

SOME EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANIPULATIONS
ON PARENT-TEACHER INTERACTION

by

Amelia Mann
B.S.E., University of Kansas, 1981

Submitted to the Department of
Special Education and to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of
the University of Kansas in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in
Special Education.

Professor in Charge

Committee Members

For the Department

Abstract

Improvement in the quality and quantity of parental involvement in special education has been sought for years, especially since the passage of Public Law 94-142. The present study was designed to investigate the effect of simple environmental manipulation on parent-teacher interaction during morning arrival time at a preschool serving multiply handicapped children. Subjects were 17 parents and caregivers of eight children enrolled in the preschool. The parents and caregivers of the children represented a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Five female preschool staff members were also involved. Parent-teacher interactions were observed daily during the twenty minute arrival time, in two different conditions, initially outside the classroom, followed by arrival time inside the classroom. The arrival site then was moved to the Outside condition to end the study. Parent-teacher contacts were recorded in terms of frequency, content, and duration of interaction. The results indicate the frequency of parent-teacher interaction was significantly higher in the Outside condition than in the Inside condition. The duration of individual parent-teacher contacts was slightly higher in the Inside condition. In both conditions the content of parent-teacher interactions was focused primarily on child-related topics,

followed by miscellaneous topics, and lastly, child-problem topics. The difference in frequency of interaction between the two conditions appears to have resulted from an overall increase in the rate of parental interactions with teachers in the Outside condition.

Acknowledgments

Buzz Bronicki for his unlimited advice, support, and guidance on this project.

Greg Johnston for his patience and dedication to reliable data collection.

Mary Bronicki, Mary Balestreri, and Emily Phillips for their willingness to participate in this project and working within its bounds.

Doug Guess for the advice and prompting needed to complete what I had started.

Gary Clark and Bonnie Utley for the advice and time they gave.

Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Mann who have always had the faith I would complete this project. Without their encouragement from the beginning, I would not have started it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
ABSTRACT	1
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. METHOD	8
Participants	8
Setting	9
Procedure	10
Data Collection	11
Experimental Conditions	13
Reliability Measures	14
III. RESULTS	15
IV. DISCUSSION	22
V. SUMMARY	27
REFERENCES	30
APPENDIX	32

List of Tables

Tables	Page
1. Overall Reliability Across Conditions	16
2. Mean Number of Contacts for Each Experimental Conditions	20

List of Figures

Figures	Page
1. Daily Number of Parent-Teacher Interactions in Each Condition	17
2. Daily Percentage of Parents Interacting in Each Condition	18

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The team approach in special education has been advocated as a viable and comprehensive means of serving handicapped children (Holm & McCartin, 1978; Lyon & Lyon, 1980; McCormick & Lee, 1979; Sears, 1981). The team approach involves combining the expertise of professionals from a variety of disciplines such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, education, and speech therapy, to best serve the child. Involving parents as their child's advocate has been recommended as an important component of the team process. This is important not only because of the close involvement with the child, but also because of the information they can provide about generalization of skills at home and in the community (McLoughlin, Edge, & Strencky, 1978; Simches, 1975). However, parent involvement and interaction with those who educate their child, at this time, is considered to be minimal (Gilliam & Coleman, 1981; Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull, & Curry, 1980). There have been attempts to involve parents in their child's education, as well as to promote interaction between parents and those serving their child. These attempts have ranged from increasing participation in the IEP meeting, to involvement in actual training of the child (Goldstein & Turnbull, 1982; Luterman, 1971; Radin, 1972).

Public Law 94-142 requires parental attendance at the IEP meeting itself (Ballard, 1977). In reality, however, parents have been found to have little active role or impact in decisions about placement and services for their child (Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull, & Curry, 1980); Gilliam & Coleman, 1981). Aside from a lack of influence parents exert during decision-making and educational planning, there also is a lack of communication between parents and teachers. Blackard and Barsh (1982) found differences in the information parents wanted from teachers and the information teachers gave to parents concerning their child. The professionals appeared to have a lack of knowledge concerning parents' needs and abilities in dealing with their child.

Improving the quality and quantity of parental involvement in special education is necessary if the goal of involving parents in team service delivery is to be met. A few researchers have approached this by investigating means to improve the quality of parental participation at parent-teacher conferences. Goldstein and Turnbull (1982) provide two strategies which resulted in increased parental participation at IEP meetings. The strategies involved providing one group of parents with a set of questions pertaining to their child's IEP followed with a phone call. The second group of parents were

provided with a school counselor as a parent advocate at the meeting. In both of these procedures, the number of relevant contributions made by the parents was higher than those made by parents in the control group. Other investigations of methods to increase parental interaction with special educators at conferences lack adequate data to support their positions, but do provide suggestions which may improve parent-teacher rapport (Gordon, 1970; Kroth, 1975; Mattson, 1977; Turnbull, Strickland, & Goldstein, 1978; Yosida & Gottlieb, 1977). Feldman, Byalick, and Rosedale (1975) found, for instance, that by giving parents the opportunity and responsibility of reporting behavioral strengths and weaknesses of their child, parents were more willing to work with professionals throughout the year. Adequate data to support this finding were not given, however.

Others have investigated improving parent involvement and participation by providing parents with discussion groups and tutorial sessions focusing on instructional techniques to use at home with their child (Luterman, 1971; Radin, 1972). The success of these programs was measured by behavioral changes in the child, rather than the parent, although Luterman (1971) noted parents who took part in the study went on to become social and political advocates for their children.

One investigation was designed to improve the ability of teachers to converse with parents during conferences (Sawyer & Sawyer, 1981). Microcounseling or didactic lectures were provided to two groups of teachers, both of which focused on parent-teacher communication. The evaluation of the two procedures was done through pretest and posttest measures which evaluated the skills covered by the program. Actual parent-teacher conferences were not conducted.

To provide handicapped children with a comprehensive education focusing on all areas of development, parents must be involved with the team of professionals who serve their child (Lyon & Lyon, 1980; McLoughlin, Edge, & Strencky, 1978; Simches, 1975). However, parental involvement in just the planning phase of their child's education is usually minimal, and systematic attempts to improve involvement are few. For parents to become more involved in the education of their child, parents and teachers should develop the ability to interact effectively with one another. Although interaction itself does not necessarily mean increased parental involvement, it may lead to better rapport between parents and professionals who serve their child. Powell (1978) found parents and teachers to interact more with one another when they considered one another friends. However, parent-teacher

interaction decreased as the year progressed in this study.

At the preschool level, the daily interactions at arrival time provide a time in which parents and teachers may develop this rapport. The preschool setting is usually the first time parents come in daily contact with professionals who serve the handicapped population. The teacher may become a source of support to parents, as well as a resource to direct parents to new services (Lichter, 1976). Daily interactions may become the means of developing a mutual trust between parents and teachers which may enhance parental participation in other areas of their child's education (McLoughlin, Edge, & Strencky, 1976).

Daily parent-teacher interaction at arrival time has not been studied in terms of the potential for use of this time to increase the frequency of interaction. In this study, simple environmental changes were made at arrival time, at a preschool serving handicapped children, to investigate the effect of these changes on parent-teacher interaction.

Chapter II

METHOD

Participants

Eight children participated in the study, ranging in age from 2 years 7 months to 5 years 2 months. The mean age of the eight children was 3 years 6 months. The length of time enrolled in the program ranged from five months to three years. All the children were severely/multiply handicapped. The handicapping conditions included cerebral palsy, vision disorders, seizures, brain damage, and mental retardation.

Nine parents were involved in the study: eight mothers and one father. One parent spoke Spanish as the primary language. In addition to the parents, caregivers who frequently transported the students also participated. Of these adults, five were female and three were male. The adult participants represented diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Five female preschool staff members participated in the study. These included a head teacher who was certified to teach Special Education in the area of severely/multiply handicapped, a physical therapy consultant, two graduate students in a Special Education program who worked as teaching assistants, and one Elementary Education graduate who worked as a teaching assistant.

Setting

The study took place at a preschool serving children with severe/multiple handicaps operating at a major university medical center, Monday through Thursday, 9:30 through 3:00. The preschool occupied one large room. Observation booths were located on the east and south sides of the classroom and were entered from an adjacent hallway. The classroom was entered from the southeast corner of the room. Another door to the classroom was located in the observation booth on the south side of the classroom. This door was primarily used by staff members and was not used by parents at arrival time.

During the study two different sites were used for observation of parent-teacher interaction. During the Outside condition, arrival activities took place directly outside the classroom in a hallway 16 feet by 6 feet. The doors to the observation booths were located in this hallway. Directly to the north of the arrival area was a large cabinet containing a bin for each child's belongings. Parent report forms, which were filled out by parents upon arrival, were located on top of this cabinet.

During the Inside condition, arrival activities took place directly inside the classroom in an area approximately 13 feet by 5½ feet. A cabinet containing the children's belongings was located on the east wall of the

arrival area; parent report forms were on top of the cabinet. The arrival area was partially partitioned from the classroom by a large bookcase. This area was the only area of the classroom in which shoes were allowed to be worn. At arrival time this area was used only for health checks and parent-teacher interaction.

Procedure

Parent-teacher interactions were observed daily during the arrival time of the students to preschool. Arrival time lasted approximately twenty minutes, and observers remained for the twenty minutes or until arrival activities had been completed for all participants. The activities during arrival time began with a health check of each student. A classroom staff member completed the health check by examining each child's scalp, eyes, nose, mouth, neck, back, and stomach for signs of illness. The child had a passive role during the health check. Each health check lasted approximately two minutes per child. The child was then taken to the center of the classroom by the staff member. Preschool staff alternated the responsibility of completing health checks during the week. Parents were required to fill out a brief report form pertaining to the child's night and early morning activities during the time the health check was conducted.

Consent forms were obtained from all persons parti-

icipating in the study: parents, other adults responsible for transporting students, and preschool staff members. Participants were notified two days in advance of the beginning of the observation period and of any change occurring thereafter. Parents and other adults transporting students were notified in writing; preschool staff members were informed verbally. Consent forms and notices regarding change in condition can be found in the appendix.

Data Collection

The experimenter and a reliability observer arrived at the observation site shortly before health checks were to begin. Each observer had a stopwatch, table grid data sheet, and a pencil. The data sheet used daily can be found in the appendix. Observers were seated on the floor approximately one meter apart, on the border of the arrival area, so as not to interfere with the activities of arrival time. Health checks were performed approximately two to three meters from the observers. Observers did not interact physically or verbally with participants during the daily observations.

Data were collected daily on all parent-teacher interactions that took place in the arrival area during arrival time. Information on the interactions of each caregiver was recorded next to each child's name.

The contacts were recorded for frequency, content, and duration of interaction. Frequency of interaction was determined by the number of individual contacts that took place. An individual contact was determined as follows: teacher statement of less than four words followed by a parent response of more than three words within five seconds; teacher statement of more than three words followed by a parent response of more than three words within five seconds; teacher statement of more than three words followed by no parent response or a response of less than four words within five seconds; parent initiated statement of more than three words followed by no teacher response within five seconds; parent initiated statement of more than three words followed by any teacher response within five seconds. A parent initiated statement of less than four words was not recorded regardless of teacher response. A teacher initiated statement of less than four words followed by no parent response or a response of less than four words was not recorded. Any teacher response of more than three words ended that interaction; the next interaction was scored separately. A change of subject by either parent or teacher was scored as a new interaction. A change of subject by a parent must have been four or more words to be scored as a new contact.

Interactions were also scored according to content. Each interaction was scored as child-problem (CP), child-related (C), or miscellaneous (M). Content was defined as follows: child problem was scored for any interaction in which the conversation centered on child illness, medication, discipline, seizures, or physical disorders relating to the child being brought to the preschool; child-related interactions were scored when the conversation centered on the child at hand and did not fall into the category of child-problem; miscellaneous was scored when an interaction centered on any subject not relating to the child at hand.

The duration of each contact was timed and scored as follows: an individual interaction which was timed as less than 10 seconds was scored as 10; an individual interaction which was timed as less than 15 seconds and more than 10 seconds was scored as 15; an interaction which was timed as less than 30 seconds and more than 15 seconds was scored as 30; an individual interaction of less than one minute and more than 30 seconds was scored as 1; an individual interaction which was timed as more than one minute was scored as 1.

Experimental Conditions

The study incorporated an ABA design (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968), with A representing the Outside condition,

and B representing the Inside condition.

During the Outside condition, parents and children were greeted by the preschool staff directly outside of the classroom. Health checks and parent-teacher interaction took place in a 16-foot by 6-foot hallway.

During the Inside condition, parents and children were greeted by the preschool staff directly inside of the classroom. Health checks and parent-teacher interaction took place directly inside the classroom in a 13-foot by 5½-foot entryway.

Reliability Measures

Interobserver agreement on the scoring of parent-teacher contacts was calculated by comparing the observers' data sheets, child by child. Interobserver agreement was scored if both observers recorded the same occurrence, content, and duration of contacts. Interobserver agreement was calculated by dividing the smaller number of recorded occurrences by the larger number of recorded occurrences of the target behaviors. The reliability percentages reported in this study are those for occurrence reliability only. Reliability observations on parent-teacher interaction were obtained for 20 (50%) of the 40 observations in each condition. At least one reliability observation was obtained in each condition.

Chapter III

RESULTS

Occurrence reliabilities are presented as mean reliabilities for each condition and are: Number of Contacts (Range 84-87%); Child-related content (Range 65-85%); Child Problem-related content (Range 83-86%); and Duration (Overall Range 0-100%). Table 1 summarizes the reliabilities for all categories.

Insert Table 1 About Here

The daily number of parent-teacher interactions recorded in each condition are presented in Figure 1. The data indicate the number of daily contacts was higher in the Outside condition and showed an upward trend (increasing rates of interaction). The Inside condition had a lower number of contacts than the Outside condition and produced a downward trend (increasing rates of interaction).

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Figure 2 shows the percentage of parents/caregivers who were engaged in interaction across all phases of the study. It is evident that a higher percentage of parents engaged in interaction during the Outside condition in contrast to the Inside condition.

Insert Figure 2 About Here

Table 2 lists the mean number of contacts for each condition. The mean number of daily contacts was lower

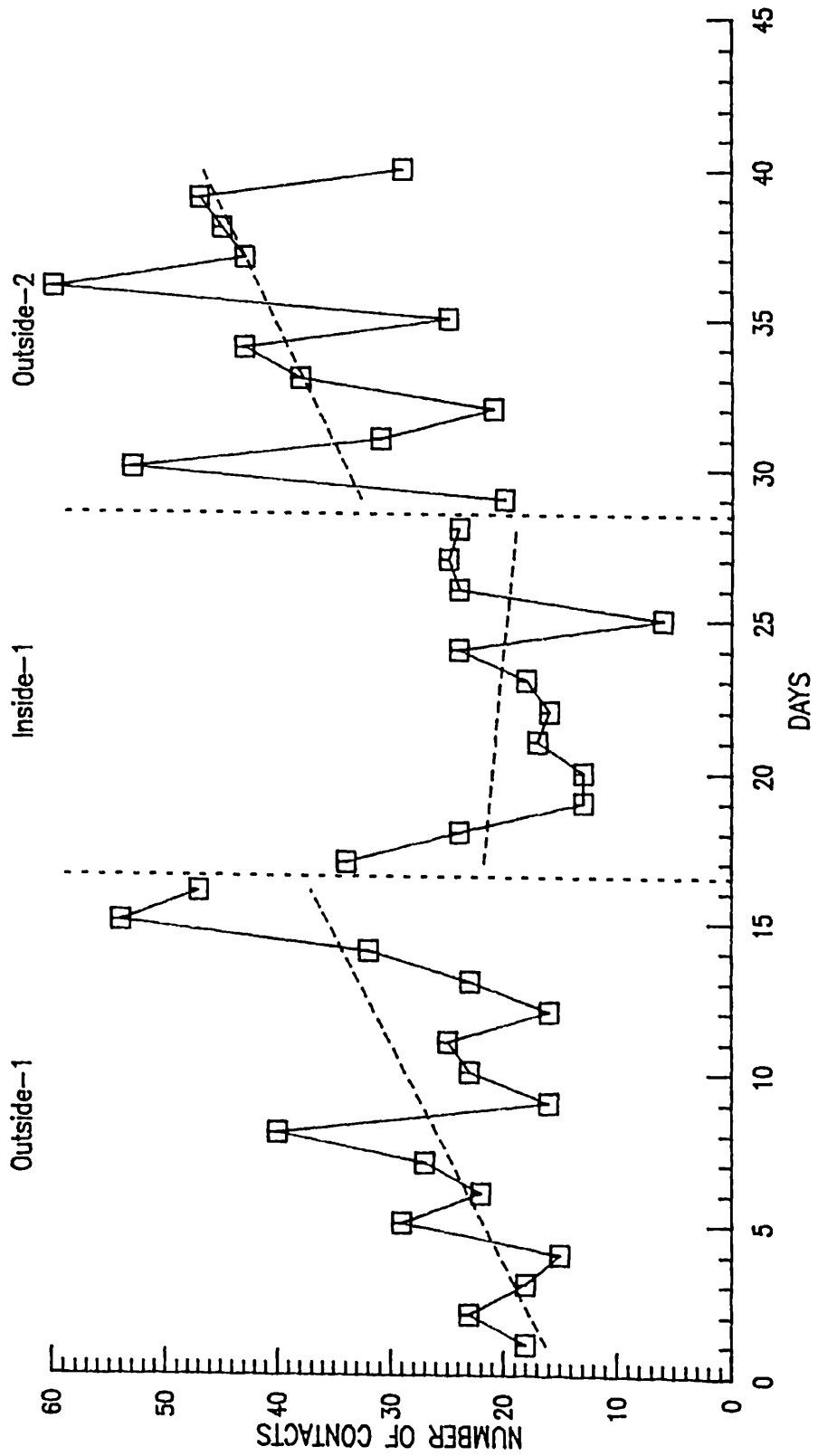
Table 1
Overall Reliability Across Conditions

	Outside Condition 1	Inside Condition	Outside Condition 2
Number of Contacts	86	87	84
Content of Contacts			
Child-Related	65	81	85
Child-Problem	83	86	85
Miscellaneous	55	82	82
Duration			
10	68	74	78
15	83	49	82
30	0	50	88
1	78	80	80
1	100	**	50

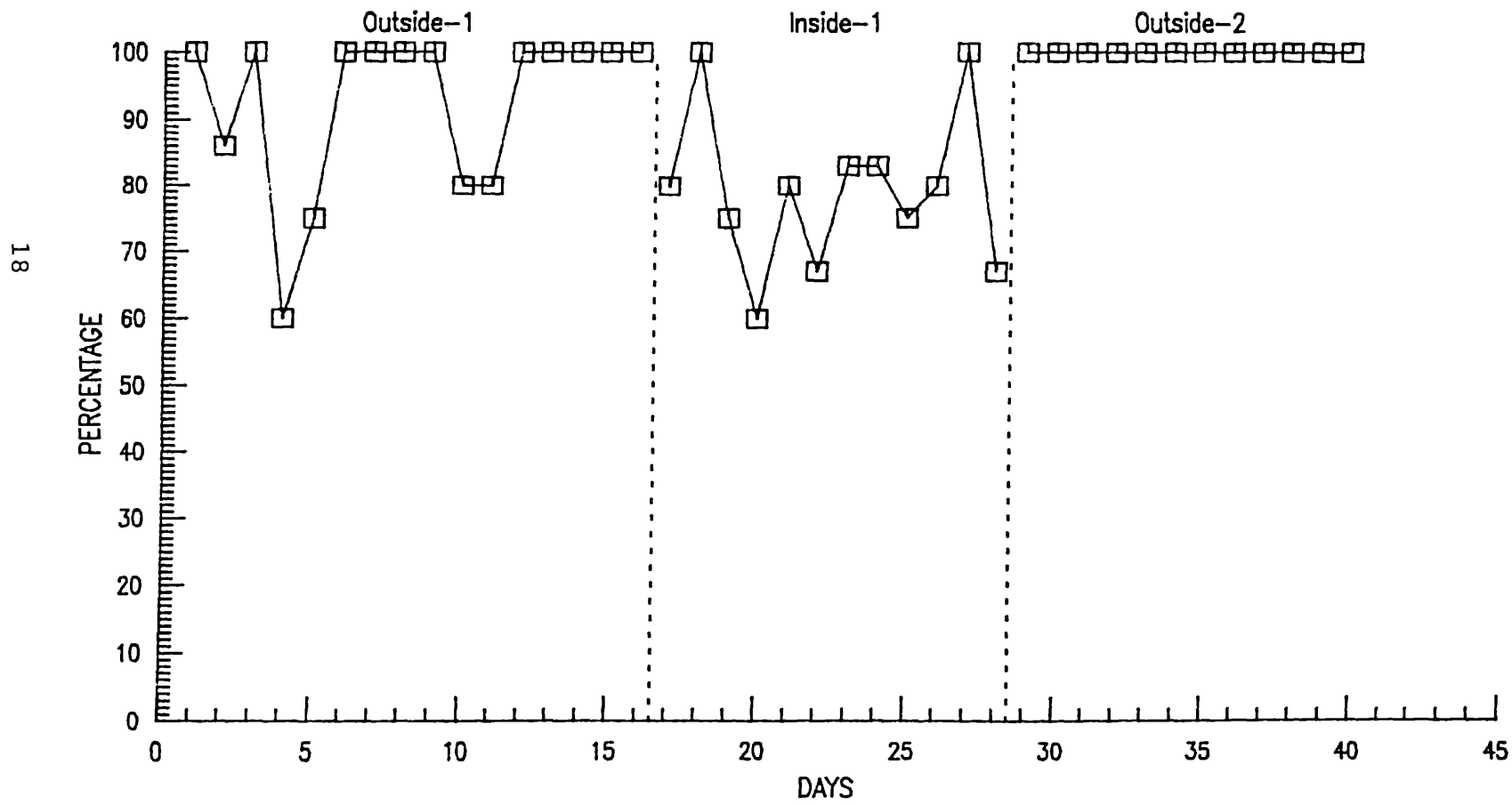
** No occurrence of this duration recorded in this condition



NUMBER OF DAILY CONTACTS



PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS INTERACTING



18

in the Inside condition, 19.8, than the daily contacts of the first and second Outside condition, which were 26.8 and 39.8, respectively. The mean rate of interaction per parent was 5.7 contacts per day. This was found by dividing the total number of interactions by the total number of parents observed during all observation days. Table 2 presents the mean rate of interaction per parent. Also listed is the mean percentage of parents interacting in all conditions. The Outside condition showed a higher percentage than the Inside condition. The second Outside condition showed the highest percentage of parents interacting, which was 100%.

Insert Table 2 About Here

The mean number of parents observed on a daily basis was slightly higher in the Inside condition (see Table 2). Therefore, the higher rate of parent interaction in the Outside condition cannot be attributed to more parents arriving in the Outside condition, since more parents arrived, on the average, in the Inside condition.

The differences in the rate of interaction between conditions could have been a result of only one or two parents changing the way in which they typically interacted with teachers from one condition to the other. For instance, a parent who had a low rate of interaction in the Inside condition, in relation to other parents, could

Table 2

Mean Number of Contacts for Each Experimental Condition

	Outside Condition 1	Inside Condition	Outside Condition 2
Mean Number of Daily Contacts	26.8	19.8	39.8
Mean Duration of Contacts (seconds)	9.7	10.3	9.6
Mean Number of Parents Observed Daily	4.9	5.3	4.7
Mean Percentage of Parents Interacting	91	80	100
Percent of Contacts by Content			
Child-Related	45	39	37
Child-Problem	20	26	27
Miscellaneous	35	35	36
Mean Number of Parents Interacting Daily	5.4	3.7	8.4

have changed response patterns to have become a parent with a high rate of interaction, in relation to other parents, during the Outside condition. A series of Kendall Coefficients of Concordance (W statistic) were computed for each parent's mean number of recorded contacts in each condition to test this possibility. A result of $W = .93$ was obtained. To test the hypothesis that there was no agreement among ranks of parents across conditions, a chi square analysis for the concordance statistic was performed. The result was $\chi^2 = 19.53$, $df = 7$, $p .01$. The results indicate that there was a high degree of agreement for parent ranking across conditions. A parent who had a high rate of interaction in the Inside condition tended to keep that high ranking in the Outside condition in relation to the other parents.

The mean duration of contacts was higher in the Inside condition than the Outside condition (see Table 2). The difference was slight, less than one second, across all conditions.

Table 2 also includes a presentation of the percentage of contacts according to content: child-related, child-problem, and miscellaneous. In all conditions, the child-related category had the highest percentage of contacts. The mean percentage of contacts, across all conditions, in the child-related category, was 43%, compared to 26% for child-problem, and 35% for miscellaneous.

Chapter IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of location on parent-teacher interaction during arrival time at a preschool. Parent-teacher interaction was analyzed in terms of frequency, duration, and content of individual interaction. The results reveal that the Outside condition resulted in a higher frequency of parent-teacher interaction as compared to the Inside condition. The mean duration of contacts was only slightly higher when health checks were completed inside of the classroom. The content of the interaction appeared to be unaffected by the location of the arrival area.

The change in the pattern of parent-teacher interaction may have been affected by the location of the arrival area in several ways. Either the parents' rates of interacting or the teachers' rate of interacting, only, could have been affected. Parents' and teachers' rates of interacting both could have been affected also. It appears from the data generated in the study that the change in interaction was due to an overall increase in individual parent interaction rates during the Outside condition. The Kendall Coefficient of Concordance (W statistic) indicates parents who had high rates of interacting during the Inside condition increased their fre-

quency of interaction during the Outside condition. Parents whose rate of interaction was low in the Outside condition had a decrease in frequency of interaction when arrival was inside the classroom. Most notably, parents who did not interact with teachers during the Inside condition did interact in the Outside condition.

The method of data collection prevents analysis of individual interaction patterns which would indicate who, parent or teacher, initiated an interaction and who changed or continued the conversation. It is possible that either parents or teachers were affected more by the change in location, and thus were more responsible for the change in patterns of interaction.

The parents and teachers themselves may offer some explanation for the higher rates of interaction during the Outside condition. Informal discussions between the experimenter and the persons who were involved revealed that some teachers, when outside the classroom, felt more at ease to talk to parents. When inside the classroom, these teachers felt the effects of the schedule more keenly. Many teachers seemed to feel that when they were able to see the activities of the classroom being carried out by other staff members, the pressures to proceed with their daily child-related responsibilities was felt more strongly. Therefore, when outside of the classroom, with-

out the visual reminders of classroom duties, there was less pressure to limit interactions with parents. In some ways, parents felt that same effect as teachers. Parents could also see ongoing activities when health checks were completed inside the classroom. The parents felt the day had begun and they must get on with their daily activities and the teachers must get on with their work. Some parents commented that when they were able to see the classroom, they were more aware of the teacher's responsibilities and felt as if they were taking time away from the teacher by conversing. During the Outside condition, however, parents felt more at ease to converse because the classroom itself could not be seen. Both teachers and parents also commented that they felt less confined outside of the classroom because they were on the same level as the teacher. Once inside, parents may have been intimidated by the teacher as a professional.

Although the area inside of the classroom designated for health checks during the study was only slightly smaller than the outside area, it may have been seen as confining for parents and teachers. The feeling of others enclosing on personal space may have been felt during the Inside condition, whereas the open hallway of the Outside condition gave the feeling of more space, thereby putting the participants at ease.

From this study several implications for preschool programs are evident. Architectural design of preschools should be modified to foster parent-teacher interaction. Implications also include scheduling modifications for preschools.

By building a rapport between parents and teachers in informal situations, such as arrival time, parent participation in actual planning and programming for children may be enhanced. This rapport may go on to foster further consistency of programming at home and school because of a better line of communication. With a comfortable relationship between parents and teachers, a better understanding of goals and needs of the child may be realized.

Classrooms designed with large, comfortable arrival areas situated outside of the classroom may aid in more effective interaction between parents and teachers. An area specifically designed to greet parents may help to give teachers and parents common ground in which to converse. With this available, teachers may also come to feel parent-teacher interaction to be a part of their daily schedule, setting time aside for this purpose on a daily basis. This should be at a time when other classroom activities are the responsibility of teaching assistants, so the teacher is available to parents.

This study provides an effective, fairly simple

ecological design to enhance interaction between parents and teachers, which has been the goal of Special Education for many years. The rate of interaction does not necessarily imply involvement of parents in their child's education, however.

Further research is necessary to investigate the possibility that high rates of parent-teacher interaction actually improve parental involvement in planning and programming. It is also necessary to determine who, parents or teachers, most often initiates, continues, and changes conversations between the two parties, and if manipulation of this information affects parent involvement at conferences. Research is also needed to investigate the way to best schedule parent-teacher interaction: dialy, bi-weekly, weekly, on a fixed schedule, or flexible schedule. This study investigated one apsect of increasing parent-teacher interaction. Other aspects need to be investigated and defined to further enhance the quality of parent-teacher interaction and involvement.

Chapter V

SUMMARY

The present study investigated the effect of simple environmental manipulation on the interactions of parents and teachers at arrival time at a preschool serving multiply handicapped children.

Parent-teacher interaction was observed daily for a twenty-minute period during the time the children arrived at school. Activities which took place during this time included a health check of each child performed by a staff member. Parents filled out a brief report form pertaining to their child during this time.

The study involved 17 parents and caregivers of eight children enrolled in the preschool: eight mothers, one father, and eight adult caregivers; five females and three males. The adults represented a wide range of ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Five female preschool staff members also participated.

Two arrival sites were used during the study. During the Outside condition, arrival activities took place directly outside of the classroom; an area directly inside of the classroom was used as the Inside condition.

The experimenter and a reliability observer remained at the arrival site during the arrival time, approximately twenty minutes daily, during the study. The observers

did not interact physically or verbally with participants during the observations. Data were collected daily on all parent-teacher interactions that took place in the arrival area. The contacts were recorded for frequency, content, and duration of interaction. Interobserver agreement was scored if both observers recorded the same occurrence, content, and duration of contacts. Reliability was obtained at least once in each condition.

The data indicate the number of daily contacts was higher in the Outside condition. The percentage of parents who interacted in some way was also higher in the Outside condition. There was found to be a high degree of agreement across conditions for parents' mean number of contacts, indicating the difference in the number of interactions was not due to a change in response patterns of one or two parents. The mean duration of interactions was slightly higher in the Inside condition. In all conditions, most of the content centered on the parent's child.

It appears that the location of the arrival area affected parents' rates of interacting by producing an overall increase in the parents' rates of interacting in the Outside condition.

It was found, through informal discussions, parents and teachers felt confined and inflexible inside the class-

room where the classroom activities could be seen. However, outside the classroom, parents and teachers felt more flexible about use of their time and more at ease to converse. Several implications can be drawn from this study, including architectural designs for preschools and classroom schedules to include adequate time for parent-teacher interaction.

References

- Baer, D. M., Wolf, M. M., and Risley, T. R. Some current dimensions of applied behavioral analysis. Journal of Applied Behavioral Analysis, 1968, 1, 91-97.
- Ballard, J. and Zettle J. Public Law 94-142 and Section 504: What they say about rights and protection. Exceptional Children, 1977, 44, 177-178.
- Blackard, M. K. and Barsh, E. T. Parents' and professionals' perceptions of the handicapped child's impact on the family. The Journal of the Association for the Severely Handicapped, 1982, 7, 62-70.
- Feldman, M. A., Byalick, R., and Rosedale, M. P. Parent involvement programs: A growing trend in special education. Exceptional Children, 1975, 41, 551-554.
- Gilliam, J. E. and Coleman, M. C. Who influences IEP committee decisions? Exceptional Children, 1981, 47, 642-644.
- Goldstein, S., Strickland, B., Turnbull, A.P., and Curry, L. An observational analysis of the IEP conference. Exceptional Children, 1980, 46, 278-286.
- Goldstein, S. and Turnbull, A. P. Strategies to increase parent participation in IEP conferences. Exceptional Children, 1982, 48, 360-361.
- Gordon, T. Parent effectiveness training. New York: Peter H. Wyden, 1970.
- Holm, V. A. and McCartin, R. E. Interdisciplinary child development team: Team issues and training in interdisciplinaryness. In K. E. Allen, V. A. Holm, and R. L. Schiefelbusch (Eds.), Early intervention--a team approach. Baltimore: University Park Press, 1978.
- Kroth, R. Facilitating educational progress by improving parent conferences. In E. L. Meyen, G. A. Vergason, and R. J. Whelan (Eds.), Alternatives for teaching exceptional children. Denver: Love Publishing, 1975.
- Lichter, P. Communicating with parents: It begins with listening. Teaching Exceptional Children, 1976, 8, 66-71.

- Luterman, D. M. A parent-oriented nursery program for preschool deaf children: A follow-up study. The Volta Review, 1971, 73, 106-112.
- Lyon, S. and Lyon, G. Team functioning and staff development: A role release approach to providing integrated educational services for severely handicapped students. The Journal of the Association for the Severely Handicapped, 1980, 5, 250-263.
- Mattson, B. D. Involving parents in special education: Did you really teach them. Education of the Mentally Retarded, 1977, 12, 358-360
- McCormick, L. and Lee, C. Public Law 94-142: Mandated partnership. The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 1979, 33, 586-588.
- McLoughlin, J. A., Edge, D., and Strenecky, B. Perspective on parental involvement in the diagnosis and treatment of learning disabled children. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 1978, 11, 291-341.
- Powell, D. R. Correlates of parent-teacher communication frequency and diversity. The Journal of Educational Research, 1978, 71, 333-341.
- Radin, N. Three degrees of maternal involvement in a preschool program: Impact on mothers and children. Child Development, 1972, 43, 1355-1364.
- Sawyer, H. W. and Sawyer, S. H. A teacher-parent communication training approach. Exceptional Children, 1981, 47, 305-306.
- Sears, C. J. The transdisciplinary approach: A process for compliance with Public Law 94-142. Journal of the Severely Handicapped, 1981, 6, 22-29.
- Simches, R. F. The parent-professional partnership. Exceptional Children, 1975, 41, 565-566.
- Turnbull, A. P., Strickland, B., and Goldstein S. Training professionals and parents in developing and implementing the IEP. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 1978, 13, 414-423.
- Yoshida, R. K. and Gottlieb, J. A model of parental participation in the pupil planning process. Mental Retardation, 1977, 15, 17-20.

APPENDIX

Dear Parents and Friends,

During the remainder of the semester and through the summer I am planning on collecting data for my Master's Thesis. It will involve observing the arrival time in the morning. I will be observing every morning and another observer will be with me on occasion. I will be collecting data on the interactions of teachers and parents or those persons bringing students to the preschool.

This observation and data collection will not interfere with arrival time, nor will it change the way in which you interact with the teachers. There will be some changes in the physical arrangement of the arrival area. Participation in this project is voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any time. Participation will not require any additional time commitment from you, or from the children.

The information that I obtain from this project will remain confidential. It will be stored securely and identified by code numbers. I will be the only person seeing the information using the children's names. Neither your name nor the children's names will be associated in any way with the findings.

Please read the attached consent form and sign it if you are willing to participate. I would very much like to include you and the students in this project. Please

feel free to contact me at the preschool or at home at
342-8364 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Amelia Mann

Research

Consent Form

The following information has been filled out by the experimenter so that an informed consent may be given by you for the individual(s) named below.

1. Outlined statement of procedures to be followed: (Identified are any procedures that can be classified as experimental in nature--i.e., not well proven or established as yet).

Quantity of parent*-teacher interactions may be influenced by the physical arrangement in which everyday classroom activities occur. Therefore, it may be possible to increase the number of contacts through a physical rearrangement of classroom activity sites. One primary observer will record data each day, and one reliability observer will record data at least once a week during receiving and health check times. Observers will record the following:

1. Total length of individual parent*-teacher interaction time.
2. Number of discreet interactions between individual parents* and teachers.
3. Nature of the subject (i.e., child related vs. non-child related) discussed by the parent* and teacher during the interaction. The actual content of the conversation will not be taped or noted. Only a simple notation indicating category will be recorded.

Observers will be present at the observation site approximately 20 minutes each day. Observers will not interact verbally or physically with teachers, parents*, or children at this time. The study will have three phases:

1. Children checked in an area outside the classroom.
2. Children checked in an area inside the classroom.
3. Children checked in an area outside the classroom.

2. Discomforts or risks for the subject that might be associated with the procedure noted above.

*Parent also refers to adults responsible for bringing students to the preschool.

There may be a brief adjustment period for parents*, teachers, and children when health check sites are moved for each phase of the study.

3. Benefits for the subject associated with the study.

Results obtained from this project may enable future classrooms to be structured in a way as to maximize the opportunity for parent*-teacher interactions to occur.

4. Alternative procedures that may be used if there are any deviations from those noted above.

None.

5. To ensure maximum communication concerning the research, to clarify the position of the preschool when a child is withdrawn from this study, and to provide anonymity of data collected, the following information is noted.

- a) The principal investigator of this project and the responsible faculty members of the Special Education Department will be available to answer any questions concerning these procedures.
- b) The person signing this consent form is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time.
- c) If data obtained in research is presented in professional meetings or publications, the subjects will remain anonymous.

*Parent also refers to adults responsible for bringing students to the preschool.

Name of project: Morning Transition Time

Name of principal investigator: Amelia Mann

Name of faculty member responsible for project: Doug Guess, Ph.D.

Name of staff member for whom consent is requested: _____

Signature of staff member: _____

Date: _____

Dear Parents,

The time has come to begin the second part of my study. This means on Monday morning, arrival procedures and health check will be done inside the classroom. The area inside the classroom where this will be done will be enclosed. All of the materials (such as bins and health check forms) and the teachers will also be inside.

On Monday morning when you arrive, come into the classroom and wait for your child to have health check done. The arrival area inside the classroom will be enlarged to permit some breathing space. The only change is moving inside the classroom for arrival. All other procedures will remain the same.

Thank you very much for your continuing cooperation in my study. Everything is going well.

SETTING/CONDITION _____ DATE _____

PRIMARY OBSERVER _____ RELIABILITY _____

COMMENTS

38

Preschool Study Code (10-29-81)

1. Score () to indicate a parent statement or reply of more than three words.

Note: Parent statements or replies of less than four words are not recorded as (). See also Rule 5.

2. Score () to indicate a parent initiated statement.

3. Score a () to indicate a teacher response within 5 seconds to a parent statement. This may be a nod or a verbal response, such as, "Uh, huh," or it may be a longer verbal statement.

Note: The teacher response or reply does not have to contain more than three words to be recorded.

Example: Parent (P): "Good morning, Ms. Teacher; how are you today?"

Teacher (T): "Fine, thank you."

Score:

4. Score a () to indicate a teacher initiated statement that was followed by a parent response or reply of more than three words.

Note: It is not necessary that the teacher initiated statement be one of more than three words, but the parent reply or response must be one of three or more words. See also Rule 5.

Example: T: "Good morning, Mrs. Parent, how are you?"

P: "Fine, how are you?"

Score:

5. Score a () to indicate a teacher statement of four or more words that is followed by either a parent response of less than four words or no response by the parent within 5 seconds.

Note: The teacher statement must be one of four or more words followed by one of the above two parent responses to score a (). Note carefully the differences between Rules 3, 4, and 5.

Example: T: "Hello, Mrs. Parent, how are you?"

P: "Hi."

Score:

Reason: Teacher statement contains more than three words, following parent statement contains less than four words.

Example: T: "Mrs. Parent, how are you today?"

P: No parent reply within 5 seconds.

Score:

Reason: Teacher statement of more than three words.

6. Score a () if the parent initiates a contact with a statement of four or more words, but the teacher does not respond with either a gesture or verbally within 5 seconds.

Example: P: "Hello, how are things today?"

T: No response within 5 seconds.

Score:

7. Parent initiated statement of less than four words are not recorded.
8. Teacher response to parent initiated statement of less than four words are not recorded.

Note: Even if the teacher response contains more words, the contact will not be recorded.

Example: P: "Hello."

T: "Oh, hello, how are you?"

Score: Nothing

Reason: Parent initiated statement is less than four words.

Example: P: "Hi."

T: "Hi."

Score: Nothing

9. Teacher initiated statement of less than four words that are followed by parent response of less than four words or no parental response within 5 seconds will not be recorded.

Example: T: "Good morning."

P: "Good morning."

Score: Nothing

10. Score the time of the individual parent-teacher interactions as 5 seconds, 10", 15", 30", 1 minute, or 1 minute.

11. Score each interaction as either (C), (CP), or (M).
C - subject matter about or relating to the child;
CP - subject matter relating to or about a child problem;
M - miscellaneous; that is, anything other than C or CP.

Example: P: "Mary is ready for school today, she's raring to go."

T: "Oh, wonderful."

Score:

interaction time

C

Example: P: "I don't know why, but Mary didn't sleep well last night."

T: "That's too bad."

Score: interaction time
CP

Example: T: "Did you watch the football game last night?"

P: "Yes, I did, it was great."

Score: interaction time
M

12. An interaction or contact is determined by the teacher response and/or the subject matter of the interaction. If the parent is talking about the same general subject and the teacher response is just a nod or a verbal statement of less than four words, the interaction is scored and timed as one contact.

Example: T: "Good morning, Mrs. Parent, isn't it a great day."

P: "Sure is, so nice and warm."

T: "Yes."

P: "I hope the sun stays all day."

T: "So do I."

P: "I just love sunny days."

Score: interaction time
M

Reason: Same general subject; teacher statements less than four words.

13. If the subject matter remains the same during the course of an interaction, but the teacher responds to the parent with a statement of more than three words, each interaction is scored and timed separately.

Example: T: "Hello, Mrs. Parent, what a great day it is today."
P: "Sure is, I love the fall."
T: "So do I, much better than the summer."
P: "Ugh, I hate the heat."
T: "Yes, and don't forget the humidity."
P: "Forget, there's no chance of that."

Score: interaction times
M M M

Reason: Although the subject matter remains the same, the teacher statements are all more than three words.

14. If the parent initiates a contact and the following interactions are about the same subject matter, and are timed and scored separately (see above rule), do not score the following interactions as parent initiated.

Example: P: "Ms. Teacher, I have a problem with Mary's sleeping habits."
T: "Let's talk about it, maybe I can help."
P: "I sure hope so, I'm worried."
T: "I'm sure you are, go on."
P: "Well, she keeps waking during the night."
T: Teacher nods head.

Score: interaction times
CP CP CP

Reason: Contact is parent initiated;

teacher responses all more than three words, therefore, all scored as separate instructions; parent continues with same topic, so do not score the following contacts as being parent initiated.

15. If the subject matter of an ongoing conversation changes, score and time each contact separately. Also, indicate if the parent initiated the subject changes.

Example:

- #1 P: "Good morning, how are you today?"
T: "I'm find. How are you?"
- #2 P: "Real good, can't really complain."
T: "Mmm."
- #3 T: "Oh, how's Mary today?"
P: "Fine."
- #4 T: "Good, she was a bit ill yesterday."
P: "Yes, the old flu bug again."
- #5 P: "By the way, did you go to the carnival last night?"
T: "Sure did."
P: "I thought it was the best yet."
T: "Oh, so did I."
- #6 P: "I especially liked the bumper cars."
T: "So did I, especially the cars."
- #7 P: "I think I'll go again tonight."
T: "Hey, maybe I'll see you there."

Example:

- #8 T: "Oh, don't forget that tomorrow is parents' day in the classroom."
P: "Thanks, I almost did forget."
#9 P: "Will you be here tomorrow?"
T: Teacher nods.
#10 P: "Can I use your telephone to call work and tell them I'll be late?"
T: No response within 5 seconds.
#11 P: "Oh well, bye."
T: "Bye."

Score:

interactions times
M M C C M M M M M M

- Reasons: #1 Parent initiates contact; teacher answers with more than three words.
#2 Parent continues conversation; subject matter does not change, but scored as separate contact because of length of the teacher response in #1.
#3 Teacher changes subject; parent responds with less than four words.
#4 Teacher continues talking about the child; parent answers with more than three words.
#5 Parent changes subject so score parent initiated; teacher responds first time with less than four

words, so score as single contact; at end, teacher responds with more; if it is the same subject is scored separately.

- #6 Same subject as above, but scored due to teacher response of more than three words above.
- #7 Same subject as above, but scored separately due to teacher response of more than three words in #6.
- #8 Teacher changes subject.
- #9 Parent continues talking about the same subject; teacher nods.
- #10 Parent changes subject; teacher does not respond within 5 seconds.
- #11 Parent initiated statement less than four words; do not score either parent or teacher statement.

Note: There will be ten symbols scored in the top grid. Item #11 is not scored, nor should a space be left indicating that this item ever occurred.

Each interaction (in this example there are ten) should be timed individually.

Each interaction will be individually scored as to subject category, that is, C, CP, or M.

15. Score and time only those interactions that occur directly between parents and teachers. Do not score parent or teacher statements to the child even if these are designed to convey information to the other party.

Example: Parent is standing next to child; teacher says to the child: "Mary, I wonder if your mother remembered the permission slip she was to bring today."

Example: Parent with child nearby says: "Well Mary, I'm sure Ms. Teacher will be happy to hear that you are not sick anymore."

Observation and Recording System

Observation period is from 9:30 a.m. to 9:50 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Observers should label each set of three lines with a child's name. The child's name will identify the child's caretaker or parent.

Observers will put either (), (), (), or () in the upper grid of the data sheet.

Observers will put either 5", 10", 15", 30", 1 minute, or 1 minute in the middle grid.

The bottom grid of the data sheet will contain either C, CP, or M.

The primary observer will start his stopwatch and the reliability observer's stopwatch simultaneously when the first parent-child dyad is seen approaching the classroom.

Record in writing which parent-child dyads were not observed by the end of each daily observation period.

EXAMPLE

child's name	
	individual interaction times
	C, CP, or M