School-To-Home Notes: Getting Parents Involved in Teaching Social Skills

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Womack, Sue A.; Shatzer, Ryan H.; Caldarella, Paul; and Adams, Michael, "School-To-Home Notes: Getting Parents Involved in Teaching Social Skills" (2009). Faculty Publications. 21.  
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School-to-Home Notes: Getting Parents Involved in Teaching Social Skills

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Brigham Young University Positive Behavior Support Initiative (BYU-PBSI)

Introduction
- Many agree that schools should be attending to the social and emotional needs of all students (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007).
- With the increasing recognition of school-wide positive behavior support (NWPS), social skill instruction has begun to address this issue.
- Social skills instruction often has problems with generalization (Gresham, 1998).
- Including parents in the instruction and reinforcement of social skills may improve generalization (Armstrong & McPherson 1991; Budd & Itzkowitz, 1998).

Social Skills Program

Monthly Schedule for Social Skill Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Social Skill</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Review 1 Core Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Skill</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Review 1 Core Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social Skill</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Review 1 Core Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social Skill</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Review 1 Core Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructional Schedule
- Week 1: Social skill introduced by teacher in the classroom
- Week 2: Parent volunteer teacher social skill lesson in the classroom
- Home notes are distributed to students
- Week 3: Librarian teaches social skill lesson using a library book

Results

Survey Return Rate

- Survey: 436 Students, K-6
- Over 50% Free and Reduced Lunch
- Ethnicity: 75% Caucasian
- 21% Hispanic
- 2% African American
- 2% Other

Survey Questions
- 7 Point Likert-type scale
- Perceptions of:
  - Favorability
  - Time Commitment
  - Effectiveness
  - Ease
  - Continued Use
  - Three versions
  - 12-15 questions
  - Open-ended comments

Data Collection

Graph showing the percentage of participants who agreed on survey items.

**Habitat**
- Students enjoy doing home note activities.
- Home notes should continue to be used next year.
- Home notes help enhance/improve social skills.
- Home notes save too much time.
- Social skills should be taught in school.
- Home notes should be used more often once a month.

**Percentage of Home Notes Signed**
- 92.4% 94.3%
- 29.0% 38.0%
- 77.6% 51.0%

**Generalization** (Gresham, 1998)
- It was easy to get home notes signed.
- It was easy to (collect/bring back) home notes.
- It was easy to keep home notes.

**Favorability**
- I like the suggestions of activities to do with my family.
- I like the suggestions of activities to do with my work.

**Time Commitment**
- It was easy to get home notes signed.
- It was easy to (collect/bring back) home notes.
- It was easy to keep home notes.

**Effectiveness**
- Home notes help me talk to my child about school.
- Home notes help students improve their social skills.

**Ease**
- The steps to this social skill are:
  - Step 1: Look at the telephone game.
  - Step 2: Think about what is being said.
  - Step 3: Do the task immediately.

**Conclusion**
- All stakeholder groups tended to rate home notes positively, with parents being particularly supportive. The use of home notes appears to be a feasible and acceptable approach to increase parental involvement and potentially improve generalization of social skills taught in schools as part of a universal level PBS intervention.
- Parents
  - Inform early about scope of the program
  - Consolidate across grade levels
  - Keep parents involved in the process

- Teachers
  - Get teachers more involved
  - Share what is learned

- Students
  - Integrate with homework assignments
  - Be consistent in procedures
  - Use activities that appeal to a broad age range

Sample Home Notes

Sample notes and activities for teaching social skills to parents.