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A Comparison of Students' and Parents' Habits and Attitudes Toward Reading in Title I and
Non-Title I Schools

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by
Judy L. Netherland
December 2004

Dr. Russell West, Chair
Dr. Nancy Dishner
Dr. Louise MacKay
Dr. Leslie Perry
Dr. Terrence Tollefson

Keywords: Attitude, Early Reader, Experience with Reading, Family, Habit, Reading,
Title I School

ABSTRACT

A Comparison of Students' and Parents' Habits and Attitudes Toward Reading in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

by

Judy L. Netherland

This study describes and compares the reading habits and attitudes of students and parents in Title I and Non-Title I schools. The study was conducted because reading is an important basic skill that all children must acquire. The information gathered can be used to help parents provide beneficial experiences for their children in reading.

The literature review addresses literature and research related to factors identified as impacting readiness for school and reading achievement in elementary-age students. Research indicates that family structure, amount of time children spend watching television, availability of learning tools, and home literacy activities may be related to school readiness and academic success.

The population consisted of third, fourth, and fifth grade students and their parents in three school systems in northeast Tennessee. Title I schools included those with a 75% or higher free or reduced lunch rate. Two survey instruments were used – a parent questionnaire and a student questionnaire. Data collection consisted of letters to directors of school systems requesting permission for schools to participate in the study and letters to principals, including the purpose of the study and asking permission to administer surveys. After securing permissions, materials were sent to teachers who helped coordinate the study at the school level.

The data were analyzed, using frequencies and percentages, with tables, charts, and figures. The questions on the surveys were analyzed to answer the four research questions.

This study found that, when compared to students and parents in Non-Title I schools, students and parents in Title I schools were less likely to read at home for enjoyment, use the public library, or read magazines and newspapers. Results demonstrate that students and parents in Title I schools, overall, read less than students and parents in Non-Title I schools, reported having fewer books at home of their own, reported having fewer educational materials at home, and students were found to read to their parents less often. Both students in Title I and Non-Title I schools reported watching television every day, although the amount of time they watch varied.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my three children,

Andrew, Courtney, and Joshua:

I deeply appreciate their love and encouragement.

I would also like to dedicate this work to Sheila P. Smith for all the effort, encouragement, and expertise she has provided throughout this process.

I want to thank Dr. Nancy Dishner for helping me believe in myself and for challenging me to take a “leap of faith.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reading is vital to the educational development of children. If children cannot read well and do not enjoy reading, they are likely to become frustrated and, consequently, give up. Educators' and researchers' opinions seem to agree that the home has a definite role in developing reading readiness. The children who have developed in an environment where they have been encouraged to learn, use their language, and had an opportunity to learn firsthand about their world is better prepared to begin reading than children who have not had such advantages (Wells, 1986).

According to Anderson (1996),

A parent reading to a child is an age-old image that brings to mind a spirit of learning that has passed from one generation to the next. Yet, it is more than imagery. Parents are their child's first and foremost teacher. Children begin to learn at an early age, when parents first use words and images to describe and interpret their world. The best way for parents to help their children become better readers is to read to them (p.5).

Skills such as listening, writing, and reasoning are frequently cited as being vital factors to the development of reading readiness. Books and stories are basic to the development of reading enjoyment in children. It is important that children hear stories that their parents and teachers tell. They should also be able to illustrate stories and poems they hear from a book. Young children need to handle books, linger over the story sequence from pictures, and retell the stories to others (Waler, 1998, p. 84). According to Waler, "The parent-child closeness often involved in being read to may facilitate positive emotional associations between reading and the

security of parental love, thus making reading a pleasant, reinforcing experience. Home life factors include the parents' reading habits, the presence of books or magazines, and parental interest in academic performance" (p.85). And, according to the National Reading Panel (2000), "School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools and communities" (p.32).

According to West, Denton, and Germino-Hausen (2000),

Children are not innately ready or not ready for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interaction with other people and environments before coming to school. With 81 percent of U.S. children in nonparental care arrangements the year before kindergarten, childcare centers and family child care homes are important early environments that affect children's development and learning (p. 34).

According to the United States Department of Education (2001), "Title I is the nation's largest federal assistance program for schools. The goal of Title I is to help every child get a high-quality education. Title I helps students, teachers, and parents" (p.12). Title I Programs usually offer special features, such as more teachers and assistants, more training for school staff, extra time for instruction, a variety of teaching methods and materials, smaller classes, and counseling and mentoring. Administrators, teachers, and parents revise each school's Title I program, yearly. Title I is a federal program that serves schools throughout the United States. The Title I program was reauthorized under the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The purpose of this legislation is to help the neediest schools and students reach the same challenging standards expected of all children. The Title I program provides extra help to students to assist them in meeting state and local education standards. The program serves millions of children in

elementary and secondary schools each year. Most school districts participate. Funds are directed to schools with the highest poverty levels, measured by the number of students receiving free and reduced-priced lunch. Students are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged if they participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program or if neither parent graduated from high school. The National School Lunch program provides free lunches to students whose family income is below 130% of the federal poverty line; it offers reduced-price lunches to students whose family income is between 130% and 185% of the poverty line (United States Department of Education, 2001). Lunch program participation is often used as an indication of family income levels at the school.

The federal government provides funding to states each year for Title I. To obtain the funds, each state must submit a plan describing what children are expected to know, what the high-quality standards of performance are that all are expected to meet, and the way to measure progress. The State Educational Agency identifies eligible schools – those with the highest percentage of children from low-income families – and provides Title I resources. Title I schools include parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff who work to identify students most in need of educational help. They set goals for improvement, measure student progress, using state and local standards, and develop programs that add to regular classroom instruction, by providing opportunities for professional development for school staff, hiring additional teachers, and involving parents in all aspects of the program. The Title I program is evaluated using state, district, and local assessments. Each year administrators, teachers, and parents review the school's Title I program. If the program goals have not been met, the program and school plans are revised.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research study is to describe and compare students' and parents' habits and attitudes toward reading in both Title I and Non-Title I schools. Children who enter school with well-developed language skills and pre-reading skills are more likely to learn to read well in the early grades and succeed in later years. In fact, research shows that most reading problems faced by adolescents and adults are the result of problems that could have been prevented through good instruction in their early childhood years (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). It is never too early to start building language skills by talking with and reading to children.

According to Coleman (2003),

America's children are not reading well enough. Results of the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress on reading showed that only 32 percent of the nation's fourth graders performed at or above the proficient achievement level demonstrating solid academic performance. While scores for the highest-performing students have improved over time, those of America's lowest-performing students have declined (p. 51).

Since 1969, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been the only nationally representative entity that continually assesses what American students know and can do in major academic subjects. Over the years, NAEP has measured student achievement in many subjects, including reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, civics, geography, and the arts. Since 1992, the current NAEP reading assessment has been administered in four different years (1992, 1994, 1998, and 2000) to a nationally representative sample of fourth-grade students (Coleman, 2003).

According to the United States Department of Education (2003a),

Reading opens the doors to learning about math, history, science, literature, geography, and much more. Thus, young capable readers can succeed in these subjects, take advantage of other opportunities such as reading for pleasure and develop confidence in their own abilities. On the other hand, those students who cannot read well are much more likely to drop out of school and be limited to low-paying jobs throughout their lives. Reading is essential to success in today's society (p. 63).

Society and its members – families, individuals, employers, and governmental and private organizations – provide support for education in various ways, such as spending time on learning activities, encouraging and supporting learning, and investing money in education. Parents contribute to the education of their child in the home through encouraging them to learn and teaching them directly.

According to the United States Department of Education (2003a), “Children with richer home literacy environments demonstrated higher levels of reading skills and knowledge when they entered kindergarten in 1998-99 than did children with less rich literacy environments; poor children scored lower than nonpoor children on a home literary index” (p. 77).

According to the United States Department of Education (2003a), “The percentage of poor and nonpoor children who participated in literary activities with a family member increased between 1993 and 2001. Despite the increase, nonpoor children were more likely than poor children to engage frequently in certain literacy activities in 2001, such as being read to by a family member” (p. 79).

According to West et al. (2000), a child's reading skills in kindergarten and first grade differed by certain characteristics of the child and the family. At the beginning of kindergarten, the child's reading skills and knowledge are related to his or her home literacy environment.

Children from “literacy-rich” home environments (i.e., those who are read to, sung to, and told stories to more frequently, and those who have more children’s books, records, audiotapes, and CDs in the home) demonstrate higher reading skills and knowledge than other children. This difference exists whether the families’ income is above or below the federal poverty threshold. A child’s performance in reading during kindergarten and first grade is also related to his or her home literacy resources upon entering kindergarten. Paralleling this pattern for children upon kindergarten entry, those with rich literacy environments at home are more likely than others to perform well in reading at the end of both kindergarten and first grade. In addition, children who have certain early literacy skills (i.e., could recognize letters of the alphabet, recognize numbers and shapes, and understand the concept of the relative size of objects) when they enter kindergarten demonstrate higher reading proficiency in the spring of both kindergarten and first grade than those who did not have this knowledge and skill. Similarly, children who frequently demonstrate positive approaches to learning when they enter kindergarten (i.e., persist at tasks, pay attention, and are eager to learn) have higher reading skills than children who less frequently display such behavior (West et al.).

Willingsky (1990) states that “Children’s reading achievement in kindergarten through the first grade is related to certain child and family characteristics, including their home literacy environment, early literacy skills, approaches to learning, and general health. These differences are still present after controlling for children’s poverty status, race, and ethnicity” (p. 67).

Significance of the Study

This study is important in that it determines if parents and students have the same habits and attitudes about reading. Findings will help determine if special classes in reading instruction

are needed for parents to help their child have a better background in reading, before entering school. The study can also be used to help teachers and curriculum coordinators in developing curriculum and planning in-service activities.

Research completed over the past 30 years indicates that families have more influence over a child's academic performance than any other factor – including schools (McClure, 1987). In the mid-1960s, University of Chicago sociologist, Coleman (2003), conducted a major research study designed to explain the differences in student performance between certain school factors and teacher variables. Coleman reached an interesting conclusion. He found that, while some specific school factors had a modest effect on school performance, the influence of the family background was considerable. From his studies, Coleman determined that resources under school control were less important than those intrinsic to the child's family background. In other words, the resources that the child brought to school from home were considerably more important for their academic success than those resources provided by the school (Coleman).

Bevevino (1988) determined that, from the time children were born, until they turn 18, approximately 87% of their waking time is under the influence of the home environment and only 13% of their time is under school supervision. Bevevino concluded that the environment provided for them by their parents largely determined a child's academic success. Gottfried (1984) discovered that the highest correlation between cognitive development and environment tended to be found during the preschool years.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2000) Reading Report Card, as cited by the United States Department of Education (2003a), included statistical information based on estimates of samples from 43 states and jurisdictions. In this report, the scores were divided into four levels of reading ability: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. The report revealed

that the national average for fourth grade students falling below the basic reading level to be about 39%, those reading at the basic level to be 31%, those reading at the proficient level to be 23%, and those reading at the advanced level to be at 6%. The reading performance of students in the state of Tennessee revealed that the state average was near the national average. The 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Reading Assessment Report revealed that the state of Tennessee's average for fourth grade students who fell below the basic reading level at 42%, those reading at the basic level at 33%, those reading at the proficient level at 20%, and those reading at the advanced level at 5% (Snow et al., 1998). This study also indicated that children in school, where 75% received free or reduced-price lunch, showed a lack of performance from the first through the third grades. Snow et al. stated that understanding the educational challenge to meet the literacy needs of children during their early years is necessary for them to be successful as adults in the workplace.

Delimitations and Limitations

A delimitation of the study is the population to be used. Generalizations with regard to results must be limited to third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I and Non-Title I schools from three school systems in northeast Tennessee. The study was limited to a convenience sample. Only those students with parental permission completed the questionnaire along with one of their parents.

The parent questionnaire presented several inherent limitations. Parents' accuracy may have been limited by lack of reading ability, lack of understanding of questionnaire items, and their perceptions of the social acceptability of certain responses. It is possible that parents in this study may have embellished upon the amount of time they spend in reading activities with their

children. This could be an example of social desirability or bias, because the parents wanted the researcher to believe they are caring and concerned parents and answered the questions to give a good impression of them. Therefore, the reliability of some responses may be affected. The students' responses may be hindered by their not completely understanding the questions or their desire to give what they considered socially acceptable answers to the questions. There was no opportunity to observe the home environment of the students and no face-to-face interviews were conducted in connection with this study.

Definitions

Attitude – a feeling or opinion about a certain fact or situation (Morris, 2000).

Early Reader – those students who are able to read with understanding before the age of six (United States Department of Education, 2003a).

Experience with Reading – surveys completed by parents and students assessed certain aspects of home reading and reading materials in the home (United States Department of Education, 2003a).

Family – a group of people living together (Morris, 2000).

Habit – a recurrent, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition (Morris, 2000).

Reading – in order to read one must comprehend the meaning of a book or writing by perceiving the form in relation to the printed or written characters (Morris, 2000).

Title I School – “refers to those schools that receive funds under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I supports programs to improve the academic achievement of children of low-income families United States” (United States Department of Education, 2003a, p. 3).

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, four basic research questions were selected as the focal point of the investigation:

1. What are the reading habits and attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
2. What are the reading habits and attitudes of parents of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
3. Do the parents' and students' reading habits and attitudes in Title I schools differ from those in Non-Title I schools?
4. Do the parents' reading habits and attitudes and their children's reading habits and attitudes differ?

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, and significance of the study. It also includes the limitations, definitions, research questions, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature and discusses the impact of early literacy environments on young children and academic progress in reading. Chapter 3 contains the methods and procedures used. This includes information about the research design, population for the study, data collection strategies, instrumentation, and data analysis. Chapter 4 contains the data analysis and findings of the study. The data from this study are presented, analyzed, and discussed. Chapter 5 contains an analysis and interpretation of data, including a summary, general conclusion, and recommendations for further consideration.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature broadly addresses literature and research related to factors identified as impacting readiness for school and reading achievement in elementary-age students. Research indicates that variables such as family income, family structure, parents' educational level, amount of time children spend watching television, availability of learning tools, and home literacy activities may be related to school readiness and academic success (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997). Research specifically aimed at the difference between environment and school readiness is somewhat limited (Chall & Snow, 1982).

Educational Philosophies and Literacy Development

Research has revealed that even philosophers such as Plato (427-347 BC), Comenius (1592-1670), and Frobel (1728-1852) continue to impact education today, just as they were instrumental in their lifetimes in inspiring parents to work with their children on language development at early ages (Durkin, 1996). Plato's philosophy that children should be taught from birth and Comenius's appreciation for the importance of language development are reflected in recent literacy research findings (Durkin). The development of oral language is fundamental to reading and the consistent practice of speaking one-on-one to babies from birth is appropriate and encouraged (Snow et al., 1998). Plato's philosophy that the entire community has the responsibility to raise its children is reflected in the current literacy emphasis on adults to share storybooks with children, to enable them to begin the process of developing the skills required for literacy (Snow et al.). Young children benefit from a print-rich environment where adults

model a love for reading, as they read letters, books, magazines, and newspapers. Providing their child with this example, parents portray a value for literacy and demonstrate that print carries meaning (Snow et al.).

Froebel, who was known as the founder of the modern kindergarten, later modeled Comenius's concepts. Comenius' innovations included teaching children early, teaching them in pleasant ways, and teaching them by using real objects, while simultaneously attaching objects to words (Snow et al., 1998). Comenius taught mothers to become effective partners in their child's education (Durkin, 1996). His publication, *School of Infancy*, was the first to provide ideas for parents to use in their homes to help educate their children from the ages of three to seven. Comenius wrote that parents should provide their child with a pleasant learning environment to allow them the opportunity to enjoy their learning experiences (Durkin).

Critical Periods for Developing Reading Readiness

Researchers have defined critical periods for brain development and function. These periods support the importance of investing in the early years for positive outcomes later in life. Between the time of conception and the time a child turns six, the child's brain develops more than at any other time in life. Getting the right kind of stimulation and love from parents and other adults early in life can improve the way individuals learn, behave, and feel about themselves both as children and adults (Beals & DeTemple, 1993).

The critical period for language development is between six months and four years, with developmental potential beginning to decrease by five years of age. Therefore, early literacy experiences are vital to support the development of lifelong learning. "There are periods of time known as windows of opportunity, in the child's development, when the brain is especially open

to certain kinds of learning. Early childhood experiences have powerful effects on the development of the child's physical and emotional abilities and influence their abilities in reading, math, logic, language, and music" (Beals & DeTemple, 1993, p. 72). Parents clearly have a strong influence on their child's literacy level. It is important to provide infants and toddlers with enriching experiences that instill a love of reading and set the stage for lifelong learning. Reading problems can be prevented with early intervention.

According to Cox (1987),

Self concept, social development and reading all begin in families through listening and talking; singing, laughing, and playing games; telling and reading stories; asking and answering questions; drawing pictures and writing; stimulating imagination through play and books; connecting language to the world the child knows and share new experiences to make the world a little larger. A supportive environment and different opportunities for using literacy are more important to reading development than acquiring a set of skills; learning to read takes place on a daily basis as part of every day life. (p. 276)

Positive parenting is important to early childhood development. A secure attachment with a nurturing adult influences the child's capacity for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Children whose parents are depressed or otherwise troubled are most at risk for losing the opportunity to establish a secure attachment in the first 18 months of life. Children living with depressed parents are almost four times more likely to be living in low-income households than in high-income households (Cox, 1987).

It is clear that parents play a strong role in the education of their child, but it is important to note that early intervention is the responsibility of everyone. The parent's role is to nurture and stimulate children from birth. Professionals have a responsibility to identify concerns and

arrange appropriate support for parents. The government also has an important role: to provide high quality early childhood programs that can contribute to a child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional well-being (Zeavin, 1997).

The powerful imprint of home conditions on school performance is shown in America's kindergarten, according to the report of a 1998-1999 United States Department of Education survey of 19,000 representative children, their families, and teachers in 900 schools. During the 1998-1999 school year, four million children attended kindergarten full-or-part time, 85% in public and 15% in private schools (Orlans, 2000).

According to Orlans (2000), 46% of children whose mothers had graduated from college were in the top quarter of reading scores, while only 6% of those whose mothers had not finished high school were in the top quarter. Children in single-parent families, families whose main language was not English, and welfare recipients did more poorly than those with two resident parents whose main language was English and who had not been on welfare. This study showed that mothers without a high-school diploma have far fewer children's books, records, or tapes, and they read to their child less than those mothers with college degrees. However, the group of mothers without a high-school diploma matched the group of mothers with a high school diploma in singing and in playing games and sports with their child. In a study by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2000), it was reported that the general pattern of performance by race or ethnicity shows American Indian children doing most poorly, followed, successively, by Hispanic, Black, White, and Asian children.

Nunley (2000), an educational psychologist and founder of *Brain.org* and the author of *The Layered Curriculum* method of instruction, has done a great deal of research on how to teach children to read effectively. Some of her research has shown something called the "broccoli

effect.” The “broccoli effect” comes about if nightly reading is viewed by the parent and child as a necessary chore. If viewed as a daily “have-to,” whether you like it or not, reading can actually turn off a child’s love for the activity. Two things that show a strong correlation with good readers are early phonemic awareness and parents who read for personal pleasure. Early phonemic awareness refers to how early someone actually demonstrates or teaches a child that letters represent sounds. The sooner the child understands that letters symbolize sounds, the sooner he or she reads. According to Nunley, the biggest influence on a child’s reading is the parent’s personal love for reading. A parent or caregiver who demonstrates the joy of reading has the biggest influence on a child’s reading ability and life-long interest in reading. Parents and educators looking at research on reading can glean valuable principles – start early to teach differences in letters and their sounds, read for personal pleasure in front of children, and find memory aids or memory exercises that help students improve comprehension. Never let a child think his or her struggles with reading are a reflection of overall ability or intelligence. There is a reader in every child (Nunley).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2000) has found that the mother’s level of education is one of the most important factors in influencing her child’s reading levels and other school achievement. Generally, traditional research has revealed that the more highly educated mothers have greater success in providing their children with the cognitive and language skills that contribute to early success in school (Sticht & McDonald, 1990). Also, children of mothers with high levels of education stay in school longer than those of mothers with low levels of education.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (United States Department of Education, 2003a) data provide some evidence supporting a traditional interpretation of

children's academic success that focuses on gross measures of their parents' educational attainment. A review of the performance of children and young adults across age groups (9 to 25 years of age), and across ethnic groups on various literacy tasks of the NAEP, confirmed the importance of the mother's educational level (Sticht, 1988). The 1990 NAEP reading assessments reveal that the average proficiency among fourth graders was lower for those students who report that their mothers had not completed high school.

According to Wells (1986),

One study of parent involvement based on a model of children reading to parents found that children who read to their parents on a regular basis made greater gains than children receiving an equivalent amount of extra reading instruction by a reading specialist at school. (p. 57)

Important Literary Activities

Children whose parents read to them perform better in school (Snow et al., 1998). Other family activities, such as telling stories and singing songs, also encourage the child's acquisition of reading skills (McGill & Allington, 1991). This information is drawn from data collected by the National Household Education Surveys Program and examines the frequency that parents reported engaging in various literary-building activities with children, ages 3-5, who were not yet enrolled in kindergarten in 1993 and 2001 (United States Department of Education, 2001). The percentage of children read to by family members frequently (i.e., three or more times per week) increased from 78% in 1993 to 84% in 2001. There were also increases in the percentage of children whose family members frequently told them a story (from 43% to 54%), taught letters, words, or numbers (from 58% to 74%), and taught them songs or music (from 41% to 54%)

(Snow et al.). “Increases in the percentage of children who were read to or who participated in other literary activities were evident regardless of the poverty status of the child. Poor children and nonpoor children were each more likely to participate in literacy activities in 2001 than they were in 1993” (Snow et al., p. 45).

Despite the increase in participation in literacy activities by all children, regardless of their income levels, nonpoor children were more likely than poor children to engage frequently in certain literacy activities in 2001. For instance, 87% of nonpoor children were frequently read to by a family member, compared with 74% of poor children (Snow et al., 1998).

The percentage of children who engaged in certain literacy activities in 2001 also varied by the child’s race/ethnicity. White children were more likely than Black or Hispanic children to be read to or told a story frequently. They were also more likely than Hispanic children to be taught letters, words, or numbers. However, no differences were found in the percentage of Black, Hispanic, or White children who were taught songs or music (Snow et al., 1998).

Improving the school readiness and literacy skills of children is an essential goal of the federally funded Even Start Family Literacy Program. Preliminary findings of the four-year national evaluation of the Even Start Program reveals that participating children with no prior pre-school experience doubled the expected development growth rate. This finding suggests, “as Even Start children enter the public schools, they are more likely to know basic concepts and precursors of kindergarten skills than they would have in the absence of the program” (Song & Hattie, 1984, p. 87).

In the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model, parents work on basic academic skills while their child attends a preschool class. Follow-up studies of preschool participants who were at a risk for failure, when they enrolled in the family literacy program, showed that primary-grade

students performed above average on variables such as academic performance, motivation to learn, attendance, self-confidence, and probable success in school. Ninety percent of the children were not considered at risk for school failure by their current teachers (Slavenas, 1984).

There are significant findings for the parents who participated in the Kenan Trust Family Model. “Over 80 percent of the parents who enrolled in the program were unemployed, had not completed high school, and had an income less than \$7,000 per year, primarily from public assistance” (Slavenas, 1984, p. 65). After participating in the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model, “41 percent either were in some form of higher or continuing education program or had definite plans for enrolling; 35 percent were employed; 41 percent were not receiving any form of public assistance; and well over half were still serving as volunteers in their child’s elementary schools one to three years after leaving the program” (Slavenas, p. 66).

The Intergenerational Literacy Action Research Project conducted by Wider Opportunities for Women (Sticht, 1988) involved mothers participating in a community-based program that provides women with basic-skills instruction and job training. The study revealed that 65% of children benefited from their mother’s participation in the adult education and training programs. Following their participation in the project, more than 90% of the mothers reported that they had become aware of the influence they had on their child’s educational achievement. The mothers also stated that they would read to their child more often and make greater efforts to help them with their homework, take them to the library, and talk with them about school.

There are a number of factors in the family context that must be identified and thoroughly investigated, so that low-literate parents learn how to use their existing skills as tools for improving their lives and their child’s education. Two more implications from this study are that

low-literate parents, especially mothers, were more likely to exert influence on their child's academic achievement when they are able to enhance their own literacy skills. Intervention programs should be designed to enable family members to construct useful meanings and definitions of literacy. All the stakeholders should come together to develop a research agenda for examining parent-child interactions and advancing family literacy as a field with appropriate frameworks and instructional approaches (Nickse, 1990).

Auerback's (1998) work also shows that indirect factors, including frequency of children's outings with adults, number of maternal outings, emotional climate of the home, amount of time spent interacting with adults, level of financial stress, enrichment activities, and parental involvement with the schools, had a stronger association with many aspects of reading and writing than did direct literary activities, such as help with homework. Munsinger (1971) wrote about the naturalness of learning to read in the home. Children ask endless questions about the names of things and what words mean. Munsinger commented also on the fact that children are curious about printed notices and signs that come their way, and that they should be told what the signs "say," when making inquiries. It is surprising how large a stock of words a child will gradually recognize in this way. The value of parents reading to their child was seen as an outcome of children attempting to imitate the reading behavior of their parents. Munsinger wrote that, given plenty of books and someone to read to them regularly, it would only be a matter of time until children learned to read.

Artley (1939) stated that by the time most children were two years old they had become well acquainted with books. First-hand experiences of sensory-motor activities include pulling, tearing, patting, chewing, and hugging books. Parents should engage their child in different language activities, including frequent conversations and periods where they can share jokes,

riddles, songs, poems, tongue twisters, and other verbal games and experiences. These activities help the child develop auditory discrimination, vocabulary, sensitivity to syntax, and other skills important to later reading success (Turner & Paris, 1995).

Bond and Wagner (1983) stated that motivation, maturation, and education were the three components of the antecedents of reading. DeBoer and Dallman (1964) concluded that factors affecting dents of readiness include mental age, physical fitness, social development, emotional development, education prior to first grade, and discrimination activities. It is conceived that the total home environment is mainly responsible for the child's early development in all areas of readiness (Manning & Manning, 1981).

Bond and Tinker (1957) confirmed that it was important for older people to interact with children. They reported that stories should be read together with children while they look at the pictures and talk about them. They concluded that a child's own extensive experiences with such materials as books, crayons, paper, scissors, and paintbrushes play a role in their preparation for reading.

Sheldon and Carillo (1952) reported a significant difference between the reading ability of students and the number of books in the home. Their project was conducted in eight elementary schools in New York, with one question on the survey concerning the number of books in the home. The data analysis revealed that the percentage of good readers increased with the number of books in the home. The study also revealed that, as the number of books increased in the homes of the poor and average readers, their reading skills improved.

Smith (1984) indicated that children in lower socioeconomic levels consistently earned lower scores on measures of academic achievement and ability than children from higher socioeconomic levels. The evidence suggested that middle-class families provide children

generalizations and concepts about reading, which aid in comprehension by associating and relating ideas and objects. Smith also reported that students, while in the company of an adult who regularly provided a positive role model as a reader, would consider reading a pleasurable and desirable activity. Students will attempt to learn to read, as the role model did, in order to recreate the feeling. Children develop an awareness of reading by imitating parents who read. If a child has access to an abundance of reading materials, chances are greater that the child will have the desire to read (Mergentine, 1963). The influence parents have on their child's attitudes toward reading has been shown in a study reported by Hess (1969). The research was conducted by using 160 Black women and their four-year-old children. Subjects were from different socioeconomic levels. Of all the factors investigated in regard to reading readiness, the factor that seemed to have the most impact was the mother's use of home resources. Hansen (1973) reported that, if members of a family group read frequently in the presence of their child, reading would become more important to the child. He also wrote that the family, which provided their child access to books, magazines, and newspapers, was the type of home to produce children with high motivation toward success in reading. Mothers and fathers should enjoy reading and let their children observe them engaged in reading activities of different kinds, so that they can see that there is a purpose for reading. Parents should spend time reading to their child. Just before bed is a good time to read to a child from their favorite book. Soon, the child will be doing his or her own reading (Turner & Paris, 1995).

Carmichael (1970) stated that S.S. Stools, using a subtest of *The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*, found that scores were related to a particular set of maternal variables: The mother's scores on the vocabulary section of the *Wexler Adult Intelligence Scale* and the discrimination index of the mother's teaching style. Children whose mothers provided rich and

varied reading activities performed better linguistically, regardless of whether the mother's qualities were directly or indirectly related to social class.

Reading authorities and research studies never fail to emphasize the importance of reading activities in the home. Activities provided by parents determine whether or not the child has been placed firmly on the path to reading. Parental views and attitudes shape and formulate their child's early development. Entry into the school program does not indicate the termination of the parent's responsibility of guiding their child in reading. Parental interest and concern should remain constant and positive. These attitudes determine and affect a child's readiness for reading (Carmichael, 1970). Wartenberg (1970) and her fellow teachers, when asked the question, "What can I do to help my child with his reading?" stated that parents should act as role models and demonstrate the fact that they, themselves, read a variety of things such as newspapers, magazines, directions, and pamphlets.

Greer and Mason (1980) presented a breakdown of the factors within the home literacy environment by their effect on children's reading interest. Factors include parents helping their child by encouraging them with homework, reading to them from birth, showing an interest in what they read, helping choose books, keeping magazines and books in the home, and reading demonstrated by parents.

The one factor that stands out from all others is that it is not who the parents are as much as what they do in the home environment. Numerous studies indicate that children model people with whom they associate (MacDonald, 1973). Children's beliefs, attitudes, and values are learned from adults in their home environment. The importance parents place on reading and their personal attitude toward books is passed on to their child (Powell, 1988).

Adults who had reading difficulty when young find value in reading and read more to their child. Reading aloud for growth in reading is more effective with children who are in the lowest ranges of reading achievement (MacDonald, 1973). Children from homes of lower socioeconomic status may receive greater benefits from being read to than other students. MacDonald also suggested that economically disadvantaged children at the elementary level showed significant gains in vocabulary meaning, visual decoding, motor encoding, and reading comprehension when they were read to on a regular basis.

Reading stories, nursery rhymes, and jingles to young children has always encouraged them. Stories of early readers have consistently recorded that one of the most important features of these children's experiences has been that they were read to from very early in their lives and that they have grown up in a book-oriented home (Waler, 1998).

Cholewinski and Holiday (1979) implemented a special beginning reading program in a low socioeconomic area in California to make up for the student's lack of experience at home with books and print. The teachers sought to simplify the process of learning to read by breaking down learning into simple steps. First, they used basal readers and flash cards, but some students still failed to learn to read. Next, they tried diagnostic, prescriptive programs, but many of the children could not transfer these skills to the reading process. In a desperate attempt to discover the problem, they decided to focus on the competent readers who enjoyed reading. They found the single most important factor was the presence of books in the home. At home, they were exposed to reading in a non-pressured environment, which was proven to be quite different from school.

Educators recognized the benefits of voluntary reading, while substantial numbers of children do not read much on their own. Foerster (1977) reported that 22% of 200 fifth grade

students she surveyed chose not to read at all. She reported a Gallup Survey, which estimated that 80% of the books read in the United States are read by 10% of the population. In addition, the survey found that half the adults sampled admitted never having read an entire book.

In studies by Morrow (1985), some characteristics of homes where children are likely to become voluntary readers include small families, parents with a college education, and a home with a rich literacy environment. Morrow also noted that children in kindergarten who demonstrated an interest in books scored significantly higher on standardized reading readiness tests and were rated higher by teachers on work habits, general school performance, and social and emotional development than the children who were not interested in books.

Crawford (1971) reported that children living in homes that reported a high frequency of literacy activities were better able to handle unfamiliar content. In an attempt to determine which factors were good indicators of school achievement, the Toronto Board of Education conducted a study, as cited in Crawford. The sample was a group of kindergarten students and their parents. A questionnaire was developed, to obtain data, with 2 of the 65 questions concerning the availability of reading material at home. The research found two factors that were the best predictors of achievement. The first factor studied was the readiness level of their child, and the second factor was the number of children's books in the home.

In a study to determine why second graders chose to read independently, Burkhart (1983) developed a reading program to motivate 120 second grade children identified as capable, confident readers. An interest inventory, a free response interview, and direct observation revealed that the students were in schools and home environments where literacy was valued, however, few chose to read independently. A ten-week structured sustained reading program was implemented. The program provided the time, setting, and activities to foster reading habits.

Parents of the students involved in the program were encouraged to establish a good reading program at home. Eighty-four percent of the 120 second grade students showed a definite change in their attitude towards reading (Burkhart).

The combined influence of reading activities at home and at school on a child's willingness to read was shown in a study conducted by Rasinski (1987). Twenty-six third grade students and 40 fifth grade students were chosen from two elementary schools. The participants were interviewed and asked to respond to questions concerning their home reading habits. Data analysis revealed a significant difference exists between high- and -low ability students in both third and fifth grades. Students who engaged in home reading activities were more willing to read on their own than those who did not participate in home reading activities.

Greer and Mason (1980) assessed the effects of the home literary environment on kindergarten children's recall of topically familiar and unfamiliar symbols. Sixteen students were chosen from a public school for the study. The other 16 students chosen came from a gifted program in a private school. Each participant was asked to recall 2 – 4 passages and answer interview questions. Their responses were recorded as to the frequency of home literary experiences. Results indicated that the amount and quality of home literary activities affected the recall of symbolic information among children of kindergarten age. Children with higher verbal scores were less affected by literary habits that focused on naming, retelling, and paying attention to the environment and their surroundings.

Stroebel and Evans (1988) investigated the neuropsychological functioning and home environment of early readers. The study matched 21 early readers attending preschool with 21 nonreaders. Students were matched according to age and intelligence. Stroebel and Evans collected the data by administering neuropsychological tests and having parents of the children

answer a questionnaire. The primary independent variable was the reading level of the child, early reader or nonreader. There were two dependent variables for this study. One dependent variable was the participant's performance on 11 neurological tests. The other dependent variable was the parent's response to the questionnaire. Stroebel and Evans concluded that the common characteristic found was having parents who valued education. Based on the responses to the parent questionnaire, the researchers found that early readers were read to more frequently. Only one of the early readers had not been read to frequently, while 13 of the 21 nonreaders had indeed been read to on an infrequent basis.

Rowe (1991) studied the home backgrounds, as well as the affective and behavioral factors that influenced students' reading achievement. He conducted a stratified probability sample of 100 government and non-government primary and post primary schools. The sample included 5,092 students chosen from grade levels one, three, five, seven, and nine, representing 91% of the sample. Two different data gathering instruments were used during the study. The first tool was a student record revealing socioeconomic factors. Parental assistance was necessary in gathering this information. The other instrument used measured reading activity in the home. Reading achievement was measured by a reading comprehension test. Teachers also rated students on reading behaviors. The results suggested that there was a positive carry-over reading effect between activities at home and the student's behavior at school. Demanding attentiveness at home resulted in the positive transference of skills to the classroom.

Reading activities at home had significant positive influences on student reading achievement as well as on mediating variables of attitude toward reading and attentiveness in the classroom. In terms of home background factors, the socioeconomic status had a positive effect on the measures of students' attitudes and attentiveness in the classroom; however, the effect was

small and insignificant. Results of the study indicated that regardless of socioeconomic status, age, or gender, reading activity at home had a significant positive influence on measures of students' reading achievement. Reading activities at home also had a positive influence on student attitude toward reading and attentiveness in the classroom. Parental involvement in reading activities at home is proven to have major long-term positive effects (Rowe, 1991).

To determine if parental involvement in a home-based reading program would increase the frequency of parent-child reading activities and improve children's reading attitudes and achievement, a sample of seven- and -eight-year-old children was divided into experimental and control groups. Both the experimental and control groups were pre-tested for reading and attitude achievement. The parents of the children were surveyed for the frequency of reading activities that occurred in the home. The parental involvement program was implemented for the experimental group through the distribution of a seven-day calendar of home reading activities. Both groups made significant gains in reading achievement from pretest to posttest, while the experimental group had higher posttest scores. These findings support the assumption that reading attitudes and achievement are higher among those students who have parents who engage in reading activities at home (Teale, 1986).

According to Landsberger (1973), parents are important educators and much learning takes place in the home environment. Some children already possess strong language skills and employ them successfully before they begin school, while other children do not possess such language skills. These differences are related to the home environment.

Carmichael (1970) reported that environmental and developmental factors interact and influence intellectual maturation. They also influence the development of the child's perceptual abilities and language. Furthermore, there appeared to be evidence that the intellectual

development during a child's early years strongly influences his or her potential as a teenager, and later as an adult (Larrick, 1976).

Recognition of the importance of the child's preschool years to later reading success is further supported by Kagan and Mass (1962). They suggested various reading experiences parents could plan for their children. Parents should either be provided with instructions on how to teach their young children basic skills of beginning reading or be involved in a cooperative effort with preschool teachers. Downing, Ollila, and Oliver (1977) stated that children come to school at the kindergarten level with a predisposition toward either achievement or underachievement. Well before they enter the classroom, many children are oriented toward either success or failure in school.

Carmichael (1970) reported that his colleagues pursued the argument that early social experiences, which are part of mother-child interactions, shape thought and cognitive styles of problem solving. Much has been revealed about the profound importance of the mother as determinate of the child's behavior (Wells, 1986).

The findings of Downing et al. (1977) supported the view that the children's development of language concepts is related to their experiences of speech and writing or printing at home. Awareness of the function of forms of language and consciousness of linguistic categories is fostered in literacy rich home backgrounds that stimulate conceptual development.

Kagan and Mass (1962) wrote that the mother acts as an example of her culture; by the goals and values she exhibits. The mother acts as a model. The way the mother is perceived by the child determines many of the behavioral choices the child will make. When children come to school without preparation for reading, the learning process can be frustrating for both children and teachers. There is an important difference between students who are read to at home and

whose parents take time to talk to them and help them with learning the alphabet (Schickedanz, 1978).

Differences among levels of support children receive at home are evident from the moment a child picks up a book at school. Teachers are encouraged when children come to school knowing the alphabet and focusing on the words instead of the pictures (McClure, 1987). Children who are not taught skills or read to at home regularly begin their education with a definite disadvantage. While teachers try to fill students' learning gaps, their peers are advancing at rapid speeds (Rasinski, 1987).

An early lack of emphasis on reading with children can establish long-term patterns that are difficult to reverse. Rowe (1991) reported that in a 1988 survey of National Education Association members' teachers, when describing obstacles to student learning, reported that a lack of family reading was the greatest hindrance. Studies over the last 30 years identify a strong link between parental involvement in school and increased student achievement, behavior, self-esteem, and attendance. In the United States, however, family involvement in the school remains at a minimum (McClure, 1987).

Sheldon and Carillo (1952) stated that children come to school for kindergarten with a predisposition toward achievement or underachievement. Long before children enter the classroom, many, particularly males, are oriented toward either success or failure. In male underachievers, the predisposition to underachieve is present when they enter school. In females, the predisposition to underachieve cannot be ruled out.

Attention to differences across families and communities in parent and child experiences has increased understanding of how poverty, race, ethnicity, family structure and transitions, parent age, and other contexts interact with children's development. Research on stress, social

support, and parental behavior has led to calls for early childhood programs to help strengthen parenting behavior by addressing the parent's needs. Sweeping social changes in the United States have shaped current ideas about differences between families and early childhood programs. The growing ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of the population increases the challenge of helping children learn to read (Powell, 1988).

Parents are powerful allies in the reading curriculum because they can provide a multitude of language experiences for their children. Many literary activities can be found in daily home life. Teachers can share suggestions with parents through a newsletter, during parent meetings, or perhaps even in an informal meeting with individual parents (Manning & Manning, 1981).

A number of factors associated with parent involvement on their child's education have come together in recent years as a theme for research and practice. Involvement is coming to be seen as much more complicated than getting parents to take an interest in their child's schooling. Parents need to help with homework, show up for teacher conferences, and get their children truly ready for school. It has been found that parents are more likely to be involved if teachers communicate appropriately with them (Armstrong, 1987). The need for such commitment has never been greater. Despite a record amount of rhetoric on education, there remains an unacceptably high level of illiteracy and semi-literacy among young people. Nearly 40% of 13-year-olds lack such intermediate skills as the ability to locate information within paragraphs or make generalizations based on what they have read (Anderson, 1996). Youngsters lacking these skills will have difficulty reading newspapers and understanding their textbooks. More serious are the challenges they will face later in life when confronted by the workplace in the *Information Age* (Gardner, 1983).

“Poetry, biographies, novels, and essays are the birthright of every child. Children who miss out on them because of poor schooling, parental inattention, or too much television are children being deprived of a rich and irreplaceable heritage” (Schickedanz, 1978, p.87). Children who do not read fluently today will not have access to the best jobs in the future. In his 1987 report on elementary education, entitled *First Lessons*, then Secretary of Education William Bennett wrote that teaching children to read is the most important responsibility of elementary schools. Parents should share the same responsibility of valuing the teaching of reading. Parents have few responsibilities more important or more rewarding than helping children learn to read (Anderson, 1996).

It is reported in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Binkley, 1998) that a parent is a child’s first guide in unraveling the puzzle of written language. “A parent is a child’s one enduring source of faith that sooner or later he/she will be a good reader “(Binkley, p.28). The Commission on Reading suggested two things parents could do to ensure that their children get the best possible start. First, parents should read to preschool children. Second, they should informally teach their children about reading and writing (Binkley). Reading is a constructive process. According to Binkley, good readers skillfully integrate information in the text with what they already know. Since no piece of text can possibly tell readers everything they need to know, readers must fill in the blanks from experience.

The Influence of the Public Library

The public library is tremendously influential for young children and their families, and it is often overlooked as an active partner in education. Through information sources, libraries can facilitate problem-solving strategies, link needs with decision-making skills, and provide answers

to questions (Bauer, 1992). As part of the network of community institutions, the public library encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning. Parents can locate materials on reading readiness, parenting, child care, and child development. Through a parent's interest in the library, the child also develops an interest in reading. Today's librarians have resources, services, and programs to reach not only print-oriented learners, but also those whose strongest learning style includes logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal styles (Gardner, 1983). Most libraries offer a wide range of developmentally appropriate programs for young children. Library programs for toddlers offer a special bonding time for adults and children. Library programs for preschoolers offer experiences with literature and may possibly be their first social experience with books and being read to. Programs through the library are not limited to reading colorfully illustrated books out loud but also include songs and musical activities, visual media puppets, toys, and dolls. Such items are used for introduction purposes, active participation on the part of the child, and sometimes just for simple crafts (Durkin, 1996).

Library-based literacy brings children and adults together with books to share at the library, as well as those books brought home to be read. Children and adults realize that reading builds close human connections (Willingsky, 1990).

Home-based literacy programs can provide story times for children and training for child care providers. Through modeling, discussions, and encouraging positive feedback, libraries teach the skills necessary and show parents and others what public library resources are available to them. Parents can influence their children's excitement for reading and learning. Children become ready to read as their attention span, receptive language, active learning, and familiarity with strong language structures increase. Adults learn that reading for themselves, reading to

their children, and having books in the home demonstrates the importance of reading to children (Tompkins, 1997).

Parent Involvement in Developing Children's Reading Readiness Skills

Parents who help their children learn to read help open the door to greater opportunities and can begin an endless chain. As parents read to their children, they develop a love of stories and poems. They open up a world of fact, fantasy, history, and make-believe. They become the keepers of all known and unknown facts. Parents who wish to read for their own information and pleasure become influential figures. Through the enthusiasm shown by their parents, children become avid readers. Parents regularly ask how they can help their children succeed in reading. Most parents know that helping their children at home with their reading will be beneficial to them. Help at home and at school both aim at producing a self-directed learner (Bruner, 1990).

Parents can use their knowledge, skills, and personal stories to serve as guides for their children. Children develop a sense of purpose that usually goes beyond the moment. Children want to please their parents and will imitate what they feel their parents want them to do. A favorable attitude toward reading can help the child reflect, inform, and organize his or her perception of the world (Auerback, 1998).

Parents need to help their child develop a repertoire of reading strategies and skills, as learning and life surround the child with complex issues. To face those issues, the child needs, not only basic skills, but also complex problem-solving strategies. These will allow the child to comprehend what is read and understand the social environment (Durkin, 1996). According to Cambourne (1998), "The child must be able to personalize information and knowledge. It might be called story telling. The learner tells himself a story about how he uses knowledge,

participates in events, searches for more clues, and manipulates tools. Personal stories of this sort bring about long-range benefits for the learner” (p. 71).

Certain steps lead to developing reading readiness and a favorable attitude toward reading. Parents need to set aside a special time to read to their children, talk with them, and let them finish their own sentences. Parents especially need to listen to the retelling of stories they have heard throughout the day. Children should be taught to listen while others are talking, and to follow simple directions. Children should be encouraged to name things around them clearly and distinctly. Playing word games with a child will help to increase his/her vocabulary. Parents should get their children a library card and encourage them to check out books frequently (Chomsky, 1992).

If parents want their child to become a self-directed reader, they need to take the steps necessary to make it happen. Parents do not have to abandon their jobs to become full-time teachers, but they do have to consider how to guide their children and how to help them develop a positive attitude toward the enjoyment of reading. Deliberate action needs to be taken to help the child grow as a conscientious, determined learner (Tompkins, 1997).

Children will want to learn language, to expand their knowledge, and to communicate effectively if they are encouraged to do so by their parents. Parents’ beliefs about helping can be translated into action, not only by specific behaviors, but also by principles, in order to guide the children in how they approach learning. One principle for learning is the process of making sense of the world. What students learn is very dependent on their previous understanding, their attitudes toward learning, the ways they perceive and organize the world, and their current context (Butler, 1998). “To reduce ambiguity and uncertainty, learners establish order by recognizing patterns or principles and constructing guidelines that give them a sense of control.

Language proficiency occurs through frequent and diverse practices in a purposeful, functional setting” (California Reading Task Force, 1995, p. 35). “Language growth is developmental. Vocabulary, syntactic complexity, and forms of expression expand over a lifetime as experiences, cognitive skills, and personal interests prompt development. Reading is a global human behavior, and it is basically an integrated learning experience” (Cambourne, 1998, p. 81).

Today, as never before, parents and care givers are concerned about two reading areas: 1) A home-school partnership that enhances reading, and 2) how teachers carry out early reading instruction (Biastock, 1992). Some school systems host a focus-group where teachers invite parents to come and discuss ways to strengthen the home-school connection as a vital link to promoting good attitudes toward reading (Chomsky, 1992).

All that is known about the child’s emerging literacy clearly points to the value of everyday home-literacy related experiences (Manzo & Manzo, 1995). Strong formative attitudes, as well as other unique experiences within the family cultural structure, are of important merit. This information needs to get out to the public. Informal literacy-related activities occurring out of school provide an important bridge to strengthening a child’s emergent literacy. Positive reading attitudes can be supported by routine literary activities within the family culture. Both incidental and deliberate literacy-related activities at home will increase, as children and parents enjoy working together (Macheil, 1995).

“The period of emerging literacy is a joyful time in childhood that is enhanced by teachers and parents working together to develop a positive reading attitude in children. The child also has an active part to play in the emergence of his or her own literacy” (Willingsky, 1990, p. 52).

The Influence of Television Viewing on Reading

In the past, the family served as the only training ground for children's language development. That is to say, it was understood that the more parents spoke to their children, read to them, listened to them, and echoed back their sounds, the more likely they were to use language well (Winn, 1985). Today, many parents believe that young children will profit as much from giving their attention to a television program as they might by spending that time talking and listening to a real person. With the almost universal acceptance of "Sesame Street" as a positive educational experience for preschool children, many parents have come to feel that watching "educational television programs may be more profitable mental occupation than they themselves might provide" (Winn, p. 77). And yet, the educational results of "Sesame Street" have been disappointing. The expectation that a program – carefully designed by the most eminent and knowledgeable child specialist – would bridge the gap between middle-class children, who have had ample verbal opportunities at home, and those children deprived of such opportunities has not been realized. Poor children have not caught up with their more advantaged peers, nor even made a significant gain. Even though many have watched "Sesame Street," their language skills do not show any significant or permanent gains as they progress through schools (Winn).

While researchers find that comprehension and retention of what children see on television does increase with age, recent findings show that even children as old as eight do not remember much of what they see and hear on television. However, there do seem to be some aspects of brain development that may be significantly impacted by regular exposure to the television experience. "Some of the aspects of brain development are impacted by children

watching television have to do with the particular ways in which the brain is organized to handle verbal and nonverbal material” (Butler, 1998, p. 124).

The clear division of human memory into two categories – verbal and visual – provides further support for the idea that there exists two discrete ways of thinking. Experimental evidence shows that the processes involved in remembering what is seen are quite different from those for remembering what is read or heard. In everyday life, this disparity is reflected in the common experience of recognizing the face of a person one has met before (visual memory) but failing to remember the person’s name or even the circumstances under which the original meeting took place (verbal memory). Until children develop language skills, they absorb experience by means of a nonverbal form of thought. By a child’s second birthday, language has usually become a dominant force in his/her life.

Further evidence of the nonverbal effect of children’s television experiences is seen in television’s failure to act as an adequate replacement for real-life linguistic opportunities. The director of a Harlem center for deprived preschool children reports that child after child arrived at his school virtually mute, unable to speak an intelligible sentence, although medical examinations revealed no clinical deficiencies, either physical or mental. “It is usually diagnosed as a speech defect,” he observes, “but most often I have found it to be the result of hearing bad language, listening to nothing but television, and being spoken to hardly at all” (Walsh, 1980, p. 85).

Walsh (1980) also said,

If the thousands and thousands of hour’s young children spend viewing television serve as a source of verbal stimulation and help to develop the verbal centers of the brain, then there should be a generation of children capable expressing themselves clearly and

distinctly. This does not appear to be the case. In fact, a carefully controlled study designed to explore the difference between television viewing and the language spoken by preschool children discovered an inverse difference between viewing time and performance on test of language development. The children in the study who viewed more television demonstrated lower language levels. (p. 86)

Further evidence indicates that the verbal abilities of children who grew up watching great quantities of television have lower verbal abilities than children who grew up watching less television. Young children have a built-in need for mental activity. In a culture that depends on a precise and effective use of spoken and written language, children's optimal development requires not merely adequate but abundant opportunities to manipulate, to learn, and to synthesize experience.

Prior to the television era, young children's access to symbolic representations of reality was limited. Unable to read, children entered the world of fantasy, primarily by way of stories told to them or read from a book. Before television, parents read to their children and helped them enter imaginary worlds. Pre-television children who entered an imaginary world before they knew how to read always had an adult along to interpret, explain, and comfort them, if need be. Before learning to read, it was difficult for a child to enter the fantasy world alone. For this reason, the impact of television was greater on preschoolers and pre-readers than on any other group. By means of television, very young children were able to enter and spend large portions of their waking time in another world. School-age children fall into a different category. Because they can read, they have other opportunities to leave reality behind. For these children, television is merely another imaginary world (Medrick, 1979).

Because reading, which was once the school child's major imaginative experience, has now been replaced in some children's lives by television, the television experience must be compared to the reading experience in an effort to try to discover whether they are actually similar activities fulfilling similar needs in a child's life (Medrick, 1979).

It is not enough to compare television watching to reading, from the viewpoint of quality, because the quality of the material available in each medium varies enormously. The very nature of the two experiences is different and that difference affects the impact of the material available... The nature of the two experiences is different and that difference affects the impact of the material taken in. Few people, other than linguistics students and teachers of reading, are aware of the complex mental manipulations involved in the reading process. According to Walsh (1980), "Shortly after learning to read, a person assimilates the process so completely that the words in books seem to acquire an existence almost equal to the objects or arts they represent" (p. 89). As a child's mind transforms abstract symbols into sounds and the sounds into words, s/he hears the words and invests them with meanings previously learned in spoken language. The brain must carry out the steps of decoding and investing with meaning each time one reads, but s/he becomes more adept at it as the skills develop. The mind not only hears words, in the process of reading, but reading also involves the mind coming up with images. The precise nature of this "reading image" is little understood, nor is there agreement about what relation it has to visual images taken in directly by the eyes. Nevertheless, images necessarily color our reading. The biggest difference between these "reading images" and the images taken in, when viewing television, is that one creates his/her own images, when reading, based on life experiences and reflecting individual needs, while one must accept what is received when watching television images. The creative aspect of reading is present during all reading

experience, and is almost like a small television program. The result is a nourishing experience for the imagination As Bettelheim (1986) notes, “Television captures the imagination but does not liberate it. A good book at once stimulates and frees the mind” (p. 65).

Television images do not go through a complex symbolic transformation. The mind does not have to decode and manipulate the television experience. Perhaps, this is a reason why the visual images received directly from a television set sometimes appear stronger than the images conjured up mentally, while reading, although ultimately they satisfy less. When reading a book, the reader is more in control because characters can be made to look like the reader wants them to look. The reader is more in control of things, when reading a book, than when one sees something on television.

“It may be the television-bred children’s reduced opportunities to indulge in inner picture-making that accounts for some children’s inability today to adjust to nonvisual experiences. This is commonly reported by experienced teachers who bridge the gap between the pretelevision and the television eras” (Medrick, 1979, p. 64).

A comparison between reading and viewing may be made in respect to the pace of each experience. The pace of each experience can determine how much it intrudes upon other aspects of life. The reader may proceed as slowly or as rapidly as desired. If something is not understood, the reader may stop and reread it before continuing. If the material read is moving, the reader is free to put down the book for a few moments and cope with his or her emotions without fear of losing anything.

Materials on TV cannot be readily transformed into a form that might suit particular emotional needs, as is done with reading. Sometimes, the images move so quickly that the viewer does not have time to use his/her imagination to invest the people and events portrayed on

television with the personal meanings that would help them understand and resolve differences and conflicts in their own life. During a television experience, the eyes and ears are overwhelmed with the immediacy of sights and sounds (Powell, 1988).

Children's feelings of power and competence are nourished by another feature of the reading experience – the easily accessible and easily transportable nature of reading material. Children can take books with them when they go to the park, to a friend's house, or to read at school when they finish other activities. In this comparison of reading and television viewing, a picture emerges that confirms the commonly held notion that reading is better than television watching. Reading involves a complex form of mental activity, trains the mind in concentration skills, and develops the power of imagination and inner visualization. The flexibility of its pace lends itself to a better and deeper comprehension of the material communicated. Reading is a two-way process – the reader can also write. Books are available and controllable.

According to Powell (1988),

Children's television viewing experiences influence their reading in critical ways, affecting how much they read, what they read, how they feel about reading, and, since writing skills are closely related to reading experiences what they write and how well they write. (p. 83)

Van Evra (1990) stated "There is no doubt that children read fewer books when television is available to them. A child is more likely to turn on the television when there is nothing to do than to pick up a book and read" (p. 89). In a survey of over 500 fourth and fifth grade students, all participants showed a preference for watching television (Rutstein, 1974). More recently, in 1980, nearly 70% of 233,000 sixth grade students polled by the California Department of Education reported that they rarely read for pleasure. In the same poll, an identical percentage of

students admitted to watching four or more hours of television a day (A. C. Nielsen Company, 1984).

Children who have difficulty with reading are more likely to combat boredom by turning to television than becoming successful readers. Television plays a profoundly negative role in the lives of students who have difficulty reading and need to read a great deal to overcome their reading problems. This point is frequently raised by teachers and reading specialists when discussing the effect of television viewing on children's reading. Selnow and Bettinghaus (1982) reported that "Television watching does not prevent normal children from acquiring reading skills although, it may cause them to read less; however, it does seem to compound the problem of children with reading disabilities because it offers them a pleasurable nonverbal alternative which reduces their willingness to work at reading in order to find vicarious pleasures" (p. 301). In the absence of a television set, there is a universal increase in reading, both by parents and by children (Selnow & Bettinghaus). When the less taxing mental activity is unavailable, children turn to reading for entertainment, more willing to put forth the extra effort (Coleman, 2003).

The role of the home environment in children's development of reading skills is emphasized in a recent study of television viewing and its difference in reading achievement. Researchers centered their attention on the various stages of reading development and compared the impact of television viewing at each stage – from a pre-reading stage, through the initial decoding stage, into the stage of increasing fluency, and finally to a stage in which children can read for knowledge and information.

Van Evra (1990) noted,

If the home environment encourages and enhances reading activities the child has a better chance of progressing trouble-free through the first three stages. On the other hand, if the

home environment has few facilitating mechanisms for reading development, activity, interaction, and information acquisition, then the child's reading development may be impeded. (p. 25)

The author concluded by noting that, "age is an important variable in the study of television viewing and reading, and the younger the children included in the study, the higher the probability that effects of the home environment and television viewing on reading behavior will appear" (Van Evra, 1990, p. 27).

Besides reducing children's need to read, and by occupying so many hours of their day, the television experience may subtly affect the actual way in which children read – what might be called their reading style. While the children of the television era still read, and read with pleasure, something about their reading has changed (Fiske, 1983). Steiner (1972) discussed a new phenomenon he referred to as the "lazy reader," characterized by an intelligent child from a highly educated family who has somehow never made the transition from the acquisition of reading skills to an ability to absorb what is read. Steiner refers to this sort of reader when he notes, "A large majority of those children who have passed through the primary and secondary school system can read but do not read" (Steiner, p. 42). The lazy reader reads well but not attentively. S/he does not read with the degree of involvement and concentration required for full comprehension. Concentration is a skill that requires practice to develop, and the television child's opportunities for learning to focus attention sharply and sustain concentration are limited. "The mental exercise demanded by the television experience may cause children who have logged thousands of hours in front of the set to enter the reading world more superficially, more impatiently, and more vaguely" (Steiner, p. 60).

Morgan and Gross (1980) referred to this sort of inattentive reader when they wrote, “Children may pick up and leaf through more books, but what they do looks less like reading every year” (p. 35). They, too, connect deterioration in reading to children’s television experience. There are indicators that a change has occurred in children’s reading preferences, with different kinds of books being read for pleasure than in the days before children watched television. Part of this change may result from the content of the programs children watch. For instance, a decline in the popularity of fiction among children in the last two decades seems related to the fantasy materials available to them on television (O’Gorman, 1975).

Other changes in children’s reading interests may be related to the influences of the actual television experience upon their reading style. Children seem more interested now in reading what can be termed “nonbooks.” An example of a nonbook is the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The nonbook seems to accommodate a new reading style. It does not have a sustained story or a carefully developed plot to be read from beginning to end. It is to be scanned or skimmed, and requires little concentration, focused thinking, or inner visualization. It provides enough visually pleasing material to divert the child who does not feel comfortable with a sequential kind of reading. The ultimate nonbook is one that not only does not have a story but also eliminates words entirely. The increasingly pictorial nature of so many books for adults and children suggests that this trend has already begun.

An important aspect of the nonbook for the television-bred child is its instant accessibility. There is no need to struggle with getting into a nonbook, a process in which the reader must make the transition from his own reality to the world of the book. The transition is often confusing, as new names and places appear and new characters are introduced. However, the child who likes to read will persevere, with the knowledge that s/he will soon be safely

settled into the book and commence to enjoy it. Like television, a nonbook makes no demands at the start. Nonbooks are composed of tiny facts and bits of interesting material, and do not change in any way during the course of a child's involvement in it. It does not get easier, harder, more exciting, or suspenseful – it remains the same. Parents often feel that their children are reading when they are actually looking at nonbooks (Hansen, 1973).

Ways to encourage reading are well known and require time and effort on the part of the parents. Laosa (1982) stated it well, “Future readers are made by mothers and fathers who read to their children from infancy, read to them during quiet moments of the day and read them to sleep at night. Only then does the book become an essential element of life” (p. 112).

In comparing viewing television with reading, one finds that in reading a person uses his or her most unique human ability – verbal thinking (Rutstein, 1974). The reader transforms symbols on the page into a particular form dictated by his or her own human nature, wishes, fears, and inner needs. As novelist Kosinski (1976) has noted, reading “offers unexpected, unchannelled associations, new insights into the tides and drifts of one's own life. The reader is tempted to venture beyond a text, to contemplate his own life in light of the book's personalized meanings” (p. 115).

During the television experience, a viewer is carried along by a mechanical device, unable to bring into play his most highly developed mental abilities or fulfill individual emotional needs. He is entertained, while watching television, but his passive participation leaves him unchanged in a human sense. For, while watching television provides diversion, reading allows and supports growth.

Kosinski (1976) states that electronic media is the sole source of information for many parents. More than 85% of adults in America get their news from television broadcasts and 54%

listen to the radio. News about children’s cognitive development and education should be provided to parents through the news media. Broadcasters can inform parents about the latest research that shows the importance of reading to children. Broadcasters can also inform parents about programming that is appropriate for kids. Parents should monitor their children’s viewing and listening habits. But with so many media choices, they don’t always know what is best. The number of programs that have been developed for children have grown dramatically since “Sesame Street” aired in 1969.

Today, many children have network choices like Nickelodeon and Discovery Kids. Broadcasters should educate parents about appropriate programs for children, through increased marketing and press coverage. An estimated eight million children are at home alone after school (Neuman, 1991). While watching television is the number one after school activity, most educational programs for young people air on Saturday and weekday mornings, not after school. When children turn on the television or the radio after school, parents have an opportunity to influence them to study, to read, to achieve, and to be good citizens. “Before they can become responsible, active citizens, young people need to succeed in school. The first five years of life are critical for children to develop the physical, emotional, and cognitive skills they will need in school and in life. Television, computers and radio are not substitutes for learning with adults and teachers, but they can be good sources of instruction for the teaching of vocabulary and language skills” (Neuman, p. 116).

Title I and Non-Title I Schools

“Title I” refers to those schools that receive funds under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged*

2003. Title I supports programs to improve the academic achievement of children of low-income families. Currently, 55% of public schools receive funds under Title I (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).

In general, Title I schools represent the most economically disadvantaged and the poorest achieving student population. However, as in any school, not all students are the same and there are students in school-wide programs who, at the outset, perform at or above grade level. Comprehensive school-wide reform, aimed specifically at Title I schools, has been given wide acclaim, along with monetary incentives for schools to pursue reform. School-wide programs permit a school with at least 50% poverty to use Title I funds to upgrade the entire educational program in order to raise academic achievement for all students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000). Expanding the use of Title I funds gives schools the option to build their own research-based school wide program or adopt and implement a research-based school- wide program or adopt and implement research-based, externally developed whole school models. The intent is to ensure that all children regardless of their background can reap the benefit of comprehensive school reforms (National Center for Educational Statistics). Studies have shown that enriching all students' educational experiences is a reasonable alternative to Title I targeted assistance programs, where Title I funds are used only for supplementary educational services for eligible children who were failing or at risk of failing to meet required state standards (National Center for Educational Statistics).

The emphasis on school-wide programs responds to research about what makes schools work for disadvantaged students. School-wide Title I programs can use funds as they choose, as long as they engage in reform strategies that help provide a high-quality curriculum and instruction for all children, according to a comprehensive plan to help children meet the state's

standards. Passage of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program in 1997 provided specific examples of whole school reform models that were considered to be successful, when externally developed that included comprehensive school-reform approaches backed by rigorous research (Pogrow, 1998). Since that time, the United States Department of Education, some states, and a few courts have essentially steered high poverty schools toward selecting the school-wide reform model from their list. Title I policy favors this comprehensive school-wide reform model and has essentially mandated the use of such programs in schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged students (Pogrow).

One school reform model that has been beneficial is the Success for All reading program, developed in 1986. Success for All reading restructures elementary schools – usually high poverty, Title I, schools to ensure that all children learn to read. The program uses a research-based reading curriculum, effective practices for beginning reading (Adams, 1990), and cooperative learning strategies (Slavenas, 1984). SFA prescribes specific curriculum and instructional strategies for teaching reading, including shared story reading, listening comprehension, vocabulary building, sound blending exercises, and writing. Teachers are provided with detailed materials for use in the classroom. School staff receives training on the implementation of the SFA reading program and SFA personnel regularly monitor and report on the school's implementation progress. The total cost for implementing Success for All has been estimated between \$261,050 and \$646,500 per school (King, 1994).

Studies show that the Success for All reading program has had favorable effects on reading achievement in elementary schools. Results indicate that SFA significantly improves reading performance, especially for students in the lowest 25% of the class. Success for All has produced research that shows, for the most part, that SFA schools' test scores improve more,

when compared to schools with similar demographics that do not use the SFA program (King, 1994).

No Child Left Behind Act

No Child Left Behind (United States Department of Education, 2003b) ensures that parents receive information they need to make informed decisions about their child's education. Based on achievement data from the previous school year, each state must compile a list of schools that did not make academic progress (what is commonly referred to as adequate yearly progress, or AYP). Working within the law's parameters, each state sets its own standards for academic achievement and goals for annual progress. Schools receiving Title I funds that do not meet the state goals are designated as needing improvement and must then notify the parents (United States Department of Education, 2003b). Some parents may find a notice in their mailbox stating that their child's school has been placed on a list of schools needing improvement. Parents receiving these notices may be concerned, but they should also feel empowered. Parents can choose to transfer their child from a Title I school needing improvement to a public school that is performing better. Children from low-income families in schools needing improvement for more than one year will be able to receive additional academic services or tutoring at no cost to the parents (United States Department of Education, 2003b).

Summary

There is increasing evidence that parental beliefs and attitudes regarding literacy, and reading in particular, influence a child's literacy development (Baker et al., 1997). The values, attitudes, and expectations held by parents and other caregivers, with respect to literacy, are

likely to have a lasting effect on a child's attitude about learning to read. The socioeconomic context of early literacy experiences relates directly to children's motivation to learn to read. Researchers have found that parents who believe reading is a source of entertainment have children with a more positive view about reading than parents who emphasize the skills aspect of reading development (Baker et al.). Researchers also found that children who view school learning as irrelevant to life outside school are less motivated to invest time and effort in learning to read (Purcell-Gates, 1996).

Adults who live and interact regularly with children can profoundly influence the quality and quantity of their literacy experiences. A wide range of factors affect the nature of these interactions, including the parents' attitudes and beliefs about reading and literacy, the children's motivation for reading, opportunities parents provide for their children, and their behavior with them as well as the parents' own reading and literacy ability level. Parents lay the foundational skills that young children will need, when they begin formal reading instruction.

Parents can promote their children's literacy learning in many ways. They can involve their children in different activities that increase their child's awareness of language and print. Talking and singing to children encourages them to try to imitate the sounds they hear. Talking with adults is a child's way of learning new words and ideas. How parents read aloud to their children can significantly impact the children's learning experiences and opportunities. By combining reading aloud with asking questions, parents increase their child's learning and comprehension. Parents, who dialogue back and forth with their child about the content they are sharing during reading, improve their children's reading skills. Parents can have a strong positive influence on their child's reading. Research has shown that enjoying a book with a child for a few minutes a day can make a measurable difference in the acquisition of basic reading skills.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe the habits and attitudes of students and parents toward reading in Title I and Non-Title I schools in three northeastern Tennessee school systems. Four areas for study have been identified, including three process factors: participation in literacy activities, availability of home learning tools, and the amount of children's television watching.

The effects of the home environment and characteristics of readiness for school and academic achievement of students have been studied. However, there are many questions that remain to be answered because previous researchers have identified complexities inherent in their studies. This chapter includes information about the research design, sample, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis used in this study.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was chosen for this study, as I attempted to discover if there were differences between the designated groups. Permission was obtained from three northeastern Tennessee school systems and surveys were distributed to six schools in those three school systems. The data were examined in tables and charts, where percentages were compared to show trends and differences between and among the groups (Title I schools' students and parents and Non-Title I schools' students and parents). By examining the tables and charts and comparing the percentages, the researcher was able to draw conclusions about the research questions.

Population

This study's population consisted of 2,160 third, fourth, and fifth grade students enrolled in 18 schools, with six schools in each of three participating school systems located in northeastern Tennessee. The students' parents were also part of the study. An equal number of Title I and Non-Title I schools were chosen. Schools designated as Title I have at least 40% free/reduced lunch; Non-Title I schools have less than 40% free/reduced lunch. Nine of the 18 schools surveyed were Title I schools with at least 75% free/reduced lunch, while the remaining nine were Non-Title I schools.

Sample

Convenience cluster sampling was selected for use in this study because of availability and feasibility of selecting naturally occurring groups in the population. For the purpose of this study, the sample consisted of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I and Non-Title I schools in three school systems in northeastern Tennessee. The schools were of different sizes and configurations.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study, the parent questionnaire and the student questionnaire. The parent questionnaire contained 26 questions: eight yes or no questions that elicit the parents' opinions on each statement; three questions measured on a Likert-type scale strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree; three questions where they had a choice of five answers; and 12 questions in a closed-form multiple-choice format.

The student questionnaire contained 26 questions: eight yes or no questions that elicit the students' opinions on each statement; three questions measured on a Likert-type scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree; three questions with a choice of five answers; and 12 questions in a closed-form multiple choice format. Parent letters and informed consent forms for both parents and students were sent home to parents by the teachers of all students participating in the study. Parent questionnaires were completed at home, while the student questionnaires were completed at school with the children's teacher administering the questionnaire.

I developed the first 14 questions on the questionnaire while taking Educational Program Evaluation (ELPA-6950-270) in the fall of 2002. At that time, Dr. Chris Lefler had the class members prepare a mini-dissertation that had to include all of the parts of a real dissertation, including a questionnaire that we actually developed and pilot-tested. The first 14 questions were pilot-tested with the third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Emmett Elementary School in Sullivan County and analyzed using descriptive statistics, mostly tables with frequencies. Williams (2002) constructed the second part of the questionnaire used, when she wrote her dissertation, *The Relationship of Home Environment and Kindergarten Readiness*, in December of 2002. The researcher wrote to Dr. Williams and asked permission to use her questionnaire and to modify it, if needed, and she agreed (see letters from Dr. Williams in Appendix F).

Data Collection Planning

Initially, letters were sent to the three superintendents/directors of schools (see Appendix E) requesting permission to collect data from selected sites within their systems. The principal at

each site received a letter of intent (see Appendix D), explaining the purpose of the study and asking permission to survey parents and students.

Letters were sent to the parents of children participating in the study (see Appendix C) explaining the purpose of the study and asking the parents' assistance in completing the parent questionnaire (see Appendix B). According to the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix G) a signature on the parent letter constituted approval. Parents were assured that all information would be kept confidential. Parents were asked to sign and return the forms to their child's teacher, to allow their child to complete the student questionnaire (see Appendix A) at school. The researcher encouraged truthful responses to the questionnaire, by stressing to participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and that response accuracy is important for research purposes. The teachers who administered the questionnaires to the students were asked to stress to the children that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and that they should answer truthfully.

Because I used both Title I and Non-Title I schools and surveyed both parents and students, I decided to use a color coding system to distinguish Title I from Non-Title I schools (blue paper for Title I parents and students and white paper for Non-Title I parents and students). By using this coding system, the questionnaires were anonymous, while I was able to identify Title I parents and children from Non-Title I parents and children. The students took the consent forms home for their parents to sign along with the parent reading questionnaire. The parents signed the form, giving their child permission to take the reading questionnaire in class under the supervision of his/her teacher. The parent questionnaire was returned along with the signed consent form to the child's teacher. Upon receiving a signed consent form from the parents, the teacher administered the reading questionnaires to students with permission to answer the

questionnaire. The informed consent form contained two places for the parents to sign – one place showing that the parents were voluntarily completing the reading questionnaire and the second place where the parents signed to show that their child had permission to take the reading questionnaire at school.

Data Analysis

This study describes the habits and attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students and parents toward reading in 18 participating Title I and Non-Title I schools in three northeastern Tennessee school systems. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages are used to summarize the data.

For the purpose of this study, four basic research questions have been selected as the focal point of the investigation:

1. What are the reading habits and attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
2. What are the reading habits and attitudes of parents of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
3. Do the parents' and students' reading habits and attitudes in Title I schools differ from those in Non-Title I schools?
4. Do the parents' reading habits and attitudes and their children's reading habits and attitudes differ?

This chapter includes information about the research design, population, sample, instrumentation, and analysis of data. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of data, and chapter 5 includes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The importance of a rich, stimulating home learning environment in the early years of a child's cognitive development cannot be underestimated. Because of the family's extraordinary influence and the evolving home environment in today's society, a study of school readiness and its relationship to specific family environment factors is important. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the habits and attitudes of children and their parents in Title I schools to those of children and parents in Non-Title I schools.

Research Questions

Four research questions evolved as the primary focus of this study:

1. What are the reading habits and attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
2. What are the reading habits and attitudes of parents of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
3. Do the parents' and students' reading habits and attitudes in Title I schools differ from those in Non-Title I schools?
4. Do the parents' reading habits and attitudes and their children's reading habits and attitudes differ?

Responses

This research study examined the relationship between children and adults in regard to their opinions concerning reading. The data for this research project were gathered by administering a 26-question questionnaire to 4,320 children and their parents. Seven hundred two (65%) of the Title I parents and their children participated in the study, while 864 (80%) of the Non-Title I parents and students completed and returned their questionnaires. With a 65% participation rate for the Title I parents and students and 80% participation rate for the Non-Title I parents and students, overall, there was an average return rate of 72.5%.

Of the 702 Title I students with parental permission to complete the questionnaire, there was a 100% response rate. Of the 864 Non-Title I students with parental permission to complete the questionnaire, 100% of the students finished it. All the questionnaires were usable. Data from the parents and student questionnaires were gathered and analyzed. The frequency and percentage for each item were determined and is shown in statistical tables.

It is assumed that participants (parents and students) were truthful when answering the survey questions. The study was limited to a convenience sample, where only those students with parental permission completed the questionnaire, along with one of their parents.

Question 1

On question one, “Do you check out books from the public library?” 96.53% of the students in the Non-Title I schools said they used the library as compared to 87.32% of the Title I schools’ students, and 12.68% of the Title I schools’ students said they did not use the library; whereas, only 3.47% of the Non-Title I school students said they did not use the library. Results found 98.15% of the parents in Title I schools said they used the public library; whereas, 97.22% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said they used the library. Title I schools’ students reported that they did not go to the library more than their parents did (12.68% for the students and 1.85% for the parents). Non-Title I schools’ students and parents reported similar results in response to whether or not they used the public library (96.53% for parents and 97.22% for students), and 9.21% fewer Title I schools’ students reported using the public library than the Non-Title I schools’ students (results are shown in Table 1).

Table 1

Question 1 Results: Student Question: Do you check out books from the public library? Parent Question: Do you use the public library?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
613	89	702	689	13	702
87.32%	12.68%	100.00%	98.15%	1.85%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
834	30	864	840	24	864
96.53%	3.47%	100.00%	97.22%	2.78%	100.00%

Question 2

On Question two, “Do you read for enjoyment?” 64.53% of the Title I schools’ students said they read for enjoyment, 77.43% of the Non-Title I schools’ students read for enjoyment, while 72.08% of the Title I schools’ parents said they read for enjoyment, and 81.37% of the Non-Title I parents read for enjoyment. Findings indicate that 12.90% more of the Non-Title I schools’ students reported reading for enjoyment than did the Title I schools’ students. Non-Title I schools’ parents said they read for enjoyment 9.29% more than the Title I schools’ parents. Overall, Non-Title I schools’ students and parents read for enjoyment more than Title I schools’ parents and students (results are shown in Table 2).

Table 2

Question 2 Results: Student and Parent Question: Do you read for enjoyment?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
453	249	702	506	196	702
64.53%	35.47%	100.00%	72.08%	27.92%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
669	195	864	703	161	864
77.43%	22.57%	100.00%	81.37%	18.63%	100.00%

Question 3

On question three, “Do you read to your child?” 92.59% of the parents in Title I schools said that they read to their child, and 93.06% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said they read to their child. On the student question, “Do your parents have time to read for you?” 80.91% of the Title I schools’ students said their parents read to them, 92.48% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said their parents read to them, whereby 11.57% more Non-Title I schools’ students reported their parents reading to them than did Title I schools’ students. There was only a 0.46% difference between the Title I and Non-Title I schools’ parents in response to the question. This was a very small difference compared to what the students reported in response to this question (results are shown in Table3).

Table 3

Question 3 Results: Student Question: Do your parents have time to read for you? Parent Question: Do you read to your child?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
568	134	702	650	52	702
80.91%	19.09%	100.00%	92.59%	7.41%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
799	65	864	804	60	864
92.48%	7.52%	100.00%	93.06%	6.94%	100.00%

Question 4

In regard to question four on the parent questionnaire, “Does your child ever ask you what words mean?” 88.18% of the Title I schools’ parents said that their child did ask them what words meant. In the Non-Title I schools 98.61% of the parents said their child asked them what words meant. On the student question, “Do you ever ask your parents what words mean?” 97.58% said they asked their parents what words meant. In the Non-Title I schools 99.07% of the students said that they asked their parents what words meant. There was only a 1.49% difference between Title I schools’ students and Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to the question of whether or not they ever asked their parents what words meant with the Non-Title I schools’ students asking slightly more. There was a 10.43% difference between the Non-Title I schools’ parents and the Title I schools’ parents in saying that their child asks what words meant with the Non-Title I schools’ parents saying that their child asked what words meant more often than the Title I schools’ students (results are shown in Table 4).

Table 4

Question 4 Results: Student Question: Do you ever ask your parents what words mean? Parent Question: Does your child ever ask you what words mean?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
685	17	702	619	83	702
97.58%	2.42%	100.00%	88.18%	11.82%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
856	8	864	852	12	864
99.07%	0.93%	100.00%	98.61%	1.39%	100.00%

Question 5

In regard to question five on the student questionnaire, “Do you read frequently (often) at home?” 68.38% of the Title I schools’ students said that they read at home, and 98.61% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said that they read frequently at home. On the parent questionnaire in answer to the question, “Do you try to get your child to read at home?” 95.44% of the Title I schools’ parents said that they tried to get their child to read at home; whereas, 97.22% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said they tried to get their child to read at home. There was an important difference between the Title I schools’ students and the Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to the question of whether or not they read frequently at home. The Non-Title I schools’ students said that they read frequently at home 98.61% of the time; whereas, the Title I schools’ students only responded that they read frequently at home 68.38% of the time. However, there was only a 1.78% difference between the Title I and Non-Title I schools’ parents answers to the question. There were only 4.56% of Title I schools’ parents who said they did not try to get their child to read, and only 2.78% of Non Title parents said they did not try to get their child to read (results are shown in Table 5).

Table 5

Question 5 Results: Student Question: Do you read frequently (often) at home? Parent Question: Do you try to get your child to read at home?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
480	222	702	670	32	702
68.38%	31.62%	100.00%	95.44%	4.56%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
852	12	864	840	24	864
98.61%	1.39%	100.00%	97.22%	2.78%	100.00%

Question 6

Regarding question six on the student questionnaire, “Do you do good work at school?” 81.20% of the Title I schools’ students said they did good work at school, with 93.98% of the Non-Title I schools’ students indicating that they did good work at school. On the parent questionnaire in regard to the question, “Do you believe that your child does good work at school?” 76.64% of the Title I schools’ parents said their child did good work at school, and 81.25% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said their child did good work at school. There was a 12.78% difference between Title I schools’ students and Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to the student question. The Non-Title I schools’ students reported that they thought they did better work at school than the Title I schools’ students reported. Title I schools’ students were almost three times more likely to say that they did not feel they did good work at school (18.80% as compared to 6.02%). There was a 12.78% difference between how the parents of Title I schools’ students and the parents of Non-Title I schools’ students answered in regard to the parent question. The Non-Title I schools’ parents reported overall that their child did better work at school than the Title I schools’ parents’ answers (results are shown in Table 6).

Table 6

Question 6 Results: Student Question: Do you do good work at school? Parent Question: Do you believe that your child does good work at school?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
570	132	702	538	164	702
81.20%	18.80%	100.00%	76.64%	23.36%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
812	52	864	702	162	864
93.98%	6.02%	100.00%	81.25%	18.75%	100.00%

Question 7

Question seven on the student and parent questionnaires asked, “Do you read magazines and newspapers?” 33.90% of the Title I schools’ students said they read newspapers and magazines, while 86.34% of the students in Non-Title I schools said they read magazines and newspapers. On the parent questionnaire, 84.05% of the parents in Title I schools said they read magazines and newspapers, while 91.20% of the parents in Non-Title I schools said they read magazines and newspapers. There was a 52.44% difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to the question. Non-Title I schools’ students were almost three times as likely to read magazines and newspapers. Title I schools’ students were almost four times as likely (66.10% compared to 13.66%) as Non-Title I schools’ students to say that they did not read magazines and newspapers. However, there was only a 7.16% difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools’ parents in regard to the same question as to whether they read magazines and newspaper with the Non-Title I schools’ parents reading magazines and newspapers more frequently (results are shown in Table 7).

Table 7

Question 7 Results: Student and Parent Question: Do you read magazines and newspapers?

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
238	464	702	590	112	702
33.90%	66.10%	100.00%	84.05%	15.95%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
746	118	864	788	76	864
86.34%	13.66%	100.00%	91.20%	8.80%	100.00%

Statement 8

On statement eight of the student questionnaire, “My parents give me money to buy books,” 43.73% of the Title I schools’ students said that their parents gave them money to buy books, while 79.17% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said that their parents gave them money to buy books. On the parent questionnaire in regard to the statement, “I give my child money to buy books,” 86.61% of the parents in the Title I schools said that they give their students money to buy books, while 97.45% of the Non-Title I school parents said that they gave their child money to buy books. There was a 35.44% difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to the statement, where Non-Title I schools’ parents were more likely according to their responses to give their child money to buy books. In regard to the statement, there was only a 10.84% difference between the Title I and Non-Title I schools’ parents – the Non-Title I schools’ parents were more likely to give their child money to buy books (results are shown in Table 8).

Table 8

Statement 8 Results: Student Statement: My parents give me money to buy books. Parent Statement: I give my child money to buy books.

Student Response			Parent Response		
Yes	No	Totals	Yes	No	Totals
Title I Schools					
307	395	702	608	94	702
43.73%	56.27%	100.00%	86.61%	13.39%	100.00%
Non-Title I Schools					
684	180	864	842	22	864
79.17%	20.83%	100.00%	97.45%	2.55%	100.00%

Statement 9

In regard to the statement on the parent questionnaire, “My child listens when someone tells stories,” 90.03% of the Title I schools’ parents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and 94.44% of the parents in Non-Title I schools either strongly agreed or agreed that their child listened to stories. In regard to the statement on the student questionnaire, “I like to listen when someone tells stories,” 91.17% of the Title I schools’ students agreed with this statement, and 95.37% of the Non-Title I schools’ students either agreed or strongly agreed that they listened to stories when someone told them (results are shown in Table 9).

Table 9

Statement 9 Results: Student Statement: I like to listen when someone tells stories. Parent Statement: My child listens when someone tells stories.

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	580	82.62	592	84.33	673	77.89	756	87.50
Agree	60	8.55	40	5.70	151	17.48	60	6.94
Undecided	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Disagree	40	5.70	62	8.83	37	4.28	30	3.47
Strongly Disagree	22	3.13	8	1.14	3	0.35	18	2.08
Totals	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Statement 10

In regard to statement 10 on the student questionnaire, “I like to read at home,” 64.53% of the Title I schools’ students agreed or strongly agreed that they did like to read at home, while 35.47% of the Title I schools’ students and 12.04% of the Non-Title I schools’ students either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they liked to read at home. Of the Title I schools’ parents, 63.39% either agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed reading at home. In the Non-Title I schools, 87.97% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they enjoyed reading at home, while 93.05% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents either strongly agreed or agreed that they liked to read, and 36.61% of the Title I and 6.94% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “I enjoy reading at home” (results are shown in Table 10).

Table 10

Statement 10 Results: Student Statement: I like to read at home. Parent Statement: I enjoy reading at home.

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	400	56.98	370	52.71	604	69.91	687	79.51
Agree	53	7.55	75	10.68	156	18.06	117	13.54
Undecided	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Disagree	180	25.64	158	22.51	92	10.65	40	4.63
Strongly Disagree	69	9.83	99	14.10	12	1.39	20	2.31
Totals	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Statement 11

In regard to statement 11 on the student questionnaire, “I like to read at school,” 91.31% of the Title I schools’ students agreed or strongly agreed that they liked to read at school, and 8.69% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they liked to read at school, while 96.53% of the Non-Title I schools’ students either agreed or strongly agreed that they liked to read at school, and 3.47% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they liked to read at school. There was strong agreement between students in Title I and Non-Title I schools that they like to read at school. Parents in both Title I and Non-Title I schools reported similar findings in regard to the question, where 95.01% of the parents in Title I schools and 93.75% of the parents in Non-Title I schools agreed strongly or agreed with the statement that their child enjoyed reading at school, while 4.98% of the Title I and 6.25% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child enjoyed reading at school (results are shown in Table 11).

Table 11

Statement 11 Results: Student Statement: I like to read at school. Parent Statement: My child enjoys reading at school.

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	478	68.09	507	72.22	587	67.94	645	74.65
Agree	163	23.22	160	22.79	247	28.59	165	19.10
Undecided	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Disagree	37	5.27	30	4.27	18	2.08	39	4.51
Strongly Disagree	24	3.42	5	0.71	12	1.39	15	1.74
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 12

In regard to question 12, “How many children’s books do you have of your very own?” 72.22% of the Title I schools’ students said that they had between 1-14 books, 24.71% said they had between 15-35 books, and 3.56% said they had over 36 books of their own. Of the Title I schools’ parents, 18.66% said they had between 1-14 children’s books, 70.23% said that they had between 15-25 children’s books, and 11.11% said they had more than 36 children’s books. In the Non-Title I schools, 10.31% of the students had between 1-14 books of their very own, 66.32% said that they had between 15-35 children’s books, and 23.38% said they had 36 or more books. Of the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 7.06% said they had between 1-14 children’s books; 48.84% said that they had between 15-35 children’s books, and 44.10% said they had 36 or more children’s books (results are shown in Table 12).

Table 12

Question 12 Results: Student Question: How many children’s books do you have of your very own? Parent Question: How many children’s books do you have at home?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1-7	25	3.56	32	4.56	8	0.93	15	1.74
8-14	482	68.66	99	14.10	81	9.38	46	5.32
15-21	75	10.68	72	10.26	308	35.65	385	44.56
22-35	95	13.53	421	59.97	265	30.67	37	4.28
36 or more	25	3.56	78	11.11	202	23.38	381	44.10
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 13

In regard to question 13 on the student questionnaire, “What subject is your favorite?” the students in the Title I schools responded in the following manner: social studies 25.36%, science 9.26%, reading 22.79%, math 28.49%, language 14.10%. In the Non-Title I schools, the students responded in the following manner: social studies 11.57%, science 11.11%, reading 32.18%, math 31.83%, language 13.31%. In the Title I schools, in regard to the parent question, “What subject do you think is your child’s favorite?” the parents answered in the following manner: social studies 18.23%, science 21.37%, reading 29.06 %, math 24.22%, language 7.12%. In the Non-Title I schools, the parents answered in the following manner to the same question: social studies 9.26%, science 4.86%, reading 34.72%, math 34.95%, language 16.20%. Both Title I and Non-Title I schools’ students liked science the least of the core subjects. Title I schools’ students liked math best (28.49%); Non-Title I schools’ students (32.18%) liked reading the best. Title I schools’ parents (29.06%) indicated that reading was their child’s favorite subject; however, Non-Title I schools’ parents reported that their child enjoyed math more. Title I schools’ students indicated that math (28.49%) was their favorite subject with reading second (22.79%), followed by social studies (25.36%), language (14.10%), and they liked science (9.26%) least. Non-Title I schools’ students liked reading (32.18%) most, followed by math (31.83%), language (13.31%), social studies (11.57%) and science (11.11%) least (results are shown in Table 13).

Table 13

Question 13 Results: Student Question: What subject is your favorite? Parent Question: What subject do you think is your child's favorite?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Social Studies	178	25.36	128	18.23	100	11.57	80	9.26
Science	65	9.26	150	21.37	96	11.11	42	4.86
Reading	160	22.79	204	29.06	278	32.18	300	34.72
Math	200	28.49	170	24.22	275	31.83	302	34.95
Language	99	14.10	50	7.12	115	13.31	140	16.20
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 14

In regard to question 14 on the student questionnaire, “Do you believe the stories in your reading book are too easy, easy, just right, hard, or too hard?” 14.10% of the Title I schools’ students said that their reading books were either too easy or easy, 51.85% said the books were just right, and 34.05% of the students said their books were hard or too hard for them. Of the Non-Title I schools’ students, 14.47% said that their books were either too easy or easy, 74.54% said their reading books were just right, and 11.00% said that their books were either hard or too hard. With the Title I schools’ parents, 14.67% said that their child’s books were either too easy or easy, 58.12% said their child’s books were just right, and 27.21% indicated that their child’s books were either hard or too hard. Of the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 27.09% responded that their child’s books were either too easy or easy, 62.73% reported that their child’s books were just right, and 10.18% said their child’s reading books were either hard or too hard (results are shown in Table 14).

Table 14

Question 14 Results: Student Question: Do you believe the stories in your reading book are too easy, easy, just right, hard, or too hard? Parent Question: Do you believe that the stories in your child's reading book are too easy, easy, hard, too hard, or just right?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Too easy	45	6.41	28	3.99	50	5.79	43	4.98
Easy	54	7.69	75	10.68	75	8.68	191	22.11
Just right	364	51.85	408	58.12	644	74.54	542	62.73
Hard	170	24.22	115	16.38	80	9.26	28	3.24
Too hard	69	9.83	76	10.83	15	1.74	60	6.94
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 15

In regard to question 15 on the student questionnaire, “How often do your parents read to you?” 24.22% of the Title I schools’ students said their parents read to them every day, 43.30% said a few times a week, 30.06% said that their parents read to them at least once a week or a few times a month, and 2.42% said that their parents rarely or almost never read to them. Results from Non-Title I schools’ students indicate that 16.32% of their parents read to them every day, 62.62% a few times a week, 20.84% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said their parents read to them either once a week or a few times a month, and 0.23% stated that their parents rarely or almost never read to them. With the Title I schools’ parents, 40.88% said they read to their child every day, 34.19% said a few times a week, 24.50% said they read to their child either once a week or a few times a month, and 0.43% of the parents said they rarely or almost never read to their child. Responses from Non-Title I schools’ parents, 21.88% said they read to their child every day, 52.08% said a few times a week, 25.93% said they read to their child either once a week or a few times a month, and 0.12% of the parents said they rarely or never read to their child (results are shown in Table 15).

Table 15

Question 15 Results: Student Question: How often do your parents read to you? Parent Question: How often do you read to your child?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	170	24.22	287	40.88	141	16.32	189	21.88
A few times a week	304	43.30	240	34.19	541	62.62	450	52.08
Once a week	151	21.51	112	15.95	170	19.68	104	12.04
A few times a month	60	8.55	60	8.55	10	1.16	120	13.89
Rarely, almost never	17	2.42	3	0.43	2	0.23	1	0.12
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 16

In regard to question 16 on the student questionnaire, “How often do you read to your parents?” 25.64% of the Title I schools’ students said they read to their parents every day, 57.55% said they read to their parents either a few times a week or once a week, 14.25% said a few times a month, and 2.56% said they rarely or never read to their parents. Of the Non-Title I schools, 51.16% of the students said they read to their parents every day, 46.99% said that they read to their parents either once a week or a few times a week, 1.85% said a few times a month, and none of the Non-Title I schools’ students said that they never read to their parents. Results of the same question on the parent questionnaire, “How often does your child read to you?” found that 27.21% of the Title I schools’ parents said their child reads to them every day, 39.31% said their child reads to them either once a week or a few times a week, 31.48% said a few times a month, and 1.99% of the parents said that their child rarely if ever reads to them. In the Non-Title I schools, 55.32% of the parents said their child reads to them every day, 41.78% said that their child reads to them either once a week or a few times a week, 2.66% said a few times a month, and 0.23% said that their child rarely if ever reads to them (results are shown in Table 16).

Table 16

Question 16 Results: Student Question: How often do you read to your parents? Parent Question: How often does your child read to you?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	180	25.64	191	27.21	442	51.16	478	55.32
A few times a week	200	28.49	225	32.05	176	20.37	160	18.52
Once a week	204	29.06	51	7.26	230	26.62	201	23.26
A few times a month	100	14.25	221	31.48	16	1.85	23	2.66
Rarely, almost never	18	2.56	14	1.99	0	0.00	2	0.23
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 17

In regard to question 17 on the student questionnaire, “How often do your parents teach you?” 34.33% of the Title I schools’ students said their parents taught them every day, 17.52% said a few times a week, 43.73% said that their parents taught them either once a week or a few times a month, and 4.42% said that their parents rarely taught them. In the Non-Title I schools, 35.19% of the students said their parents taught them every day, 23.84% said a few times a week, 40.74% said their parents taught them at least once a week or a few times a month, and 0.23% said their parents rarely or almost never taught them. In regard to the question on the parent questionnaire, “How often do you play with or teach your child?” In the Title I schools, 43.59% of the parents said that they played with or taught their child every day, 29.20% said a few times a week, 21.51% said that they played with or taught their child at least once a week or a few times a month, and 5.70% of the Title I schools’ parents said that they rarely or almost never played with or taught their child. Of the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 47.11% said that they played with or taught their child every day, 19.56% said a few times a week, and 32.99% said that they taught or played with their child at least once a week or a few times a month, while 0.35% said that they rarely played with or taught their child (results are shown in Table 17).

Table 17

Question 17 Results: Student Question: How often do your parents teach you? Parent Question: How often do you play with or teach your child?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	241	34.33	306	43.59	304	35.19	407	47.11
A few times a week	123	17.52	205	29.20	206	23.84	169	19.56
Once a week	127	18.09	101	14.39	305	35.30	247	28.59
A few times a month	180	25.64	50	7.12	47	5.44	38	4.40
Rarely, almost never	31	4.42	40	5.70	2	0.23	3	0.35
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 18

In regard to question 18 on the student questionnaire, “How often do your parents take you to visit the public library, a zoo, aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value?” 0.71% of the Title I schools’ students said their parents took them every day, 66.24% said that they took their child at least once a week or a few times a week, and 29.34% said a few times a month, while 3.70% said that their parents rarely or almost never took their child to places considered to have educational value. In the Non-Title I schools, 1.39% of the students said that their parents took them to a place with educational value every day, 64.59% said that their parents took them at least once a week or a few times a week, and 32.75% were taken a few times a month, while 1.27% said that their parents rarely or almost never took them to any place considered to have educational value. Results of the question on the parent questionnaire, “How often does your child visit the public library, a zoo, an aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value?” found that 2.56% of the Title I schools’ parents said their child visits a place of educational value every day, 86.76% said their child visits either once a week or a few times a week, 4.84% visit a few times a month, and 5.84% said that their child rarely or almost never visits places considered to have educational value. Of the Non-Title I schools, 3.13% of the parents said their child visits a place of educational value every day, 70.49% said their child visits at least once a week or a few times a week, 25.93% said their child visits a place of educational value a few times a month, and 0.46% said rarely if ever does their child visit a place considered to have educational value (results are shown in Table 18).

Table 18

Question 18 Results: Student Question: How often do your parents take you to visit the public library, a zoo, aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value? Parent Question: How often does your child visit the public library, a zoo, an aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	5	0.71	18	2.56	12	1.39	27	3.13
A few times a week	28	3.99	129	18.38	43	4.98	69	7.99
Once a week	437	62.25	480	68.38	515	59.61	540	62.50
A few times a month	206	29.34	34	4.84	283	32.75	224	25.93
Rarely, almost never	26	3.70	41	5.84	11	1.27	4	0.46
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 19

Question 19 on both the parent and student questionnaires asked, “How often does your family sit down for a meal together?” 10.68% of the Title I schools’ students said their parents ate with them every day, 31.28% said they ate together either once a week or a few times a week, 39.74% said they ate with their family a few times a month, and 18.38% said they rarely if ever ate with their family. Of the Non-Title I schools’ students, 30.09% said they ate with their parents every day, 52.31% said they ate with their family either once a week or a few times a week, 17.36% said they ate with their parents a few times a month, and 0.23% said they rarely or almost never ate with their parents. In answer to the same question, 15.10% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said they ate with their family every day, 73.79% said they ate with their family at least once a week or a few times a week, 9.97% said they ate with their family a few times a month, and 1.14% said they rarely or almost never ate together as a family. With the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 2.31% said that they ate with their family every day, 63.20% said they ate with their family once a week or a few times a week, 31.71% said they ate with their family a few times a month, and 2.78% said they rarely or hardly ever ate with their family (results are shown in Table 19).

Table 19

Question 19 Results: Student/Parent Question: How often does your family sit down for a meal together?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	75	10.68	106	15.10	260	30.09	20	2.31
A few times a week	94	13.39	212	30.20	222	25.69	306	35.42
Once a week	125	17.81	306	43.59	230	26.62	240	27.78
A few times a month	279	39.74	70	9.97	150	17.36	274	31.71
Rarely, almost never	129	18.38	8	1.14	2	0.23	24	2.78
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 20

Question 20 on the parent and student questionnaire, “When your family eats together, who does the talking?” 70.94% of the Title I schools’ students said that there was some talking by the entire family, 14.67% said the adults did most of the talking, 9.97% said the child did most of the talking, 4.13% said there was limited or no talking at the table, and only 0.28% said that their family did not eat together; while 74.65% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said that there was some talk by the entire family, 12.96% said there was some talk mostly by the adults, 10.07% said the child did most of the talking, 2.31% said there was limited or no talking at the table, and none said that the family did not eat together. Of the Title I schools, 39.46% of the parents said there was some talk by the entire family, 31.20% said there was some talk mostly by adults, 14.81% said the child did most of the talking, 14.25% said there was limited or no talking at the table, and only 0.28% said the family did not eat together; while 80.32% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said that there was some talk by the entire family, 9.72% said there was some talk mostly by adults, 8.68% said the child did most of the talking at the table, 0.81% said there was limited or not talking at the table, and only 0.46% said their family did not eat together (results are shown in Table 20).

Table 20

Question 20 Results: Student/Parent Question: When your family eats together, who does the talking?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Some talk by the entire family	498	70.94	277	39.46	645	74.65	694	80.32
Some talk, mostly by adults	103	14.67	219	31.20	112	12.96	84	9.72
Child does most of the talking	70	9.97	104	14.81	87	10.07	75	8.68
Limited or no talking at the table	29	4.13	100	14.25	20	2.31	7	0.81
Family does not eat together	2	0.28	2	0.28	0	0.00	4	0.46
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 21

Question 21 on the student questionnaire asked, “How often do you watch television?” 87.46% of the Title I schools’ students said they watch television every day, 12.25% said they watch television either once a week or a few times a week, 0.14% said they watch a few times a month, and 0.14% said they rarely, or almost never, watch television. Of the Non-Title I schools, 81.83% of the students said they watch television every day, 16.55% said they watch television once a week or a few times a week, 1.62% said they watch television a few times a month, and none said they watch television rarely, or almost never. This question on the parent questionnaire, “How often does your child watch television?” found that 81.48% of the Title I schools’ parents said their child watched television every day, 16.24% said they watched television at least once a week or a few times a week, 2.14% said they watched television a few times a month, and 0.14% said their child rarely, or almost never, watched television, while 86.46% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said that their child watched television every day, 10.53% said they watched television once a week or a few times a week, 2.78% said they watched television a few times a month, and 0.23% said their child rarely, or almost never, watched television (results are shown in Table 21).

Table 21

Question 21 Results: Student Question: How often do you watch television? Parent Question: How often does your child watch television?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	614	87.46	572	81.48	707	81.83	747	86.46
A few times a week	70	9.97	89	12.68	103	11.92	45	5.21
Once a week	16	2.28	25	3.56	40	4.63	46	5.32
A few times a month	1	0.14	15	2.14	14	1.62	24	2.78
Rarely, almost never	1	0.14	1	0.14	0	0.00	2	0.23
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 22

Question 22 on the student questionnaire asked, “On an average weekday, how many hours of television do you watch?” 16.10% of the Title I schools’ students said they watch four or more hours of television per weekday, 81.34% said that they watch two to three hours per weekday, 2.56% said they watch one hour of television per weekday, and none watch no television. In the Non-Title I schools, 58.56% of the students said they watch four or more hours of television per day, 39.70% said they watch two to three hours of television per weekday, 1.74% said they watch one hour of television per day, and none said they watch no television, while 58.68% of the parents said their child watches four or more hours of television per day, in comparison to 43.30% of the Title I schools’ parents who responded to this question, 37.96% of the Non-Title I and 27.49% of the Title I schools’ parents reported that their child watches two to three hours of television per weekday, 3.13% of the Non-Title I and 29.20% of the Title I schools’ parents reported that their child watches one hour of television per weekday, and only 0.23% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents and no Title I schools’ parents said their child watches no television each day (results are shown in Table 22).

Table 22

Question 22 Results: Student Question: On an average weekday, how many hours of television do you watch? Parent Question: On an average weekday, how many hours of television does your child watch?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
4 or more hours	113	16.10	304	43.30	506	58.56	507	58.68
3 hours	204	29.06	112	15.95	218	25.23	82	9.49
2 hours	367	52.28	81	11.54	125	14.47	246	28.47
1 hour	18	2.56	205	29.20	15	1.74	27	3.13
None	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	0.23
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 23

In regard to question 23 on the student questionnaire, “How often over the past year have you played with a toy or worked on a hobby that you feel has educational value?” 28.49% of the Title I schools’ students said that they did this every day, 61.40% said they did a few times a week or once a week, 5.70% said they did a few times a month, and 4.42% said they rarely or almost never played with a toy or worked on a hobby that they felt had educational value. Results show that 59.95% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said that they played with a toy or worked on a hobby with educational value every day, 39.12% said they participated a few times a week or once a week, 0.93% said they participated a few times a month, and none reported that they rarely, or almost never, played with an educational toy or participated in an educational hobby. Then, 63.82% of the Title I schools’ parents said that their child played with an educational toy or participated in an educational hobby every day, 33.48% said their child did a few times a week or once a week, 2.28% said their child participated a few times a month, and 0.43% said their child rarely, or hardly ever, participated in playing with educational toys or participated in educational hobbies. Results found that 66.09% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said that their child played with educational toys or participated in an educational hobby every day, 31.36% said their child did a few times a week or once a week, 2.20% said their child participated a few times a month, and 0.35% said their child rarely, or almost never played with educational toys or participated in an educational hobby (results are shown in Table 23).

Table 23

Question 23 Results: Student Question: How often over the past year have you played with a toy or worked on a hobby that you feel has educational value? Parent Question: How often over the past year has your child been involved with a toy or hobby that you feel has educational value?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	200	28.49	448	63.82	518	59.95	571	66.09
A few times a week	281	40.03	174	24.79	126	14.58	220	25.46
Once a week	150	21.37	61	8.69	212	24.54	51	5.90
A few times a month	40	5.70	16	2.28	8	0.93	19	2.20
Rarely, almost never	31	4.42	3	0.43	0	0.00	3	0.35
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 24

In regard to parent/student question 24, “Of the following materials – encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, computer – how many do you have in your home?” 2.42% of the Title I schools’ students said they had all of the mentioned materials, 9.97% said they had four of the items, 61.97% said they had two to three of the items, 25.64% said they had one of the items, and no students responded that they had none of the materials. Of the Non-Title I schools’ students, 22.92% said they had all of the items, 48.73% said they had four of the items, 25.46% said they had two to three of the items, 2.89% had one item, and no one stated that they had none of the items. Responses from the Title I schools’ parents indicate that 3.13% had all of the items mentioned in the question, 72.79% said they had four of the items, 6.84% said they had two to three of the items, 17.24% said they had one item, and no parents said they had none of the items. With the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 31.71% said they had all of the items, 50.93% said they had four of the items, 10.42% said they had two to three of the items, 6.94% said they had one item, and no one said they had none of the items (results are shown in Table 24).

Table 24

Question 24 Results: Student/Parent Question: Of the following materials – encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, computer – how many do you have in your home?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
All of the above	17	2.42	22	3.13	198	22.92	274	31.71
4	70	9.97	511	72.79	421	48.73	440	50.93
2-3	435	61.97	48	6.84	220	25.46	90	10.42
1	180	25.64	121	17.24	25	2.89	60	6.94
None of the above	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Question 25

In regard to student question 25, “How often do your parents take you to get a new book from the store or library?” 9.97% of the Title I schools’ students answered every day, 79.78% answered a few times a week or about once a week, 8.55% said a few times a month, and 1.71% said that their parents rarely or almost never took them to get a new book from the library or store. Of the Non-Title I schools’ students, 3.94% said they went to the store or library every day to get a new book, 72.45% said they got a new book a few times a week or about once a week, 21.53% said they got a new book a few times a month, and 2.08% said they rarely, or almost never, got a new book from the store or library. Of the Title I schools’ parents, 2.71% said their child got a new book from the store or library every day, 10.40% said their child got a new book from a store or library a few times a week or about once a week, 85.19% said their child got a new book from the store or library a few times a month, and 1.71% said their child rarely, or almost never, got a new book from the store or library. Of the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 8.91% said their child got a new book from the store or library every day, 71.18% said their child got a new book a few times a week or about once a week, 19.91% said their child got a book a few times a month, and no parents said that their child rarely, or almost never got a book from the library or store (results are shown in Table 25).

Table 25

Question 25 Results: Student Question: How often do your parents take you to get a new book from the store or library? Parent Question: How often does your child get a new book from the store or library?

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Every day	70	9.97	19	2.71	34	3.94	77	8.91
A few times a week	80	11.40	26	3.70	331	38.31	408	47.22
About once a week	480	68.38	47	6.70	295	34.14	207	23.96
A few times a month	60	8.55	598	85.19	186	21.53	172	19.91
Rarely, almost never	12	1.71	12	1.71	18	2.08	0	0.00
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Statement 26

In regard to the statement, “I live with____,” 26.35% of the Title I schools’ students live with both parents, 13.39% live with their father only, 43.30% live with their mother only, 16.24% live with their grandparents, and 0.71% live in an “other” type situation. Of the Non-Title I schools’ students, 62.27% live with both parents, 8.33% live with their father only, 21.64% live with their mother only, 7.52% live with their grandparents, and 0.23% live in an “other” type situation. Of the Title I schools’ parents, 25.07% reported that their child lived with both parents, 12.11% said they lived with their father only, 45.73% reported living with their mother only, 11.40% live with their grandparents, and 5.70% live in an “other” type situation. Of the Non-Title I schools’ parents, 63.08% reported their child lived with both parents, 8.68% live with the father only, 19.56% live with the mother only, 8.33% live with their grandparents, and 0.35% reported living in an “other” situation.

It is interesting to note the discrepancies between the answers of parents and their child. The Non-Title I schools’ parent’s and student’s answers are more closely related than the Title I answers. While the largest number, 43.30%, of the Title I schools’ students and 45.73% of the Title I schools’ parents, reported that they lived with their mother only, the largest number of Non-Title I schools’ parent’s and children reported living with both parents – 62.27% for students and 63.08% for parents (results are shown in Table 26).

Table 26

Statement 26 Results: Student Statement: I live with _____. Parent Statement: My child lives with _____.

Response	Title I Schools				Non-Title I Schools			
	Student Response		Parent Response		Student Response		Parent Response	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Both parents	185	26.35	176	25.07	538	62.27	545	63.08
One parent (father)	94	13.39	85	12.11	72	8.33	75	8.68
One parent (mother)	304	43.30	321	45.73	187	21.64	169	19.56
Grandparents	114	16.24	80	11.40	65	7.52	72	8.33
Other	5	0.71	40	5.70	2	0.23	3	0.35
Total	702	100.00	702	100.00	864	100.00	864	100.00

Research Question 1

What are the reading habits and attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?

Results of question 1 show that students in Non-Title I schools were 9.21% more likely to use the public library than students in Title I schools – 87.32% of the Title I schools’ students said they did use the public library, however, and 96.53% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said they used the public library. Question 2 results indicate that Title I schools’ students read for enjoyment 12.90% less than the students from Non-Title I schools (64.53% for Title I schools’ students as compared to 77.43% for Non-Title I schools’ students). Title I schools’ students reported in question 3 that their parents were 11.57% less likely to read to them than Non-Title I schools’ parents (80.91% compared to 92.48%). There was only a 1.49% difference between the Title I schools’ students and the Non-Title I schools’ students (97.58% compared to 99.07%) in regard to question 4, “Do you ever ask your parents what words mean?” Fewer Title I schools’ students (68.38%) said in question 5 that they read frequently at home as compared to 98.61% of the Non-Title I schools’ students. This was a difference of 30.23% in regard to this question. There was only a 12.78% difference between the Title I schools’ students and Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to question 6, “Do you do good work at school?” The Title I schools’ students reported less often (81.20% compared to 93.98%) that they did good work at school. There was a large difference (52.44%) between the two groups in the percentages in regard to question 7, “Do you read magazines and newspapers?” Only 33.90% of the Title I schools’ students said they read magazines and newspapers. However, 86.34% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said they read magazines and newspapers. There was also a 35.44% difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools’ students in regard to question 8, “Do your parents give you

money to buy books?” Only 43.73% of the Title I schools’ students said their parents gave them money to buy books, while 79.17% of the Non-Title I schools’ students said their parents gave them money to buy books.

There was only a small difference (4.20%) between Title I schools’ students (91.17%) and Non-Title I schools’ students (95.37%) stating that they strongly agree or agree with statement 9, “I like to listen when someone tells stories.” There was a 23.44% difference between Title I schools’ students (64.53%) and Non-Title I schools’ students (87.97%) in regard to statement 10, who strongly agree or agree with the statement, “I like to read at home.” The Title I schools’ students were much less likely to enjoy reading at home. The percentages were close (5.22%) on statement 11, “I like to read at school,” where 91.31% of the Title I schools’ students and 96.53% of the Non-Title I schools’ students strongly agree or agree with the statement that they like to read at school.

Results of question 12 show 72.22% of the Title I schools’ students said that they had between 1-14 books of their very own, while Non-Title I schools’ students reported having more, with 66.32% saying they had between 15-35 books of their very own. According to question 13, the largest percentage of Title I schools’ students (28.49%) said their favorite subject was math, while the largest percentage (32.18%) of the Non-Title I schools’ students said their favorite subject was reading, with math having only a difference of three fewer students in the Non-Title I group. As shown in statement 14, 51.85% of the Title I schools’ students reported that the stories in their reading books were just right in regard to the degree of difficulty; the Non-Title I schools’ students agreed, reporting that 74.54% of them indicated the stories in their reading books were just right.

Question 15 results show that most, 43.30%, of the Title I schools' students said their parents read to them a few times a week, with the majority, 62.62%, of the Non-Title I schools' students also reporting that their parents read to them a few times a week. There was a 2.19% difference in percentages between the Title I schools' students and the Non-Title I schools' students in regard to the statement that their parents rarely read to them, with 2.42% of the Title I schools' students and only 0.23% of the Non-Title I schools' students saying their parents rarely read to them. On question 16, most of the Title I schools' students, 57.55%, said that they either read to their parents a few times a week or once a week, while the greatest number of the Non-Title I schools' students, 51.16%, said that they read to their parents every day.

Results show that 43.73% of the Title I schools' students and 40.74% of the Non-Title I schools' students said in question 17 that their parents taught them something once a week or a few times each month. Results of question 18 found that the majority of students (66.24% of the Title I schools' students and 64.59% of the Non-Title I schools' students) report their parents take them to visit either the public library, a zoo, an aquarium, a museum, or some place of education value either a few times a week or once a week.

Question 19 found the most, 39.74%, Title I schools' students saying that their family sat down to eat together a few times a month, while the majority of Non-Title I schools' students, 30.09%, reported that their family sat down to eat together every day. While there were 18.38% of the Title I schools' students who said that they rarely or almost never sat down to eat a meal with their family, only 0.23% of the Non-Title I schools' students reported rarely eating a meal with their family.

Results of question 20 found agreement between the students, with 70.94% of the Title I schools' students and 74.65% of the Non-Title I schools' students saying that when they ate a

meal together, there was some talk by the entire family. The percentage of difference between the Title I schools' students and the Non-Title I schools' students was much closer on this question than on the question of how often their families ate together. From this information, one could say that when families did eat together, there was talk by most members of the family. In regard to question 21 concerning the frequency of television watching, 87.46% of the Title I schools' students and 81.83% of the Non-Title I schools' students said that they watch television every day – this is only a 5.63% difference between the two groups. For question 22, regarding the amount of television watching, 81.34% of the Title I schools' students reported watching 2-3 hours of television per weekday, while 58.56% of the Non-Title I schools' students reported that they watched four or more hours of television per day, resulting in a large difference between the two groups.

Question 23 results show that 61.40% of the Title I schools' students said they were involved with a toy or a hobby that had educational value a few times each week or once a week, while 59.95% of the Non-Title I schools' students reported playing with an educational toy or engaging in an educational hobby every day. While 4.42% of the Title I schools' students said that they rarely or almost never played with an educational toy or engaged in an educational hobby, none of the Non-Title I schools' students reported never playing with an educational toy or engaging in an educational hobby.

The findings from question 24 show that the majority (61.97%) of Title I schools' students reported having 2-3 of the educational materials listed in the question – encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, and computer, while most (48.73%) Non-Title I schools' students reported having at least 4 of the educational items, and 25.46% had 2-3 items listed. With such a large difference between the two groups on this question, additional study might be indicated on

the impact of having or not having educational aids available to children. None of Title I schools' students or the Non-Title I schools' students reported having none of the educational items.

Results of the survey found that 79.78% of the Title I schools' students reported in question 25 that they had access to a new book either from the store or library a few times a week or once a week, while 72.45% of the Non-Title I schools' students reported the same access to a new book; 8.55% of the Title I schools' students and 21.53% of the Non-Title I schools' students reported that they had a new book from a store or library a few times each month.

Results from statement 26 found the majority (43.30%) of the Title I schools' students reporting that they live with their mother only, while the majority (62.27%) of the Non-Title I schools' students reported living with both parents. There was a large difference between the Title I and Non-Title I schools' students in regard to this question with many more Non-Title I schools' students living with both of their parents. Further study on the impact of this finding should be done. Both groups showed more students living with their mothers (21.64% of the Non-Title I schools' students live with their mother) than their fathers (13.39% of the Title I schools' students and 8.33% of the Non-Title I schools' students). Results found that 16.24% of the Title I schools' students live with their grandparents, while 7.52% of the Non-Title I schools' students indicated that they lived with their grandparents, and few students indicated that they lived in an "other" type situation.

Research Question 2

What are the reading habits and attitudes of parents of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?

According to the results of question 1, parents in both Title I and Non-Title I schools use the public library – 98.15% compared to 97.22%. The results of question 2 show that 72.08% of the Title I schools’ parents read for enjoyment, while 81.37% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents read for enjoyment; Non-Title I schools’ parents read more for enjoyment than Title I schools’ parents. According to the results of question 3, Title I and Non-Title I schools’ parents were nearly equal in their report of reading to their child – 92.59% compared to 93.06%. Question 4 indicates that 88.18% of the Title I schools’ parents said their child asked them what words mean compared to 98.61% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents – this was a 10.43% difference between the two groups. Question 5 shows that slightly fewer Title I schools’ parents (95.44%) try to get their child to read at home as compared to 97.22% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents. This was a difference of only 1.78% in regard to this question.

There was only a 4.61% difference between the Title I schools’ parents and Non-Title I schools’ parents in regard to question 6, “Do you believe that your child does good work at school?” The Non-Title I schools’ parents reported more often (81.25% compared to 76.64%) that their child did good work at school. There was a wider margin of difference (7.15%) between the two groups on question 7, “Do you read magazines and newspapers?” 84.05% of the Title I schools’ parents said they read magazines and newspapers, while 91.20% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said that they read magazines and newspapers. There was a 10.84% difference between the Title I and Non-Title I schools’ parents on statement 8, “I give my child money to

buy books.” 86.61% of the Title I schools’ parents said they give their child money to buy books, while 97.45% of the Non- Title I schools’ parents said they give their child money to buy books.

In regard to statement 9, “My child listens when someone tells stories,” 90.03% of the Title I schools’ parents strongly agree or agree that their child listens when someone tells stories, and 94.44% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said that their child listens when someone tells a story. The statement 10 results found that 63.39% of the Title I schools’ parents strongly agree or agree that they enjoy reading at home, compared to 93.05% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents – this is a 29.66% difference between the two groups. Concerning statement 11, 95.01% of the Title I schools’ parents and 93.75% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents either strongly agree or agree with the statement that their child enjoys reading at school – this is only a 1.26% difference between the two groups on this question.

Results varied on question 12, where 70.23% of the Title I schools’ parents and 48.84 % of the Non-Title I schools’ parents said that they have between 15-35 children’s books at home, with only 11.11% of the Title I schools’ parents and 44.10% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents saying they have 36 or more children’s books at home. The Non-Title I schools’ parents reported having 36 or more children’s books at home by almost a four to one margin. Question 13 found 29.06% of the Title I schools’ parents reporting that they thought their child’s favorite subject was reading, while 34.95% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents reported that their child’s favorite subject was math. However, there was only a slight difference of only two Non-Title I schools’ parents saying that their child liked reading less than math.

In regard to question 14, “Do you believe the stories in your child’s reading book are too easy, easy, hard, too hard, or just right?” parents agreed that the books were just right, with 58.12% of the Title I schools’ parents and 62.73% of the Non-Title I schools’ parents responding.

Title I schools' parents (27.21%) were nearly three times more likely to feel that their child's reading books were either too hard or hard for them than Non-Title I schools' parents (10.18%).

There was a small difference between the Title I schools' parents and Non-Title I schools' parents in regard to question 15, "Do you read to your child?" The greatest number, 40.88%, of the Title I schools' parents reported that they read to their child every day, while most, 52.08%, of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that they read to their child a few times a week. Only 0.43% of the Title I schools' parents and 0.12% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said that they rarely, or almost never read to their child. Results of question 16 found that 39.31% of the Title I schools' parents said that their child reads to them either a few times a week or once a week, while the majority 55.32% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said that their child reads to them every day. Responses also reveal that 31.48% of the Title I schools' parents said that their child reads to them a few times a month in comparison to 2.66% of the Non-Title I schools' parents responding to the same question.

The results of question 17 were somewhat consistent, in that 43.59% of the Title I schools' parents and 47.11% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said that they played with or taught their child something every day. Whereas, 5.70% of the Title I schools' parents said that they rarely, or almost never, played with or taught their child, and only 0.35% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that they rarely played with or taught their child anything. In regard to question 18, "How often does your child visit the public library, a zoo, an aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value?" 86.76% of the Title I schools' parents and 70.49% of the Non-Title I schools' parents responded that their child visits places of educational value a few times each week or once a week, while 5.84% of the Title I schools' parents said that their child

rarely visited places of educational value, and only 0.46% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported their child rarely, or almost never, visited places of educational value.

Results of question 19 found that 73.79% of the Title I schools' parents said that their family sat down to eat a meal together either a few times a week or once a week, while 63.20% of the Non-Title I schools' parents stated that their family either ate together a few times a week or once a week. Findings show that 9.97% of the Title I schools' parents and 31.71% of the Non-Title I schools' parents say they eat a meal together as a family a few times a month. In reply to question 20, "When your family eats together, who does the talking?" there was little agreement. Results show that 39.46% of the Title I schools' parents and 80.32% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said there was some talking by the entire family. Title I schools' parents spread their answers out more than Non-Title I schools' parents, with 31.20% indicating that the adults do most of the talking, 14.81% reporting that the child does most of the talking, and 14.25% saying there is limited or no talking.

In answer to question 21, "How often does your child watch television?" 81.48% of the Title I schools' parents said their child watched television every day, and 86.46% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that their child watched television every day. Results of question 22 show 43.30% of the Title I schools' parents reporting that their child watched four or more hours of television per weekday, with 58.68% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reporting that their child watched four or more hours of television per weekday, while 27.49% of the Title I and 37.96% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that their child watched 2-3 hours of television per weekday.

In response to question 23, "How often over the past year has your child been involved with a toy or hobby that you feel has educational value?" 63.82% of the Title I schools' parents

responded that their child had been involved with an educational toy or hobby every day and 66.09% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said that their child was involved with an educational toy or hobby every day. There was a difference of 28.58% between the Title I schools' parents and the Non-Title I schools' parents in regard to question 24 about how many of the educational materials (encyclopedias, dictionary, almanac, atlas, computer) they had in their home, with 72.79% of the Title I schools' parents saying they had four of the educational materials, and 50.93% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they had four of the educational items in their home. In regard to question 25, "How often does your child get a new book from the store or library?" 85.19% of the Title I schools' parents said their child did get a new book from the store or library a few times each month, while 71.18% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that their child got a new book from a store or a library a few times each month or once a week.

On statement 26, "My child lives with____," the greatest percentage, 45.73%, of the Title I schools' parents responded that their child lived with only the mother in the home, while most, 63.08%, of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that their child lived with both parents. A large number, 25.07%, of the Title I schools' parents reported that their child lived with both parents, and almost as many, 19.56%, of the Non-Title I schools' parents said their child lived with the mother only. Very few, 5.70%, of the Title I schools' parents and 0.35% of the Non-Title I schools' parents, said their child lived in an "other" type situation.

Research Question 3

Do the parents' and students' reading habits and attitudes in Title I schools differ from those in Non-Title I schools?

Non-Title I schools answers to question 1, "Do you use the public library?" were more closely related than the Title I schools. In Title I schools, 87.32% of the students and 98.15% of the parents reported using the library, while in Non-Title I schools, 96.53% of the students and 97.22% of the parents said they used the public library.

In response to question 2, "Do you read for enjoyment?" the results show 64.53% of the Title I schools' students and 72.08% of the Title I schools' parents saying they read for enjoyment, with 77.43% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 81.37% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reporting they read for enjoyment. The Title I and Non-Title I schools' parents' and students' answers to question 3 concerning whether or not the parents read to their child were similar, with 80.91% of the Title I schools' students and 92.59% of the Title I schools' parents reporting that the parents read to their child, and 92.48% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 93.05% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicating that the parents read to their child.

In relation to question 4 on the questionnaire concerning whether or not children ask their parents what words mean, results in the Title I schools found that 97.58% of the Title I schools' students and 88.17% of the Title I schools' parents indicating their child asks them what words mean. The Non-Title I schools' students answers were more consistent with their parents, with 99.07% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 98.16% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reporting that the child asked their parents what words meant.

The answers given to question 5 concerning the child reading at home found Title I and Non-Title I schools differing, with 68.38% of the Title I schools' students and 95.44% of the Title I schools' parents responding that their child is encouraged to read at home, while 98.61% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 97.22% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicated that their child was encouraged to read at home. There was a 27.06% gap on the answer by the Title I schools and a 1.39% gap by the Non-Title I schools.

Title I and Non-Title I schools showed a similar trend in their answers to question 6 of whether or not they thought they did good work at school, with the students indicating a higher percentage of yes answers than their parents. There were 81.20% of the Title I schools' students and 76.64% of the Title I schools' parents who responded that the child did good work at school, with 93.98% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 81.25% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicating the child did good work at school. There was a 4.56% gap between the Title I schools and a 12.73% gap in the Non-Title I schools, with the parents indicating the lower number regarding whether or not their child did good work at school. Title I and Non Title I schools also showed a large gap in their answers to question 7, "Do you read magazines and newspapers?" Only 33.90% of the Title I schools' students said that they read magazines and newspapers, while 84.05% of their parents reported that they read magazines and newspapers, for a difference of 50.14%. There were 86.34% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 91.20% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reporting that they read magazines and newspapers, for a slight 4.86% difference.

The responses to statement 8, concerning parents giving their child money to buy books, found 43.73% of the Title I schools' students and 86.61% of the Title I schools' parents reporting that the parents give their child money to buy books, for a 42.88% difference between the

answers, while 79.17% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 97.45% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicated that the parents give their child money to buy books, for a difference of 18.29%.

Both Title I and Non-Title I schools reported similar responses to statement 9 on the questionnaires having to do with whether or not the child listened when someone told stories: 91.17% of the Title I schools' students and 90.03% of the Title I schools' parents strongly agree or agree with the statement that the child liked to listen to someone tell stories; 95.37% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 94.44% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that the child listened when someone told stories.

There was not a great deal of difference between the Title I schools' students and parents and between the Non-Title I schools' students and parents on statement 10, "I enjoy reading at home." However, there was a difference between the Title I and Non-Title I schools, with 64.53% of the Title I schools' students and 63.39% of the Title I schools' parents saying they strongly agree or agree that they enjoy reading at home. This result compared to 87.97% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 93.05% of the Non-Title I schools' parents, who said they strongly agree or agree that they also enjoy reading at home. The difference in their answers ranges from 23.44% between the student answers and 29.66% between the parent answers.

In response to statement 11 concerning whether or not the child likes to read at school, the answers among the Title and Non-Title I schools were close: 91.31% of the Title I schools' students and 95.01% of the Title I schools' parents said they strongly agree or agree that the child enjoys reading at school, with 96.53% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 93.75% of the Non-Title I schools' parents saying they strongly agree or agree that the child enjoys reading at school.

On question 12, concerning how many children's books there are at home, there was very little consensus among the Title I and Non-Title I schools. While only 3.56% of the Title I schools' students said they had 36 or more books of their own at home, 11.11% of the Title I schools' parents stated that they had 36 or more children's books at home. The majority (72.22%) of Title I schools' students reported 1-14 books, while the majority (70.23%) of Title I schools' parents reported 15-35 books. Results in Non-Title I schools were closer in agreement, but still considerably different, with 23.38% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 44.10% of the Non-Title I schools' parents saying they had 36 or more children's books at home. The majority (66.32% compared to 48.84%) of Non-Title I schools' students and parents reported 15-35 books.

On question 13 regarding the child's favorite subject in school, none of the parents' choices matched the students' choices. The majority of Title I schools' students chose math as their favorite (28.49%), while their parents chose reading (29.06%), and the Non-Title I schools' students chose reading as their favorite (32.18%), while their parents chose math (34.95%).

In regard to question 14 about whether or not the stories in the child's reading book were too easy, easy, just right, hard, or too hard, all Title I and Non-Title I schools' responses indicate that the stories were just right: 51.85% of the Title I schools' students, 58.12% of the Title I schools' parents, 74.54% of the Non-Title I schools' students, and 62.73% of the Non-Title I schools' parents stated that the stories in the child's reading books were just right. The Title I schools (34.05% of the students and 27.21% of the parents) reported the stories as hard or too hard more often than the Non-Title I schools (14.47% of the students and 27.09% of the parents), which reported the stories as too easy or easy.

In regard to question 15, concerning how often parents read to their child, the Title I and Non-Title I schools reported similar findings, with 43.30% of the Title I schools' students saying that their parents read to them a few times a week, and 40.88% of the Title I schools' parents saying that they read to their child every day. There were 62.62% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 52.08% of the Non-Title I schools' parents who agreed that the parents read to the child a few times a week. On question 16, regarding how often the child read to the parents, there was agreement among the responses from Title I schools and among those from Non-Title I schools. However, the Title I schools' responses varied more than the Non-Title I schools' responses, with 57.55% of the Title I schools' students and 39.31% of the Title I schools' parents saying that the child read to their parents a few times each week or once a week, for a difference of 18.24%. There was only a 4.16% difference between students and parents in Non-Title I schools, which reported that the child read to their parents every day (51.16% of the students and 55.32% of the parents). Non-Title I schools' parents and students agreed more about this question than the Title I schools' students and parents.

Both Title I and Non-Title I schools' participants had similar answers to question 17, concerning how often parents play with or teach their child, in that the parents consistently differed in the answer given by the students. Responses show that 43.73% of the Title I schools' students said that their parents played with or taught them something once a week or a few times each month, while 43.59% of their parents replied that they played with or taught their child every day, and 40.74% of the Non-Title I schools' students said their parents played with or taught them something once a week or a few times each month, while 47.11% of their parents replied that they played with or taught them something every day.

On question 18 asking how often the child visited a public library, zoo, aquarium, museum, or some other place of educational value, both Title I and Non-Title I schools' parents and students agreed that they did this a few times each week or once a week. These results were reported by 66.24% of the Title I schools' students, 86.76% of the Title I schools' parents, 64.59% of the Non-Title I schools' students, and 70.49% of the Non-Title I schools' parents.

On question 19 concerning how often the family sat down together to eat a meal, 39.75% of the Title I schools' students said that they ate a meal with their family a few times each month, while 73.79% of the Title I schools' parents indicate they eat together a few times each week or once a week. All of the Title I school responses show the parents indicating more frequent meals together than their child. Responses from Non-Title I schools show that 52.31% of the students and 63.20% of the parents ate a meal together a few times each week or once a week. The Non-Title I school responses show the parents indicating less frequent meals together than their child – the opposite trend with Title I schools, which may indicate social pressure.

There was consensus on question 20, “When your family eats together, who does the talking?” with both Title I and Non-Title I schools responded that there was some talking by the entire family. This response was reported by 70.94% of the Title I schools' students, 34.46% of the Title I schools' parents, 74.65% of the Non-Title I schools' students, and 80.32% of the Non-Title I schools' parents, where they all agreed that there was some talk by the entire family at a meal. Even though the Title I schools' parent/student difference was 31.48% and the Non-Title I schools' parent/student difference was only 5.67%, the majority of all responses indicate there was some talk by the entire family.

Concerning question 21 of how often children watch television, there was agreement among all Title I and Non-Title I schools' participants that the children watch television every

day: 87.47% of the Title I schools' students, 81.48% of the Title I schools' parents, 81.83% of the Non-Title I schools' students, and 86.46% of the Non-Title I schools' parents all said the child watched television every day. In regard to question 22, concerning how many hours of television the child watched in a weekday, the majority responses disagreed in Title I schools and agreed in Non-Title I schools, with 81.34% of the Title I schools' students responding that they watch 2-3 hours of television per weekday, 43.30% of their parents indicating that their child watched four or more hours per weekday, while 58.57% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 58.68% of the Non-Title I schools' parents agreed that the child watched four or more hours of television on a weekday. It is interesting to note that the Title I schools' parents over-estimated their child's television time, while the Non-Title I schools' parents responded almost exactly as their child responded.

On question 23, concerning how often over the past year the child had played with an educational toy or engaged in an educational hobby, the responses varied somewhat. Findings indicate that 61.40% of the Title I schools' students played with an educational toy or engaged in an educational hobby a few times a week or once a week, while 63.82% of their parents indicated that the child played with an education toy or engaged in an educational hobby every day, where 59.95% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 66.09% of the Non-Title I schools' parents agreed that the child had played with an education toy or engaged in an educational hobby every day.

There was some consensus on question 24 regarding how many educational materials (encyclopedias, dictionary, atlas, computer) were in the home. Findings show that 61.97% of the Title I schools' students said they had 2-3 of the items, and 72.79% of the Title I schools' parents said their child had at least four of the items, while the largest percentage (48.73%) of the Non-

Title I schools' students and 50.93% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they had at least four of the educational items.

There were a variety of answers to question 25, concerning how often the child gets a book from the store or library, where 79.78% of the Title I schools' students said they got a new book from a store or library a few times each week or about once a week, while 85.19% of the Title I schools' parents said their child got a new book from the store or library at least a few times a month, with 72.45% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 71.18% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they got a new book a few times a week or about once a week.

Results of statement 26, regarding who the child lives with, found consensus between parents and students in both Title I and Non-Title I schools, with 43.30% of the Title I schools' students and 45.73% of the Title I schools' parents reporting that the child lives with a mother only, while 62.27% of the Non-Title I schools' students and 63.08% of the Non-Title I schools' parents agreeing that the child lived in a home with both parents.

Research Question 4

Do the parents' reading habits and attitudes and their children's reading habits and attitudes differ?

Both Title I and Non-Title I schools' students reported using the library less in question 1 than their parents – 87.32% of the Title I schools' students and 96.53% of the Non-Title I schools' students said they use the library, while 98.15% of the Title I schools' parents and 97.22% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they use the library.

In response to question 2, "Do you read for enjoyment?" the parents reported that they read for enjoyment more than the students. Among responses, 64.53% of the Title I schools' students and 77.43% of the Non-Title I schools' students said they read for enjoyment, while 72.08% of the Title I schools' parents and 81.37% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they read for enjoyment. The Non-Title I schools' parents' and students' answers to question 3 concerning whether or not the parents read to their child were similar: 80.91% of the Title I schools' students and 92.48% of the Non-Title I schools' students said that their parents read to them, while 92.59% of the Title I schools' parents and 93.06% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that they read to their child.

In relation to question 4 on the questionnaire concerning whether or not the child asks their parents what words mean, the Title I and Non-Title I schools' students answers were mostly consistent with their parents, where 97.58% of the Title I schools' students and 99.07% of the Non-Title I schools' students said they asked their parents what words meant, and 88.18% of the Title I schools' parents and 98.61% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said their child asked them what words meant.

The Title I schools' responses varied, while the Non-Title I schools' responses were close for question 5, concerning whether or not the child reads at home: 68.38% of the Title I schools' students and 98.61% of the Non-Title I schools' students answered that they read frequently at home, while 95.44% of the Title I schools' parents and 97.22% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicated that they encourage their child to read at home. This shows a 30.23% gap between the students' answers and a 27.06% gap on the answer by the Title I schools' parents and students.

Title I schools' students and parents were closely related on question 6 of whether or not they thought the child did good work at school, where 81.20% of the Title I schools' students and 93.98% of the Non-Title I schools' students responded that they did good work at school, while 76.64% of the Title I schools' parents and 81.25% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said their child did good work at school. It is interesting to note that the parents of both groups of students indicated their child did good work at school, but at a lower rate (4.56% for Title I and 12.73% for Non-Title I) than their child.

Students and parents were not at all close in their answers to question 7, "Do you read magazines and newspapers?", 33.90% of the Title I schools' students and 86.34% of the Non-Title I schools' students said they read magazines and newspapers, while 84.05% of the Title I schools' parents and 91.20% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they read magazines and newspapers. This shows a 52.44% difference in the student response and a 50.14% difference in the Title I schools' students' and parents' responses to the question.

The responses to statement 8, concerning parents giving their child money to buy books, differed much between parents and students, where 43.73% of the Title I schools' students and 79.17% of the Non-Title I schools' students reported that the parents give their child money to

buy books, and 86.61% of the Title I schools' parents and 97.45% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that the parents give their child money to buy books. These findings show a 35.44% difference between the students' answers, and a difference of 42.88% between the Title I schools' students and parents.

Both Title I and Non-Title I schools' students' and parents' reported similar responses to statement 9 on the questionnaires having to do with whether or not the child listened when someone told stories: 91.17% of the Title I schools' students, 95.37% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 90.03% of the Title I schools' parents, and 94.44% of the Non-Title I schools' parents strongly agree or agree with the statement that the child liked to listen to someone tell stories.

There was a great deal of difference between the Title I schools' responses and the Non-Title I schools' responses for both the students and parents on statement 10, "I enjoy reading at home," where 64.53% of the Title I schools' students and 87.97% of the Non-Title I schools' students indicated that they strongly agree or agree that they enjoy reading at home, resulting in a difference of 23.44%, while 63.39% of the Title I schools' parents and 93.05% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said they strongly agree or agree that they also enjoy reading at home, for a difference in their answers of 29.66%. In response to statement 11 concerning whether or not the child likes to read at school, the answers among the Title and Non-Title I schools were close, with 91.31% of the Title I schools' students, 96.53% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 95.01% of the Title I schools' parents, and 93.75% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reporting that they strongly agree or agree that the child enjoys reading at school.

On question 12, concerning how many children's books there are at home, there was very little consensus among the Title I and Non-Title I schools. While, the majority (72.22%) of the Title I schools' students said they had 1-14 books of their own at home, the majority (66.32%) of

the Non-Title I schools' students reported 15-35 books. The majority (70.23%) of Title I schools' parents and the majority (48.84%) of Non-Title I schools' parents reported 15-35 children's books at home.

On question 13 regarding the child's favorite subject in school, virtually all of the responses were different. Of the Title I schools' students, 28.49% chose math as their favorite, while 32.18% of the Non-Title I schools' students chose reading as their favorite; and 29.06% of the Title I schools' parents chose reading, while 34.95% of the Non-Title I schools' parents chose math. In regard to question 14 about whether or not the stories in the child's reading book were too easy, easy, just right, hard, or too hard, all Title I and Non-Title I schools' respondents indicated the stories were just right: 51.85% of the Title I schools' students, 74.54% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 58.12% of the Title I schools' parents, and 62.73% of the Non-Title I schools' parents stated that the stories in the child's reading books were just right.

In regard to question 15, concerning how often parents read to their child, the Title I and Non-Title I schools reported similar findings, with 43.30% of the Title I schools' students and 62.62% of the Non-Title I schools' students saying that their parents read to them a few times a week, 40.88% of the Title I schools' parents indicating that they read to their child every day, and 52.08% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reporting that they read to their child a few times a week. On question 16, regarding how often the child reads to the parents, there was mixed agreement among Title I and Non-Title I schools' participants, where 57.55% of the Title I schools' students indicated they read to their parents a few times each week or once a week, and 51.16% of the Non-Title I schools' students replied that they read to their parents every day, while 39.31% of the Title I schools' parents said that their child read to them a few times each

week or once a week, and 55.32% of the Non-Title I schools' parents reported that their child read to them every day.

Title I and Non-Title I schools had similar answers to question 17, concerning how often parents play with or teach their child. Results show that 43.73% of the Title I schools' students and 40.74% of the Non-Title I schools' students said that their parents played with or taught them something once a week or a few times each month, while 43.59% of the Title I schools' parents and 47.11% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicate that they played with or taught their child every day.

On question 18, asking how often the child visited a public library, zoo, aquarium, museum, or some other place of educational value, all Title I and Non-Title I schools' participants agreed that they did this a few times each week or once a week, with 66.24% of the Title I schools' students, 64.59% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 86.76% of the Title I schools' parents, and 70.49% of the Non-Title I schools' parents giving the same response.

On question 19, concerning how often the family sat down together to eat a meal, 39.75% of the Title I schools' students and 52.31% of the Non-Title I schools' students said that they ate a meal with their family a few times each week or once a week, while 73.79% of the Title I schools' parents and 63.20% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicated they eat together a few times each week or once a week. There was some consensus on question 20, "When your family eats together, who does the talking?" Both Title I and Non-Title I schools responded that there was some talking by the entire family, where 70.94% of the Title I schools' students, 74.65% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 34.46% of the Title I schools' parents, and 80.32% of the Non-Title I schools' parents all agreed that there was some talk by the entire family at a meal.

Results of question 21, concerning how often children watch television, there was agreement among all Title I and Non-Title I schools that the children watch television every day, with 87.47% of the Title I schools' students, 81.83% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 81.48% of the Title I schools' parents, and 86.46% of the Non-Title I schools' parents all saying the child watched television every day. In regard to question 22, concerning how many hours of television the child watched in a weekday, the majority responses varied some in Title I schools and agreed in Non-Title I schools, where 81.34% of the Title I schools' students responded that they watch 2-3 hours of television per weekday, 58.57% of the Non-Title I schools' students indicate they watch four or more hours per weekday, and 43.30% of the Title I schools' parents and 58.68% of the Non-Title I schools' parents agreed that the child watched four or more hours of television on a weekday.

On question 23, concerning how often over the past year the child had played with an educational toy or engaged in an educational hobby, the responses varied somewhat. Results showed that 61.40% of the Title I schools' students said that they played with an educational toy or engaged in an educational hobby a few times a week or once a week. Whereas, 59.95% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 63.82% of the Title I schools' parents, and 66.09% of the Non-Title I schools' parents agreed that the child had played with an education toy or engaged in an educational hobby every day.

There was little consensus on question 24 among Title I and Non-Title I schools, regarding how many educational materials (encyclopedias, dictionary, atlas, computer) were in the home. Results found that 61.97% of the Title I schools' students said that they had 2-3 of the items, and 48.73% of the Non-Title I schools' students, 72.79% of the Title I schools' parents, and 50.93% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said the child had at least four of the items.

There were various answers to question 25, concerning how often the child gets a book from the store or library, where 79.78% of the Title I schools' students, 72.45% of the Non-Title I schools' students, and 71.18% of the Non-Title I schools' parents said the child got a new book a few times a week or about once a week. Answers show that 85.19% of the Title I schools' parents said their child got a new book from the store or library at least a few times a month.

Results of statement 26, regarding who the child lives with, found consensus between parents and students in both Title I and Non-Title I schools, but not between the students or between the parents. Findings show that 43.30% of the Title I schools' students said the child lives with a mother only, while 62.27% of the Non-Title I schools' students indicated that the child lived in a home with both parents, and 45.73% of the Title I schools' parents said the child lives with a mother only, while 63.08% of the Non-Title I schools' parents indicated that the child lived in a home with both parents.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to compare and describe the habits and attitudes of students and parents in both Title I and Non-Title I schools in regard to reading. The study's population consisted of parents and their children in nine Title I schools and nine Non-Title I schools in three school systems in northeast Tennessee. The 18 schools consisted of 12 K-5 schools and 6 K-6 schools, with a total of 4,320 surveys distributed and 702 Title I parents and their children participating in the study, for a 65% return rate, and 864 (80%) of the Non-Title I parents and students completing the questionnaires. Overall, there was an average return rate of 72.5%.

The parent questionnaire surveyed school and home environment issues related to reading. The parent questionnaire contained 26 questions – eight yes or no questions that indicated the parents' opinions on each statement; three questions measured on a Likert-type scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree; three questions where there was a choice of four answers, and 12 questions in a closed-form multiple choice format. The student questionnaire also contained 26 questions – eight yes or no questions that indicated the parents' opinions on each statement; three questions measured on a Likert-type scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree; three questions where there was a choice of four answers, and 12 questions in a closed-form multiple choice format.

The teachers of the students being asked to participate in the study sent parent letters home. Parent questionnaires were to be completed at home, sealed in an attached envelope, and returned to school the day after they were given out. Attached to the parent questionnaire was a

cover letter to the parents explaining the reason for the study and requesting their written permission to allow their child to complete the reading questionnaire at school under the supervision of their teacher. Only students whose parents signed the permission forms were allowed to participate in the study and complete the reading questionnaire at school. A total of 2,160 reading questionnaires were sent home for parents to complete (1,080 to parents of children attending Title I schools and 1,080 to parents of children attending Non-Title I schools).

Findings

There were 4,320 surveys distributed, with 1,566 student participants and 1,566 parent participants, the participation and survey rate for the study was excellent at 72.5%. The findings were summarized as responses to the four basic research questions:

1. What are the reading habits and attitudes of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
2. What are the reading habits and attitudes of parents of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Title I schools vs. Non-Title I schools?
3. Do the parents' and students' reading habits and attitudes in Title I schools differ from those in Non-Title I schools?
4. Do the parents' reading habits and attitudes and their children's reading habits and attitudes differ?

Conclusions

Parents and educators must continue to realize the importance of all aspects of the home environment, as they relate to the academic success of children. This study found that the home

environment is vitally important to children's academic development. Reading and playing educational games with a child, enjoying educationally oriented outings, two-way conversations with adults and peers, and the availability of books and other educational tools, including a computer, were all important aspects of the home environment. What families actually do, matters. Values, habits, and relational dynamics are all at work within the family environment.

Just as this study has demonstrated, years of earlier research have clearly shown that children are more likely to succeed in learning when their families actively support them. Laura Bush (United States Department of Education, 2002) made this statement concerning reading, "As parents, the most important thing we can do is to read to our children early and often. Reading is the path to success in school and life. When children learn to love books, they learn to love learning."

Parents should take their child to the local library, visit the children's section, and spend time with their child reading and selecting books to take home. Librarians can help parents and children select books that are suitable for their age level. Librarians can tell parents and children about other reading programs and services they offer such as a weekly story time. Many libraries have group story time. Librarians help keep children interested in reading during the summer, by offering summer reading programs.

When compared to Non-Title I schools' students and parents, and to Title I schools' parents, this study found that students in Title I schools are less likely to read at home for enjoyment. The study found that Title I schools' students were 27-30% less likely than their own parents or the students and parents in Non-Title I schools to indicate that they read at home. They are also 10% less likely to use the public library as others, and 66% do not read magazines and newspapers, while other participants do read magazines and newspapers. The results demonstrate

that Non-Title I schools' students and parents read more than Title I schools' students and parents. While the research found that the majority of respondents indicate that they enjoy reading at home, the Title I schools' students and parents were less likely to strongly or agree or agree than the Non-Title I schools' students and parents (see Figure 1).

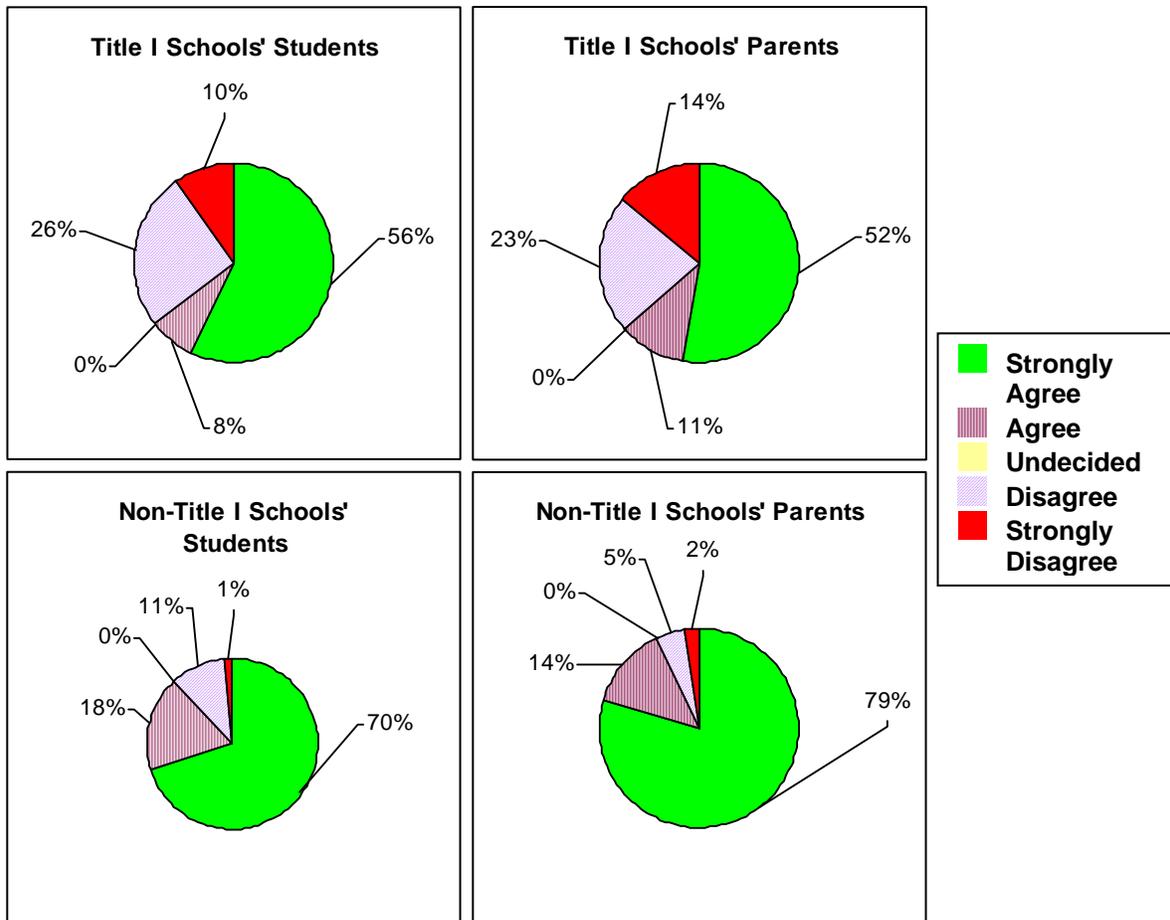


Figure 1. A comparison of responses to statement 10, “I enjoy reading at home,” in Title I and Non-Title I schools.

A contributing factor to enjoyment of reading at home, at least for the students, could be the presence of children’s books in the home. Starting a home library of children’s books shows the child the importance of books. Having books of their very own in a special place increases

the likelihood that children will want to read even more. Books can come from many sources – bookstores, garage sales, flea markets, used book stores, book fairs at school, and older books put up for sale by the local library. Results show that Title I schools’ students and parents do not agree as to the number of children’s books in the home, while the Non-Title I schools’ students and parents report overall a greater number of children’s books in the home. The results of question 12 on the survey (see Figure 2) show that approximately 4% of the students in Title I schools have 36 or more books of their very own, while 23% of the students in Non-Title I schools reported having 36 or more books of their very own. Students in Non-Title I schools were almost six times as likely to have 36 or more books of their own, with 72% of the students in Title I schools reported having 1-14 books of their own, and 66% of the students in Non-Title I schools reported having 15-21 books of their own. These results indicate that students in Non-Title I schools have more books of their own than students in Title I schools.

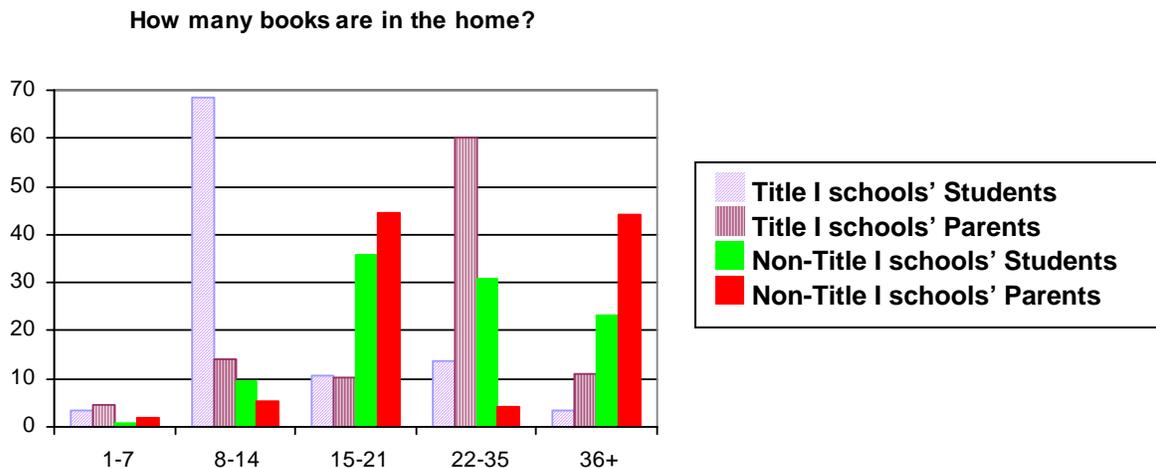


Figure 2. A comparison of how many books can be found in the homes of families in Title I and Non-Title I schools, as reported in the responses to question 12.

While children are still babies, parents should read aloud to them and make it part of their daily routine. Parents should pick a quiet time to read to their child such as the time right before bedtime. Reading to children at bedtimes gives them a chance to rest between play and sleep. While children are still young, it is good to read with them on your lap or snuggled next to you so they feel close and safe. Parents should make reading a quiet and comfortable time that their child looks forward to. Parents should strive to spend at least 30 minutes each day reading to and with their child. Parents should talk with their child about what they are reading. With younger children, parents should point to the pictures in the book and tell the child what the picture is. Later, as parents read stories to their child, they should read slowly and stop occasionally to allow them to think about what they have read.

Access to a new book, whether from the store or a library, is important to stimulate reading. An explanation for the discrepancy in the number of books at home could be found in the results, whereby in question eight, 56% of the Title I schools' students report that their parents do not give them money for books, almost 87% of their parents indicate they give their child money for books. These results can be compared to over 79% of the Non-Title I School's students and more than 97% of the parents, who report giving their child money for books. The research shows that Non-Title I schools' students are getting new books more often than Title I schools' students. In addition to getting books less often, the Title I schools' parents do not appear to be aware of how often the students are getting new books. This implies a lack of communication between Title I schools' students and parents.

Results of this study found that students in Title I schools are approximately 12% less likely to indicate that their parent reads to them than their own parent's response or the responses of the students and parents in Non-Title I schools. The number of times students and parents read

to each other shows a distinct trend in both the Title I and Non-Title I schools, with the higher percentage at the most frequent reading rate and the lower percentage at the less frequent rate. However, the trend is more distinct in the Non-Title I schools, with the greater number in the more frequent reading rate (see Figure 3). Related to this trend, question 26 on the surveys revealed that students in Non-Title I schools were over twice as likely to live with both parents, as were children in Title I schools. From the responses collected in question 26, one can say that students in Non-Title I schools have twice as many opportunities to read with their parents than the students in Title I schools, because they have twice as many parents at home.

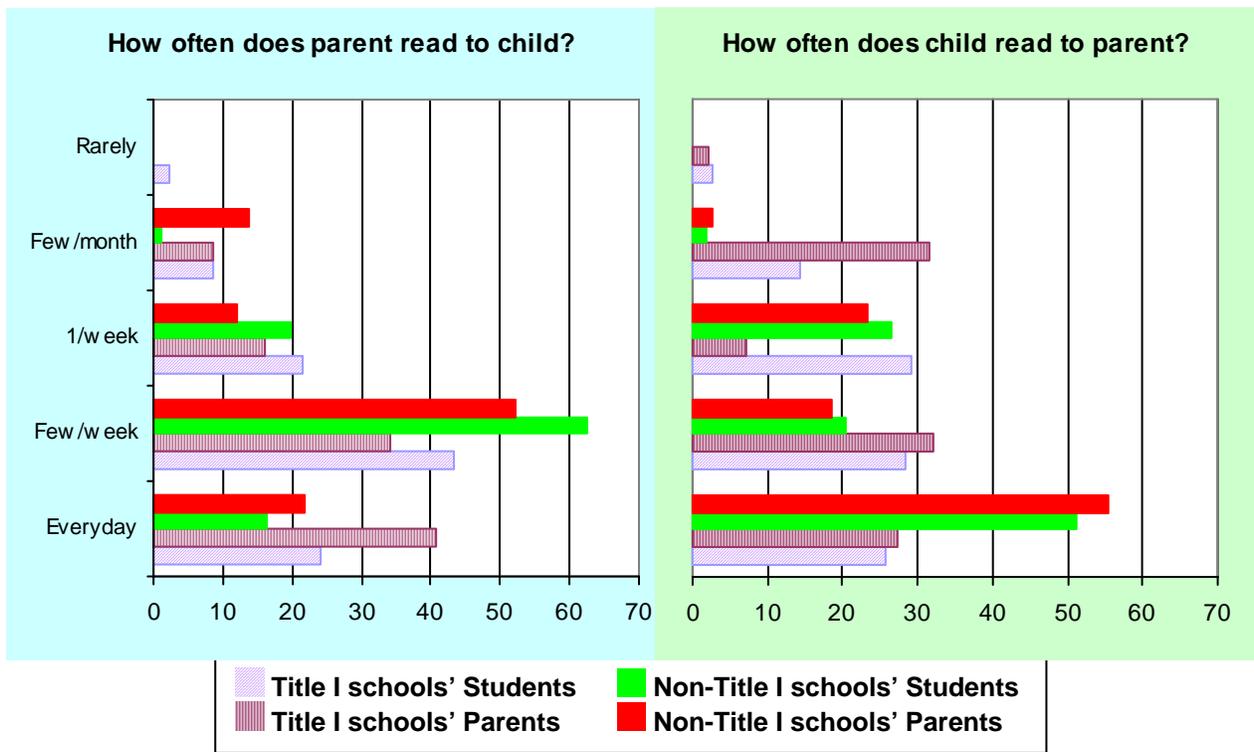


Figure 3. A comparison of how often parents and children read to each other in Title I and Non-Title I schools, as found in the responses to questions 15 and 16.

Many children enjoy television and can learn from it. It is up to parents to decide how much and what shows their children should watch. Parents should consider the child's age and carefully choose the shows they will allow their child to watch. Parents should look for television shows that teach children something, hold their interest, encourage them to listen and question, help them learn words, make them feel good about themselves, and introduce children to new ideas. There are many excellent children's programs on public television stations, network television, and on cable channels.

While all participants agree that the students watch TV everyday, the Title I schools' parents and students responded with very different amounts (see Figure 4). Their responses indicate that the parents are not aware of the true amount of TV the students are watching. In this question, it was surprising to find that the students in Non-Title I schools reported watching four or more hours of television per day at a rate that was almost four times more often than the Title I schools' students. Too much television can cut into important activities like reading. While watching television with their child, parents should point out things on television that are like the child's everyday life. Parents can also question their child, to see what they remember from television shows. In general, parents should limit the amount of time they allow their child to watch television. The Title I schools' parents also responded with different values on how often the students are playing with educational toys or hobbies. The Title I schools' parents and students do not appear to be in touch with one another and parents are unaware of what the students are doing.

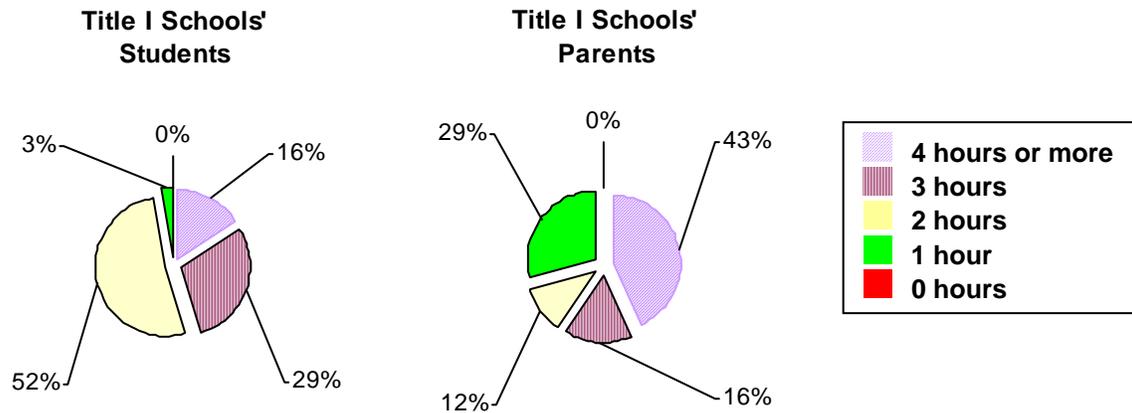


Figure 4. A comparison of responses to question 22, “How many hours of television does the child watch daily,” in Title I schools’ students and parents.

All participants in the study indicated that they have at least one of the educational materials (encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, computer), with most having 2-4 items. However, the Non-Title I schools’ parents and students responses show a greater trend toward having all five items in greater number than the Title I schools.

Parents, teachers, and other professionals should work together, to ensure that all children learn to read and read often. There are lifelong benefits from school and learning, where home life is structured, yet flexible, and where adults demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors toward school and learning. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed, not just in school, but also throughout life.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. A naturalistic inquiry or direct observation of the home environment and family characteristics would present a variation on this research. In addition to being more insightful,

this method would eliminate sole reliance upon parental perceptions and memory as a data source.

2. Proximal (face-to-face) interviews would provide an additional variation on this research. This method would minimize any problems with lack of reading skills or lack of understanding on the part of the student or the parent.
3. An additional open-ended question, asking parents what could be done to assist them as they prepare their child for school, could provide additional ideas and opinions for schools and community agencies to consider.

Recommendations for Practice

1. An abundance of reading materials should be made available to a child throughout his or her life. If parents are not able to financially afford a variety of books, educators should promote the use of the public library.
2. Schools should make every effort to engage parents in an educational partnership, by providing various opportunities for parent involvement.
3. Schools should develop strategies to increase communication with parents and to encourage positive reading attitudes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Student Questionnaire

Part I

Circle the choice that indicates your opinion on each statement.

- YES NO 1. Do you check out books from the public library?
YES NO 2. Do you read for enjoyment?
YES NO 3. Do your parents have time to read to you?
YES NO 4. Do you ever ask your parents what words mean?
YES NO 5. Do you read frequently (often) at home?
YES NO 6. Do you do good work at school?
YES NO 7. Do you read magazines and newspapers?
YES NO 8. My parents give me money to buy books?

Part II

Please circle your answers to the questions below.

9. I like to listen when someone tells stories.
strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
10. I like to read at home.
strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
11. I like to read at school.
strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree

Part III

Please circle your answers to the questions below.

12. How many children's books do you have of your very own?
1-7 8-14 15-21 22-35 36 or more
13. What subject is your favorite?
social studies science reading math language
14. Do you believe the stories in your reading book are
too easy easy just right hard too hard

Part IV

Circle your answers to the questions below.

15. How often do your parents read to you?
A. everyday
B. a few times a week
C. once a week
D. a few times a month
E. rarely, almost never

16. How often do you “read” to your parents? (For example, this could be by showing your parents pictures and telling them a story about them).
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
17. How often do your parents “teach” you? This could be writing, counting, playing games, etc.?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
18. How often do your parents take you to visit the public library, a zoo, aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
19. How often does your family sit down for a meal together?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
20. When your family eats together, who does the talking?
- A. some talk by the entire family
 - B. some talk, mostly by the adults
 - C. child does most of the talking
 - D. limited or no talking at the table
 - E. family does not eat together
21. How often do you watch television?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never

22. On an average weekday, how many hours of television do you watch?
- A. 4 or more hours
 - B. 3 hours
 - C. 2 hours
 - D. 1 hour
 - E. none
23. How often over the past year have you played with a toy or worked on a hobby that you feel has educational value?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
24. Of the following materials – encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, computer – how many do you have in your home?
- A. all of the above
 - B. 4
 - C. 2-3
 - D. 1
 - E. none of the above
25. How often do you get a new book from the store or library?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few days a week
 - C. about once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
26. I live with_____.
- A. both parents
 - B. one parent (father)
 - C. one parent (mother)
 - D. grandparents
 - E. other

APPENDIX B

Parent Questionnaire

Part I

Circle the choice that indicates your opinion on each statement.

- YES NO 1. Do you use the public library?
YES NO 2. Do you read for enjoyment?
YES NO 3. Do you read to your child?
YES NO 4. Does your child ever ask you what words mean?
YES NO 5. Do you try to get your child to read at home?
YES NO 6. Do you believe that your child does good work at school?
YES NO 7. Do you read magazines and newspapers?
YES NO 8. My parents give me money to buy books?

Part II

Please circle your answers to the questions below.

9. My child listens when someone tells stories.
strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
10. I enjoy reading at home.
strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
11. My child enjoys reading at school.
strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree

Part III

Please circle your answer to the questions below.

12. How many children's books do you have at home?
1-7 8-14 15-21 22-35 36 or more
13. What subject do you think is your child's favorite?
social studies science reading math language
14. Do you believe that the stories in your child's reading book are
too easy easy hard too hard just right

Part IV

Please circle your answer to the questions below.

15. How often do you read to your child?
A. everyday
B. a few times a week
C. once a week
D. a few times a month
E. rarely, almost never

16. How often does your child “read” to you? (For example, this could be by showing you pictures and telling a story about them.)
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
17. How often do you play with or “teach” your child? This could be writing, counting, playing games, etc.
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
18. How often does your child visit the public library, a zoo, an aquarium, a museum, or some place with educational value?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
19. How often does your family sit down for a meal together?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
20. When your family eats together, who does the talking?
- A. some talk by the entire family
 - B. some talk, mostly by the adults
 - C. child does most of the talking
 - D. limited or no talking at the table
 - E. family does not eat together
21. How often does your child watch television?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never

22. On an average weekday, how many hours of television does your child watch?
- A. 4 or more hours
 - B. 3 hours
 - C. 2 hours
 - D. 1 hour
 - E. none
23. How often over the past year has your child been involved with a toy or hobby that you feel has educational value?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few times a week
 - C. once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
24. Of the following materials – encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, computer – how many do you have in your home?
- A. all of the above
 - B. 4
 - C. 2-3
 - D. 1
 - E. none of the above
25. How often does your child get a new book from the store or library?
- A. everyday
 - B. a few days a week
 - C. about once a week
 - D. a few times a month
 - E. rarely, almost never
26. My child lives with_____.
- A. both parents
 - B. one parent (father)
 - C. one parent (mother)
 - D. grandparents
 - E. other

APPENDIX C

Letter to Parents/Informed Consent Form

Dear Parents,

In order to meet the requirements for a doctoral degree from East Tennessee State University, I am currently doing a study about the relationships between parents' and children's attitudes and habits concerning reading. This study will aid in updating previous reading research. This study will provide information about which reading habits and attitudes are most helpful in promoting reading readiness so that schools and other community agencies can guide and assist parents in providing the best educational environments for their children. I need your help to make this research study successful.

In this research study there are two survey instruments – one for parents and one for students. Both survey instruments are brief and should take no more than 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The questions on both the parent and student surveys contain questions concerning reading habits and attitudes. The questions on both surveys parallel each other so the researcher can determine the difference between the habits and attitudes of children and parents. The surveys are completely confidential and do not require the participants' names.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher (Judy Netherland) at 423-652-2519 (home) or e-mail me at Neth1948@aol.com. You may also call the chairman or coordinator of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University at 423-439-6054.

If you as a parent are willing to complete the attached survey, please sign your name below. You do not have to put your name on the survey.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

If your child has permission to complete the student reading survey, please fill in your child's name in the blank below and sign your name giving permission for him/her to complete the reading survey at school under the direction of his/her teacher. Each child who returns the parent survey and completes the student survey will receive a small prize.

Child's Name

Date

Please return this letter and your completed survey to your child's teacher tomorrow. I have enclosed an envelope for you to use to return your survey to school. Also, please return the parent letter that you have signed giving your child permission to complete the survey at school. Your survey is very important to the success of this study, and I certainly appreciate your time and help.

Sincerely,

Judy L. Netherland

APPENDIX D

Letter to Principals

514 Georgia Avenue
Bristol, Tennessee 37620

Dear

As part of the requirements toward the completion of a Doctor of Education Degree at East Tennessee State University, I am planning to complete a study of how parents' and students' habits and attitudes in Title I schools differ. Procedures will include an analysis of parent and student surveys. This letter is to request permission for your school to participate in the study. I have contacted your superintendent of schools to gain his/her permission to conduct this study, and permission has been granted.

Having been an elementary school teacher for the past thirty-one years in Sullivan County, I feel it is important to address individual needs of our students. We can best accomplish this through an understanding of the importance of the home environment in developing literacy skills. With the acknowledgement that family background is an important contributor to achievement outcomes; it becomes imperative that educators continue to acquire knowledge in this area. This particular study will contribute to current research by focusing on the habits and attitudes of parents and students toward treading. The study will have practical significance in updating previous research, which in turn, may have implication for parent and teacher education. This study will also determine which characteristics of the home environment are most conducive to promoting reading readiness, so that schools and other community agencies can guide and assist parents in providing optimal educational environments for their students.

Upon completion, I will be happy to share the results of my survey with you.

I appreciate your consideration. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call me at Emmett Elementary School (423-354-1855), home 423-652-2519, or e-mail me at Neth1948@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Judy Netherland

APPENDIX E

Letter to Teachers

514 Georgia Avenue
Bristol, Tennessee 37620

Re: Dissertation Surveys
(Judy Netherland)

Dear Teachers,

I have been given approval by your superintendent, board of education, and principal to ask your cooperation in helping me gather data for my doctoral dissertation at East Tennessee State University. My study consists of two surveys – one for the parent to complete at home and one for the students to complete at school under your direction. Both the parent and the student surveys parallel each other in questions regarding their habits and attitudes toward reading. The subject of my dissertation is to see if there is a difference between the habits and attitudes of parents and students in Title I schools from parents and students in Non Title I schools. The parent surveys you will send home along with a cover letter to the parents explaining the study and asking their permission for their children to complete the student survey under your guidance. This should only take a minimal amount of your time. The parent surveys will be sent home on one day and returned the next. If the parent signs that the child can complete the survey, then you can let the students complete the survey at your convenience. In the packet that you will receive will be the parent surveys with a cover letter stapled to it, student surveys, and a small gift for each student who returns their parent survey and completes the student survey at school.

As an educator, I feel it is important to address the individual reading needs of our students. This particular study will contribute to current research by focusing on family habits and attitudes toward reading and help to identify factors that relate strongly with good reading skills in school.

Upon completion, I will be happy to share the results of my study with you.

I appreciate your consideration. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call me at 423-652-2519 (home) or at 423-354-1865 (Emmett Elementary) or e-mail me at Neth1948@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Judy Netherland

APPENDIX F

Letters to and from Superintendents/Directors of Schools

514 Georgia Avenue
Bristol, Tennessee 37620
May 1, 2004

Dear _____:

As part of the requirements toward the completion of a Doctor of Education degree at East Tennessee State University, I am planning to complete a study of how children's and parents' attitudes and habits toward reading in Title I schools differ from those in Non Title I schools. Procedures will include an analysis of student and parent surveys. This letter is to request your permission for three of your Title I schools and three of your Non Title I schools to participate in this study. I would like to survey three of the Title I schools that have the highest percentage of free and reduced lunches and three schools that are not Title I schools. This letter is to request your permission for me to conduct this study and also to request permission for me to ask the principals at the schools I need to survey to allow their schools to participate in my study.

Having taught in Sullivan County for thirty one years as an elementary teacher, I realize the importance of reading to a child's life, and I feel this study may give some insight into what opportunities we might be able to afford parents to help their children be ready to read when they start school and also to help them with their children who are already in school. As an educator, I feel it is important to address the individual needs of our students. We can best accomplish this through an understanding of the home environment. With the acknowledgement that family background is an important contributor to achievement outcomes; it becomes imperative that educators continue to acquire knowledge in this area. This particular study will contribute to research by focusing on students' and parents' habits and attitudes toward reading in both Title I and Non Title I schools. This study will have practical significance in updating previous research, which in turn may have implications for parent and teacher education. This study will also determine which characteristics of the home environment are more conducive to promoting reading readiness, so that schools and other community agencies can guide and assist parents in providing optimal educational environments for their preschoolers and children already enrolled in school.

Upon completion, I will be happy to share the results of my study with you.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call me at Emmett Elementary School (354-1865) or home 423-652-2519.

Sincerely,

Judy Netherland



Board of Education Minutes June 21, 2004

The Bristol Tennessee Board of Education met at 6 p.m. on Monday, June 21, 2004, in Room 100 of the School Administration Building with the following present: Beth Webb, Kathy Cooper, Debbie McMillin, Mike Stollings, Steve Morgan, Steve Dixon, and representatives of the staff.

Visitors	Beth Webb, chairman, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.
Pledge	John Clark led the Pledge of Allegiance.
Consent Agenda Adoption and Approval	Mike Stollings made a motion to adopt and approve the consent agenda and Kathy Cooper made the second. Voting for the motion: Morgan, McMillin, Cooper, Stollings, and Webb Motion was approved.

Items on consent agenda:

- I. Minutes of May 17, 2004, regular meeting
- II. Board Approval Listing of May bills for the General Purpose, Federal Projects, and School Nutrition Funds
- III. Financial Reports - General Purpose, Federal Projects, and School Nutrition Funds (Revenues and Expenditures) for May
- IV. Extended use of Bus 21
- V. Tennessee Department of Education 200-Day Accountability Report
- VI. Tennessee High School student fees for the 2004-2005 school year
- VII. Student reading survey by ETSU doctoral student, Judy Netherland
- VIII. Surplus/obsolete material from Anderson Elementary
- IX. Surplus/obsolete material from school nutrition
- X. Surplus/obsolete material from Haynesfield Elementary
- XI. Surplus/obsolete material from Tennessee High
- XII. Surplus/obsolete material from Avoca Elementary
- XIII. Release of a student from Compulsory Education
- XIV. Renewal of contract with Scholastic Insurers, Inc. for student insurance for 2004-2005. Insurance is optional for purchase by parents. There are no changes in rates or benefits from 2003-2004. No system funds are involved.
- XV. Adoption of 457 (b) Deferred Compensation Plans for Governmental Employers

Recognitions None

Hearing of Delegations Captain Tommy McDaniel, resource officer at Vance Middle School, outlined the September 9 Mock Violent Intruder Drill to be conducted in coordination with the Bristol Tennessee Police Department.

Kingsport City Schools

Kingsport, Tennessee



Kingsport Board of Education

Mrs. Pat Turner, President
Mr. Tim Dean, Vice President
Mrs. Barbara Goodlett
Mrs. Susan Lodal
Dr. Randall Montgomery

Richard L. Kitzmiller, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 23, 2004

Dr. Meria Carstarphen
Executive Director for Comprehensive School Improvement and Accountability
Kingsport City Schools
1701 East Center Street
Kingsport, TN 37664

Dear Meria,

With respect to the survey submitted by Ms. Judy Netherland, I am approving the survey under the parameters described. Specifically, I understand that the principals of two schools have approved, noting possible value of the information to their program. This approval is contingent upon specific approval of the parents involved and notice (and other provisions) as required in Policy JRE.

I would ask you to please continue as liaison between the research and the two schools.

Sincerely,

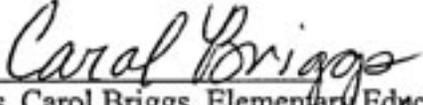
Richard L. Kitzmiller, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

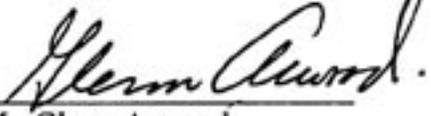
July 15, 2004

RE: Permission to Conduct Reading Surveys in the Sullivan County School System
(Judy A. Netherland/Emmett Elementary School)

To: Dr. Russell West, Chairman of Dissertation Committee
Dr. Terrence Tollefson, Acting Chair of the ELPA Department
Dr. Nancy Dishner, Dissertation Committee Member
Dr. Leslie Ann Perry, Dissertation Committee Member
Mr. Steve Barnett, Principal
Other Elementary School Principals in Sullivan County

Judy Netherland has permission to conduct reading surveys in the Sullivan County School System. These surveys are part of the requirements for completing her doctoral dissertation. She will be conducting surveys in three Title I Schools and three Non-Title I schools. The surveys will be conducted in late August or early September 2004.


Ms. Carol Briggs, Elementary Education Supervisor


Mr. Glenn Arwood
Superintendent of Sullivan County Schools

APPENDIX G

Letters to and from Dr. Nancye Williams

514 Georgia Avenue
Bristol, Tennessee 37620
February 25, 2004

Re: Requesting Permission to Use Your Dissertation Survey
(Judy Netherland)

Dear Dr. Williams,

My name is Judy Netherland, and I am in the ELPA doctoral Program at East Tennessee State University. Dr. Russell West is the chairman of my committee. When we were talking about the topic for my dissertation he suggested that I read your dissertation. My proposed topic is Comparing the Attitudes and Habits of Children and Parents Toward Reading in Title I and Non Title I schools. I thought your parent questionnaire was so good, I am writing to ask permission to use it as part of my parent survey. Of course, I would give you credit for designing it. Dr. West says it is better to use an instrument that has been tested because if I develop one on my own, I will have to do a pilot test. He wants me to survey three school systems which I find a daunting thought.

I teach at Emmett Elementary School in Sullivan County (fourth grade). I have been teaching for thirty-five years and going back to get my doctorate is a personal goal for me. I have already been through the qualifying exams and the defense of my answers and survived. The next hurdle is getting the prospectus approved. Did you find that getting the prospectus approved was a difficult process? I would appreciate any information you could provide me in this process. Dr. West says that I need to secure your permission in writing in order to use your survey. If it is all right with you, could you please write me a letter saying that I have permission to use your survey? Also, my e-mail address is Neth1948@aol.com and my home phone number is 423-652-2519 and my number at Emmett Elementary is 423-354-1865. I will enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for your response.

Your consideration in this matter will be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Judy Netherland



Pigeon Forge Primary

1766 Waldens Creek Road
Sevierville, Tennessee 37862
Phone (865) 428-3016 Fax # (865) 428-3053

March 2, 2004

Dear Ms. Netherland:

Please feel free to use the parent questionnaire from my study. I hope that it will prove useful as you examine parental attitudes toward reading.

Good luck with your dissertation! It is a long stressful process but well worth every minute that you put into it. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nancy C. Williams

ACCREDITED BY SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

Principal : Dr. Nancy Williams

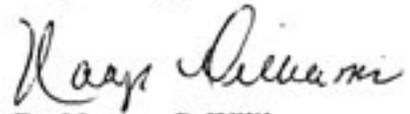
Assistant Principal : Dr. Connie Cottongim

May 15, 2004

Dear Ms. Netherland,

This is to confirm permission to modify my parental survey for use in your study.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nancy Williams".

Dr. Nancy C. Williams

VITA

JUDY L. NETHERLAND

Personal data: Date of Birth: June 2, 1948

 Place of Birth: Jefferson City, Tennessee

 Marital Status: Divorced

Education: East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;

 English, History, Elementary Education, B.S., 1968

 Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee;

 K-12 Education, M.A., 1999

 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;

 Classroom Leadership, Ed.S., 2002

 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;

 Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D., 2004

Professional Experience: Bristol Tennessee City Schools, Bristol, Tennessee

 Teacher, Vance Junior High School, 1968-1971

 U.S. Government Job Corps Program, Abingdon, Virginia

 Teacher, Jacobs Creek Job Corps Center, 1971-1973

 Sullivan County School System, Tennessee

 Teacher, Cold Springs Elementary, 1973-1986

 Teacher, Emmett Elementary School, 1986-Present