Summary
This article shall address the matter of informing and influencing families in preventing violence, through the school pupils. This requires finding ways of optimizing cooperation between the schools and families in preventing violence, all through the school students. In our study violence is the case to study the involvement family in school.

We have included 400 teachers and 400 parents from rural areas in this study, as well as 300 teachers and 300 parents of fourth classes from the urban areas. They come from the various city schools in Kosovo. A systematic sample was randomly selected, and we have compiled the questionnaire. A team of teachers, who have been previously trained to use this questionnaire, took attitudes of both subjects.

This study integrated quantitative and qualitative methods in its methodology. Questionnaires, interviews and focus-groups were utilized.

Findings show that the level of information of families, both in urban and rural environments, is only at an average. The study concludes that the level of awareness of families has an impact on communication between schools and families.

We contend that the study may offer benefits to the education management institutions, in terms of developing strategies for involving families in schools, all in a view of preventing violence among students.

Keywords: Information, Prevention, Violence, Student
**Kako se informacije o sprečavanju nasilja među učenicima prenose između škole i obitelji**

**Sažetak**

Ovaj članak nastoji odgovoriti na pitanja informiranja i sudjelovanja obitelji u prevenciji učeničkog nasilja u školi. U tu svrhu je potrebno pronaći načine poboljšanja suradnje između škola i obitelji. U ovom istraživanju nasilja stoga se proučava uključivanje obitelji u djelovanje škola.

U istraživanje je bilo uključeno 400 nastavnika i 400 roditelja učenika četvrtog razreda iz ruralnih područja, kao i 300 nastavnika i 300 roditelja iz urbanih područja. Uzorak je slučajno izabran, a upitnik je konstruiran za ovu priliku. Tim nastavnika koji su prethodno bili osposobljeni za korištenje ovog instrumentarija ispitao je stavove o zadanim temama.

U ovom istraživanju integrirane su kvantitativne i kvalitativne metode. Korišteni su upitnici, intervjui i fokus-grupe.

Rezultati pokazuju da se razina informiranosti obitelji, kako u urbanim tako i ruralnim sredinama, uglavnom kreće oko srednjih vrijednosti. Studija utvrđuje da razina svijesti o potrebi komunikacije sa školom u obitelji utječe na suradnju između doma i škole.

Iz svega se zaključuje da studija može ponuditi puteve obrazovnim ustanovama u razvoju strategija za uključivanje obitelji u škole u cilju sprečavanja nasilja među učenicima.

**Ključne riječi:** informiranje, prevencija, nasilje, učenik
Introduction

Today, we are all witnesses of violence in schools, disrespect for the rights of others, and witnesses of one of the reasons preventing the realization of a goal. Therefore, violence amongst peers at school is one of the reasons to increase involvement and cooperation between schools and families. There might be numerous reasons why families must be more involved in schools and other education mechanisms, but one would surely claim that the primary reason is the issue of safety of children at school. While violence amongst students in schools is a rather complex issue, it may be prevented, or at least reduced in level. For this to happen, schools must involve families more.

Violence in schools causes a decrease in students’ academic success, decay in school climate, drop-outs and creates psychological ill-being. In order to prevent violence and intervene appropriately, it is important to know how students, administrators and teachers define violence as well as how, when and how often violence is observed in schools. Moreover, it is essential to obtain administrators’, teachers’ and students’ views about the reasons for violence and their perceived precautions to prevent violence from happening at schools (S. A. Altuna & Bakerb, 2010).

Epstein (1996) and her associates at the Centre on Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University have developed one of the most widely implemented and rigorously researched models. The author uses the term ‘partnership’ instead of ‘participation,’ emphasizing the equal participation of three groups of stakeholders - family, school, and community - who share responsibility for student learning and development through various activities. Six types of partnership activities that their research shows to have an impact on student outcomes are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. This research has been essential in guiding schools in the United States and internationally toward more effective family-school-community partnerships.

According to Raffael, K., & Linda, M. (1999), cooperation in education came with a view of sharing information between families and practitioners. Also, ”various studies have proven that one cannot wait for the parents to build their own awareness and information in helping their children, or to contact with schools/students, but it should be the school that informs and involves the parents in the school-family-community partnership” (Bezati& Hoxhalari, 2011).

Apart from the information it provides to families in terms of achievements, assignments, duties of students, etc., the school must also keep families well informed on any changes in the behaviour of their children. It is important to provide information in cases of violence, but it is even more important to provide information about violence in relation to violence prevention, all through the students themselves. Families may have little or no information on cases of eventual violence between students.
For the authors Brubaker, Brubaker & Link (2001), regular information from school to families on any changes in behaviour of children is more than necessary. Families, the children of which may be aggressive or violent in schools, are informed by school and are the best-suited people to develop a strategy to manage their own children. This information, therefore, is very much necessary for school teachers. Communication should be utilized for building a successful partnership between family and school for preventing violence among students, as there is no collaboration between family, educators and members of the community if there is no mutual communication in this direction, focused on strong points of parents (and students) and on solving of problems together. And, communication can be clear or masked and direct or indirect Epstein, N. B., Bishop, D., Ryan, C., Miller, I., & Keitner, G. I. (1993). Researchers consider that the way we realize school-parent conversation is definitely important in communication between school and family for preventing violence among students. It is certain that in order for this communication to be effective, it must be positive. In this aspect of necessity for positive communication from school toward family, ”for family members to believe that their thoughts and feelings are respected, teachers must engage in two-way communication with family members what is positive and supportive. When relationships with families are built on a foundation of positive, healthy communication, problems that may arise throughout the year are more likely to be resolved in a positive way” (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009, p.499). Communication is quite a complicated issue including speaking, listening, a reflection of feelings, and interpretation of the message in itself (Berger, 2000).

Setting from Timothy H. Brubaker, Ellie Brubaker, Mary Link (2001), Jackson and Foshee (1998) have found that children who perceive that their parents have clear instructions, structured care and support are much less engaged in violent actions with their peers. The educational personnel may offer parental education, and thereby facilitate the parents’ job in setting clear boundaries and supporting their children. This information may be shared with parents at any class or year. In terms of assistance to families in preventing violence between students, and this factor in preventing violence, authors Brubaker, Brubaker, & Link (2001), demand that when informing the families with a view of preventing violence amongst peers, the parents are advised on literature that they must consult in this sense.

The benefits of informing the family are numerous, and what is most important, such awareness reflects in pupils. Furthermore, the sharing of information between families and schools can only deepen cooperation between families and the school. We consider that with sharing of information, one can do much more in preventing violence amongst youth.

According to a study made by Gudlaug, all parents want to be informed on the manner and the persons their children spend their time during or outside a school, and the
majority of parents consider themselves to be well-versed with the school in these terms (G. Erlendsdóttir, 2010).

Jackson and Foshee (1998) have found that children who think that their parents have clear instructions, structure, caring and support from them, were clearly a little less engaged on violent actions with kids their age. The teachers could offer parental education and could make it easier for parents to put clear borders and support their children. This information could be shared with children`s parents on every grade level (Brubaker, Brubaker, & Link, 2001)

Why is such information given to families important in preventing violence amongst youth? Teachers get information from the family, and in this manner, they obtain the essence. This way, the teacher weighs the information obtained from the family against his/her own knowledge, building upon three points of reference: experience within his/her own family, families with whom he/she has worked with in the past, and contacts with the present child or family.

A KEC study undertaken in Kosovo shows that parents had never been given any information from the school on the ways they would help their children in learning, the school itself, the rules of conduct, and course syllabi. According to such study, schools fail to provide even superficial information on matters such as health, drugs, violence, etc., and when such sharing occurs, information only covers parents already involved in school mechanisms. Nevertheless, based on the same KEC study, half of the parents state that they never obtained any written information from school on attendance of their children, written assessments, grade cards, and final reports. When addressing the importance of this factor in the school-family relationship authors Shalpey K. & Case. B (2004) underline the need of being careful when sharing information with the family on their child, since one must avoid blaming and judging the family, but also clearly and shortly state the situation, and illustrate with concrete examples. The family must understand that any given problem will not be resolved within days or weeks of sharing information. In this regard, authors recommend that teachers have in mind the feelings of parents/family when sharing information, and then try to concentrate on resolving the problem during the conversation. Again, even the solution will come a bit later. It is rather obvious that this factor is highly relevant, and therefore, one must have regard for its delicacy.

Researches show that there exist different ways on how the school can offer information about the different ways that can affect the level of children`s studying. Anyways, families can have more limited access than the teachers, on this information. The school can be the one who spreads the important information by children`s help. Most of the families want specific information about the activities that they can do with their children. The teachers can also give helpful instructions even for creating an environment that
stimulates the child’s success, like the setting of the homework time, reading on free
time, exploring different educative topics, and also limiting the time of standing in front
of the TV or video games. Schools can also share information on community services
and activities that require support and an extra opportunity for everyone in the family to
have a lesson (Stacy Callender, MA, & Annie Hansen, MA et al., 2004)

Why is the information about preventing violence between students, given to the family
important? Teachers get information from the family, in this way they take the meaning
of information too. So, the teacher measures the information from the family with their
awareness, by three reference points: the experience in their family, families with who
they have worked before, long recognition of the child or the family.

But when we talk about the importance of this factor on cooperation school-work,
the authors Shalpey, K. & Case, B. (2004) let us know that we should be careful when
informing the family about their child because we should avoid blaming and judging
the child. But also declare the state clearly, shortly and with examples about the child’s
attitude. The family should understand that solving the problem cannot happen just a
few days or weeks after the teacher gives them the information for the child. In this case
the authors recommend that while giving the information, preliminarily we should be
aware of the parent’s / family’s feelings, then to try to focus while talking about solving
the problem. Again, solving it will come a little slowly. We notice that this factor is so
important, so we should be so aware of the delicate side of it.

There are many advantages of informing the family from school and they reflect, most
importantly, at the children. Also, enough information that the family takes from school
and the job that it does, just make the cooperation between family and school better.
”Like the professionalism of the teachers also parents’ awareness about their child can
open ways for a useful educational partnership” (Dusi, P. 2012). We consider that by
informing we can do a lot about preventing the violence between students.

Survey’s Methodology

Operational definitions – Family is a group of individuals related by blood, marriage
or cohabitation approval. A family should be more involved and participate in school.
School is the educational institution in which the organized activity of upbringing and
education of the young generation takes place, establishing the highest level of school
role through cooperation with the family. Cooperation between school and family are
activities and cooperation agreements between them to achieve common goals. With
the number of meeting of family school-meetings, we mean the average of the meetings
that the school has with the family within a school year. Prevention means to avoid
violence from the beginning. Violence among students is an expression, behaviour or
action of a pupil or more, in one or more students.
Methodology
This is a quantitative/qualitative study. In order to recognize the problem in its complexity, the mixed methodology was used: the study of literature, a collection of contextual material, surveying subjects. Using these methodologies was seen as necessary to meet the breadth of opinions, experiences, and practices on violence among students in particular, and information family-school collaboration in preventing violence among students.

Research Design
The objective of the study was the discovery of attitudes, views of family and school about the level of school information family and disclosure of the relationship between this factor – information and family and the level of contacts with the school to prevent violence among students.

The aim of the study
The purpose of this study is to determine the level of effect of information families get by school for cooperation in order to prevent violence among students at school.

Study Questions. Does the family information from the school level meetings between school and family prevent violence among students? Are there significant differences on this issue between the family and school environment when families come from urban and rural areas?

Research hypothesis
The level of meetings between school and family to prevent the violence among students is influenced by information the family gets from school.

The importance of the study
This study is important because it affects the information family by school and it establishes the contacts with the family. Also, note that the relationship between these variables is the same in urban and rural areas.

Limitations of the study. This study may be limited by the following factors:
- Teachers may be cautious in providing information in collaboration with the family.
- Restrictions on giving honest responses may also encounter family.
Population and sample
The population of the study consists of teachers and parents of the eight classes of lower secondary school in Kosovo. A population is determined numerically. The type of sample is a stratified random sample. Stratification is done by the respective geographic regions and according to urban/rural (two-dimensional layered sample). The study analyzed the factor of the school information family in a vast geography that represents the entire population of the country. The number of samples for each layer is made in order to fulfil the formula $30/2 \times$ number from geographical regions, while the method of selection was a random one (proportional to the number of parents and students in school). It uses Lahiri methods (linear cumulative) of sampling. The sample included 300 parents of fourth class school classes of the urban environment in Kosovo and 400 parents of school rural environment of the fourth class of seven regions of Kosovo.

Instruments applied
Instruments used in the study were a questionnaire - through which we came to the findings of information of the family collaboration with school to prevent violence between students.

The questionnaire consists of five Likert scales as “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree” and the part labelled family trust in school, effective communication, family information, decision-making, support the success of students, the school welcomed family and vice versa, separation of duties and responsibilities, previous experience with the school family. The questionnaire was developed by us as the researchers.

The procedure of data collection
Data were collected from a group of professors who were trained prior to data collection. The study is divided into two phases. In the first phase is done by examination of existing literature on the problem. In the second phase we applied questionnaires through which we received the findings of the school welcoming family in violence prevention in school. Before conducting a survey we respected the requirements for quantitative research ethics, such as confidentiality, anonymity, the consent of the persons involved, the right to privacy and the opportunity of attraction...

Data analysis procedure
Data- study findings were analyzed by two methods. Initially, the descriptive statistical analysis was used and later on the correlation study was done. Pirson’s
correlation was used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the dependent variable - level of meetings between family and school and family information to the school.

Findings

The results of our study show that the level of information coming from the school to urban families is only perceived as average. Only 3.2% of urban families perceive the information coming from the school to be at a high level, while 62.5% consider it to be poor, while 30% consider it to be average. Mean responses in assessing the level of information sharing with the schools in urban families were 2.6294 (DS. 55160).

Then, 64.8% of urban area teachers consider the information they share with the families to be „average”. 22.5% consider such rate to be „high”, while 12.8% think its „poor”. Results show that the majority of teachers consider that their own level of sharing with the families is at an average level, not high. The mean responses in assessing the level of information sharing, according to teachers, in urban areas were 2.0973 (DS. 58654).

Further, one of the study’s focuses was the standing of families in rural areas on the level of information shared by the school. According to the findings in table no. 48, 36.5% of the families surveyed consider information-sharing from the schools to be „poor”, 28.4% consider the information sharing to be „high”, and 34.8% to be „medium”. We see that information sharing between schools and rural area families show some difference between „medium” and „poor” levels, while the „medium” level dominates. Rural area families consider the information sharing from schools to be of a medium quality. Mean responses in assessing the level of information sharing with schools in rural families were 2.0178 (DS. 84647).

Even the teachers of rural areas state the same perception of the families of the same environment. They consider school information sharing to be at a medium level. As per responses of teachers in rural areas, from a total of 315 teachers responding to this question, 117 teachers, or expressed in percentage, 17.9.0%, express the opinion that the information sharing from the schools is at a „medium” level. 193 teachers, or 29.0%, consider it to be at a „high” level, and 1.2% „poor”. According to these records, it seems that rural schools do not ensure sufficient information sharing. The mean responses in assessing the level of information sharing, according to teachers, in rural areas, as per table 8, were 2.5968 (DS. 52272).

Here we have some discordance in perception. According to the findings, families of both areas state that they are not provided with information on prevention of violence amongst students at school, while teachers have a different perception on such a matter,
according to them, the families are given sufficient information on matters related to students and families.

The variable analysis takes us towards identifying gaps, which lessens the weight of this factor, but also in finding the first reason for the family being informed through the Parents Council, teachers, etc., but not being informed on the functions of such councils. This means that the information is not complete; it is formal, and consequently ineffective. All schools surveyed give the result that 176 teachers have read the Kosovo Law on Education. This means that teachers are not aware of the legal aspects. Families also show a poor level of awareness on legal information, but this is less concerning when compared to teachers which are bound to know such terms. Meanwhile, all directors surveyed seem to be aware of legal terms. Also, we have identified the fact that schools do not offer families proper information on forms and options of cooperation. The main concern in relation to the prevention of violence amongst youth is the fact that the school does not provide regular and continuous information to families on the potential changes in behaviour of children.

The correlation between the meetings and the level of information in urban areas is recorded at: (r= .336 p < 0.0). This is a moderate, yet statistically relevant correlation. We have also studied the correlation between the ratio of meetings and information levels in urban areas and Table 2 data, and we learned that the rate is: (r= .133, p < 0.00), which may be a weak relation, but statistically relevant.

Table 1. The number of meetings and the level of information between teachers from urban areas and family, according to the teachers’ attitudes

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<th>Information</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
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Table 2. The number of meetings and the level of information between teachers from urban areas and family, according to family attitudes

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Further, we engaged in a correlation analysis of information shared and the meetings between schools and families. The correlation rate between the meetings and information levels in rural areas was recorded at: \( r = .249, p < 0.00 \), which may be weak, but again statistically relevant. All these data are presented with the table no. 9. In terms of the correlation between the meetings and information shared in rural areas, as presented in table 9, the rate is: \( r = .152, p < 0.00 \), again a weak link, but yet again statistically relevant.

Table 3. The number of meetings and the level of information between teachers from rural areas and family, according to the teachers’ attitudes

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Table 4. The number of meetings and the level of information between teachers from rural areas and family, according to family attitudes

Interviews have revealed a rather worrying issue and the fact that a part of the psychological violence among students is not reported in family or school. It seems that the reason for not denouncing it is family’s lack of information about psychological violence and its consequences. But, this non-denunciation, could it be that it enables violence among them „stand tall“?

During interviews with family, they thought they were familiar with the concept of violence but it resulted that they were not able to define it as a notion. They also lacked information about the consequences of violence. A part of them are informed but this information is not specific. When we are at information, through interviewing family and school, we understand that the reason for violence among students is the fact that students are not informed about the consequences for them in case of violence. Further, one of the school directors considers that „even education law itself does not clearly define duties and responsibilities of students in school. If we analyze the law of primary
Worrying is the fact that while the interviewees declare that violence is harmful and it must be stopped, they are not informed and show surprise when it is talked about preventing it. Oddly, we encounter the same situation among teachers as well. We notice a „hopelessness” toward preventing violence among students in school. A teacher even states that „in our time we have also teased each other”, another teacher says that „it is difficult to deal with this generation”, while two parents think that „violence between students is a little bit exaggerated”.

Violence among students in school is prohibited by law, but this study finds that family lacks adequate information about the consequences of violence. A school does not fulfil its duty at this point. In one of the schools in the capital city, teachers are satisfied with the fact that there is some information displayed on notice boards in the school hall, which indeed, is not nearly enough. The findings suggest paying more attention to this issue. Interviewing with parents reveals that school should contact the family more often. „They can inform us about any change in a child’s behaviour. Today, we have internet, phones, but they do not contact us about violence, only when the problem becomes very serious” (Parent).

Interviews with school directors reveal that there has been no organization of training for teachers and directors about the importance of involving the family in school, or about preventing violence among students at school. From interviews with family, it is found that they want to be more involved in preventing violence among students in school. One of the often stated pronunciations about this issue is: „We are busy with work, but if they are afternoon meetings, why not? From 39 interviewed families, 70% of them state that they lack information about preventing violence among students, while there are no families which declare that they are involved in any school activity about preventing violence in school”. From teachers and school directors’ side, interviews enable us to understand that school has no strategy and has not organized any activity about preventing violence among students. We encountered such position in 88% of the interviewed families. Among teachers, we have the statement that „we try to contact family”, but they do not explicitly talk about any real activity in this direction.

Conclusions and recommendations

An important finding of the study included the information sharing from school to family and vice-versa, as a major factor in ensuring involvement and cooperation between schools and families, with a view of preventing violence amongst youth. The results of this study reflect the fact that the information shared by schools to families is
not at the desired level. As shown in the study, information shared by school, in general terms, including matters related to students, or even those related to violence, is not perceived as sufficient, or it is even found to be poor. Families are not informed on ways of preventing violence through their own children. On the other hand, teachers consider that it is well-placed in this regard.

In this factor, there is a visible discordance of perceptions. The analysis of quantitative findings shows that: 62% of urban families have the perception that the information from their schools is poor. 30% of the families perceive the level of information to be of medium level, while from a total of 300 surveyed only 3.2% perceive the level of information sharing from the schools to be high. Also, according to teachers in urban areas, information to the families is of a medium level, according to 64% of the teachers in these areas, while 22% perceive it to be „high” level of information shared with the families. According to table 66 data, from 393 families surveyed in rural areas, 36% of these families perceive the level of information shared from the schools to be „poor”, while 34% consider it to be „medium”. The positions of rural families on the level of information shared by the schools do not have distinct differences in levels. The information shared by the schools in rural areas, according to the families in these areas, vary between medium and poor levels. Teachers of the same areas assess the information sharing to be of medium quality. From 315 surveyed, 117 (17.9%) perceive the level of information shared with the families to be „medium”, 193 state that the level of information is „high”, and only 5 of the teachers say it is „poor”. According to rural teachers, information shared by their schools with families is of „high” quality – meaning they provide sufficient information to families.

The study shows that there is no coordination, or such cooperation is not properly established in terms of preventing violence amongst students, while there is insufficient sharing of information in this regard. The spheres of influencing students remain divided. Families are not influenced by school information on violence in preventing such violence in their children.

Our schools place their attention on the communication of student achievements at school, or only communicating the scores of students, but not on informing families on most efficient ways of cooperating with them in awareness raising on violence amongst students. The levels of information sharing from the school in terms of violence amongst youth are shown to be rather concerning for families. On the other hand, if families whose children are violent or violated, would be more involved (present) with schools, they would be well informed on any changes in the behaviour of their children. Further, when families are well informed of the behaviour of their children at school, be it related to harassment, slander or any other problems children have, there is bound to be more cooperation with schools, and prevention of violence between children becomes possible.
Descriptive data renders us aware that school is rather formalistic in informing families, while qualitative data reflect a lack of information. Deriving from an analysis of interviews, schools provide little or no information to families in terms of preventing violence between children at school. On the other hand, correlation data render clear that information sharing is an essential factor of statistical relevance of the quality of school-family relationships. The correlation results take us to the requirement of improving the level of information shared from school, which we consider to be of primary importance. The lack of information, to be shared from school to family and from family to school, on violence amongst students and prevention thereof, can only result in lack of results in prevention, or failure of prevention of violence. No prevention can be imagined without cross-referenced information.

The study shows that schools insufficiently inform families on general matters. Information shared by schools with families is found to be deficient. Therefore, we recommend:

- Information sharing between schools and families is a two-way street. Families must keep schools well informed of any changes in behaviour of children. Schools must keep families well informed on any changes in behaviour or achievement in students, compared to other students and others in general. Teachers/schools should not miss out on any changes in behaviour, even if it is viewed as irrelevant at a first glance. In this regard, we mean changes found in the emotional and physical aspects of students in relation to others, communication ways, information provided on behaviour of students, their achievements, etc. With regards to providing such information to families, the recommendation is for direct and individual meetings with families. Identification and sharing of information, timely response against violent behaviour of students, would surely be the best ways of preventing violence amongst students, in cooperation with the families.

- School must necessarily inform the family with ways they can work with the child, in terms of preventing violence through children themselves. In this way, except for information sharing, awareness would be increased, while the highest level of involvement of families and schools would be achieved in terms of preventing violence, a higher engagement of families with schools, which is our aim as scholars in preventing such violence. In this regard, schools may act in different ways, including activities organized in schools for students and families, leaflets provided to families, teachers and students, brochures with detailed information on violence and its prevention. Another possibility for school is to present different statements on positive relations between students in halls and classrooms in a school, and what is most important, to provide families with information on alternative methods of preventing violence through students themselves.
• Results of the study suggest ways of informing families on causes of violence between students, including internet and social networks. In focus groups, this turned out a primary reason for violence amongst youth in schools. In this regard, we recommend cooperation with families in raising awareness of families on this source of violence and keeping control of children in retaining a positive use of such resources. School principals must find ways to inform families with this factor of violence amongst students, by involving all families, and not only those that have been regular in parent meetings or individual meetings. A good possibility in this regard would be in various proper information programs on the consequences of online social networks and violent games on the internet and TV.

• Schools may also provide families with specific information on activities they can organize with children in terms of preventing violence amongst students. Teachers can provide useful information also on creating environments that are conducive to positive behaviour, such as time-setting for home assignments, reading at spare times, and exploring further lessons, and limiting times spent before TV or video-games.
References


