

## **Parental and Familial Involvement in the School Community**

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## **Parental and Familial Involvement in the School Community**

### **Abstract**

Parental/familial involvement in the classroom as well as school community is an issue of constant importance. Parents and families are crucial participants in a child's education. It is critical to create a bridge between home and school. Parental/familial involvement within the school community is essential to the quality of all children's educational as well as their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development. This Action Research Project was focused on finding the most effective means of getting parents/families involved in the school community. This study was completed at a small private Montessori children's house school we will call "Children's House" Montessori in the Midwest. 22 families were involved in this Action Research Project. This study used surveys after each community event/involvement activity occurred. The surveys were sent to every family to measure the effectiveness of the event or information provided in helping the parents/families get involved in the school community. Results indicated that each community building activity or parent communication helped the parents and families feel more connected to the school community. The surveys given helped to decipher which activities and communications were most important to the parents and families.

### **Literature Review**

One of the oldest questions in education is how to encourage parents to be more involved in the school community. This day and age most parents are both working full time jobs and do not have much flexible time, which in turn means, they are not able to be involved in too many school activities. All children learn best through modeling and examples. If parents are not actively interested in discussing their children's education with their children, their children will most likely have minimal interest in their education themselves. There are many important keys to successful parent and family communication and involvement. It is important to have a bridge between home and school. A teacher and parent/family relationship is the link between home and school (Butler & Uline 2008). Once there is a solid foundational relationship created, then the parents and families can feel comfortable with the school, teacher, and classroom. Parents and families have a more vested interest in being involved when they feel the vested interest the school community has in them and their children (Goodman & King 2002).

There is much research to support the premise that the more active the parents are in their children's education, the more success the children will have in school (Michigan Department of Education 2002). In order to achieve this goal, it is important for the teachers to create and continue to build a relationship with all of their families. This can be done in many different ways. It is imperative that the parents and the families feel comfortable and secure with the teacher. Many parents and families say they do not want to be involved in the school community because they do not feel they have a relationship with the teacher. Once the foundation of a respectful and caring relationship is laid with

the parents and families, the more interested they will be with communications going back and forth from teacher to home (Smith, Robbins, Stagman, & Mahur 2013). It is imperative to continue to have weekly communication with the families.

In order to reach the greatest number of families and parents, research indicates that it is important to have many ways of being involved in the classroom such as weekly email, family newsletters, website updates, conferences, field trip volunteers, classroom volunteers, and material making volunteers (Haakmat 2015; Liu & Chien, 2012). The more options available in a classroom for parents and families to be involved, the stronger the relationships between teachers and home, and the more family and parent involvement will happen.

### **Defining Parental/Familial Involvement**

There is not one correct definition for family/parent involvement in schools. We are living in a fluid world where family structure, technology, curriculum in schools, children, etc. are all continually changing. In an effort to place national emphasis on parental and familial involvement in classrooms the government passed an act called the Family Engagement in Education Act of 2011. This act defined parental/familial involvement as,

The term family engagement in education means a shared responsibility . . . of families and schools for student success, in which schools and community-based organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development. (Section 12) (as cited in Hilado, Kallemeyn, Phillips, 2013 p. 2)

This definition is meaningful, broad, and expansive. If a school has a definition of familial/parental involvement that is very specific, it is more difficult for the families to feel involved if they are not participating in the ways defined by the school. Similarly, it is also difficult for the teachers to have a positive attitude towards the familial involvement in the school because the families might not be able to be involved in the specific ways defined by the school (Hilado et al., 2014). There was a study completed by Hilado et al. (2014), where they collected data from 10 preschool administrators in Illinois about their definitions of familial involvement and their views on the involvement in their schools. The study found the schools with specific and inflexible definitions of parental/familial involvement were more likely to have a negative view on involvement in their school and reported low involvement. The schools that had flexible and broad definitions of parental/familial involvement had better relationships with their families and also reported higher involvement in the schools (Hilado et al., 2014). The definitions of parental/familial involvement can continue to evolve and change. Parents and families feel more comfortable and able to be involved in the school community when the role is not rigidly defined for them. They will have more opportunities to be involved when there is a broad and flexible working definition of parental/familial involvement in the school community (Hilado et al., 2014).

### **Ways to Get Parents/Families Involved**

The common thread between school and families is the child. Families and parents need to know how important the child and his or her education and well-being are to the teacher. Teachers can do this by creating a solid foundation of a relationship with

all families. According to Gartrell (2014), the best way to do this is to create a bridge between school and home. The teacher can genuinely get to know each family for exactly who they are and appreciate every family's individual culture. A study completed by Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards & Marvin (2011) had a group of teachers conduct five home visits over two years. The teachers were trained in modeling, supportive discussion, and child observation. The aim was to help the parents interact better at school, use positive and responsive behavior and words, identify and conduct natural learning opportunities in the home, and lastly to help identify and promote their children's strengths. Over the two years the children who participated in the study compared to the control group showed higher self-direction, assertiveness, stronger language skills, less anxiety, and secure attachment to adults. In addition to home visits and verbal communication, another way to create a genuine relationship with parents and families is to have the parents come in to the classroom and see their child working. In a case study, Davies (2008) reports seeing a novice teacher involving parents in her classroom in many different ways. Most of these parents had low income but because of the solid relationships that the teacher had created with them, they wanted to help in any way that they could. She invited parents into her classroom to learn with their child (Davies, 2008). This is a way to help the children feel their parents are interested in their education and continue to build a bridge between home and school. The parents who are involved in the classroom itself understand what their children are learning and they are then able to discuss school at home.

A study done by Liu and Chien (2012) also found that a way to enhance and gain parental/familial involvement was to create projects that extended from school to home

and back to school. The teachers in this study created specific projects that the children would take home. The children would work on the project at home with their parents and then the parents would come into school when the child would present the project. The parents loved to help. Overall the study reported that the families and parents were happier with their participation in their child's education and felt more of an integral part of it (Liu et al., 2012). Not only should the parents/families feel connected to the classroom but also should feel connected to the school community. The director of the school in combination with the teacher(s) should allow the parents/families to give feedback about the school and decisions made (Rapp & Duncan 2011). This way the families and the parents feel they have a voice and that it means something to the school and teachers. This can be done in a myriad of ways such as discussion at parent/family/teacher conferences, monthly school meetings, or surveys that are sent home.

In addition to open houses Haakmat (2015) states that Potluck Dinners as well as Curriculum Overview Meetings are stable family involvement events at her school. The Curriculum Overview Meetings begin the parental/familial journey into the materials for the year. The teaching teams discuss not only the content but also the purpose and skills that come from each material and theme. They also discuss the progression of learning through the year as well as through the child's school career. This appears to help parents and families feel even more connected to the school because they can see the reasons behind the materials as well as the goals attached to the materials and learning experiences. The Potluck Dinners serve as a community-building event as well as promoting a deeper understanding of the curriculum in the classroom. Parents have

another chance to speak with teachers and gain understanding of the materials in the classroom. This way the parents can have more intelligent and efficient conversations with their children at home.

Surveys can also be a very powerful tool in the hands of a teacher or school administration. They can be used in the beginning of the year as well as throughout the year as a tool to build relationships between home and school. Parents and families want to know that you truly care about their child. One can get to know the family culture as well as the child through asking many different questions on surveys (Goodman & King 2002). As the year goes on the surveys can be used as a tool for the parents to have a voice in decisions being made about the school.

There are many tools for teachers and schools to raise the parental and familial involvement in the classroom and school. They include parent/family/teacher conferences, newsletter, weekly written and spoken communication, open house nights for parents, in-class observation, classroom volunteers, material making volunteers, and monthly surveys on classroom and school policies and activities. According to Butler and Uline (2008) the use of technology is very important in our current day. There are many resources on the Internet to help create a more interactive experience for parents and children at home to work together. Technology is a very efficient way to keep all parties involved connected and up to date on important information. Technology enables parents who cannot physically come into the classroom very often a chance to continue to stay involved.

In order to use these tools successfully, there must be a solid foundation provided by a good relationship between the teacher and the family. The way to establish this is to

first and foremost make no assumptions about the family (Goodman et al., 2002). Always be open and show that you are interested in learning about each family's special and unique culture (Gartrell 2012). The more interested, knowledgeable, open, and excited the teacher is about all the family cultures the more positive response and participation in the classroom/school culture he/she will receive back from the parents and families (Rapp et al., 2011).

### **Importance of Parental/Familial Involvement**

Before children enter school they are learning about everything around them from their experiences, siblings, friends, and especially parents. One of the ways that parents can begin their engagement in their children's education is through literature. Reading to children at home is one of the most important things you can do to enhance literacy skills (Dunst, Valentine, Raab, & Hamby, 2013). A study done by the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) says that these literacy skills are predictors of success in children learning to read and success in school. In general, parents reading to their children at home is incredibly important to their children's success throughout their school careers. A similar study conducted by Ramani and Siegler (2008) found that experience with numbers and operations at home is also a predictor of children's success with math in school. When parents play board games, card games, complete mazes, and dot to dots with their children they are building a foundation of knowledge that can promote students success in their first years in school.

The children benefit immeasurably from the family/teacher relationship because they have two worlds working together to help guide their development and education

(Gartrell 2014). This idea is reminiscent of the old saying, “it takes a village to raise a child” (Goodman et al., 2002). According to Carter and Roe (1998), children learn best from modeling and from the perceptions of what others think of us. When the teachers and the parents/families are modeling positive relationships between each other and both sides have positive views on the education of the child, the child will have a better chance of being vested in his or her own education. Between the teachers, parents, and families of each child there are many incredible resources waiting to be tapped. It is important for families to be involved in their child’s education because they can use the teacher/school community for important resources and the teacher can use the families/parents for useful resources as well. It is a team effort to help guide each child to the best well-rounded education possible (Keller 2011). Familial relationships are extremely important to teachers, children, and families alike. According to the Parent Teacher Association as cited by the Michigan Department of Education in an article titled *What research says about parent involvement in children’s education in relation to academic achievement* (2001), when parents are involved students have higher grades, higher attendance, higher self-esteem, and lower rates of drug use, suspensions, and violence.

When there are positive relationships built through continuous effort all parties involved have positive reactions. Children are excited and motivated to have their families involved in their education, parents/families feel great that they have a hand in their child’s education, and the teacher feels supported from all fronts and has wonderful resources and understanding surrounding the classroom/environment (Liu et al., 2012).

### **Summary of Literature Review**

Parent and familial involvement in the classroom and school is a large piece of the puzzle for every child's education. The baseline in order to raise the parent/family involvement in a classroom or school is to create a strong foundational relationship with all families individually. Research indicates that it is beneficial to create an honest and open environment where the families feel that you truly care about their family culture and their child. Once you have a strong relationship with the parents/families then they will feel comfortable and excited to be a part of the school community. According to the research it is effective for the teacher to create as many opportunities for the parents/families to participate as possible. This way every family, no matter what their schedules, can still be a part of the school community. There is a common goal that the teacher and the family both share which is the education and well being of the child. Research has shown that there is much significance and importance in parental and familial participation in the school community. Children are supported by home and school, which in turn helps the children excel in all aspects of their lives. Parents feel connected to their child's education and they feel like they can help. Children are happy to have support coming from school and home. The children and parents/families alike feel supported by the positive connection between home and school.

### **Research Design**

#### **Purpose**

Children's success in school heavily depends upon their parent and family involvement in their education. The purpose of my Action Research Project is to see which means of

communication or parent involvement techniques in schools are most effective to gain parent involvement and maintain parent involvement in the schools.

### **Research Topic**

What are the most effective means of getting parents involved in the school community?

### **Subsidiary Questions**

What are the best ways of teaching/informing parents about the Montessori philosophy?

How useful/informative do the parents find a monthly or weekly newsletter?

Does a parent informational night help parents to feel more connected to their child's school community and education?

Does parent involvement in field trips help parents to feel more connected to their child's school community and education?

What are some techniques that parents say help them to feel more a part of the school community?

### **Participants**

I surveyed the parents of my private Montessori Preschool "Children's House" Montessori School. We have 22 children enrolled. There were 22 mothers and 20 fathers as well as a few grandparents and nannies. One family participating were Lebanese, two Russian families, three Chinese parents, one Fijian parent, one African American parent, and 12 Caucasian families. Five of the families in the study were racially mixed families.

**Setting**

The families took the surveys at home on their computers or Internet accessible devices. I checked that all parents had access to a computer, Internet, and email. They took the Pre-Parent Night survey at “Children’s House” Montessori School.

**Materials**

The materials I used were the surveys I have created (see Appendix B), a computer, access to email, and access to SurveyMonkey.com (where I created most of the surveys).

**Procedure**

After every parent/family involvement activity within our school I gave out a survey to the families. To do this in an economically and environmentally friendly way I used an online survey website. This way I could create the surveys online and send them to the families using emails. This measure was effective as I always received responses.

**Data Collection**

My data collection process began in October and ended in mid-March. Before and after selected events at the school I gave the parents a survey linked to that specific event or parent communication. In the surveys there were a series of questions linked to a number scale. There were also some short answer questions. I used a website called Survey Monkey to help track all of the data in the surveys. Throughout the months I gathered the data and created graphs to visually see the effects of the parent communications on the school community.

**Data Analysis**

The data from my surveys were analyzed and put into graphs. I studied these graphs to see the effects of the study on the school community and the parents feeling on the school community. I noted how their answers changed represented on the number scale I adapted. I took note of change over time. I analyzed the data to determine the most effective means of parental and familial involvement activities and communications.

**Findings, Results, and Discussion**

The overall findings from the surveys conducted had positive results. Consistently throughout all of the surveys the parents and families answered that after each of the community building activities they felt more connected to the school community than they had felt before the activity. For all survey questions please see Appendix B.

**Parent Night Survey**

The first formal community building activity we set up was a Parent Informational Night. This Parent Informational Night had two different parts of the evening. The first part of the evening began with a version of a “Silent Journey” through the classroom. All of the areas of the classroom were labeled with signs and attached quotes from Maria Montessori (see Appendix C). The parents and families were given a two-sided paper that had brief explanations of each area of the classroom (see Appendix D). They were given a slip of paper that was color coded with a specific area of the classroom. This slip of paper contained the name of a material in that area. Their job was to explore the area and see if they could find their given material. After the “Silent Journey” there was a question

and answer section with the two lead teachers. Below are the results from the survey conducted after the Parent Night. There is one chart as well as two comments from parents.

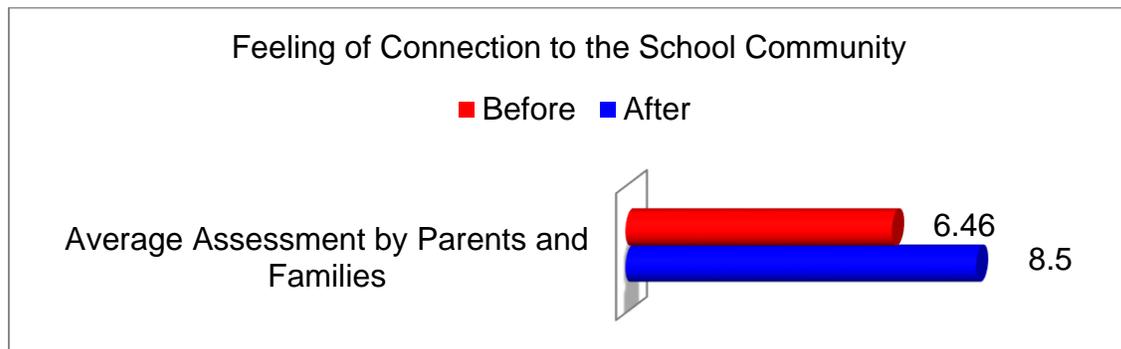


Figure 1. Parent Informational Night Survey

\*Connection to School Community increased from 6.46 to 8.5  
**31.6% increase**

\*The survey gave a scale of 0-10 to each parent to say how connected they felt to the school community. Shown are the averages of the answers from the parents.

### **Parent feedback from survey**

**Would you recommend continuing having informational parent nights?**

All responded YES.

**If yes, then why?**

“More opportunities to explore the environment, talk with instructors, and meet with other parents.”

“It is good to know more about my kids friends and their families.”

According to the survey the parents and families felt a 32% increase in connection to the school community. It is crucial for parents to understand the Montessori philosophy and the purpose of the structure of the classroom, structure of work time, didactic materials, and role of the teacher. When they have an overall understanding of these they feel more connected to the school community as well as their child’s education. This is an

imperative way to start the year as it creates a stable and foundation for the families in the classroom for the rest of the year.

### **Halloween Party Survey**

The Halloween Party (as most parties at “Children’s House Montessori”) is an event where parents and family members are all invited to attend. The parties begin with a group activity. After the group activity there are stations with different games. There are parents who volunteer to help run the game stations. After the game stations we share a snack all together.

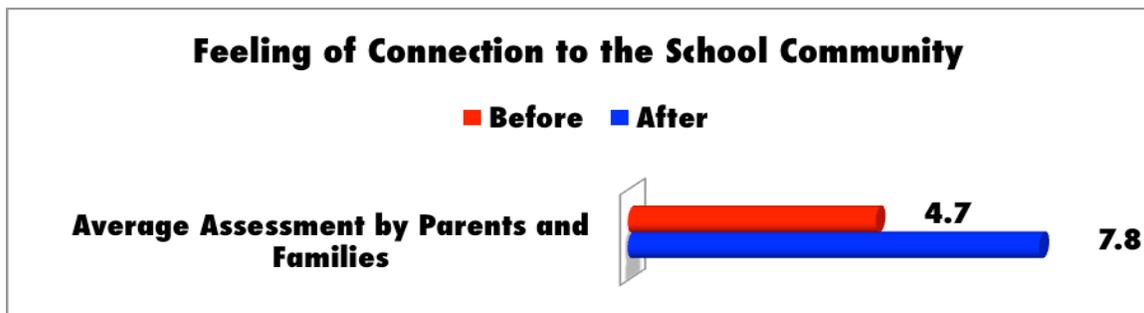


Figure 2. Halloween Party Survey

\*Connection to School Community increased from 4.7 to 7.8  
**66% increase**

### **Parent feedback from survey**

**Did the Halloween Party help you feel more connected to the school community? If yes, why?**

“It is a low pressure and fun way to interact with parents and kids in their space.”

“It is always great to see the children in their school environment and to meet other parents from the community.”

“I enjoyed the interaction with the kids, parents, and teachers.”

According to the survey the parents and families felt a 66% increase of connection to the school community. The parties serve as a fun and relaxed community building activity. The parents can talk with each other at the same time they are bonding with their children. In this relaxed environment people are more willing to open up and have fun. The families are able to connect with each other and get to know each other in a different way. Families can meet their children’s friends and parents. The parties are also good to learn about different cultural traditions and connect with families and how they celebrate their cultural traditions. At “Children’s House Montessori” we are made up of many different cultures. It is a community goal that we all respect, learn about, and celebrate every child’s culture. Different celebrations throughout the year help to engage the children in cultural learning and experiences.

**First Conferences Survey**

The first set of conferences the teachers wrote the conferences together but we conducted them separately. Each teacher took the families they were chosen separately. During the conference we spoke through the “progress report” written by both teachers.

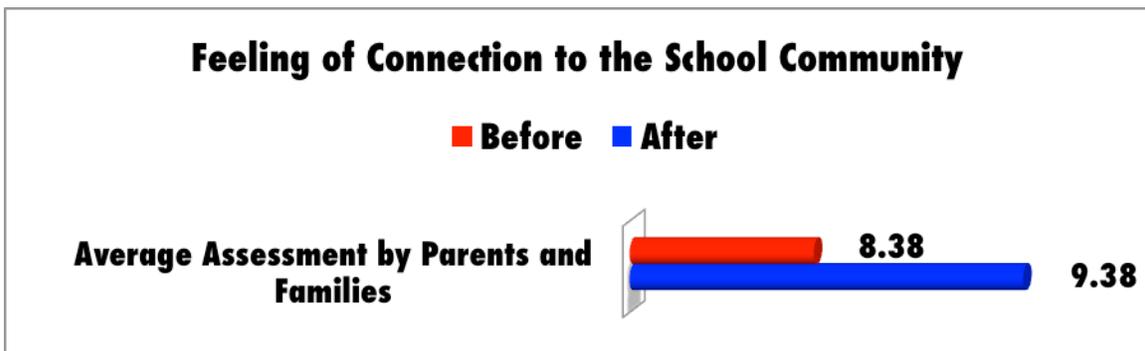


Figure 3. First Parent/Family Conferences Survey

\*Connection to School Community increased from 8.38 to 9.38  
**12% increase**

### **Parent feedback from survey**

#### **Why did you or did you not feel more connected to the school community after parent/teacher conferences?**

“Love that our teachers know our child so well!”

“I feel VERY connected! Excellent communication!”

“Helps me understand how my child participates in class, his learning abilities, social behaviors, and any other feedback teacher might have either about the student or school.”

#### **Would you recommend parent/teacher conferences? Why or why not?**

“Absolutely. Most parents are too busy to take the time to sit down and really evaluate their kids. This creates the space and in our case provides a better understanding of how she is in the world when we are not around. Totally cool! Thanks.”

“Yes, I would. It helps parents to be more involved in their children's education.”

“Yes, it’s wonderful to connect with teachers on a personal level! Parents just like to be assured that you know our kids. I loved just being at the school and hearing stories about my daughter 😊”

According to the survey, parents and families felt a 12% increase in connection to the school community. Conferences are very important in connecting parents and families with teachers. This is a specified time for teachers to speak directly with families about the development of their children. Conferences help to further solidify the relationships between teachers and families. The more solid of a relationship between teachers and families the stronger educational opportunities the children will have at school and at home.

### **Newsletter Survey**

Every month we send out a Newsletter (see Appendix E). This newsletter contains information of themes and activities done in the classroom from the past month as well as for the month ahead. We have a section for important updates. There is a calendar for the

month with all the activities and important dates recorded. There is also a section for information on the monthly field trip. We add pictures from the past month of special activities or classroom work time to give the parents a peek into our daily school life.

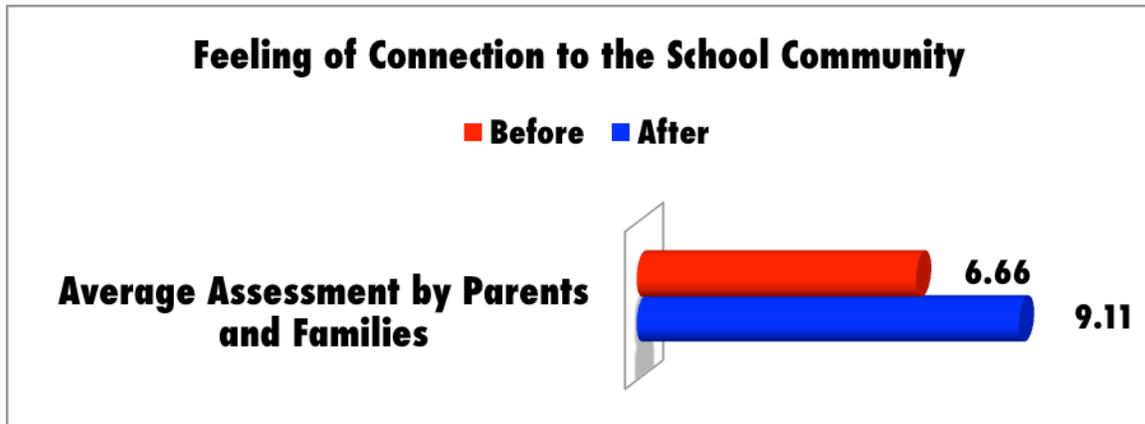


Figure 4. Newsletter Survey

\*Connection to School Community increased from 6.66 to 9.11  
**36.8% increase**

#### **Parent feedback from survey**

##### **Why or why not through the school newsletter do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education?**

"I love the updates and recaps that fill us in on events or work our child has done 😊 We also enjoy the calendar."

"The summary of recent and upcoming activities helps me understand what happens at school all day. We also share the newsletter and pictures with Grandmas and Grandpas 😊 The information we learn allows us to reinforce what she is learning at school at home as well."

"I feel like I understand what my child's days at school are like."

##### **Would you recommend continuing to send out the monthly newsletter? Why or why not?**

"Definitely. It is a great way to involve parents."

"Yes, it is a useful tool for communicating important information and dates."

"Yes! Very helpful and I love the pictures."

“Yes! I love hearing the summary of what’s happening in class.”

According to the survey parents and families felt a 37% increase in connection to the school community. Parents and families want to know what their children are learning in school. When families are on the same page of curriculum then parents are able to reinforce their child’s learning. As you can see in the survey results the parents on average felt more connected to the school community after receiving the monthly newsletter. The newsletter provides the parents and families with the necessary information to plan their month. The parents have background knowledge on the themes in the daily classroom as well as field trips. The consistent information allows the families to all stay connected to school throughout the whole year.

**Field Trip Survey**

Our field trips happen every month. The families and parents are all invited to the field trips. On the day of the field trips there is no school. Every family meets at the field trip location. We participate in the field trip as a whole community.

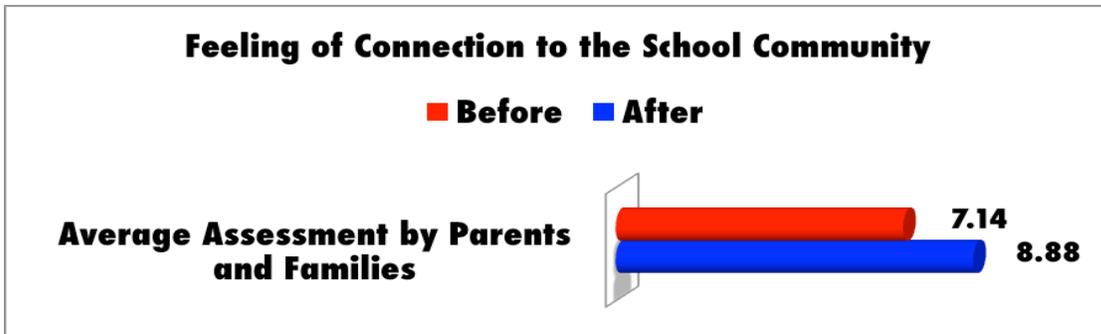


Figure 5. Field Trip Survey

\*Connection to School  
Community increased from 7.14 to 8.88  
24.4% increase

**Parent feedback from survey**

**Why or why not through the field trips (all parents attend) do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education?**

“It is a nice opportunity to interact with other parents and kids outside of school.”

“I like that most often the curriculum at school relates directly to the field trip activity. The fact that it is purely experiential is a great way for us parents to access what they are learning w/o a lot of mental work.”

“Because I get to know the teachers, parents, and other students better.”

**Would you recommend continuing field trips with all parent attendance? Why or why not?**

“Yes. The field trips enrich the learning experience for both parents and children.”

“Yes, it is such a wonderful way to spend time with other parents and children while sharing in fun and interesting experiences.”

“Yes because I feel more connected to the community and they're a fun educational experience.”

According to the survey parents and families felt a 24% increase in connection to the school community. Field trips provide the opportunity for parents and families to learn along with their children. It also provides them with a monthly opportunity to connect with other families and teachers. The community continues to grow closer and closer the more opportunities there are to learn and have educational experiences together.

### Weekly Reminder Email Survey

Throughout the year we realized that the monthly newsletter was not enough communication for important events and reminders. We decided to send out a weekly reminder email to further keep in contact with the families (see Appendix F). This weekly reminder email serves as an extra communication piece reminding parents and families what is coming for the upcoming week. It contains information on field trip details, show and tell, and classroom happening

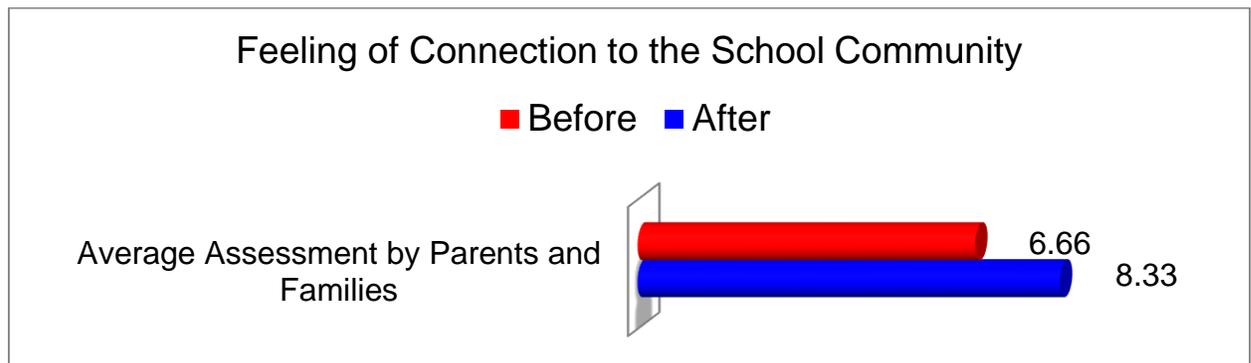


Figure 6. Weekly Reminder Email Survey

\*Connection to School Community increased from 6.66 to 8.33  
25.1% increase

### Parent Feedback from Survey

**Why or why not through the weekly reminder emails do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education?**

“The emails are essential to us remembering all the details of our child's school life. With everyone's busy schedule, it is easy to forget things.”

“The reminder emails serve as wonderful reminders.”

“I get a better sense of what is happening at school.”

**Would you recommend continuing the weekly reminder emails? Why or why not?**

“Yes. Great reminder and what to expect on weekly basis. Also I can help my child at home whatever topic he is learning.”

“Yes! They are extremely helpful!”

“Yes, I can be very forgetful otherwise and emails serve as good reminders.”

According to the survey parents and families felt a 25% increase in connection to the school community. Parents feel more connected to the school community because they know what to expect for the upcoming week. They also feel the reminder is very helpful for our busy lives we lead. It is important to remind parents and families what is happening in the classroom because they can continue to reinforce the learning at home. This continues to strengthen the relationship between home and school.

**Pictures of Children in Classroom Survey**

Everyday during work time the teachers at “Children's House Montessori” are taking pictures of the children completing their work. Once every two months we gather the pictures and email each family pictures of their individual child. This helps give the parents a sense of what materials their children like to work with. It also allows them to see what their child does all day at school.

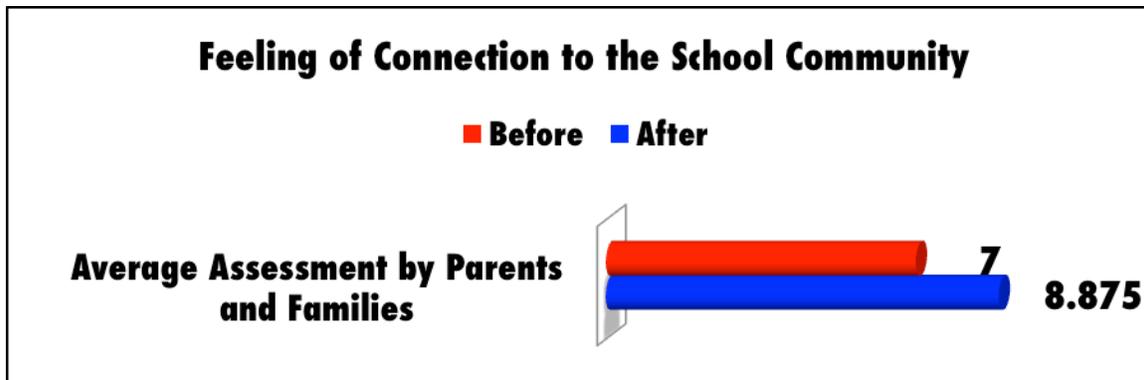


Figure 7. Pictures of Children in Classroom Survey

\*Connection to School Community increased from 7 to 8.875  
26.8% increase

#### Parent feedback from survey

**Why or why not through the pictures of your child in the classroom do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education?**

“Seeing the photos of the children actively working is much different from hearing about it from the teachers during conferences.”

“Thank you so much for this email. It made my day to take a peek at my boys' day away from mom.”

“The pictures demonstrate what my child is working on.”

**Would you recommend continuing to send out the pictures of your children in the classroom? Why or why not?**

“Yes. It is a very nice touch and one more point of engagement with parents. I know it is more work for you but so appreciated!”

“Yes, having an email with the pictures of my child is an easy way to share with family and friends.”

“Yes, helps me understand what my child is doing in the classroom, what parent doesn't want their child's picture from school? It's very comforting and rewarding.”

“Yes! It is a great way to see what our children are doing at school all day. It also provides the opportunity for me to ask about the activities at home. Which reinforces what she is learning at school.”

According to the survey the parents and families felt a 27% increase in connection to the school community. The pictures serve as a view into the classroom and a specific child's work habits. The parents and families can have conversations with their children about the work in the pictures. This will further reinforce the children's learning. The parents and families can also check in with the teacher about the specific work their children is completing more than only at conferences. The constant communication between home and school continues to strengthen this important relationship.

### **Second Conference Survey**

The second set of conferences were set up a little differently than the first set of conferences. In order to take into account feedback given about the first set of conferences we decided to change the way the time was used throughout the conferences. For the second set of conferences both teachers spoke with every family together. We also moved around the classroom and talked to the families about what materials their

children were using and what materials they will be using in the near future.

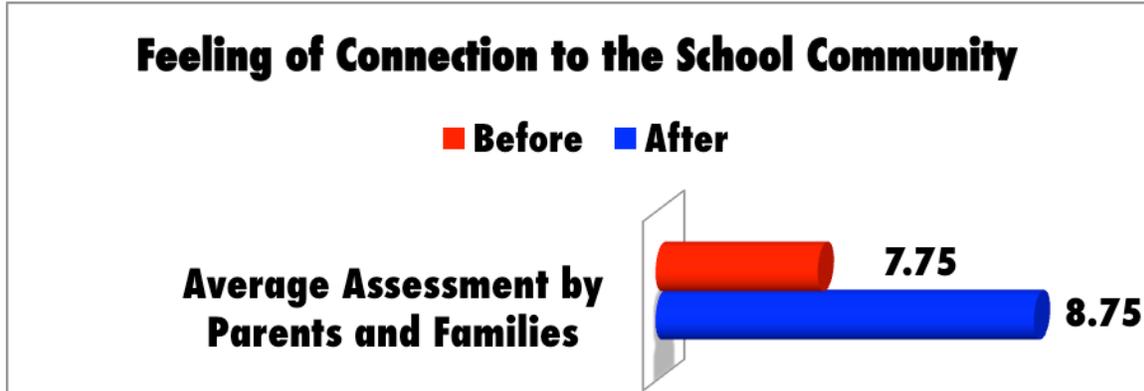


Figure 8. Second Parent/Family Conferences

\*Connection to School Community increased from 7.75 to 8.75  
12.9% increase

#### **Parent feedback from survey**

**Why did you or did you not feel more connected to the school community after parent/teacher conferences?**

“I was able to look more closely at the materials that my child is using.”

“It’s always nice to see first-hand what our child is doing during the day.”

“It’s always helpful to see what the kids are doing during the day.”

**Would you recommend continuing parent/teacher conferences like the first set or second set of conferences? Why?**

“I prefer the second set of conferences. By learning about the work that my daughter was doing at school, I was able to make related materials available for her at home in order to strengthen these concepts.”

“I definitely liked having both teachers present.”

“It’s helpful to be able to see the exact materials my child is using right now and what they will be using moving forward.”

According to the results of the survey parents and families preferred the second set of conferences. The parents and families felt a 13% increase in connection to the school community. The parents and families enjoyed have both teachers present. This conference helped the parents and families connect with both teachers and hear the thoughts of each teacher about the development of their child. The parents and families also enjoyed seeing the physical materials their children are using, the purposes of the materials, and what materials they will be using next. The tour of the classroom helped the parents and families feel more connected to the school community.

### **Final End of the Year Survey**

The purpose of the last survey was to ask the parents and families what were their favorite community building activities were. Figure 9 asked the parents/families to rate each community building activity from 0=10. Figure 10 asked the parents/ families to choose their top three favorite community building activities. This information serves to

graph which activities were best for the families and parents.

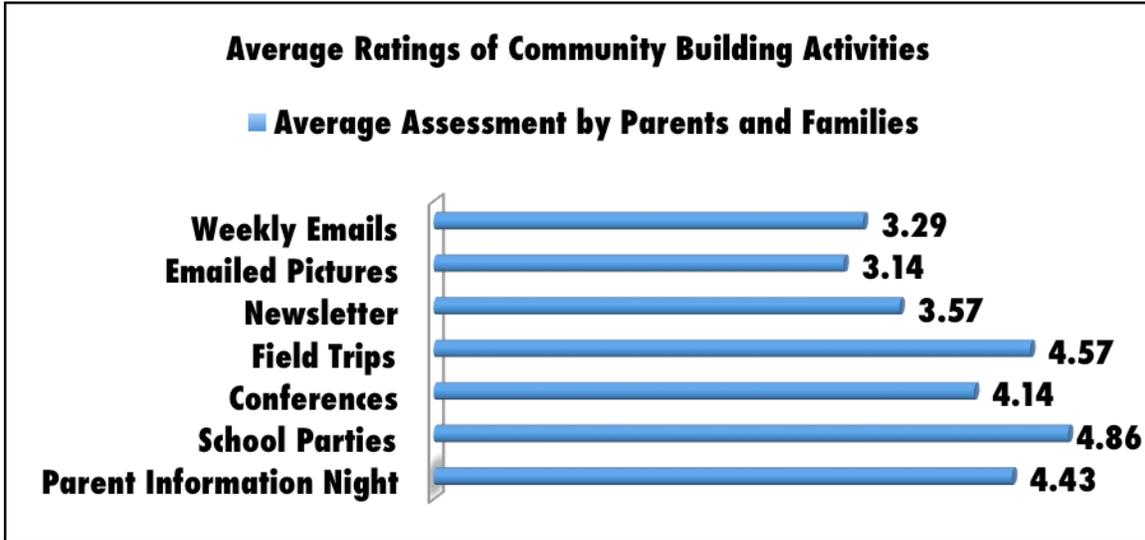


Figure 9. Community building activities

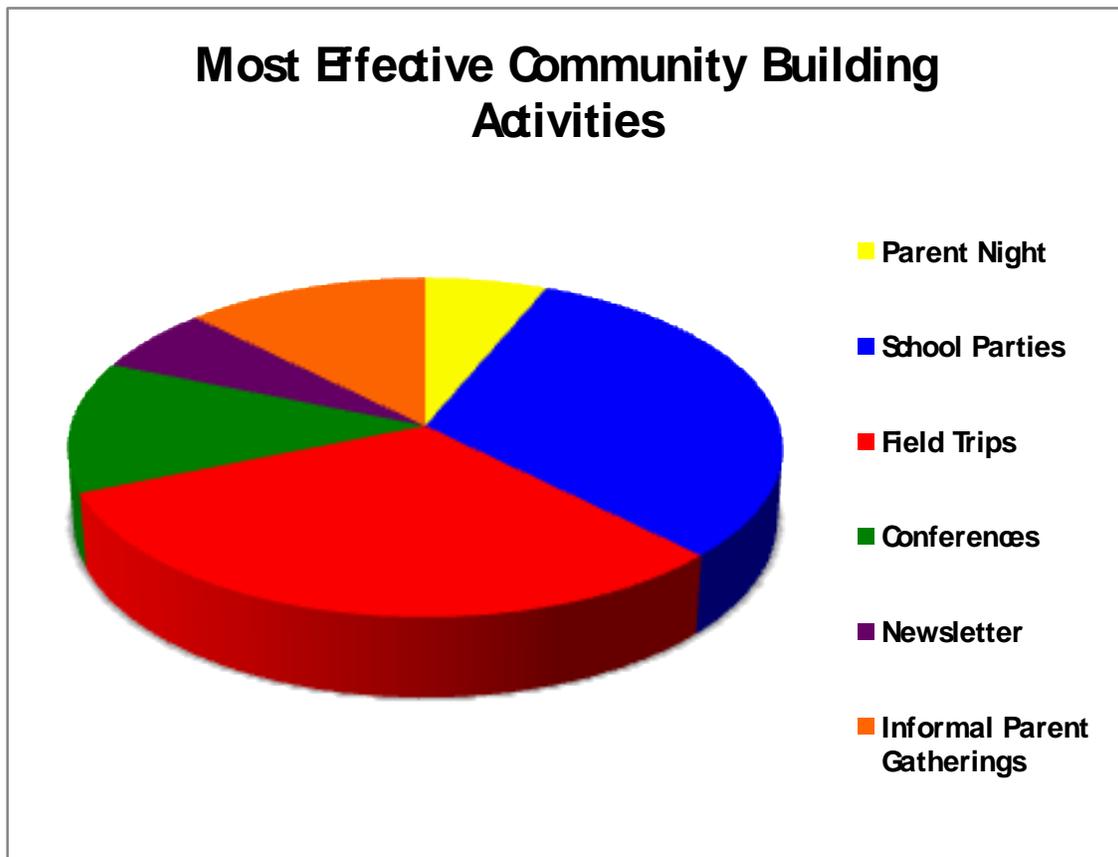


Figure 10: Most effective community building activities

**Do the community building activities that HMS provides help you to feel more connected to the school community/your child's education? If yes, do they also make you want to continue to be involved in the school community?**

“Yes and yes. If we were going to be here another year I could see us getting more involved. With kids here for such a short time, it would be hard to keep the momentum going as parents rotate our every couple years.”

“Yes. The Parent Information Night helped me better understand your school philosophy and how you work with the kids.”

“Yes- they are great!”

**Any comments you would like to add about HMS and our school community/community building activities.**

“Children's House” does a great job at building community 😊”

“The growth we have witnessed with our child during her first year at “Children's House” is amazing. We are so excited for next year already!”

“I will always be grateful for the opportunity we had to be a part of ‘Children's House’.”

According to the results of the Final End of the Year Survey the parents and families top three favorites of parental involvement and community-building activities were conferences, school parties, and field trips.

### **Interpretation (Analysis and Discussion)**

Overall, the results indicate every parental/familial involvement activity helped to increase the feeling of connectedness to the school community. In the beginning of the process the families and parents generally answered on average a lower number for connectedness “before” the community building activity. As the year went on the parents answers on average for the “before” question steadily rose. Throughout the year the percentage of increase in connection to the school community on average decreased. This demonstrates that parents and families throughout the year continued to feel more

connected to the school community on average. Towards the end of the year parents and families already felt so connected to the school community that the data shows lower percentage increase of connection to the school community. The parents and families generally reported on every survey that on average they felt between 8-9 level of connectedness on the scale of 0-10 “after” they participated in all community building activities. This report demonstrates that the parents and families overwhelmingly and consistently felt highly connected to the school community “after” participation in all community building activities. According to the results of the last Final End of the Year Survey the top three highest rated means of parental and familial involvement in the school community are field trips (4.57 average), school parties (4.86 average), and the Parent Night (4.43 average). The parents and families rated the community building activities on a scale of 0-10. These results were low compared to the previous survey results on each individual event. The average feeling of connectedness on each previous individual activity survey for the “after” participation in the activity was between 8-9. The amount of time in between the individual surveys and the Final End of the Year survey could account for this discrepancy. Another factor could be that at the end of the year I had a lower sample size of parents and families completing the surveys. The parents and families rated conferences (13%), field trips (31%), school parties (31%), and “informal parent gatherings” (13%) as their top three favorite community-building activities. The rating scale of the community building activities of the connection felt to the school community as well as the choice of top three community building activities produced similar results. They both demonstrated that field trips and school parties helped them feel most connected to the school community. The discrepancy between

these two questions was that one showed conferences as another favorite and the other showed the Parent Night as the other favorite. In the individual surveys the Halloween Party demonstrated a 66.6% increase in connectedness and the Field Trip survey demonstrated a 24.4% increase in connectedness to school community. Both surveys demonstrate a large increase in feeling of connectedness to the school community because of these two activities. A limitation within my data would be the different interpretations of the term “connectedness” by different parents and families. There were other parental/familial involvement activities such as the “Newsletter” that were not rated in the top three on the Final End of the Year Survey but in the previous individual survey it produced a 36.8% increased feeling of connectedness to the school community. This discrepancy could have been produced by the length of time between the occurrence of the activity/initial survey and the Final End of the Year Survey. The parents and families could have been feeling extremely connected to the school community immediately after the activity happened. As time passed and they were brought back to reflect on the event on the Final End of the Year Survey their feelings could have changed on their level of connectedness to the school community after that specific activity. Overall every parental/familial involvement activity produced an increase in feeling of connectedness to the school community. In the small sample size that I was working with the parents and families had shown that school parties, field trips, conferences, and the Parent Night were their favorite activities. This demonstrates that these activities were most effective in helping families and parents feel most connected to the school community.

### **Future Action Plan**

This Action Research Project has been extremely informative for my future teachings. I plan to own and run my own school someday and the knowledge that I now have on this subject will be extremely important and useful to have in my tool belt. I will continue the parental and familial community building activities that I incorporated this year. I would also like to add an Open House for perspective parents sometime in February. This way new families who are interested in our program and Montessori in general can experience the classroom and explore materials. In addition to the Parent Night in October, I would also like to add a curriculum night for parents and families who have questions specifically about the curriculum and the materials in the classroom. It would be a great opportunity to education perspective and current families on the areas of the classroom and the sequential order. Just as the Montessori reasoning applies to the children I believe it also applies to parents and families; in order to truly understand and appreciate something people must know the reasoning behind all things. When parents and families understand the sequence of the materials of the Montessori classroom as well as the purpose of all of the Montessori materials they will feel more connected to the school community. The newsletter and consistent weekly emails help to keep the parents and families updated on happenings in the classroom, themes we are studying, and important dates. These two pieces of parental and familial involvement are extremely important. Our field trips and school parties give the parents and families a chance to bond with each other and create solid relationships. These community-building activities help to build concrete foundational relationships throughout our school. A close knit and solid community helps to support the school and above all the children. When there are

many people involved in a child's education who are supportive and knowledgeable of the curriculum they are learning the children will have better educational and life long success.

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**Appendix A- Parent Permission Letter**

Rachel Roth

(Had name of school, address, and phone number here)

Dear Parents and Families,

At "Children's House Montessori" we highly value our community of school, parents, families, students, and teachers. We believe school community is an integral part of school dynamics, which in turn helps create the best educational experience for your children. The environment in which your child learns is one of the main keys to success in their education. In order to continue to create the most comfortable, fun, and effective environment and community for your children we would like to continue to improve our practices. As you know I (Ms. Rachel) am working on my Masters of Montessori Education. This year I will conduct an Action Research Study. My Action Research Study will look deep into the community of the school and parent involvement within the school community. The Action Research Study will consist mainly of surveys and interviews of you, the parents/families. These surveys will help us to figure out the effectiveness of school and teacher practices within our community such as the Newsletter or Parent Night. We will make necessary changes within our school and practices according to your feedback of the effectiveness of our community building practices.

Within all surveys and interviews I guarantee your total confidentiality by using pseudonyms. If you decide you no longer want to be a part of the study, you may withdraw at any time without any repercussions. No data collected will be used unless you agree. The findings will need to be presented to University faculty/students. If you would like to see the findings of the data collected I would love to share it with it, feel free to contact me with questions.

I would truly appreciate your participation within this study, but please know that all participation is voluntary. If you have any questions please contact myself, Rachel Roth at [roth0393@gmail.com](mailto:roth0393@gmail.com) (612-987-8036) and/or my University Research Advisor, Professor Gay Ward at [gay.ward@uwrf.edu](mailto:gay.ward@uwrf.edu) (715-425-0601).

---

Yes, I would like to participate in interviews and would like to receive and complete surveys.

Parent/Family member printed names:

Parent/Family member signature:

|       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| _____ | → | _____ |
| _____ | → | _____ |
| _____ | → | _____ |

---

No, thank you. I respectfully decline participation in the interviews and surveys.

Parent/family member printed name:      Parent/family member signature:

|       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| _____ | → | _____ |
| _____ | → | _____ |
| _____ | → | _____ |

Appendix B- Surveys

Pre and Post Parent Night Surveys were completed before I got the idea to use the electronic survey creator called Survey Monkey. These I created myself on my word processor.

Pre-Parent Night Survey

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name or preferred pseudonym:  |  |
| Before the parent night how connected did you feel to the school community?               | Not connected<br>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br>Completely Connected    |
| Before the parent night how knowledgeable of Montessori education do you feel?            | Not knowledgeable<br>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br>Fully Knowledgeable |
| Before the parent night how connected do you feel to the teachers?                        | Not connected<br>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br>Fully Connected         |
| Before the parent night how connected do you feel to your child's education?              | Not connected<br>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br>Fully Connected         |
| Do you think this parent night will help you feel more connected to the school community? | YES NO   |
| Please explain your answer above.   |  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Do you think this parent night will help you feel more connected to your child’s education?                            | <p style="text-align: center;">YES                  NO</p>  |
| Please explain your answer above.  |   |
| When you heard that “Children’s House” was going to have an informational parent night were you looking forward to it? | <p style="text-align: center;">Not excited    Extremely Excited</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10</p> |
| Why do you think it is a good idea to have a parent informational night?   |   |

Post Parent Night Survey

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Name or preferred pseudonym:  |   |
| After the parent night how connected did you feel to the school community?    | <p style="text-align: center;">Not connected    Completely Connected</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10</p>    |
| After the parent night how knowledgeable of Montessori education do you feel? | <p style="text-align: center;">Not knowledgeable    Fully Knowledgeable</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>After the parent night how connected do you feel to the teachers?</p>                                | <p>Not connected<br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br/>Fully Connected</p>  |
| <p>After the parent night how connected do you feel to your child's education?</p>                      | <p>Not connected<br/>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10<br/>Fully Connected</p>  |
| <p>Did this parent night help you feel more connected to the school community?</p>                      | <p>YES NO</p>  |
| <p>Please explain your answer above.</p>  |  |
| <p>Did this parent night help you feel more connected to your child's education?</p>                    | <p>YES NO</p>  |
| <p>Please explain your answer above.</p>  |  |
| <p>What parts of the parent night did you find most beneficial or important? Circle all that apply.</p> | <p>Exploration of the environment<br/>Quotes of Maria Montessori or other Montessorian's<br/>Explanations of areas of Montessori environment<br/>Studying the Montessori materials<br/>Presentation done by teachers</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>Question and answer session with all parents</p> <p>Packet of materials</p> |
| <p>Please explain above answers. Why are these important?</p>                         |  |
| <p>What do you think could make the parent night more beneficial to the families?</p> |  |
| <p>Would you recommend continuing having informational parent nights?</p>             | <p>YES                  NO</p>   |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| IF YES, why? |  |
| IF NO, why?  |  |

\*These surveys were created on an electronic survey creator called Survey Monkey. Here are the questions asked on each Survey Monkey Survey.

\*\*All survey questions either asked the survey taker to rate something on a scale of 0-10 (0 being least connected and 10 being most connected) or there was a comment box to add their personal comments about the question.

Halloween Party Survey

1. After the Halloween Party how connected did you feel to the school community? (0=not at all connected, 10=completely connected)
2. After the Halloween Party how connected do you feel to the teachers? (same scale as above)
3. After the Halloween Party how connected do you feel to your child and their education? (Same 0-10 scale)
4. Did this Halloween Party help you feel more connected to the school community? (Yes or No)
5. Please explain your answer above.

Conferences 1 Survey-

1. Before parent/teacher conferences how connected did you feel to the school community? (0-10 scale)
2. After parent/teacher conferences how connected did you feel to the school community? (0-10 scale)
3. Why did you or did you not feel more connected to the school community after parent/teacher conferences?
4. Would you recommend continuing parent/teacher conferences? Why or why not?

## Newsletter Survey-

1. Before receiving the school newsletter, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
2. After receiving the school newsletter how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education do you feel? (0-10 scale)
3. Why or why not through the school newsletter do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education? (comment box)
4. Would you recommend continuing to send out the monthly newsletter? Why or why not? (comment box)

## Field Trip Survey

1. Before participating in the field trips, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
2. After participating in the field trips, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
3. Why or why not through the field trips (all parents attend) do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education? (comment box)
4. Would you recommend continuing field trips with all parent attendance? Why or why not? (comment box)

## Weekly Reminder Email Survey

1. Before the weekly reminder emails, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
2. After the weekly reminder emails, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
3. Why or why not through the weekly reminder emails do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education? (comment box)
4. Would you recommend continuing the weekly reminder emails? Why or why not? (comment box)

## Pictures of your Child Survey

1. Before receiving the pictures of your child in the classroom, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
2. After receiving the pictures of your child in the classroom, how connected did you feel to the school community and your child's education? (0-10 scale)
3. Why or why not through the pictures of your child in the classroom do you feel more connected to the school community and your child's education? (comment box)
4. Would you recommend continuing to send out the pictures of your children in the classroom? Why or why not? (comment box)

## Conferences 2 Survey

1. Before parent/teacher conferences how connected did you feel to the school community? (0-10 scale)
2. After parent/teacher conferences how connected did you feel to the school community? (0-10 scale)
3. Why did you or did you not feel more connected to the school community after parent/teacher conferences? (comment box)
4. Was there anything about the first conferences or the second conferences you liked better? (comment box)

## Final End of the Year Survey

1. Please rate the community building activities on how connected they made you feel to our school community and your child's education. (0-10 scale)
2. Why do you think it is important to build a school community? (comment box)
3. What are the top three community building activities would you say we participated in this year at HMS and why? (comment box)
4. Do the community building activities that HMS provides help you to feel more connected to the school community/your child's education? If yes, do they also make you want to continue to be involved in the school community? (comment box)
5. Any comments you would like to add about HMS and our school community/community building activities. (comment box)

Appendix C- Signs and Quotes for Parent Night

Practical  
Life

Sensorial

Geography

Science  
Math

Language

“The human hand, so delicate and so complicated, not only allows the mind to reveal itself, but it enables the whole being to enter into special relationships with its environment.”

Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*

(pr. life)

“We might even say that man ‘takes possession of his environment with his hands’.”

Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*

(sensorial)

“So the logic of natural development is seen, first the child prepares his instruments, hands and feet, then he gets strength by exercise, and next looks at what other people are doing, and sets to work in imitation, fitting himself for life and freedom.”

Maria Montessori, Education for a New  
World

(pr. life)

“In order to grasp these prisms of different widths, the hand will have to carry out a different movement for each prism. The amount of strength needed by the hand that we have to use will enable us to recognize the prism we lift when we do the exercise. It is like a story and carried out by the hand.”

Maria Montessori, *Creative Development in the Child*

(sensorial)

“To establish the relationship between things is to bring knowledge.”

                    Maria Montessori, From  
Childhood to Adolescence

(geography)

The Pink Tower, like all of the Montessori materials, is used in many more ways, in a series of lessons called extensions. For example, a child will place a second rug across the classroom and will build the tower from the collection of cubes randomly arranged on the first rug. This requires that the child keep in mind what he or she needs while traversing the classroom, increasing skill in concentration and attention.

“When the child shows us the (red and blue number rod of) 9, he is handling a rod which is inflexible – an object complete in itself, composed of nine equal parts which can be counted.”

Dr.  
Montessori’s Own Handbook

(math)

“In writing the child expresses his own thoughts through symbols; in reading he must comprehend the thoughts of another.”

Paula Polk Lillard,  
Montessori, A  
Modern Approach

(language)

“The entire curriculum can be taught through culture.”

Brenda Petta,  
UWRF

(science)

## Appendix D- Handout for Parent Night

“Children’s House” Montessori School  
Parent/Guardian Education Night  
October 28, 2014

|  |
|--|
| Place your work label here.<br>Imagine what a child might do<br>and discover with this |
|--|

We invite you to tour the Classroom Areas of Discovery:

**Sensorial**

The sensorial materials give order and classification to the impressions of the world being experienced by the young child. The child sees a cone in a funnel, circles in plates, trapezoids in lampshades. He witnesses shades of color, items of increasing length and weight. In his most sensitive period for absorbing sensations, these materials give the child a means to classify their impressions. They provide what Maria Montessori described as “the keys to the universe”.

**Language**

Language is rich throughout the integrated classroom of a Montessori school. The multi-age classroom and the extensions and variations in our pedagogy accommodates all levels of literacy development, from the child just beginning to discriminate visually, to the early reader. As in all areas of the classroom, the language materials are presented in a sequence. We begin with auditory and visual discrimination, moving from the more concrete to the abstract. The sandpaper letters give the child profound experience in learning the sound, touch and shape of the letters. The child matches the sound with the symbol first. Then, he/she connects these symbols to form words using the movable alphabet. The child is “writing” without a pencil. The composing of words naturally leads to reading those same, and ever more, words.

The mechanical act of learning penmanship is separated from learning the sounds of the letters. Work with the metal insets, the chalkboard, and pin punching, painting tracing letters and numbers with a pencil (to name just a few) gives the child much practice in the mechanics of writing.

**Practical Life**

The Exercises of Practical Life are just that — purposeful activities of everyday living: those essential simple ordinary tasks that we do as adults to prepare, maintain, restore, and beautify our environments, such as washing, sweeping, cooking, cleaning and so forth. For the child, these exercises serve a more personal, developmental function. Adults perform the work of

practical life for the result or product; making the floor clean or having a meal ready. The utility derived by the adult in doing these acts is just what attracts the child.

However, what the child gains through the exercises of Practical Life is far more than simply the outcome of a task. They can become so absorbed in their work that their *concentration* can be remarkable. The child's sense of *order* is supported in the sequential steps required for any given activity, which is presented by the teacher or witnessed of another child. The work requires *coordination* of movement and through it they gain *independence*.

### **Mathematics**

Through concrete representation children are introduced to the abstract concepts in mathematics. These materials, referred to by Dr. Montessori as "materialized abstractions", help the child come to know quantity and measurement; to compare, differentiate, find patterns and perform the four operations of arithmetic: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Mathematics is made tangible for the child through the senses and movement. Number rods and golden bead material give the child a sensorial impression of quantity and arithmetic. The idea is for the child to "experience" mathematics. To understand with his senses and whole body movement what it means to add, to take away (subtraction), to add the same number many times (multiplication) and to share evenly among friends (division). The child holds and manipulates quantities, walks with the rod of five, counts the beads of the ten bar with the touch of her fingertips, exchanges squares of hundreds for cubes of thousands. She plays games with her friends in remembering a quantity and bringing objects to show for it. The child acts out operations with the golden bead material and cards. Because the child is working with concrete objects alongside the numerical symbol, quantity and its symbol unite and the child understands, for example, what "100" really means.

### **Culture**

In geography we study the life of humans, our physical world, the way we live, and the way of life that has been established by a human society to sustain life. It is the study of the features of the earth, and the cultures that were developed in the various parts of the world by human beings. The needs of humans are universal, but the way these needs have been met, differ. We study the many different peoples around the world who live differently, who have adapted differently to what the world has offered them.

Science is an integral element of discovery. Among other things, it represents a way of life: a clear thinking approach to gathering information and problem solving. The children experience a hands-on introduction to botany, zoology, chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy. This approach to science cultivates children's fascination with the universe and helps them develop a lifelong interest in observing nature and discovering more about the world in which we live and their role in it.

Sensorial light blue

Knobbed Cylinders

Binomial Cube

Sound Cylinders

Brown Stairs

Constructive Triangles Box

# Practical Life purple

Lemon Water

Pouring, One to Many

Bubble Making

Table Scrubbing

Polishing

Pin Punching

Language orange

Moveable Alphabet

Command cards

Sandpaper Letter Box Objects

Matching Object to Picture

Patterning

# Geography dark blue

Land Forms

Oceans Overlays

Galaxy Models

Land Air and Water Samples

Parts of a Flag

Continent Artifact Box

Science green

Seed Matching

Parts of a Fish

Living/Non-living

Sink or Float?

# Math

Number Rods

Spindle Boxes

Teen Boards

100 Board

Thousand Chain

Bead Stair

Appendix E- Example of Newsletter (February)

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  <p>“Children’s House”<br/>Montessori<br/>School</p> <p><i>“ The education of even a small child, therefore, does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life. ”</i><br/>“Maria Montessori</p>  |   |
| <p>February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015</p>   | <p>February Newsletter</p>  |
|  <p><b>Inside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Montessori Vocab.</li> <li>* Important announcements!</li> <li>* Lost and Found</li> <li>* THANK YOU! <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">2</span></li> <li>* February Calendar</li> <li>* Calendar Information <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">3</span></li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welcome to February!</b></p> <p>While some of us braved the cold on the sliding hill and others tested their skill on the obstacle course at our winter party, all of us seemed to enjoy celebrating together. With spectacular face painting, a shared meal and games galore, the children enjoyed the feeling of community and celebration. Many thanks to our parent volunteers, without whom we could not have had such a rich celebration. We are also grateful for the music we shared with “student” dad and for the many things we learned about instruments, how they are played and how they sound. We made music together and danced with scarves to African drumming.</p> <p>As we make our way through the study of the five classes of vertebrates: fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, mammal, we have been studying frogs. This month, we will learn about the turtle, its habits and habitat, varieties, lifecycle and body parts.</p> <p>Our fun theme of LOVE this month in the tradition of Valentine’s Day, gives us a chance to talk about ways in which we can show one another kindness, respect and care. Images of hearts and notes to one another give us pause to tell each other how valuable and important each of us is as an individual and to the community.</p> <p>We look forward to sharing stories, including Goodnight Moon, and to our visit to the theater.</p> |



Our musical guest in January! "Children's House" dad generously brought some of his instruments to teach us about them and to let the children experience new instruments.

### Montessori Words of the Month-

Directress or guide – Historically, the designation for the lead teacher in a Montessori classroom; some schools still refer to the lead teacher as "guide." In Montessori education, the role of the instructor is to direct or guide individual children to purposeful activity based upon the instructor's observation of each child's readiness. The child develops his own knowledge through hands-on learning with didactic materials he chooses. \*

Grace and courtesy – Children are formally instructed in social skills they will use throughout their lives, for example, saying "please" and "thank you," interrupting conversations politely, requesting rather than demanding assistance, and greeting guests warmly. \*

\*<http://amshq.org/Family-Resources/Montessori-Terminology>

### Announcements!

1. Show and Tell will be held on the last week of February, February 23-27. Since we are going to see the play version of the book Goodnight Moon we would like the theme of Show and Tell to be your child's favorite book.
2. We have decided this year to replace our Valentine's Day Party with an in class valentines exchange throughout the week of February 9<sup>th</sup>. Please have your child bring in a cereal box that has been covered in plain paper; they will decorate this box in class for their received valentines to be placed (please bring to school by Monday Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>). You may also choose to have your child bring valentines to hand out to their friends. If you decide to do this please have your child write their names on the valentines only (no need to write every single child's name, just bring enough for every child, 20 valentines will be sufficient.) We will be talking about this cultural celebration throughout the week. During morning work time the children will be able to hand out their valentines one by one.
3. On Thursday February 12<sup>th</sup> we will have an in class celebration with some songs, a story, and a special treat.
4. Please check your child's extra clothing box to restock their extra clothes with warm winter apparel/ correct sizes (children might have grown since beginning of the year ☺).

#### \*LOST AND FOUND\*

We are missing two blue cylinders. Sometimes little objects accidentally get put into pockets and are taken home. If you find please return back to school. Thank you!

### THANK YOU!

We wanted to send the warmest thank you to all families who have brought snack. We are so thankful to have beautiful fresh snacks at school everyday. Your generosity and kindness is most appreciated.

February Calendar

| Monday  | Tuesday                  | Wednesday   | Thursday                               | Friday   |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| 2<br><b>Groundhog's Day</b>   | 3                        | 4   | 5                                      | 6  |
| 9<br>In class Valentine's exchange will be ongoing this week...please see announcements section of newsletter for details.*** | 10                       | 11<br>Field Trip to Stages Theatre to see Goodnight Moon<br>NO SCHOOL | 12<br>In class Valentine's Celebration | 13<br><u>No Valentines Party.</u><br>normal school day<br>Teacher 1 and Ms. Rachel absent for Master's Seminar (* 3 teachers names are substituting) |
| 16<br>Presidents Day<br>NO SCHOOL   | 17                       | 18<br>Chinese New Year in class celebration                           | 19                                     | 20   |
| 23<br><u>Favorite Book</u><br>5 children's names  | 24<br>5 children's names | 25<br>5 children's names  | 26<br>6 children's names               | 27   |
|   |                          |   |  |  |

February Field Trip

When: Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup>, meet at Theatre at 9:30am. Play begins at 10am.

Where: Stages Theatre, Downtown Hopkins. 1111 Main Street, Hopkins MN 55343

What: Stages Theater rendition of Goodnight Moon.

## Appendix F- Example of Weekly Reminder Email

Good Morning "Children's House" Families!

I hope this email finds you enjoying your Sunday! We just wanted to send out a couple reminders for the week...

1. This week we will continue talking about Valentines Day with themes of love, kindness, and friends. If you so wish to participate please remember to have your child bring a cereal box covered in white or brown paper for them to decorate. This will be used to store their valentines received from their friends. ALSO, again if you wish to participate, please have your child bring 20 valentines to hand out to their friends. The valentines should only be signed by your child (no need to write each individual name unless you or your child would like to). The children (one by one) throughout work time this week will be handing out their valentines to each child's box. Then on Thursday...(see below)
2. There will be an IN CLASS Valentine's celebration at the end of the morning on Thursday where your child will receive their box of valentines, we will sing songs, have a story, and have a small Valentines treat.
3. Good Night Moon Field Trip is on Wednesday. No school. Meet at the theater at 9:30am the play will begin at 10am.
4. NO Valentines Day Party on Friday...NORMAL SCHOOL DAY. Teacher 1 and Ms. Rachel will be absent on Friday for a required Masters Seminar. Teachers 2, 3, and 4 (3 teachers names) will be substituting.

Warmly,  
Teacher 1 and Ms. Rachel