your praise to a child--DON'T WAIT!

Always be specific with your praise. Tell the child what you liked that s/he did well.

Never use "back-handed" compliments, such as "It's about time you did such a nice job cleaning your room" or "This is nice--so why can't you do this more often?"

Be sincere and generous with your praise.
1. **Write a Story**

Have your child dictate a story to you. This can be done over several sessions, maybe only a sentence at a time. Tips: write on only one side of the paper, leave ample room above the words for your child to draw illustrations, leave a 1" margin on the left side of the paper. Fasten the pages together when your child is finished with the story. Keep the book in your child's book collection to read together.

2. **Silent Conversation (10 minutes)**

In this game you write everything you want to say. No talking is permitted. If you write a word your child can't read, s/he can point to it and you can read it to him/her. If your child writes a word you are unable to read, point to is and s/he can read it to you. Spelling doesn't count.

3. **Eraser**

Write the entire alphabet on a piece of paper and draw a stick figure named Eraserman, or Eraserwoman. Think of a word and draw letter frames for the letters. When your child guesses a letter, cross out that letter. If your child guesses a letter not in the word, erase part of the stick figure.

4. **Photo Book**

Have your child write a story to accompany pictures from your last vacation, family gathering, etc. Use old pictures and have your child write a story about his/her life. Variation: give your child a camera and a roll of film and send them out to create a story.

5. **Journal**

Have your child keep a daily journal (one line entries are acceptable). This can be done on a big wall calendar, on scrapes of paper and taped together, in a special book. At the end of the week or month, read what your child has written together.

6. **Write a Letter**

Have your child write a letter to a friend--find a pen pal. Have your child write for free material through the mail. Discuss ways to start a letter and to end it; look at letters you have received and think of a new way to write the letter.
7. Computer/Typewriter Stories

Try to get your hands on an old typewriter or a computer. Kids love to use these to write! If your child types a jumble of letters, try to sound out nonsense words.

8. Story Sharing

Write a story with your child. You write a line or two and then your child writes a line or two. If your child doesn't know what to write, make a few general suggestions ("you could describe the..."). Spelling does not count.

9. Body Writing

Think of a simple word. Don't tell your child the word. Instead, trace the word on the back of her/his hand while your child keeps her/his eyes closed. Keep tracing each letter until your child knows for sure what that letter is, then go on to the next letter. Be sure to give a big cheer when your child figures out the word you are writing. Take turns.

10. Word Bridges

Ask your child for a word. Write it vertically, forward and backwards. The goal is to create words to bridge the gaps. Feel free to use a dictionary or use made-up words (but ask your child for a definition of the made-up word!).
Flying Pepper

Sprinkle a little salt on a plate. Mix in a pinch of pepper. Rub a plastic spoon in your hair until the spoon is charged with static electricity (a few sec.). Hold the spoon close to the salt and pepper, but don't let it touch the mixture. The pepper will fly up to the spoon.

Catch the Money

Have your child hold his/her hand like this; the thumb does not touch the fingers. Now you hold a dollar bill in the space between his/her thumb and fingers--your child's fingers must not touch the bill. Inform your child that at any moment you will drop the dollar without giving a warning. Dare your child to grab the dollar bill.

Giant Bubbles

1 clean pail
10 cups clean, cold water
1 cup Joy or Dawn liquid detergent
3-4 tablespoons glycerine (from your pharmacy)
Mix the soap and water. Add the glycerine. Stir, but not too much. Skim off any froth. Use wands, hoops, cup rims, etc., to make bubbles.

Tornado Tubes

Fill an empty pop bottle 3/4 full with water. Fasten to an empty bottle of the same size neck-to-neck using tubing or a tornado tube connector. Create a swirl by rotating the jars in a clockwise movement.

Balloon Races

Cut string into 10' lengths. Thread string through a straw. Blow up a balloon and, holding the end closed, tape it to a straw. Bring the balloon/straw down to the end of the taunt string. Release the balloon. Have races with two balloons; compare balloons of different shapes; use different lengths of string.

Lie Detector

Fill a soda bottle to the very top with water. Place an eye dropper into the water-filled bottle (glass end down, rubber end up). Be sure the eye dropper is not filled with any water. Screw on the top of the bottle. When the sides of the bottle are squeezed, the dropper will drop to the bottom of the bottle.
7. **Bottle Fountain**

Make a hole (or more) in a jar/can with an air-tight lid. Fill the container with water. Put on the lid... open the lid. What happens? Do some holes squirt water farther, faster, etc.? What happens when the water level drops below a hole?

8. **Magnet Magic**

Gather various magnets and a variety of objects to test to see if they will adhere to the magnet. Will the magnet attract objects through water? Paper? Make magnets move without touching each other. How many magnets can be strung together?

9. **Goop**

Mix cornstarch and water in a tray until it begins to get gooey. Scoop up a handful and manipulate to form a ball. The heat of your hand will turn it into a solid, but if you stop rubbing, what happens?

10. **Megaphone**

Scratch an emery board with a straight pin. Listen. Stick the pin through the tip of a cone paper cup. Now scratch the emery board. Does it sound different?

Other activities: Twenty questions
Scavenger Hunt
Balloons and Bottles
Water Games
1. **Draw a Map of your Neighborhood**

Draw a map of your neighborhood or how to get from your house to school. Then, get in the car/on bikes and follow your child's map.

2. **License Plate Lotto**

Using a map, color in states when you see a car with that state's license plate. See if you can find all 50 states during one trip/summer/year. Or use an Iowa map and try to find all the counties in the state.

3. **Road Trip**

Get a road atlas. Plot out a real or imagined trip. Figure out the total miles, what to see along the way to your destination. Could you get there without using a car? How? Write the Chamber of Commerce offices in towns you want to visit along the way to your final destination. What could you do in those places?

4. **Ethnic Night**

With your child select a country on the map/globe. Go to the library and find a book about that country (or use the encyclopedia) to learn about the country. Discuss what you learn. Fix a meal/food you would eat if you lived in that country.

5. **Where's It Come From?**

Look on canned foods, toys, clothing, and other items to see where they were manufactured or processed. Mark on a map each place you find. What might influence where something is produced?

6. **Make a Topographic Map**

Use clay/playdough/plaster of paris to create a map. On cardboard draw an outline of the state/country you are making or mark the boundaries. Paint the rivers and mountains when it is dry.

7. **Match Up**

Write the name of a state/country and its capital on paper (one word on each piece). Using several pairs place the papers face-down on the table. Play Memory, trying to match up the pairs that belong together.
8. Treasure Map

Hide a "treasure" in your house or yard. Draw a map to the treasure. Be sure to include directional clues: "Walk 10 paces north and then 10 paces west."
Option: leave clues to the treasure using geographic landmarks. ("Find the next clue under the big rock by the maple tree.")

9. What Did You Say?

Check out foreign language tapes from the library. Learn how to say something in a different language. Write french/spanish/etc. words and try to guess what it means (use a language dictionary). Learn some sign language.

10. Travel Log

Create your own travel log from a trip your family has taken. Attend a travel log lecture in town or invite a friend to share slides from a trip they took.
1. The Club Game

To give your child experience describing and forming all kinds of logical groups, identify a category, or 'club', and try to name a specific number of things in that club. Give hints if it is helpful to your child.

Suggestions: 10 wild animals, 8 musical instruments, 15 delicious desserts, 9 things that need electricity, 5 friends

2. String Along

Name a category. Then, name a subcategory of the first category. Continue naming subcategories until you have 4, or your child thinks you have sub-divided as much as possible. Start with a category known to your child.

3. Patterns

Using blocks, make a pattern using 2 different types of blocks (red/blue/red/blue/red...). Have your child continue the pattern. Or, draw patterns (circle, line, circle, line...). Draw a pattern containing a mistake and have your child correct the pattern.

4. Pattern Grids

Make a grid (5 squares x 5 squares). Fill in the top row with a 2 shape pattern. Fill in the second row with a different pattern. Repeat the first pattern in the third row, etc.. Add some color then sit backn and discuss patterns you see within the grid (up, down, and diagonally).

5. Time Capsule

To help your child understand our world today, start him/her thinking about what the world will be like in the future. Make a time capsule by placing items in a shoe box. Discuss what the world might be like in 5, 10, 50, 100 years. Try to put in items that may still be used in the future or items you think may no longer exist. Seal the box and hide it.
6. **What Would You Do If...**

During a free moment, have your child mentally solve social/logical problems. Ask "What would you do if you had one apple and you and your friend both wanted to eat it?" or "What would you do if you saw 2 big boys punching a small boy?" Brainstorm several solutions to each 'problem'. Remember, there's no "right" answer.

7. **$100**

Pretend your child has won $100. How would s/he use the money? Put restrictions on how the money can be used: some must be saved, some has to be given away, some you can spend on yourself, etc. Vary the dollar amount depending on the age of your child.

8. **I Can Do It**

To help your child solve problems with another person him/herself, model the appropriate behavior and then have your child practice the behavior. Assist your child and the other child(ren) involved in the problem, but let the children solve the problem. Remember, the solution kids come up with is not always what an adult would do: if the kids are satisfied with the solution, that's what counts.
Date________________________

Location____________________

Topic_______________________

Directions: Please rate the following items on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being low/no and 5 being high/yes. Circle the number that most closely corresponds to how you feel.

1. The location was convenient for me.
   (no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

2. The presentation was well organized.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. The time was convenient for me.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. The material presented was useful to me.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. I think my child will enjoy these activities.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The hand-out was helpful.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I am interested in attending next month's Brown Bag Lunch Session:
   _____yes _____no

8. What other topics would interest you:

9. If you attended last month's session, how did the activities work for you?

Please feel free to add any additional comments on this page.
Final Brown Bag Series Evaluation
(Participants)

Date_____________________
Location___________________
Topic: Overall Evaluation

Directions: Please give brief answers to the following questions.

1. Why did you attend the Brown Bag sessions?

2. My favorite session topic was:

3. My favorite activity was:

4. The topic I enjoyed the least was: Why?

5. Did you look forward to trying the activities at home?

6. Were the handouts helpful? Too detailed? Not enough information?

7. Was too much packed into the half-hour sessions?

8. Would you like Brown Bag offered here again next year?

9. What other topics would interest you:

10. Would you be interested in a 6-8 week series on discipline (to meet every week) instead of once-a-month meetings? yes_______ no_____

11. Do you have any suggestions for other sites to hold a Brown Bag series?
12. Would you attend the Brown Bag series if it was held in the (circle one) late afternoon or evening in another location? If you would, what is a convenient time for you?

13. Did you like having a 2-person team present the sessions?

14. Please comment on any aspects of the Brown Bag series you did not like:

15. Please add any additional comments that will help us improve the Brown Bag series.
Brown Bag Session Evaluation
(Leaders)

Date____________________

Location__________________

Topic_____________________

Directions: Please rate the following items on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being low/no and 5 being high/yes. Circle the number that most closely corresponds to how you feel.

1. I felt the session was well organized.  
   (no) 1  2  3  4  5 (yes)

2. The participants were interested in the material.  
   1  2  3  4  5

3. Too many activities were planned.  
   1  2  3  4  5

4. Not enough activities were planned.  
   1  2  3  4  5

5. The facilities were adequate.  
   1  2  3  4  5

If the facilities were not adequate, please state what was wrong with them.

6. Participants made comments or asked questions.  
   1  2  3  4  5

7. I would be interested in leading another session.  
   ______yes  ______no

If you would be interested in helping with another session, please indicate what topic would be of interest to you.
Appendix D
October Parent Meeting

The actual meeting content and agenda will be determined by elementary staff and PTO members who will be the meeting leaders.

This meeting will be similar to one held during the 1991-92 school year. There will be five sessions offered to parents with topics ranging from school-related issues to family issues. Parents will pick four of the five sessions to attend. Childcare will be provided at the facility holding the meeting.

Session topics will be selected from last year's Parent Evening as well as from the information derived from the needs assessment given to parents in September.

At the end of the evening participants and leaders will fill out an evaluation form.
December Parent Meeting
Topic: Curriculum Content
   and
Progress Check for the School

The actual meeting content and agenda will be determined by elementary staff and principals who will be the meeting leaders.

1. Parents will divide into groups according to the grade their child attends. Each group will meet with 1-2 elementary teachers who teach that grade level. The teachers will explain the flow of curriculum activities for that grade level, share class curriculum materials, and explain the evaluation system.

2. Parents will return to a large group. This group will be led by the elementary principals. They will lead a discussion about how the school year is going and ask for input from parents about what the school can be doing better, should stop, what is going well.

3. At the end of the evening all participants and leaders will fill out evaluation forms.

Childcare will be provided on the facilities where the parent meeting is held.
February Parent Meeting
Topic: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Actual meeting content and agenda will be determined by elementary staff who will lead the meeting.

At this meeting leaders will explain what the Iowa Test of Basic Skills involves. They will share with parents how it is administered, what each subdivision covers, and what the scores really mean. Group leaders will also explain why the test is given and why Algona School District feels it is important to administer the test.

At the end of the evening, participants and group leaders will fill out evaluation forms.
April Parent Meeting
Topic: All-School Family Picnic

The April meeting is less formal and geared toward a social evening. Each elementary hosts an all-school family picnic at one of the local parks.

The meal is potluck and notices are sent home instructing each family what they will need to bring to the picnic (silverware, chairs, dishes to share, etc.). Parents are aware that if their child is going to attend the picnic, that child must be accompanied by an adult.

No evaluations are completed by parents because there is no definite start and stop time to this "meeting". Elementary teachers process the activity the following day at school.
May Parent Meeting
Topic: Appreciation Tea

An Appreciation Tea will be held for parents and community persons who have assisted at school and made contributions (monetary, time, material, etc.) to the educational process during the school year. Elementary teachers and administration will host and MC the event.

Certificates of Appreciation will be given to persons who have contributed to educating children.
Parent Meeting Session Evaluation
(Participants)

Date____________________________

Location______________________Topic________________

Directions: Please rate the following items on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being low/no and 5 being high/yes. Circle the number that most closely corresponds to how you feel.

1. The location was convenient for me.
   (no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

2. The presentation was well organized.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. The time was convenient for me.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. The material presented was useful to me.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Any hand-outs were helpful.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. I am interested in attending next month's Parent Meeting:
   _____yes _____no

7. What other topics would interest you:

8. If you attended last month's meeting, did the information help you relate to your child or better understand his/her homework?
Parent Meeting Evaluation
(Leaders)

Date______________________________

Location_________________________ Topic_________________________

Directions: Please rate the following items on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being low/no and 5 being high/yes. Circle the number that most closely corresponds to how you feel.

1. I felt the meeting was well organized.
   (no) 1 2 3 4 5 (yes)

2. The participants were interested in the material.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Too many activities were planned.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Not enough activities were planned.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. The facilities were adequate.
   1 2 3 4 5

If the facilities were not adequate, please state what was wrong with them.

6. Participants made comments or asked questions.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I would be interested in leading another meeting.
   _______yes _______no

If you would be interested in helping with another meeting, please indicate what topic appeals to you.
Appendix E
Newspaper publicity:

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

Helping Your Child Read

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<tr>
<td>Oct 19</td>
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Sponsored by the Algona Community School District

The Algona Community School District in a joint effort with local business firms is offering a Brown Bag Lunch Series for parents of elementary students. These one-half hour sessions will offer parents suggestions and activities to use with their children to enhance learning skills.

The activities are 10-minute skill builders intended to be fun for parents and children. This month the topic will be "Helping Your Child Read". These sessions are geared for parents with elementary age children, but everyone is welcome to attend.

Education is a cooperative effort between parents, teachers and the community. Come be a part of the learning process!
Radio publicity:

The school superintendent will have a monthly radio show on the local station, KLGA. During this program he will discuss School Board happenings, the Brown Bag Lunch Series, and the elementary Parent Meeting. Monthly figures from the Brown Bag and Parent Meeting activities will be given to the superintendent prior to the radio broadcast.
Data Collection

Monthly Figures

1. Number of persons attending Brown Bag Series: ______

2. Grade level of children of Brown Bag attendees:
   - Number in preschool ______  Third ______
   - Kindergarten ______  Fourth ______
   - First ______  Fifth ______
   - Second ______  other ______

3. Number of persons attending Parent Meeting: ______

4. Grade Level of children of Parent Meeting attendees:
   - Number in preschool ______  Third ______
   - Kindergarten ______  Fourth ______
   - First ______  Fifth ______
   - Second ______  other ______

5. Time spent preparing for the activity:
   - Brown Bag ____________
   - Parent Meeting ______
6. Funds necessary for activity:

   Brown Bag: _______________
   Funds needed for:

   Parent Meeting: _____________
   Funds needed for:
On-going Figures                      Date:____________

1. Number of persons who attended an activity:

   Brown Bag:________  Parent Meeting:________

3. Hours spent planning/organizing activities:

   Brown Bag:________  Parent Meeting:________

4. Funds necessary for activities:

   Brown Bag:________  Parent Meeting:________
   spend on:_________  spent on:_________

5. Persons involved and hours worked:

   Name          Hours
Satisfaction Level for Activities

Rating: (low) 1  2  3  4  5 (high)

Evaluations collected at activities are used to compute the averages given here.

Brown Bag Series:

October: ______  February: ______
November: ______  March: ______
December: ______  April: ______
January: ______  May: ______

Parent Meetings:

October: ______  February: ______
November: ______  March: ______
December: ______  April: ______
January: ______  May: ______
### Program Participants for 1992-93

<table>
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**Key:**
- **BB** = Brown Bag
- **PM** = Parent Meeting
- **C** = Conferences
- **FP** = Family Picnic
- **T** = Appreciation Tea
Appendix G
Timeline for Activities

September

1. A needs assessment will be given to parents and to teachers (see Appendix A). Results are compiled and an agenda is determined for the Brown Bag sessions.

2. An elementary staff meeting will be held to discuss the parent involvement program and the results of the needs assessment. Staff input is obtained for Brown Bag sessions.

3. A meeting is held with the Algona CEO managers to explain the Brown Bag series and select locations for the sessions (see Appendix C).

4. Newspaper, radio, and TV (on local cable) spots are run to explain the new Resource Centers and the Brown Bag sessions (see
Appendix E).

5. Elementary Open Houses are held in each elementary building.

6. The Resource Centers are set up by staff and parents (see Appendix B).

7. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

October

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag lunch sessions begin. The topic this month is "Helping Your Child Read" (see Appendix C).

3. Planning for November's Brown Bag session takes place.

4. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session and the upcoming all-elementary parent meeting (see
5. A parent meeting is held for all elementary parents led by PTO members, teachers, and community resource persons. The meeting will offer several mini sessions relating to academic, social, and family issues (see Appendix D).

6. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

November

1. American Education Week is held. A newspaper spread is run about school activities. Student work is displayed in local businesses.

2. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions (see Appendix E).

3. Brown Bag lunch series: "Math Can Be Fun" (see Appendix C).

4. Planning for December's Brown Bag session
5. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session (see Appendix E).

6. Parent-Teacher conferences are held.

7. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

December

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag Lunch series: "Winter Survival Ideas--Help for Parent Sanity" (see Appendix C).


4. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session (see Appendix E).

5. An elementary staff meeting is held to
update staff about the Brown Bag sessions and the Resource Centers. Feedback is requested about the level of parent involvement at this time.

6. Parent Meetings are held at each elementary building to discuss how the year is going--complaints and praise--and share grade level curricula (see Appendix D).

7. PR spots are run with suggestions from teachers about gift ideas, methods of spreading cheer without spending money.

8. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

**January**

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag lunch series: "Who's the Boss? Tips for Effective Discipline" (see
Appendix C).

3. Planning for February's Brown Bag session takes place.

4. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session and the upcoming parent meetings (see Appendix E).

5. Business firms hosting the Brown Bag sessions will be contacted to gain feedback about this activity.

6. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

February

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions, the Week of the Young Child, and the upcoming parent meeting (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag lunch series: "Right-on for Writing" (see Appendix C).
3. Planning for March's Brown Bag session takes place.

4. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session and the upcoming parent meeting (see Appendix E).

5. Building activities for National Week of the Young Child.

6. Parent Meeting for all elementary parents is held. The topic is: "Iowa Test of Basic Skills--What Does It Mean?" (see Appendix D).

7. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

**March**

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag lunch series: "Fun With Science" (see Appendix C).
3. Planning for April's Brown Bag session takes place.

4. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session (see Appendix E).

5. Elementary Parent-Teacher conferences are held.

6. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

April

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions and all-school family picnics (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag lunch series: "The World All Around--Geography Near and Far" (see Appendix C).

3. Planning for May's Brown Bag session takes place.

4. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of
the Brown Bag session and the school family picnics (see Appendix E).

5. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

May

1. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the Brown Bag lunch sessions (see Appendix E).

2. Brown Bag lunch series: "Problem Solving--A Life Skill" (see Appendix C).

3. Newspaper, radio, and TV spots are run to inform the public about the results of the Brown Bag session and the upcoming Appreciation Tea for volunteers, parents, and supporting businesses (see Appendix E).

4. An Appreciation Tea is hosted by the elementary staff for volunteers, parents, and local business persons who have supported education the past year.
5. Weekly "Alert" and monthly "Elementary Ed" newsletters are sent to parents.

6. The needs assessments are given to staff and parents to evaluate 1992-93 program activities and to assist in planning the 1993-94 activities (see Appendix A).
REFERENCES

Address before a joint session of the Congress on the State of the Union, Jan. 3, 1990.

*Presidential Documents, 26*(5), 146-151


Wymore, P. (July, 1992). Member of the Algona Community School District School Board, personal communication, Algona, IA.