

Helping Hands©: Creating a Partnership Between Schools and Families

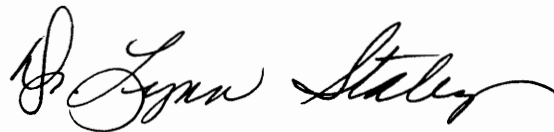
An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Abigail Back

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Lynn Staley

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Lynn Staley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D" and "L".

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

April 2011

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2011

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Abstract:

There is much more to education than reading, writing, and arithmetic. Countless factors can affect a child's ability to learn and succeed in school. Many of these factors come from outside the school building, staff, and even peers. A child's home life not only affects his or her personality and development, but it also affects his or her disposition toward school, motivation, and ability to achieve. Creating a partnership between schools and families can help both sides get a better picture of what the child needs to succeed. Teachers and families in communication can work together not only to understand the child, but also to help him or her go through life and be challenged appropriately through dialogue and enriching activities. I have created ten resources for families in an attempt to help them better understand, develop relationships with, and appropriately challenge their children. These resources open the doors of communication between schools and the home in an effort to best meet the needs of children.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Dr. Lynn Staley for advising me in the completion of this project. Her personal and professional influence has inspired me greatly during my four-year college career, particularly in the importance of relationships with families.

Artist Statement/Rationale:

It has been proven that there are many factors that influence how children grow, mature, and learn. Children can be both positively and negatively impacted by what goes on at home and in their community, and in order for a child to reach his or her full potential, he/she must be supported in both environments.

Additionally, more and more parents are approaching schools looking for help and guidance. How can they best support their child at home? What should they do in a given situation? With busy schedules, larger class sizes, and many districts cutting back on parent-teacher conferences, something must be done to bridge the gap in communication between schools and the home.

In an attempt to find out more about child psychology and also produce something that I will use in a future classroom, I undertook the project of beginning a series of helpful handouts for parents. The ultimate hope is that I will have a library of updated resources for parents to freely take and use as support at home. While these handouts will not take the place of conferences and personalized support for students, they will hopefully serve as a supplement to what is already taking place. I also hope that they point parents and families to valuable resources. Each handout is one page front and back, kept short to ensure that it would not be overwhelming or boring to the reader. In the handouts I included several means by which parents can seek additional information and support should they choose. There are books for those with access to a library or bookstore, websites for those with access to the Internet, and information and practical tips for all. The topics that I have chosen to cover are very timely and relevant, and they are things that I have experienced in the field of education during my four years at Ball State.

My project advisor and I feel that this project is not only worthwhile, but that it taps into something that will become increasingly important in the future. The idea stemmed from a course assignment, and Dr. Staley is considering using my project as a model for something that she hopes to have her university students complete in the future.