Parent Knowledge of School Rules and Proactive Behaviors in Children: Implications of a Parent Education and Involvement Program Conducted at the Helena Head Start

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Abstract

The effects of a specific parent involvement strategy on proactive behaviors in children were studied in this experiment. Four classrooms, two experimental groups and two control groups, from the Helena Head Start volunteered to take part in the study. The parents from the experimental classrooms received three weeks of educational materials based on three rules at Head Start ("walking feet," "inside voices," and "take care of your hands") and how they are taught. Pre-test data (before the parents received the materials) and post-test data (after the parents received the materials) were collected on the children's performance of these rules. The results indicated that the experimental classrooms did not have significantly higher total gain scores than the control groups. The experimental classrooms also did not have higher gain scores when each rule was considered separately. When only one experimental classroom and one control classroom were analyzed, the experimental classroom did have significantly higher gain scores on the "walking feet" rule. The materials and the results of this experiment will be used by Head Start in order to continue to encourage parent involvement.
Parent Knowledge of School Rules and Proactive Behaviors in Children: Implications of a Parent Education and Involvement Program Conducted at the Helena Head Start

In the past several decades, evidence has shown steady declines in both emotional and intellectual growth of our children. Trends such as increases in the divorce rate, and single-parent and low-income families are changes in the family structure that affects school achievement and the psychosocial development of children. American students' average achievement test scores have continued to decline and children in the United States still perform poorly in science and math compared to other countries. We have also seen alarming rates of teenage pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, illiteracy, high school dropouts, and drug abuse among our youth. With all these depressing realities, it is tempting to look for someone to blame. Larry Decker, an education professor and expert on parent involvement in schools, claims that the education system is not doing enough to encourage parent participation ("Parent," 1997). Laurence Steinberg, a psychology professor studying American student achievement, says that parents, not schools, are to blame for students' poor performance ("Educating," 1997). Regardless of where blame is laid, however, the solution lies in creating partnerships between home and school environments through different parent involvement strategies.

The importance of the home and parent involvement to children is not a new concept. The history of parent education can be traced to the writings of Plato (427-347 B.C.) on child rearing. Plato emphasized how care given by adults can influence a child. Educating parents in ancient Greek society was seen as essential to the future of the state. Aristotle’s and Locke’s view of children as tabulae rasae (blank slates) also highlighted the parent’s responsibilities toward their children. Rousseau (1712-1778) recognized the
importance of mothers and recommended teaching methods for them to use. Pestalozzi (1747-1827) claimed that a mother should not only nourish a child’s body, but also his or her mind. An explosion of different paradigms on child rearing and parent involvement in the United States evolved from these early theorists. These paradigms continue to shift and change based on the cultural demands of the time (see Berger, 1991).

Two major advocates of parent participation in education in the 1970’s were Brofenbrenner and Lightfoot. They argued that parent involvement is critical to good education and that a partnership between schools and families is imperative (Comer & Haynes, 1991). These opinions are supported by a vast number of studies. Research has shown that parents either directly or indirectly influence the major factors identified as essential to cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning in children. These factors include student ability and motivation, quality and amount of instruction, the psychological climate of the classroom, an academically stimulating home environment, a peer group with academic interests, goals and activities, and a minimum exposure to television (Walberg, 1984). Children whose parents are involved in these domains do better in school and are more successful in life. These children have better attendance, more positive attitudes towards school, achieve at higher levels, and are more likely to become healthy, productive members of society ("PTA," 1997). In addition, programs with school-parent partnerships that promote learning at home predict academic achievement twice as well as socioeconomic status. Assignment and grading of work done at home produces an effect on achievement three times greater than family income, education and occupation (Walberg, 1984). In short, parent involvement, more than any other factor, influences children's level of success.
Despite this evidence, however, home conditions that are conducive to learning and relationships between homes and schools continue to deteriorate. The problem now becomes which parent involvement strategies and methods are most effective for which schools and which families. A leading expert on parent involvement, Joyce Epstein (1995), outlines five major types of family participation that occur in different places, require different materials and processes, and lead to different outcomes. The first type of parent involvement considers the basic obligations parents must perform in order to ensure their child's safety and health. Type two refers to the basic obligations of schools to pursue regular communication between the school and home. The third type of parent involvement concerns parent volunteers who assist teachers, administrators, and the children at school. Type four involves learning activities at home that reinforce what the child is learning at school. Type five allows parents to take part in decision-making roles on advisory councils, or other committees or groups at the school. The last type of parent involvement places the focus on whole community involvement. It is up to the specific school to decide which type or types of procedures are most appropriate.

A classic example of a parent involvement program that attempted to use all of the above methods is the New Haven study. Conducted between 1968 and 1980, and headed by James Comer, the Yale University Child Study Center targeted two schools in New Haven for implementation of an extensive parent involvement program. The primary goal was to reduce behavior problems and improve relations with parents in order to produce a climate more conducive to learning. Management teams of parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as mental health specialists, were made available in order to find solutions to the problems facing these schools. Other teams and strategies
were added as necessary and, by 1975, these two schools saw an increase in attendance rates, decrease in behavior problems, and significant gains on performance on math, reading, and language tests (Comer, 1988). Comer's parent involvement curriculum, called the School Development Program, is now being used in over 100 schools across the country. Although this program may seem impressive, it can not necessarily be the only model for parent involvement strategies. Other large-scale programs are being developed and implemented with varying results. Many of these attempts have not been carried out as they were intended and often fail to engage the participation of low-income parents (Mclaughlin, & Shields, 1987).

One of the most dangerous barriers to parent involvement is the stereotypes held by teachers, parents and society. Many have preconceived notions of the “pushy” upper-middle class parent, the “helpful” middle-class parent, and the “incapable” lower-class parent. An analysis of teachers' attitudes toward parent involvement conducted by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues in Maryland revealed that teachers who don’t use parent involvement techniques with highly educated parents said that techniques would work, but they simply chose not to use them. Teachers who did not promote parent involvement and worked with less educated parents reported that these parents would be unable or unwilling to carry out involvement activities (Becker & Epstein, 1982). These attitudes place at-risk children at an even greater disadvantage.

At-risk children are classified as those who come from families that are large, single-parent, poor, non-English speaking, abusive, and/or those that include parents and older sibling who dropped out of school. These children are typically more susceptible to low school achievement and school dropout. Teachers usually report that the parents of
at-risk children are the ones they see the least. This may be due to a variety of reasons. Surveys reveal that low-income families often feel helpless about their ability to influence their children's success in school. They are concerned about time and work schedules that may interfere with involvement, and express a need for special training to help their children and influence school decisions (Chavkin & Williams, 1989). Research also shows, however, that lack of involvement from low-income families is not due to a lack of parental interest in the child's life. Despite the parents' own low school achievement, many still value teachers and education and they would like more for their children than what they experienced. Studies have found that low-socioeconomic families prepared their children for school by reading to them, and teaching them color names, the alphabet, and number recognition. These parents also had high regard for their children's potential for learning (Karther & Lowden, 1997). The reason for non-participation in the school, therefore, might be rooted in the parent's feeling of inadequacy toward their own low educational attainment.

Parents who have had unsuccessful school careers may feel anxiety and intimidation if they visit the school. These feelings are reinforced by societal prejudices against low-income families and gradually parents and teachers learn to distrust each other. Children are caught in the middle. By age eight, these children are expected to progress academically at a rate that exceeds their developmental readiness. Expectations for their behavior and performance are lowered and eventually they are labeled as "bad." It is also around this time that children begin to understand how they and their families differ in income, education, and race (Comer, 1988). Negative conceptions of themselves in relation to any or all of these variables place students on the track towards failure. The
key lies in deciding which involvement strategy to use in order to empower parents, teachers, and children to reach their full potential.

Questionnaires given to parents and teachers reveal that both groups are most receptive to parent involvement that requires learning activities to be done at home (Epstein, 1986; Epstein & Becker, 1982). Parents often report that they would like to become more involved in their children's education, but they may not know how to help (Reeves, 1990). Sending activities home that reinforce what is being taught at school and that parents and children can complete together, is one solution to this problem. Most parents say they could spend more time helping their children at home if they were shown how to do specific learning activities (Epstein, 1986). Involving parents with academic activities at home not only benefits the child, but also improves the parent's knowledge and expertise, which gives them a greater sense of competence and self-worth (Bennett, 1986; see Simich-Dudgeon, 1986). This might give reluctant parents the courage to participate more directly in school settings.

An example of an effective at home activity is educating parents on the school rules and how they are taught. This is especially relevant for at-risk children because their home and school worlds are often radically different (Liontos, 1991). Donald Hansen (1986) points out that incompatibility between rules in the family and the classroom interferes with children's success in school. He targets the interaction rules defined not only as what is said and done, but also how it is said and done. Hansen found that children are more successful in school situations where the rule structures parallel those of their homes. If parents are made aware of rules and expectations for children's behavior at school and are encouraged to practice and use these rules at home, children
will find greater continuity and security in both environments. Behavioral problems should then decrease and academic achievement should increase. This assumption provided one basis for an exploration on how the need, theoretical frameworks, and different approaches for parent involvement can be applied in the Helena community through two special organizations; the Helena Head Start and the Montana Behavior Initiative.

The Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI) is defined as “a comprehensive staff development venture created to improve the capacities of schools and communities to meet the diverse and increasing complex social, emotional and behavioral needs of students.” MBI aims to help schools, parents, law enforcement, and mental health and social service providers work together to promote the attitudes, skills, and systems children need in order to succeed in society. Lack of discipline is seen nation-wide as the most serious problem facing our educational system. Even in Montana, younger and younger children are being impacted by behavioral problems. MBI works to intervene in these problems before they become serious through training, structured meetings, active membership including parent and community members, data collection using existing data, surveys, observations, and analysis, developing and evaluating team goals and strategies, and diffusion of MBI philosophies to the community. Five communities were selected in Montana to become MBI sites. Through a collaborative relationship with the Helena school district, the Rocky Mountain Development Council Head Start program became involved in MBI (Bailey-Anderson, 1995).

The Head Start Program was started by the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1965 in order to serve children ages three to five of low-income families. Head Start is
now run by the Administration for Children and Families under the Department of Health and Human Services. The goals of the program include meeting the educational, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of low-income children and their families. Head Start fosters development of social competence in the child, which in turn encourages patience, self-control, and tolerance of others. These goals are reflected in the Helena Head Start Mission Statement: “To be a positive influence for change by providing a supportive and safe learning environment for children and their families. The entire staff is dedicated to giving families an opportunity to enhance their feelings of belonging, self worth and respect, and to help them reach their highest potential” ("Head," 1997-1998).

Parent involvement is one of the cornerstones of the Head Start program, as outlined in the Head Start Handbook of the Parent Involvement Vision and Strategies (1996). Head Start aims to create genuine partnerships with parents and encourages them to participate in all aspects of the program. Involvement meetings, employment possibilities, volunteering in the classroom, and a parent lounge are just a few of the opportunities available for Helena Head Start parents. In order to measure parent satisfaction with the program, the Helena Head Start MBI team recently asked parents to complete a survey.

The results of this survey indicated that the question, “Do you know Head Start’s rules and expectations for children’s behavior?” scored statistically lower than other questions. On a prior staff survey, the question, “Do parents seem to understand Head Start’s rules and expectations for student behavior?” also scored statistically lower than other questions. Based on this data, the MBI team and I decided to implement a “Good Behavior Month” at Head Start that would teach parents and children the rules at Head
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Start and how they are taught. We attempted to integrate classroom teaching strategies into the home, with the goal being to increase parental knowledge of rules, heighten proactive behavior in children, and ultimately foster parent involvement. The measurable hypothesis then became: the use of specific parent involvement activities in the home based on classroom rules at Head Start will increase proactive behaviors in children while at Head Start.

Methods

Subjects

The subjects were children from four Head Start classrooms. The teachers from these four classrooms volunteered at a staff meeting to be a part of this experiment. Data was collected on 26 females and 41 males, aged three to six years old from the classrooms. Four of these females and eight of the males were not counted in the data analysis due to absences and other interferences in observations. This left 12 females and 19 males in the experimental classrooms and 10 females and 19 males in the control classrooms.

Design

A pre-test, post-test, two-group design was used. Two classrooms volunteered to be the experimental groups and two classrooms volunteered to be the control groups. Data was collected on 26 children in the two experimental classrooms and on 29 children in the control classrooms. The independent variable administered to the experimental classrooms was three weeks of parent education based on the strategies and rules used at Head Start. The dependent variable was operationally defined as children’s performance on three targeted rules. These rules were called, “walking feet,” “inside voices,” and
"take care of your hands." When children hear "remember to use your walking feet," they know that they need to walk, and not run. Yellow feet along the walls at Head Start are used to teach this rule. The "inside voices" rule reminds children not to yell and shout while inside the Head Start building. A yellow star is shown to the children if they forget to use their "inside voices." A blue star indicates that it is acceptable to use "outside voices," and be noisier than usual. The red star cues children it is time to be quiet, sit still and use "listening bodies." "Take care of your hands" is a verbal reminder given to children when they are not keeping their hands, feet, and/or objects to themselves.

Systematic observations were conducted in order to measure each child use of these three rules. The null hypothesis was; there is no change in children's behavior as a function of a three-week parent education program based on these desired behaviors.

Procedure

The instrument used was an observation table design by the MBI team and myself (see Appendix A). Every child in each classroom was observed on his or her ability to use the "walking feet," "inside voices," and "take care of your hands" rules. Each of these rules was observed on five different occasions. "Walking feet" was observed in the classroom, to the bathroom, to the playground, to the gross motor room, and to the bus. "Take care of your hands" was observed during circle time, mealtime, line time, and outside time, and in the bathroom. The child's use of "inside voices" was observed during five unspecified times. Children were given a plus if they followed the rule correctly and a minus if they did not. The total number of pluses out of five observation times was added up for each of the three rules. The highest possible score for each rule
was five, and the lowest was zero. A second observation was conducted using the same method.

Pre-test observations were conducted by the teachers and myself during the weeks of February 9 through February 26. Teachers were given both verbal and written instructions on how to conduct these observations (see Appendix B). Based on how the three targeted rules are taught at Head Start, I then designed a “Good Behavior Month” consisting of worksheets, activities, and letters for parents that were sent home with the children March 2 through March 26 (see Appendix C). Parents in the experimental classrooms received these materials (defined as the independent variable), while parents in the control groups did not. Week one focused on when to use "inside voices," "outside voices," and "listening bodies." Week two concerned when and why to use "walking feet." The final week addressed when and why children need to “take care of their hands.” Parents in the experimental group were contacted prior to week one and encouraged to participate in “Good Behavior Month” by discussing and practicing these rules with their children. Parents who filled out and returned a form indicating that they participated (see Appendix D) received a special reward each week. Rewards for weeks one through three, respectively, were a certificate for a free movie rental, a book, and a certificate for free apples at County Market.

At the end of three weeks, post-test data was collected March 23 through April 2, using the same observation form and procedure used for pre-test data collection. The averages were calculated for each child on each rule for both pre- and post-test data. Due to time constraints, only a single observation was taken in one of the experimental classrooms. The teacher reported that this observation was representative of the
children's behavior. In two classrooms, no observations were made for “walking feet” to the gross motor room, so these scores were pro-rated based on the five-point scale. A t-test analysis was conducted on the pre-test to post-test gain scores of the control and experimental classrooms to measure whether or not the children in the experimental classrooms showed significant improvement on performance of any or all of the rules. A t-test was also used to compare two specific classrooms (one experimental and one control) on “walking feet.” Data from one experimental group was thrown for this particular analysis since only one observation was conducted in this group. Furthermore, the data collected on the children from one of the control groups was eliminated in this instance because the children in this group were younger than in the other groups.

Results

A t-test of the total gain scores of all three observed rules from the experimental and control groups revealed the mean gain score of the experimental group was .7308, and the mean gain score of the control group was .8405. Using a one-tailed test based on these means, the null hypothesis was accepted; there was no significant difference in total gain scores of children's behavior as a function of a parent education program (t(53) = -0.1907, p>.05).

The mean gain score for the “walking feet” rule in the experimental classrooms was 0.6135 and 0.2198 for the control classrooms. This was not significant on a one-tailed t-test analysis (t(53) = 1.5257, p>.05). The mean gain score for the “take care of your hands” rule was 0.5192 for the experimental groups and 0.4138 for the control groups. This was also not significant on a one-tailed t-test analysis (t(53) = 0.4028,
There was no significant difference on the gain scores of the experimental and control groups when these two rules were evaluated separately.

The mean gain score for the “inside voices” rule in the experimental classrooms was –0.3846, and 0.2069 in the control classrooms. This was significant on a one-tailed t-test analysis (t(53) = -2.0102, p<.05). A review of the means shows that the control groups had significantly higher gain scores on this rule than the experimental groups.

A one-tailed t-test analysis of only one experimental and one control group, showed a significant difference on the performance of the “walking feet” rule (t(25) = 2.8773, p<.05). The mean gain score of this experimental classroom was 1.0417, and the mean gain score of the control group was .1250. The experimental group had a significantly higher mean gain score on the “walking feet” rule than the control group.

**Discussion**

The fact that this experiment yielded no significant results in total gain scores or in gain scores on the specific “walking feet” and “take care of your hands” rules when data from all four classrooms was used may be due to several secondary variables. One of the experimental classrooms received two new students in the middle of “Good Behavior Month,” and the teacher reported that the class dynamics were notably impacted as a result. The other experimental classroom consisted of several particularly challenging students and the teacher claimed that depending on the day and which children were present or absent, the dynamics would fluctuate. My presence in the classroom while I was observing seemed to disrupt some of the children as well. This was also a very short-term study that was conducted in the middle of the school year and
more significant results might have been obtained if parents had been exposed to the rules
earlier in the year, and for an extended period of time.

There might have also been some flaws in the observation instrument. The
surprising result that the control group had higher gain scores than the experimental
group on the “inside voices” rule might have been because observation periods of this
rule were not as clearly defined as the other rules. Teachers were asked simply to
observe the child on five unspecified occasions. Most children could have received either
all pluses or all minuses for this rule, depending on when they were observed. Observer
error, judgement, and bias were not accounted for in this study. The teachers and I also
noticed that recording the post-test data was much simpler than recording the pre-test
observations since we felt more comfortable with the instrument. In addition, the five
point scoring scale left little room for variation in gain scores.

Another major variable that could not be controlled for was whether or not the
parents actually received and practiced the materials that were sent home with their
children. Bus drivers were asked to give the children in the experimental groups the
information for their parents each day of “Good Behavior Month” before they dropped
them off at home. The bus drivers have children from all classrooms, not just the two
experimental classes, thereby complicating their ability to consistently sort out which
handouts go to which children. The teacher also admitted that they sometimes forgot to
give the bus drivers the materials for a particular day and would therefore give two days
worth of material on the next day. Some children go to day care after they’re done at
Head Start, which further reduces the likelihood of parents getting information from the
classroom. Finally, since it is not possible to observe what goes on at home after children
leave Head Start, there is no way to know whether or not children actually received assistance on the rules from their parents.

Despite all these limitations that may have contributed to the lack of definitive results, one interesting analysis did come out significant. When I compared the two classrooms that I felt had the most complete data and the least amount of secondary variables, children in the experimental classroom did have statistically higher mean gain scores on the “walking feet” rule than children in the control classroom. Parents were encouraged throughout “Good Behavior Month” to continue to practice the rules with their children. “Walking feet” was the subject of week two, so perhaps children had more time to practice this rule than the “take care of your hands” rule that was the focus of week three. The younger age of the children in one control group might have also affected the overall results. Given that the results were insignificant when this group was included on the "walking feet" rule, but significant when they weren't, it can be surmised that controlling for age would have been beneficial.

Even though only one of the t-tests was statistically significant, I believe the true value of this experiment extends beyond statistical analysis. As I stated in the introduction, research indicates that parent involvement in education activities such as the one in this study ultimately make a difference. More research on the benefits for children of teaching parents school rules needs to be conducted. An examination of the parents at Head Start shows that 20 different families from the experimental classrooms did return sheets indicating their participation in “Good Behavior Month.” Six different families from these same two classrooms showed up and were involved in a meeting on parent involvement that was held March 31 at Head Start to culminate this project. When I
called and invited parents to this meeting, many more were interested in coming, but had prior engagements. Based on this information, and the positive interactions I have had with these parents, I am convinced that, as research suggests, most parents at Head Start do care about their children’s education and are responsive to involvement efforts.

While calling these parents, I also asked them to rate their understanding of the rules and expectations for children’s behavior at Head Start on a scale of one (not much) to five (very much.) Over 80% of the parents from these two classrooms responded with either a four or a five. This knowledge and understanding can only positively reinforce their children’s behavior. In fact, an improvement on the performance of the rules was seen in certain children. For this reason, Head Start plans to use the materials from “Good Behavior Month” at the beginning of the next school year for a program-wide effort to educate all parents on the rules at Head Start and how they are taught. I predict that this will produce even greater observable results in the behavior of the children and the involvement of the parents.
References


Appendix A

Observation table used to record proactive behaviors.
Appendix B

Instructions given to teachers on how to complete the observation tables.

The Helena Head Start MBI Team needs your help! Your time and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

- Using the attached form, please observe each child in your classroom twice on his or her ability to use the following three rules: “walking feet,” “inside voice,” and “taking care of your hands.”

- Enter each child’s name twice on the left-hand side of the form.

- Enter a + each time the child follows the three rules, as indicated on the form.

- If the child fails to follow the rule, enter a -.

- When all five columns regarding a rule are complete, enter the number of plus signs under the “observation 1” column.

- Do the same for the second observation.

- Under the “inside voice” rule, any five times of the day can be used for observation, and therefore specific activities are not indicated on the form. For the “walking feet” and “take care of hands” rules, please use the indicated observation times.

- Fill the forms out as completely as possible and return them to Liz Cooley, preferably at the end of this week. Incomplete observations can be finished at the beginning of next week.

- Questions? Contact Liz or Molly Hedrick, Carroll College Volunteer (457-0260.)

- Thanks!!!
Appendix C

Materials sent home to parents during "Good Behavior Month."

hi!
i am an inside voice!
you can hear me...
in a classroom,
at restaurants,
and on the bus.
where else can you hear me?
Dear parent:

The Head Start "Good Behavior" Month has begun! This week, we will review noisy and quiet voices. We will use colored stars to remind us that sometimes we should be quiet and other times it is okay to be noisy.

At Head Start, we hold up a yellow star to remind children to use their "Inside," or quiet voices. When children see the yellow star, they know it is okay to use a normal, talking voice, but it is not okay to scream and yell. Please read the fun message on this yellow star with your child, and try using the star at mealtime, or during other quiet times at home.

Stay tuned for tomorrow's star: "The Outside Voice."

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. Remember that on Thursday, we will send home a coupon for a free movie rental from Video Excitement to all parents who let us know they practiced this week's rule!
hi!
i am an outside voice!
you can hear me...
on the playground,
when i'm singing,
and with my friends.
when else can you hear me?
Dear Parent:

Now that you've met our yellow star, it is time to meet the blue star. When children see the blue star, they know it is okay to be louder and noisier than usual. In other words, they can use their "Outside Voices." Try using the blue star when your child is outside playing, and then use the yellow star when they come back inside.

Tomorrow's star: The red star. See if your child knows what a red star means.

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. Tomorrow you'll also get a brief form asking you to indicate how your child did on the rules you practiced together. Please fill it out and return in Thursday in order to receive your free movie certificate!
hi!
i am a listening body!
i am quiet...
when my teacher speaks,
during circle time,
and at the movies.
what other times am i quiet?
Dear Parent:

Our final rule this week is "Listening Bodies." When children see the red star, they know it is time to be quiet and listen. Some examples of when to use a "listening body" are listed on your red star. Can you and your child think of any other times when it would be appropriate to use a "listening body?" Try practicing all three stars and rules with your child, then fill out the attached form. Have your child return the form to school tomorrow, and we will send your free movie certificate home with him or her.

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start
Dear Parent:

Thank you for participating in the first week of "Good Behavior" Month. We hope you enjoyed learning about our stars. Please keep practicing these rules with your child.

Next week, we will review our "Walking Feet" rule. We invite you to continue to take part in this special month.

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start
Hi!
I'm a walking foot.
Look for me at Head Start.
I remind children to walk in the halls, in the classroom, on the way to the bus and on the way to the bathroom. Where else can you use walking feet?
Dear parent:

Welcome to week two of "Good Behavior Month!"

This week, we will be reviewing "walking feet." You may have already noticed the little yellow feet along the walls at Head Start. These feet remind children to walk while they're inside the building instead of running. Children are expected to walk to and from the bus, the playground, the bathroom, the gross motor room, and in the classroom. "Use your walking feet!" is a verbal reminder heard often at Head Start. Show your child the attached walking foot and see if he or she knows where else to use walking feet.

Tomorrow we'll practice our walking feet on the stairs!

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. This week we'll be sending home a free book to parents who participate.
show me where
to put my walking feet
on the stairs!

remember not
to skip stairs!
Dear parent:

Now that we know what yellow feet are all about, it's time to look at an important example of when to use walking feet. Children are often tempted to run up or down the stairs. Please remind your child that running on stairs can be very dangerous. Have your child point out how the girl on today's walking foot should walk slowly up every stair. Practice telling your child to use walking feet on the stairs in your house.

Tomorrow's special reminder: "Slow and steady wins the race!"

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start
Help Mr. Turtle use walking feet to get through the maze!
Dear parent:

Our final message this week comes from the famous story of the rabbit and the turtle. The fast rabbit was so sure he would win the race against the slow turtle, that he stopped to take a nap. While he was sleeping, our friend the turtle ending up winning the race. The moral of that story; "slow and steady wins the race," still holds true. Review this with your child, and help him or her move the turtle on today's walking foot through the maze.

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. Remember to fill out the attached form and send it to school tomorrow and we'll send home a free book with your child.
Dear parent:

Thanks for participating in week two of "Good Behavior Month." We hope you enjoyed learning about walking feet. Try practicing the walking feet along with listening bodies, and inside and outside voices. Next week we'll learn how to "take care of our hands."

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start
At head start we take care of our hands!

Instead of pushing, hitting, or pinching, we place our hands gently in our lap during circle and listening time, and before mealtime. When else should you take care of your hands?
Dear Parent:

Welcome to week three of "Good Behavior Month." We hope you enjoyed learning about our "inside voices" and "walking feet" rules! This week, we will be talking about keeping our hands to ourselves.

Children at Head Start are told to "take care of their hands" if they are using their hands to bother or hurt other children. During circle time and while using "listening bodies," children are encouraged to sit quietly with their hands folded in their lap. Practice saying, "take care of your hands" with your child at home and see how well he or she does!

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. There will be another special surprise at the end of this week for parents who participate.
WHICH CHILDREN ARE TAKING CARE OF THEIR HANDS DURING PLAYTIME?
WHICH CHILDREN ARE HAVING MORE FUN?
Dear Parent:

Children at Head Start spend a great deal of their day in playtime. During playtime, children can do wonderful things with their hands. However, they must also remember to "take care of their hands" while playing with other children. Please read today's message with your child and try saying; "take care of your hands," the next time he or she is playing with friends or siblings.

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start
AT HEAD START,
WE DON'T FIGHT, PUSH, OR SHOVE ...

BUT WE DO ...
HOLD HANDS, HUG, AND LOVE
Dear Parent:

"Take care of your hands" is a reminder for children to avoid aggressive or distracting behaviors towards other children. This doesn't mean, however, that children can't hold hands, hug, or use gentle touches when appropriate. At Head Start, we try to create a positive, safe environment for children. Please make sure your child knows the difference between shoving and loving!

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. Return the attached form and receive a surprise from County Market tomorrow!
Dear Parent:

Thank you for participating in the last three weeks of "Good Behavior Month." We hope you have a better idea of the rules at Head Start and how they are taught. Please continue to practice "inside voices," "walking feet," and "take care of your hands" with your child at home. Stay tuned for information on a special meeting that will wrap up "Good Behavior Month."

Sincerely,

Helena Head Start

P.S. Feel free to let us know what you thought of the "Good Behavior" activities.
Form 34 Parent Checkup on Rules Homework

Appendix D

Parent Knowledge 24

Form that parents were asked to complete at the end of each week.

Dear Parent:

Please circle one of the three faces to indicate how well your child did on following the rule at home. Thanks for your help.

[Diagram of three faces]

[Diagram of three faces]

[Diagram of three faces]

When the rule was practiced, here's how he/she did:

Rule:

Date:

Name:

Teacher's Signature:

Define your expectations and establish the rule.