

# An Analysis of Parental Perceptions of the New Discipline Plan Implemented at Haven Grade School

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## **1. Introduction**

In September 2003 Haven Grade School implemented a new discipline plan which emphasized teacher generated classroom behavioral expectations and provided students in grades kindergarten through second with a reward system for each week's positive behaviors. A weekly target sheet was kept for each student on which negative behaviors were noted. Each Thursday the target sheet was sent home with the student for parental review and signature. (If no negative behaviors were noted, the child was permitted to participate in a fun activity the following day, such as watching a movie or outdoor relay races.) Given the amount of resources invested by the teachers and administration in training for the new plan, and the time spent within the classroom working with students, the school district wanted to know if the plan was having the desired effects. This research was designed to assess how parents felt the discipline plan was working at Haven Grade School.

## **2. Methodology**

A 31-item survey instrument was developed. The survey examined the parents' involvement with the Haven School District, their own discipline beliefs, their personal responses to the discipline plan and how they felt their child responded to the discipline plan. The survey was designed to accommodate parents who had more than one child in grades kindergarten through second. Demographic questions also were included in the survey.

Of the 101 administered surveys, 57 surveys were returned providing an acceptable response rate of 56 percent. Three distinct research questions were addressed during data analysis: 1) were parents satisfied with the discipline plan being used at Haven Grade School?; 2) did parents believe the discipline plan was effective?; and 3) did parents believe the discipline plan should continue to be used at Haven?

## **3. Conclusions**

Responses to the demographic questions indicated that most respondents were currently married, the biological parents of their child(ren) in Haven Grade School, had an average family size of four members, were in the 30-39 age range, had an education beyond high school, and had lived in Haven for more than five years. Most parents believed they disciplined their child more frequently than others and that their children were better behaved. Regarding the discipline plan specifically, 93 percent indicated the plan was explained to them thoroughly, 87 percent believed it reinforced their own discipline beliefs, and more than 91 percent felt the target sheets created by the teachers covered all expected behaviors. Results for the three dependent variables indicated the parents supported the discipline plan's design and application. More than 92 percent indicated they were satisfied with the plan, 91 percent considered it effective, and almost 93 percent thought that the Grade School should continue to use the discipline plan in future years.

## **4. Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the Haven School District for providing access to the parents for this study. In addition, we would like to thank the teachers who were instrumental in distributing and gathering the completed surveys to ensure parent's confidentiality. We also would like to thank the Department of Sociology at Wichita State University for providing all operational costs necessary for the survey development, administration and analyses.

\* Given the small n, data for second children not presented in this table.

**Respondent's Perceptions of Discipline and Discipline Plan\***

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Compared to other children, I discipline my child more frequently.	57	5.3%	52.6%	29.8%	12.3%
Compared to other children, I believe my child is better behaved.	57	17.5%	59.6%	19.3%	3.5%
School should play a significant role disciplining children.	57	8.8%	54.4%	28.1%	8.8%
The discipline plan was thoroughly explained to me.	57	26.3%	66.7%	7.0%	0.0%
The discipline plan reinforces my discipline beliefs.	56	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%
The target sheets cover all expected behaviors.	57	19.3%	71.9%	8.8%	0.0%
The discipline plan has increased communication with child's teacher.	57	29.8%	49.2%	17.5%	3.5%
The good behavior tickets and Friday activities child to behave.	57	36.8%	54.4%	8.8%	0.0%
Overall, I am satisfied with the discipline plan.	57	35.1%	57.8%	5.3%	1.8%
Overall, I believe the discipline plan is effective.	57	31.6%	59.6%	8.8%	0.0%
I believe Haven should continue to use the discipline plan.	55	41.8%	50.9%	5.5%	1.8%

\* Given the small n, data for second children not presented in this table.

**Respondent's Perceptions of Their Child's Response to the Discipline Plan\***

	N	Regularly	Often	Seldom	Never
Child discusses Friday activity with parent	57	<b>49.2%</b>	36.8%	14.0%	0.0%
In a typical month, how often child misses Friday activity due to behavior	55	3.6%	5.5%	21.8%	<b>69.1%</b>
Child looks forward to Friday activities	55	<b>80.0%</b>	14.5%	5.5%	0.0%
Child views Friday activity as an incentive for positive behavior	57	<b>60.0%</b>	25.5%	12.7%	1.8%
In a typical month, how often child complains about discipline plan	55	0.0%	1.8%	16.4%	<b>81.8%</b>
Child discusses Target Sheets before they are sent home	55	14.5%	23.6%	<b>32.8%</b>	29.1%