

# Family Counts

A study of the effects of home visits on the parent-teacher relationship

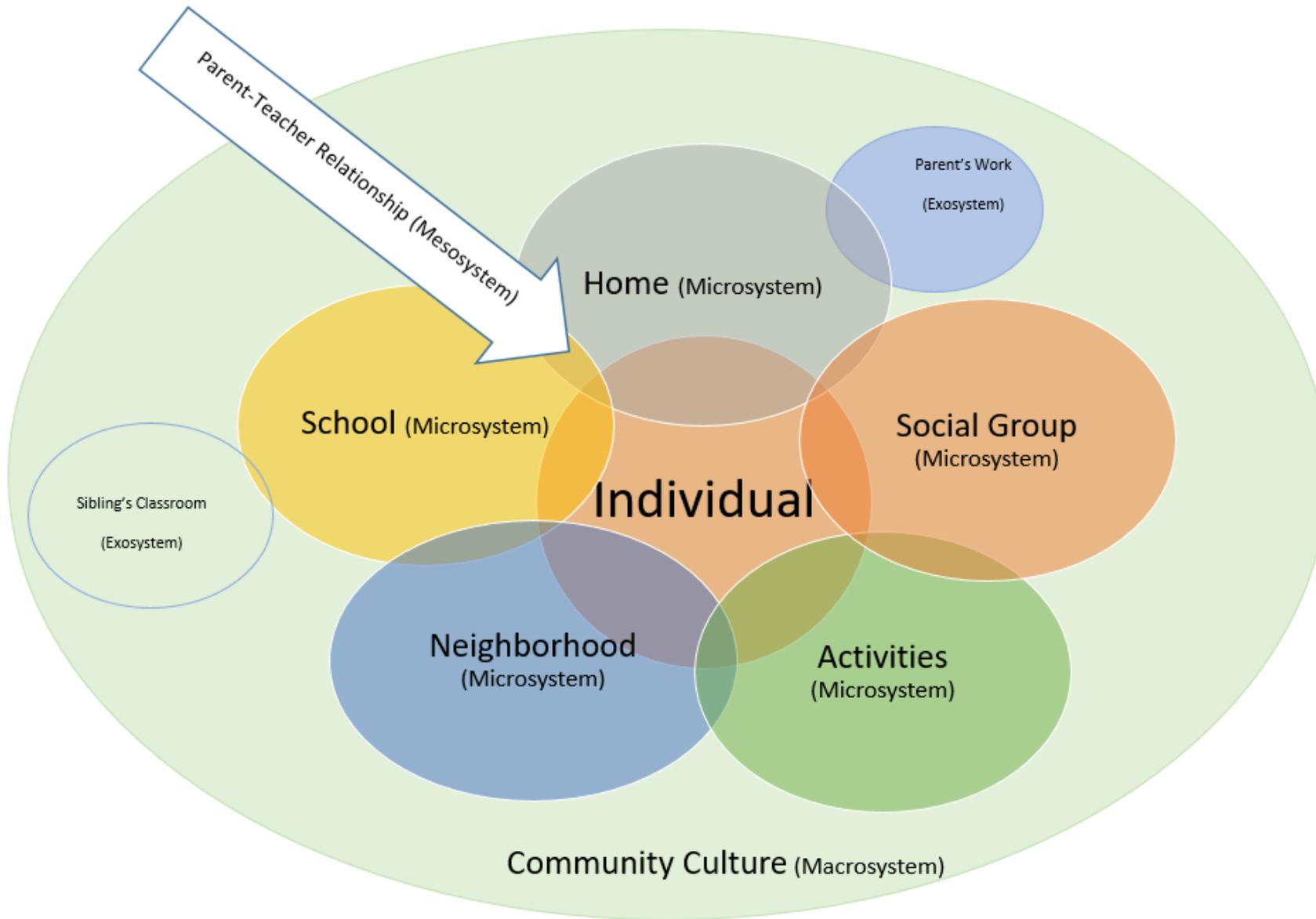
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# Research Aims

- Determine the effect of a teacher home visit on subsequent parental participation in parent education, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), volunteerism on campus, and school events.
- Discover trends in the quality and frequency of parent-teacher communications.
- Explore the responses of teachers and parents to the process and effects of teacher home visits.

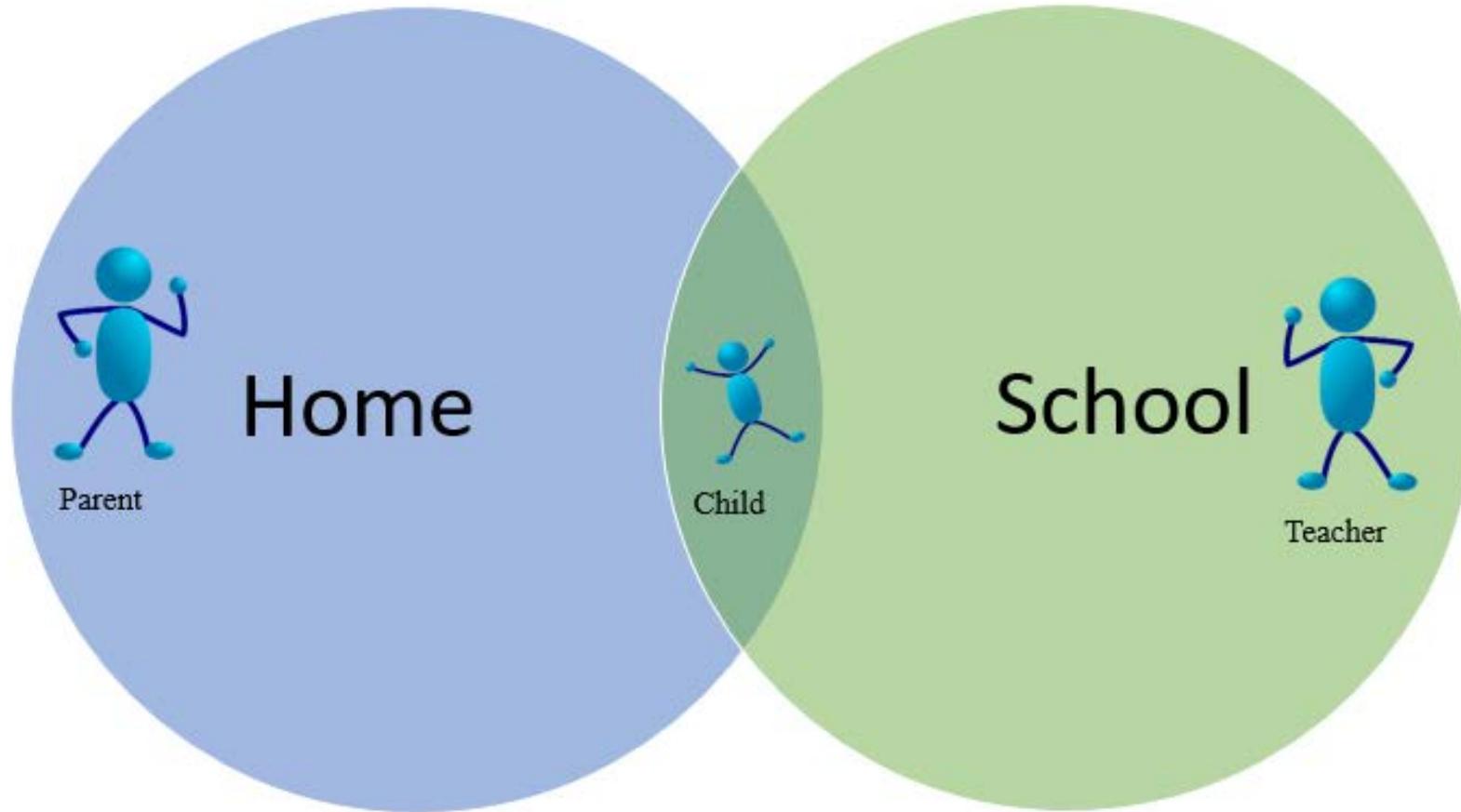
# Theoretical Framework



- Ecological Systems Theory indicates that the overlap of the home and school environments has tremendous effects on the individual
- Social Capital Theory suggests that members of a community have access to one another's education, experience, and ideas as resources or capital

*Figure 1.* Ecological Systems Theory. This figure shows examples of microsystems, exosystems, the macrosystem, and the significant mesosystem with which this research is concerned.

# Perceptions of Separateness



*Figure 2.* Positions within microsystems. This figure shows the separation of parent and teacher in separate microsystems, with the child only in the mesosystem, or overlap.

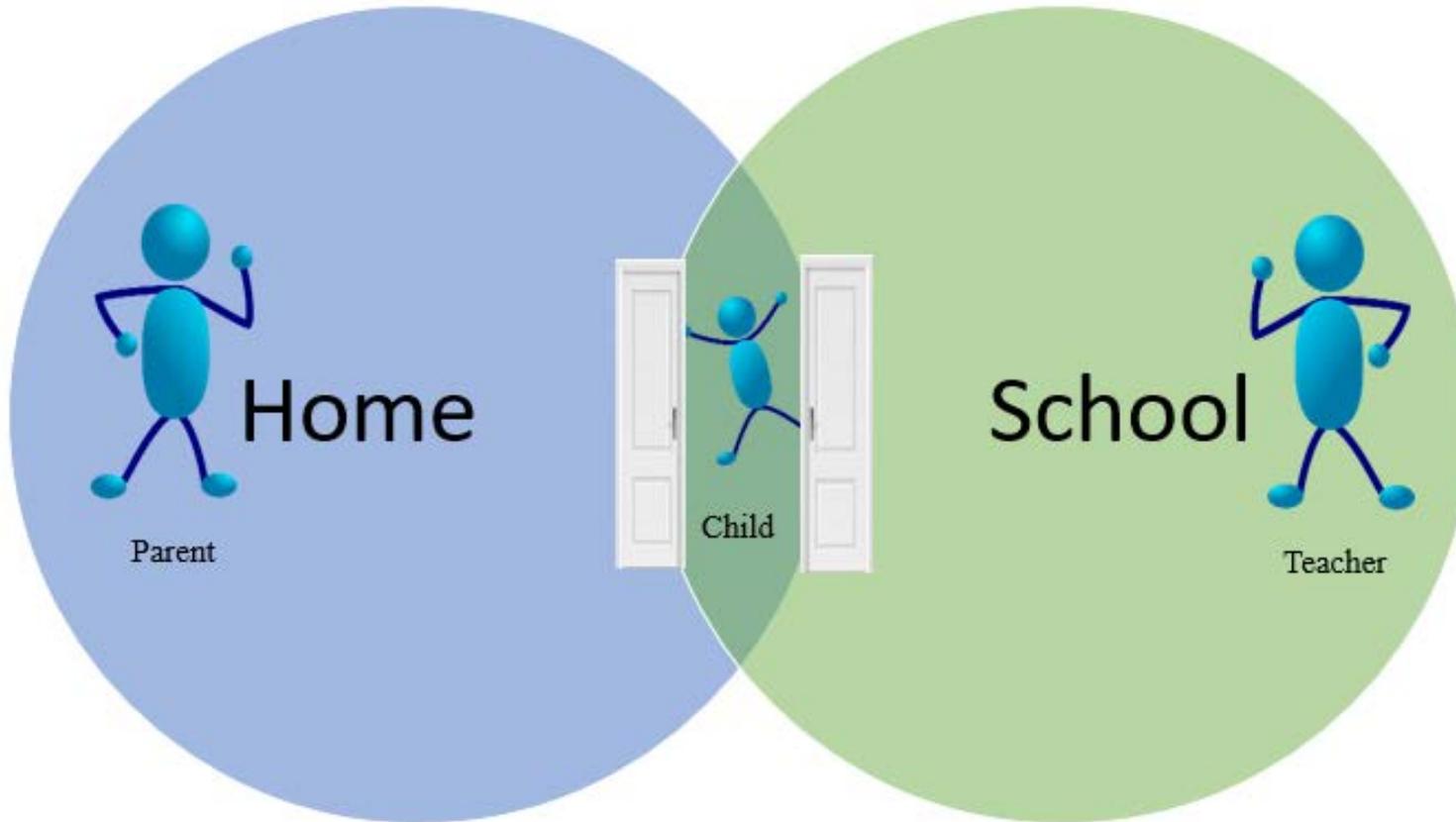
## Key ideas:

- Logical belief that we are on the same team doesn't translate into feeling connected or accessing one another as resources
- Parents fear judgment of their parenting skills, academic ability, home environment, and capacity to support their children
- Teachers fear offending parents, and parental judgment of their competence and caring
- Both have discomfort in communicating openly, and have assumptions about the other which impede relationships

# Opening the Door



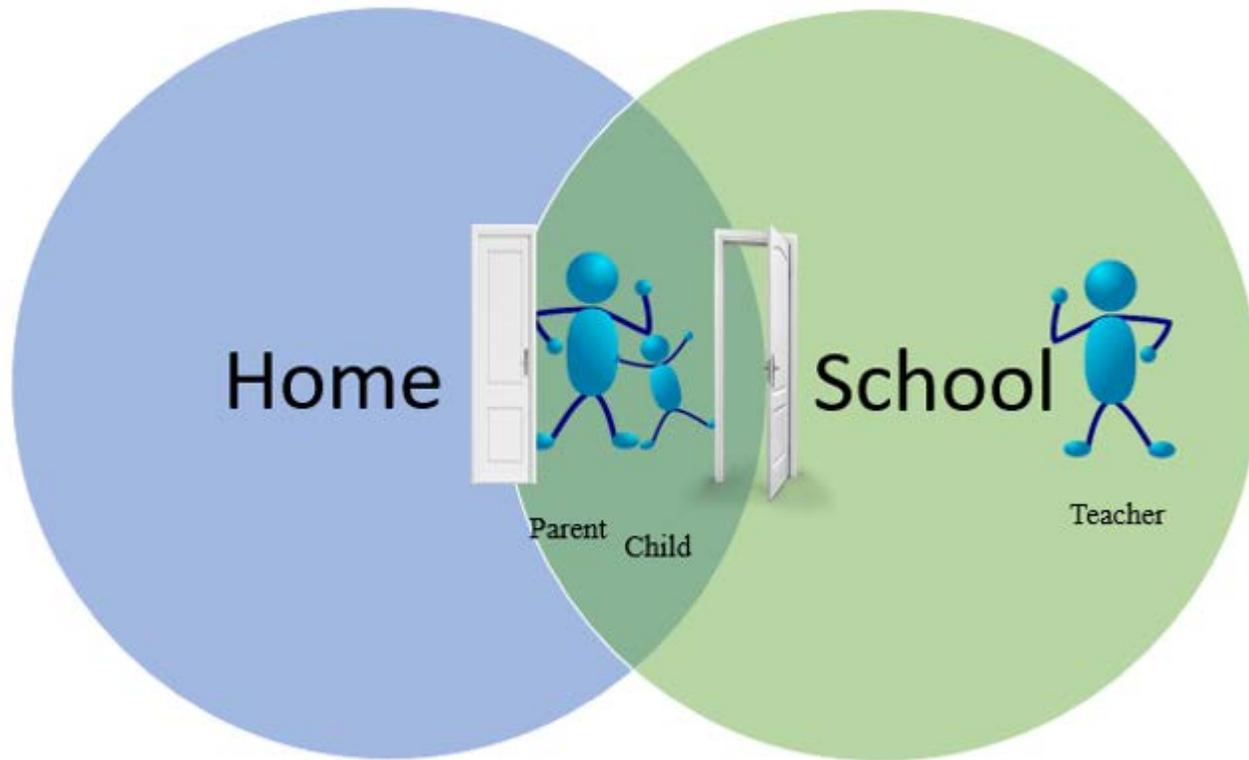
# Closed Doors



- There are doors on both sides
- The child has free access to both, but teachers and parents often feel the doors are closed to them
- Teachers feel frustrated when they repeatedly reach out, but parents don't respond or reciprocate

*Figure 3.* Microsystems with a closed mesosystem. This figure shows closed doors into the microsystem, representing the fears that keep teachers and parents separate.

# Opening School Doors



*Figure 4.* Parent on campus. This figure shows the parent in the mesosystem, but with his own door closed and still in a separate space from the teacher.

- Teachers want more parents to volunteer at school, and recognize those who do as involved

BUT

- Opening the school's doors doesn't cause parents to feel a part of the school community
- 48% BTSN attendance
- 18% of total parent body enrolled in PTO
- After BTSN, 4% contributed 44% of volunteer hours
- Community logged 324.5 hours, parent body logged only 283.5.
- BTSN doesn't inspire involvement

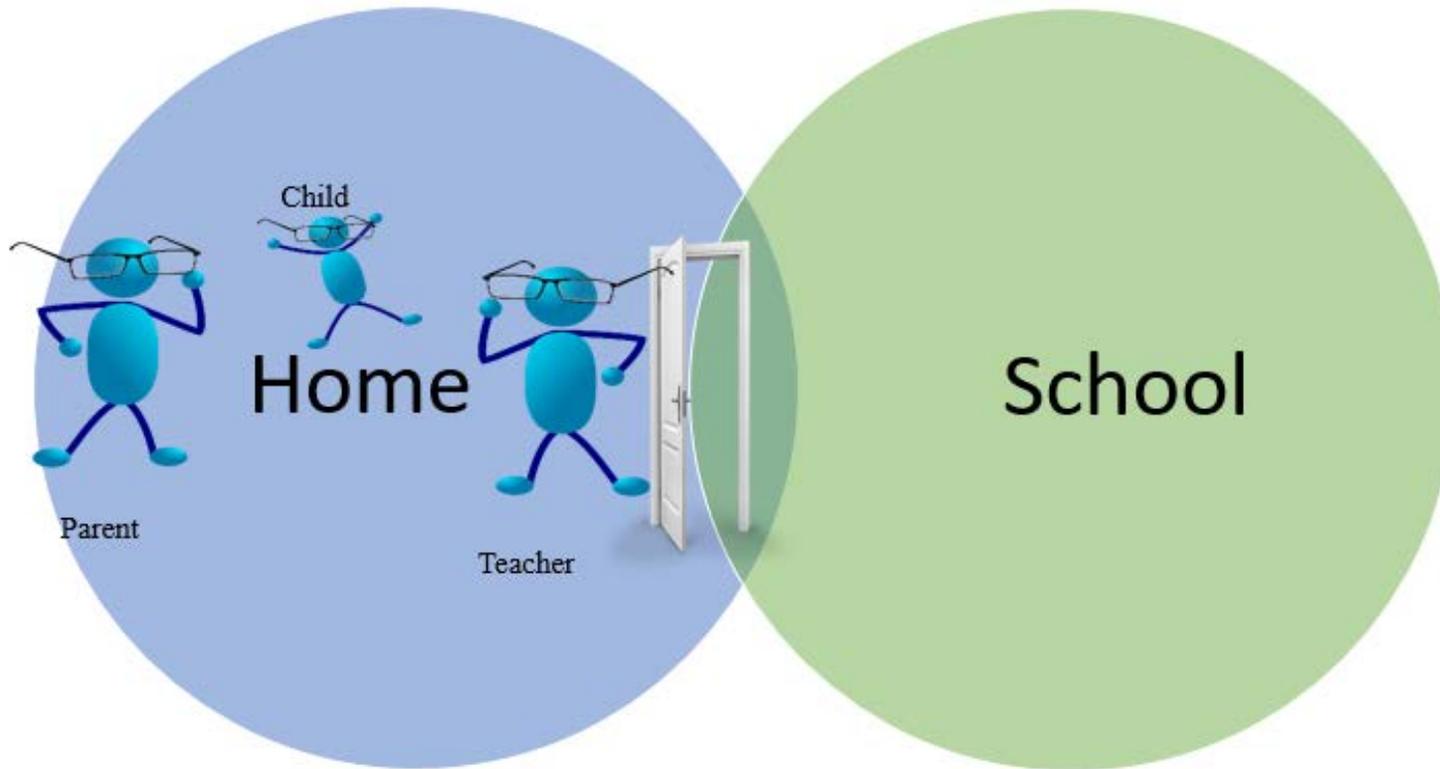
# Home Visits: A better way to open the door

- 149 Home visits completed with 114 families (37% of 306 total families)
- 14 teachers & 13 support staff participated
- PTRS had 68 parent respondents (22% of total families).
- 35% HV, 32% wanted one but hadn't had one, 32% were not interested in HV



- 31% HV families volunteered on campus; 24% of non-HV families volunteered
- 20% of HV families attended Parent Ed; 6% non-HV families attended
- 21% HV families joined PTO; 15% of non-HV families joined

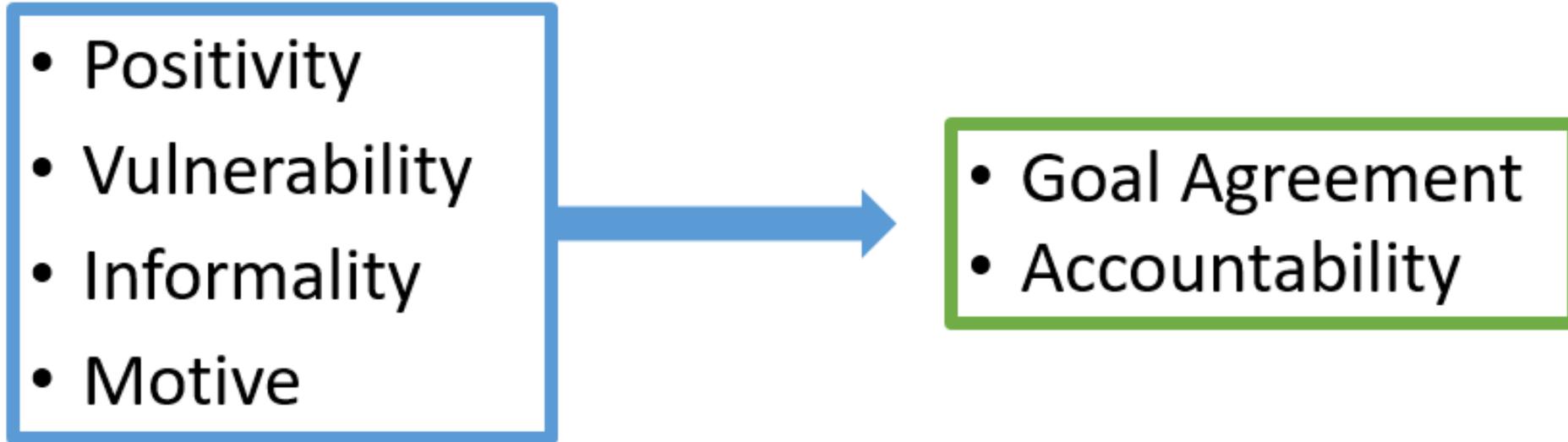
# Home Visits: Realistic View



- Culture
- Family Dynamics
- Parenting Styles
- Child's role in the family
- Home environment, including special things
- Teachers enter as learners
- Settling of ROLES
- Levels the playing field – no power differential (equal ground)
- Let go of assumptions and fears

*Figure 5.* A realistic view from the home visit. This figure shows parent, child, and teacher seeing each other in a new way during a home visit.

# Building Trust



# Communication



webpage

- Resources accessible at home
- No-contact support



text

- Fast, short, easy
- May contain graphics & pictures
- Informal
- Answer now or later
- Google text from office
- Higher among HV participants



email

- Include Admin, save in folder
- General information
- Attachments
- Detail
- Now or later response
- Time to craft and word carefully
- Most frequent use
- Begin individual conversations



face-to-face

- Body language helps
- Most effective at achieving detail, compassion, and teamwork
- Before & after school, hallways, carpool, Walmart...
- Higher comfort for teachers and parents after HV



phone

- Sense of urgency creates anxiety in both parents and teachers
- Parents assume problems
- Improvisation makes teachers nervous
- Teachers fear misinterpretation
- Generally a last resort
- Easier after HV

## What really happened? PTRS survey indicates that...

### No Home Visit Group

- Teachers say 20% of parents tell the teacher when they are pleased
- 64% of parents say they tell the teacher when they are pleased
- 82% tell when they are concerned
- 68% tell when they are worried
- 40% of teachers tell parents when they are pleased



### Home Visit Group

- Teachers say 75% of parents tell the teacher when they are pleased
- 87.5% of parents say they tell the teacher when they are pleased
- 87.5% tell when they are worried or concerned
- 100% of teachers tell parents when they are pleased

Home Visiting pairs communicate as often about being pleased as being worried or concerned. They share **POSITIVE** interactions.

# Effects of Open Doors

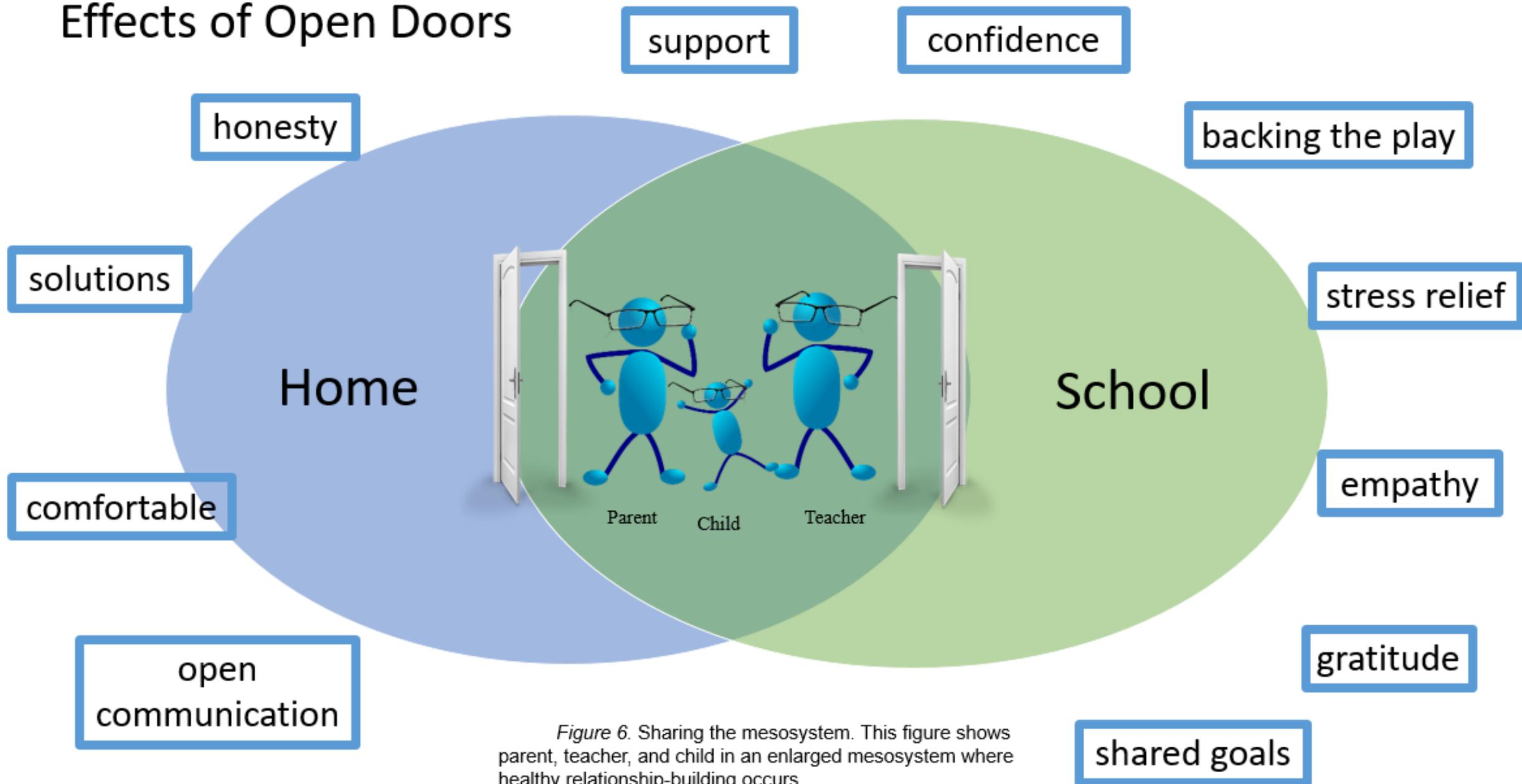


Figure 6. Sharing the mesosystem. This figure shows parent, teacher, and child in an enlarged mesosystem where healthy relationship-building occurs.

# Recommendations

## **School Organization:**

- Voluntary home visits for families and teachers
- Financial compensation
- Visits in teams
- Training and class lists  
(training by end of school year, class lists second week of June)
- Administrative communications about purposes
- Opportunities to discuss & reflect

# Recommendations

## **Strategic Relationship Building for Teachers**

- Create strategies other than home visits for those who choose not to participate
- Create a collaboration plan together with all families
- Focus on the power of positive communications

## **Strategic Relationship Building for Parents**

- Build confidence in the school and teacher
- Create teacher accountability through reciprocal communication – initiate!
- Express gratitude and approval and notice success.