Some Inferences for Educational Programs from Primary School Children's Family Drawings and Verbal Metaphors

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This study, which was conducted to make inferences for educational programs by determining the family speeches and drawings of primary school students, was designed employing the understanding of the basic qualitative research. The study included 126 primary school students. The family verbal metaphors and family drawing (draw-narrate) techniques were used to gather research data. The data was analyzed using techniques for content and document analysis. It was observed that the primary school students' family linguistic metaphors could be categorized into six themes: nuclear family, extended family, fight, cooperation, enjoyable action done together, and love. The first graders produced more metaphors for the theme of enjoyable action together and fourth graders produced more metaphors for the theme of love. Following an analysis of the family drawings, it was found that the drawings revealed details about the development, emotions, sorts of families, and interactions between family members. It was also observed that children mostly drew family structures consisting of parents and children. The said family drawings contain more information than verbal metaphors. Only six of the 126 metaphors produced are negative. It was determined that the family discussions and family drawings both accurately expressed and reflected the positive values of the educational programs. Future studies should, as was advised, study both family drawings and potential family drawing-related issues.

Introduction

In order to raise individuals in accordance with social and universal ideals, prepare them for the future, and other goals, education programs serve as national road maps. For this reason, one of the topics addressed within the framework of providing individuals with values and knowledge, and skills is the family. While education programs in general aim to raise individuals who have acquired root values such as love-respect-happiness, the Family themes of the Social Sciences and Turkish Language Teaching Programs in particular aim to provide children with conceptual knowledge of family and to increase their awareness of domestic relations. In the area of values, there is also the issue of how to build connections within the family that are founded on love, respect, and trust. Children's cognitive and affective schemas regarding the family can therefore be shaped in accordance with the values and knowledge

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they pick up from both their family interactions and their academic experiences. Analyzing the metaphors these schemas produce is one method to comprehend and expose them.

Family Concept

Although family is generally defined as a bond between a man and a woman who care for their children and prepare them for the future (Berk, 2013), it is known that there is no single-family structure and that the meaning of family varies across groups or societies (Tillman & Nam, 2008). For example, Duxbury et al. (2007) considered the family in four classes. In families consisting of a single parent and a child whose basic structure has changed, the roles and relationships within the family may also differ significantly. It is an undeniable fact that environmental factors also have an impact on the family. For this reason, the context, which consists of internal and external conditions that affect the individual from development to learning, is becoming increasingly important for educational and developmental psychologists (Wolfolk-Hoy, 2015). Researchers generally try to explain the concept of family from a social systems perspective, which is quite similar to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Berk, 2013). Those who adopt this approach argue that the shaping effect between the family and the child is reciprocal and that this effect takes place directly or indirectly. Similar views can be found in Vygostky's socio-cultural theory (Miller, 2008). Relationships between mother, father, and child can be shaped according to the personal characteristics-attitudes of the individuals in the family, family types, socio-economic status of the family, parental chronic diseases, etc., as well as factors originating from the child can play a role in these relationships (see Hilton, Desrochers, & Devall, 2001; Khoshgoftar, Khodabakhshi-Koolaee, & Sheikhi, 2022; Knutsson, Enskär, Andersson-Gäre, & Golsäter, 2017; Spigelman, Spigelman, & Englesson, 1993).

Drawing and Family Drawings as a Means of Development and Expression

Drawings have long been used as tools for understanding a range of issues about children's graphical and perceptual development, human relationships, and psychological effects. Drawings have been recognized as reflecting children's views, experiences, and understandings of events and phenomena (Einarsdottir, 2007). By analyzing pictures, information about children's physical, social-emotional, and intellectual development can be obtained (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011). Drawing is also a way to understand the inner world and emotions of the child (Akay, 2022; Oğuz, 2020). The history of children's drawings from graphical development to their acceptance as a means of creating meaning and reflecting contextual structure is explained in detail by Einarsdottir, et al. (2009). It is known that the first study on children's drawings was Lowenfeld's (1947) study (Deaver, 2009), which categorized the stages of linear development into five basic stages. In later studies, drawings were examined as a way of understanding children's parental attachment styles (Fury, Carlson, & Suroufe, 1997). Drawing criteria developed for children's family attachment styles were also used in later studies to determine teacher-student mental attachment styles (Zee, Moritz Rudasill, & Roorda, 2020).

Children's ideal school (Loureiro, Grecu, de Moll, & Hadjar, 2020), experiences of starting school (Einarsdottir et al, 2009; Kaplun, 2019), perception of natural disaster (Kay, 2023), perceptions of teachers (Aykaç, 2012), teacher-student relationship (Bombi, Cannoni, Gallì, & Di Norcia, 2020), and comparison of children's school pictures (Metin & Aral, 2020) were analyzed through pictures. It has also been suggested to examine drawings when determining young children's psychomotor development and color use (Trifunović, Pešić, & Čičević, 2022). Family drawings also reflect children's feelings about family relationships, and

emotions, which are metaphorical constructs, are revealed through drawing metaphors (Mair, Winter, Reed, 2014). However, drawing is not a preferred way of communication for all children, and rich meanings can be created through a draw-and-tell practice (Einarsdottir et al., 2009). To understand the emotions in drawings, drawings should be supported with narratives, detailed questions about story roots, and other tools (Wolcott, Williford, & Hartz-Mandel, 2019). Based on the results of the above-mentioned studies, we hypothesize that it may be possible to determine the perceptions, developmental tendencies, and cognitive schemas of children aged 7-10 toward the concept of family by using drawings and verbal metaphors together.

Children's drawings have also been recognized as research tools in determining child and family relationships. For example, Dunn, O'Conner, and Levy (2002) found that 7-9-year-old children living in stepparent and single-parent families were more likely to exclude their parents, while children living with their parents were more likely to draw them together. Some of the studies have shown that competition between the sexes and family problems are reflected in the drawings of 10-12-year-old children living in divorced families and that the father's influence on the child continues as father figures are drawn larger in both divorced and non-divorced families (Spigelman, et al., 2008). The results of cross-cultural comparisons of children's family drawings indicated differences in the number of family members, the size of family member depictions, the detail, and emotional expressions of facial drawings (Gernhardt, Rübeling, & Keller, 2013), and attachment representations (Gernhardt, Keller, & Rübeling, 2016).

It was observed that children with special needs positioned themselves more abstractly than the family in family drawings, some of them eliminated their siblings in the drawings while others were accepting, and undesirable emotions and behaviors such as violence-jealousy and competition between siblings were reflected in the drawings (Elumar, 2021). In a study conducted with children aged 5-13, it was determined that the details in family drawings differed with gender and age (Cherney, Seiwert, Dickey, & Flichtbeil, 2006). In a study in which the participants were first and fourth-grade primary school students, it was determined that children mostly drew their friends as their favorite person and this rate increased with age (Tozduman-Yaralı, Özkan, & Aytar, 2016). Papandreu (2013) considers children's drawings as a process of meaning-making through thinking and communication skills in the light of social-cultural theory. For this reason, drawings can be used not only as an indicator of biological development or psychological state but also as an assessment tool for learning. As a result, it can be said that children's family drawings can be used as a tool in the evaluation of development, family structure, family relationships, and learning-teaching.

Family as a Subject and Value Area of Primary School Education Programs

In order to accomplish defined objectives, education programs include the subjects to be taught, learning-teaching processes, assessment-evaluation activities, etc. One of the most important functions of education is acculturation. Education programs attempt to convey values to future generations. For this reason, the essential values of Turkish Education Programs have constituted the general focus of the curricula. Because education strives to raise people who have assimilated social culture as well as impart knowledge. It might be claimed that the acquisition of fundamental values like love and respect, accountability, and altruism for future generations is given priority by the Turkish national education program. For this goal, the theme "My Family in Turkey" and basic knowledge and values relating to family were added in the Social Sciences Curriculum (MoE, 2018b). Again, it is advised to

include Family and Family Communication in the learning-teaching process and course material of both Our National Culture and Communication topics in the Turkish Lesson Teaching Programs (MoE, 2018a). One of the practice venues for social and universal principles is both home and school. For this reason, implicit experiences are another way that value is transferred. There is no denying the family's importance in the transmission of values. The outcome is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological viewpoint as well. The home is where children first learn fundamental moral ideas like those articulated in the primary school curricula as "the sum of principles that shape the viewpoint," such as love, respect, and altruism. Nonetheless, it can be hypothesized that the concepts taught in school classes may cause children to establish cognitive schemas about the concept of family, and that these schemas may be mirrored in children's family drawings by differentiating according to age.

Current Study

One of the tools for understanding the meanings that primary school children attribute to concepts is the drawings they make. In the literature, a limited number of studies were found in which children's family metaphors were collected using both verbal and drawing techniques. In some of these studies, family metaphors of primary school children were investigated verbally. The other part of the studies aimed to determine the linear development of children's drawings about family or to analyze the family concept narratives of younger children. In a study in which preschool children's perceptions of teachers were determined through drawings, it was suggested to analyze the family perceptions of children of different age groups (primary school, secondary school, etc.) through drawings (Kızıltaş & Halmatow, 2017). In several studies conducted for different purposes, children's drawings were supported with techniques such as story stem completion (Kallitsoglou, Repana, & Shiakou, 2022) and look-draw-write (Stokas, Strezou, Malandrakis, & Papadopoulu, 2017). Therefore, this study aims to analyze primary school children's family drawings, a topic that has been suggested in previous studies, and to compare these drawings with verbal family metaphors and to make inferences in terms of the education program. In this study, drawings were supported by children's explanations (draw-write). By examining children's family metaphors, it will be possible to examine the meanings that 7-10-year-old children attribute to the concept of family from a developmental perspective, to compare drawings and verbal metaphors, and to make inferences by evaluating educational programs in terms of values and achievements. The results of the research will guide childhood professionals, education program developers, and practitioners. In this study, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How are primary school students' verbal family metaphors and under which themes are they grouped?
- How did primary school students' verbal family metaphor themes change according to grade level?
- How did primary school children draw their families?
- What are the prominent qualities in primary school children's family drawings according to their grade levels?
- Did primary school children's verbal family metaphors and family drawings reflect similar situations (emotion/event/family type, etc.) in terms of content?
- What content did primary school children's family metaphors and drawings reflect from the perspective of educational programs?

Method

Research Methodology

This research was conducted through adopting the philosophy of the basic qualitative research. The basic qualitative research is used to uncover the meaning of individuals' experiences (Merriam, 2009). Data collection is not done according to a specific design in general design studies (Creswell, 2015). The basic qualitative research focuses on how individuals construct meaning through their interactions with the social world (Merriam, 2009). Since this study aimed to determine children's verbal family metaphors, reveal the common meanings they attribute, and identify the attributions in family drawings, it can be said that the basic qualitative research is appropriate for the study.

Participants of the Study

The research was conducted in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The purposive sampling method was used in the selection of the participants. Participants were selected from each grade level of primary school. The participants of the study were 126 primary school students studying in two public primary schools in a district of Sakarya province. The schools were of similar quality and close to the center. Of the participants, 33 were first-grade (girl 18, boy 15), 37 were second-grade (girl 20, boy 17), 33 were third-grade (girl 17, boy 16), and 32 were fourth-grade students (girl 18, boy 14). Of the participants, 64 (50.79%) were girls, and 62 (50.21%) were boys. Of the participants, %26,19 were first-grade (girl %54, boy 46), %29,36 were second-grade (girl %54, boy %46), %26,19 were third-grade (girl %51, boy %49), and %25,39 were fourth-grade students (girl %56, boy %44).

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through an interview form prepared by the researcher and drawings made by primary school students. The interview form included two questions: The interview form included two questions: "1. *What do you think family means?"* and "2. *Why did you liken family to ....?"* in response to the question *"Family means ....; because......?"*. After the interviews, the children were asked to draw a family picture: *"Can you draw a family picture?"*. The child was then asked to explain the elements in the picture: "*What did you draw? What is this? Who are the people in this picture? What are they doing"* etc. Children's explanations about family drawings were noted on the drawings. The opinions of two external experts were obtained for the validity of the interview questions. Interviews and document reviews were used to collect the data. Data diversity is ensured. The reliability of the study was tried to be increased in this way (Patton, 2002).

Data Collection Process

First, schools were invited to participate in the study. In the schools that accepted the invitation, teachers were contacted, and voluntary consent forms were sent to the parents. Of the total 140 forms sent, 126 were returned. Then, children were interviewed in school environments on the specified days and their verbal family metaphors were determined. After having relaxing conversations with the children, they were asked *"What do you think family means? Why did you liken family to ....?"* and the verbal responses of the children were recorded on paper. The children were then asked to draw a family picture. Children's drawings of the concept of family were not interfered with, and they were allowed to draw a figure to represent the family. For this purpose, A4-sized white paper and pencils were

distributed to the children. The children colored their drawings with their colored crayons. At the end of the drawing, the children were asked *"What did you draw? Who are the people in this picture? What are they doing?"* etc. and asked to tell the story of their drawing. The children's answers were noted on the papers by the practitioner and marks were made. Each participant was interviewed for approximately 40 minutes. Data collection took about 1.5 months. Children were not allowed to receive help during their drawings. They were provided with the necessary conditions to do the drawings on their own.

Data Analysis

Content and document analysis techniques were used to analyze the verbal metaphor and family drawings data obtained from the study. The summarizing approach of the content analysis technique, which is widely used in qualitative research, involves counting keywords and interpreting the underlying meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this study, firstly, metaphorical discourses and family pictures produced by children about family were coded, frequency values were calculated, and themes were reached. In the analysis of discursive family metaphors, children's discourse explanations were taken into consideration to determine the appropriate themes if the metaphors were similar. In the analysis of children's family drawings, it was tried to comply with the criteria determined by reviewing the previous literature to a great extent. Various evaluation criteria were developed by associating children's drawing development with drawing development, emotions, etc. For example, studies on children's drawing development consider Lowenfeld and Brittain's (1987) criteria (Şermin & Aral, 2020). Another approach is the study by Fury et al. (1997), which identified a common list of criteria for emotional markers in children's family drawings. This study was also adapted for teacher drawings (Zee et al. 2020). Similarly, a list of criteria for teacher drawings was developed by Aykaç (2012). In the current study, since it was aimed to determine the relationship between children's family drawings and their metaphors, the criteria in Aykaç's (2012) study were adapted to family drawings. From these criteria, eight themes were evaluated: children's ways of distinguishing the gender of family members, indicators of their physical characteristics, the height and proximity of family members (unlike Aykaç's study, the proximity dimension was added to this item), gestures and facial expressions, the place where family members are located, the action performed by family members in drawings, and the objects around family members in drawings.

The indicators pointed out by the drawings were interpreted in the light of the existing literature (Fury et al. 1997) and the perspective of the goals and objectives of the curriculum-lesson teaching programs. The criteria for family drawings were evaluated by an expert in the field of art psychology and the criteria were finalized after the necessary corrections were made. Since the study in question was about the family, the drawings were evaluated for the presence or absence of people, proximity-distance of people, height, representations of people outside the family, facial expressions, and non-human elements. These evaluations were interpreted with children's verbal metaphors and themes. Two (2) external experts were consulted to ensure that both verbal metaphors and family drawings met the criteria. The first expert in the field of education placed the family metaphors produced by the children under the eight themes determined by the researcher and checked their conformity with the researcher's evaluation. Accordingly, the percentage of agreement between the two experts was calculated as .80 for verbal metaphors. The other expert from the field of art evaluated the drawings according to the criteria. Accordingly, the percentage of agreement for the drawings was calculated as .92. Since these values are above .70, it can be said that the study is reliable. Unlike previous studies, the colors used by children in the drawings and

exaggerated drawings were not included in the evaluation. This is because the study did not aim to assess global pathology (Fury et al. 1997).

Findings

Primary school students' verbal family metaphors are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Verbal Family Metaphors of Primary School Children

Theme	Grade				
	1st Grade Metaphors(f)	2nd Grade Metaphors(f)	3rd Grade Metaphors (f)	4th Grade Metaphors(f)	Total
Nuclear family	House(f=5), plane tree(f=1), watermelon(f=1), family(f=1), colorful house(f=1), snowman family(f=1)	Sibling(f=1), tree branches(f=1), to protect(f=1)	mother-father-child(f=1), pretty(f=1), house(f=2), tree(f=1), value(f=1), first photo(f=1), to be strong(f=1)	Helicopter(f=1), mother-father-sibling(f=1), cooperation(f=1), protection shield(f=1), apartment(f=1)	26
Total	10	3	8	5	
Extended family	human herd (f=1),	holding on to a rope (f=1),	Relatives (f=3), clouds(f=1), leaves(f=1), overcoming challenges(f=1)	Family tree(f=1), a huge tree(f=1),	10
Total	1	1	6	2	
Fight-hate	-	-	bad family(f=1),	Monster(f=1), war(f=1), life(f=1), fight(f=2),	6
Total	-	-	1	5	6
Love	-	Cat(f=2), love-respect(f=10), caterpillar(f=1), cake(f=1)	Love(=9), butterfly(f=1), dear friend(f=1), heart(f=1), gathering my family(f=1), fraternity(f=1)	Happiness(f=6), flower(f=1), BJK(f=1), warm(f=1), universe(f=1), heart(f=2),	40
Total	-	14	14	12	
Cooperation	-	Cooperation(f=2)	-	solidarity(f=3),	5
Total	-	2	-	3	
Enjoyable actions done together	Going to the park(f=2), eating at a restaurant(f=1), going to grandma's(f=1), staying at home(f=1), holiday(f=2), picnic(f=3), playing games(f=2), going to the park(f=1), cycling(f=1), watching the sky(f=1), eating(f=1)	Being together(f=3), picnic(f=2), playing games(f=1), traveling(f=8)	chatting(f=2), traveling(f=1), Silence(f=1),	traveling(f=3), memories(f=1), picnic (f=1),	39
Total	17	14	4	5	
Grand T.	27	34	33	32	126

According to Table 1, first graders mostly produced metaphors for the theme of work done together (f=16) and nuclear family (f=9). Only one first-grade student produced a metaphor for the theme of extended family. Second-grade students produced the most metaphors under the themes of love (f=14), action done together with pleasure (f=4), nuclear family (f=3), cooperation (f=2), and extended family(f=1), respectively. It was observed that second-grade students did not produce any metaphors under the theme of fighting. Third graders produced metaphors mostly on the themes of love (f=14), nuclear family (f=8), extended family(f=6), work done together (f=4) and fight (f=1), respectively. Fourth graders produced metaphors for the themes of love (f=12), enjoyable action done together (f=5), nuclear family (f=5), fight-hate (f=5), cooperation (f=3) and extended family(f=2), respectively. It was determined that home, happiness, love, and cat metaphors were mentioned by more than one person. Of the one hundred and twenty-six (126) metaphors produced, six (6) were negative and one hundred and twenty (120) were positive. In a study conducted, it was determined that 4th-grade primary school students produced the most love-themed metaphors about family (Ceylan, 2016). This result supports our results. The feeling of love is one of the most powerful emotions that brings people closer to each other. The social structure where this love is experienced in its purest form is the family. Children grow up with love. At the core of being human is the feeling of love. This emotion, which is experienced intensely in the family, is therefore at the center of children's perception of the family. Fun activities done together are the second most prominent concept in children's metaphors. The family is conceptualized by children as a structure in which actions are carried out together. Primary school students tend to conceptualize the family in terms of either its structure (nuclear/extended family) or the emotions (love) or actions (togetherness) experienced. The metaphors related to the theme of fight reflect the conflict within the family.

Table 2. Children's Perception of the Family

Family Perception	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Mother-child	2	7.6	1	2.70	-	-	1	3.12	3.35
Mother-father	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.12	0.78
Mother-father-child	3	11.5	4	10.81	4	12.12	1	3.12	9.38
Mother-father-sibling-child	11	42.3	12	32.43	14	42.42	13	40.62	39.44
Mother-father-sibling-child and relatives	2	7.6	5	13.51	2	6.06	-	-	6.79
Mother-child-sibling	-	-	-	-	1	3.03	-	-	0.75
Father-child-sibling	-	-	-	-	1	3.03	-	-	0.75
Mother-child-sibling-relatives	-	-	-	-	1	3.03	-	-	0.75
Father-child-sibling-relatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6.24	1.5
Only sibling-cousin-friend	-	-	5	13.51	-	-	2	6.24	4.93
Only themselves	4	15.38	2	5.40	1	3.03	2	6.24	7.51
Metaphorical Drawing - No People (Heart-Tree-Family tree, Animal-House-Palace-Age Cake-Monster-Crest)	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the rate of primary school students drawing the family as mother-father-sibling-child is 39.44%, the rate of drawing as mother-father-child is 9,38%, and the rate of non-human metaphorical drawing is 23.88%. According to the findings, children's family drawings contain more human elements. The representation of families as nuclear families is 39.44% and as extended families is 6.79%. Some of the younger children did not want to draw a human figure. The reason for this is that children find it difficult to draw human figures. Some children asked the researcher, "I cannot draw a human. Can I draw something else?" they asked. The author of this article is trained in the

analysis of children's drawings. When interpreting children's drawings, the author wanted to be independent of the knowledge he/she gained from his/her education. The researcher, therefore, asked the participant children questions about what they thought about each object-entity they drew. Children were asked to explain what they had drawn. Some of the young children drew the figure of a large family, despite living in a nuclear family. The reasons for drawing a big family, according to the children's explanations, were that the big family gave confidence to the younger child or the topics about the family that was covered in the Life Science lesson. One of the children said: My father is dead. But I also drew it. It can be said that the child has not yet accepted the death of his father. In the picture on the right below, it is seen that the child draws his deceased father. The picture includes aunts and cousins. It can be thought that relatives support the family. Example:

Picture 1. Fourth grade, on a swing set, mother-father-child-sibling. No facial expression.

Picture 2. Third grade. Father is the representative object. Sister close to father. Mother-children-siblings-relatives, stylish clothing, smiling face, open arms.

Table 3. Physical Appearance of Family Members

Appearance	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	%
Smartly dressed	9	34.61	20	54.05	12	36.36	10	31.25	39.06
Other	-	-	4	10.81	4	12.12	4	12.48	11.46
Line (Stickman)	13	50	5	13.51	8	24.24	8	24.96	28.17
No people	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100

When Table 3 is analyzed, it is understood that 39.06% of the children see their families as stylish. Especially second-grade students tend to draw their families more stylishly than other grades. According to Table 3, 50% of the human drawings in the first grade, 13.51% in the second grade, 24.24% in the third grade, and 24.96% in the fourth grade were in the form of cartoon people. It can be said that children in the younger age group tend to draw people in the form of stick men (50% in the first grade). Some of the children compared the family to a tree. According to these children, the family is a rooted and strong structure like a tree. Example:

Picture 3. Third grade, no people, tree metaphor.

Table 4. Family Figures Size

Size	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	%
Hierarchical	2	7.6	5	13.51	7	21.21	5	15.62	14.48
Not Hierarchical	20	76.92	12	32.43	17	51.51	17	53.12	53.49
Other	4	15.38	20	54.05	9	27.27	10	31.25	31.98
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100
Father big	7	26.92	11	29.72	9	27.27	9	28.12	28
Mother big	2	7.6	3	8.10	4	12.12	1	3.12	7.73
Mother father equal	2	7.6	3	8.10	4	12.12	7	21.87	12.42
All equal	-	-	3	8.10	-	-	2	6.24	7.17
All small	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-	0.67
Sibling big	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-	0.67
Child Big	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-	0.67
Only Themselves	4	15.38	2	5.40	1	3.03	2	6.24	7.51
Size Unclear	7	26.92	4	10.81	5	15.15	1	3.12	14.09
No people	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100

Participating primary school students see the father figure as larger than other figures in family drawings (Table 4). Seeing parents as equal is 21.87% among fourth-grade students. The drawing of the family members' height is considered an indicator of the center of power in the family. The findings indicate that roles and powers within Turkish families are beginning to change. Example:

Picture 4. Second grade, hierarchical, father larger, mother between brother and sister, arms open, in the garden.

Table 5. Gender Representation in Family Drawings

Gender Perception	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	%
Gender Clear	14	53.84	26	70.27	22	66.66	20	62.5	63.31
Gender unclear	8	30.76	3	8.10	2	6.6	2	6.24	12.92
Only Metaphor	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100

As seen in Table 5, the representation of gender in participant children's family drawings is 63.31%. The younger the children are, the less they include gender representations in their drawings (first graders 30.76%, second graders 8.10%). It can be said that the gender perceptions of primary school children are reflected in their drawings. Example:


Picture 5. First grade, gender clear, at picnic, parents unclear size, facial expression not clear, close to father, parents-child, and animal.

Table 6. Gestures and Mimics in Family Drawings

Gestures and Mimics	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	%
Smiling Face	16	61.53	21	56.75	19	57.57	14	43.75	54.9
Angry/Sad Face	-	-	1	2.70	2	6.6	2	6.24	7.77
No expression or Unclear	6	23.07	5	13.51	3	3.3	6	18.75	14.65
Only Metaphor	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100
Arms Open	18	69.23	21	56.75	19	57.57	16	50	58.38
Arms Closed	4	15.38	8	21.62	4	12.12	6	18.75	16.96
No drawing of a body	-	-	-	-	1	3.3	-	-	-
Only Metaphor	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100

54,9% of the children portrayed family members with smiling faces, 7.7% with angry faces, 58.38% with open arms, and 16.96% with closed arms (Table 6). Gestures and facial expressions give information about family relations. Gestures and facial expressions give information about family relationships. Drawings of people with smiley faces show that children are happy. Drawing open arms on human figures shows that the family is open to communication. Most of the children in this study had happy and communicative families. Example:
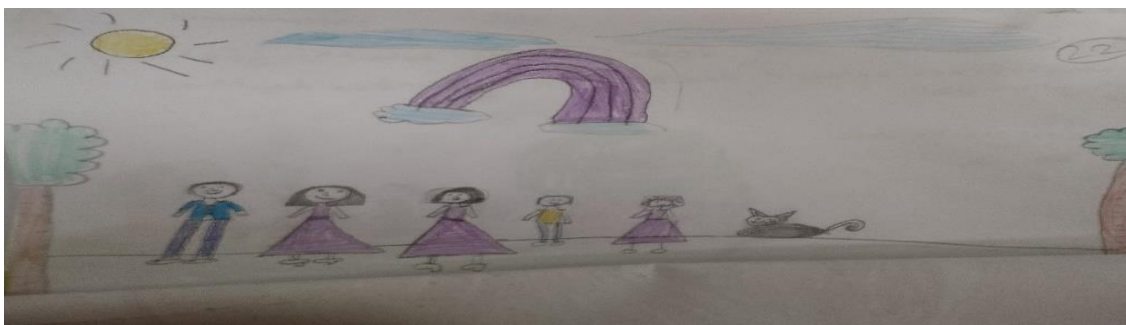
Picture 6. Second grade, smiling face, in the garden, parents-siblings-children, standing.

Table 7. Proximity Status of Family Members

Person Close to	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	%
Mother	2	7.6	6	16.21	5	15.15	3	9.37	12.08
Father	3	11.5	3	8.10	1	3.3	2	6.24	7.28
Sibling	5	19.23	4	10.81	5	15.15	5	15.62	15.20
Between Mother-Father	3	11.5	3	8.10	2	6.6	1	3.12	7.33
Between Mother-Sibling	-	-	6	16.21	4	12.12	2	6.24	8.64
Between Father-Sibling	1	3.84	1	2.70	2	6.6	-	-	3.28
Between Siblings	1	3.84	2	5.40	1	3.3	3	9.37	5.47
Unclear	2	7.6	1	2.70	2	6.6	3	9.37	6.56
Relative	2	7.6	1	2.70	1	3.3	1	3.12	4.18
Only Themselves	3	11.5	2	5.40	1	3.3	2	6.24	6.61
No people	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25	23.88
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100	100

Participating primary school students tended to draw themselves closest to their mothers (7.6% of first graders; 16.21% of second graders; 15.15% of third graders; 12.08% of fourth graders) and siblings (7.6% of first graders; 16.21% of second graders; 15.15% of third graders; 12.08% of fourth graders) (Table 7). First-grade students are the ones who draw themselves closest to their father (11.5%) or between their parents (11.5%). When children draw, they usually first draw the person they feel closest to in the family. They also draw themselves closer to their favorite person in the family. Some drawings give information on whether the parents are alive or separated. In the picture given below, the child has drawn a large family. He drew himself at the end, next to his sister. It can be said that this child feels close to his older sister. Example:
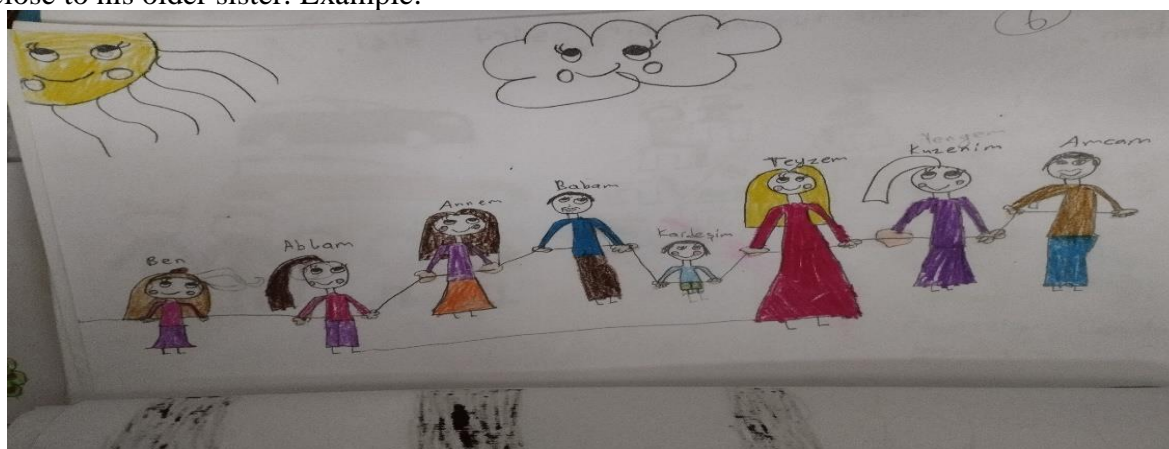
Picture 7. Grade 2, close to sibling, smartly dressed, smiling face, arms open, parents-children-siblings-relatives, in the garden.

Table 8. Places and Actions in Family Drawings

Places and Actions		Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Place	Home	5	19.23	2	5.40	2	6.6	1	3.12
	Dinner Table	1	3.84	3	8.10	-	-	-	-
	Diner/Restaurant	1	3.84	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Garden/Park/Road	9	34.61	14	37.83	19	57.57	10	31.25
	Picnic/Forest	3	11.5	6	16.21	-	-	5	15.62
	Seaside	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-
	Museum/Archaeological Site Trip/Holiday	3	11.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Car	-	-	-	-	1	3.3	-	-
	School	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-
	Unclear	-	-	-	-	2	6.6	6	18.75
	Only Metaphor	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25
Total		26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100
Action	Standing	14	53.84	23	62.16	18	54.54	14	43.75
	Sitting	4	15.38	2	5.40	2	6.6	1	3.12
	Studying	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.12
	Fighting	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6.24
	Playing games	4	15.38	4	10.81	1	3.3	1	3.12
	Swinging	-	-	-	-	1	3.3	3	9.37
	Unclear	-	-	-	-	2	6.6	-	-
	Only Metaphor	4	15.38	8	21.62	9	27.27	10	31.25
Total		26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100

According to the findings in Table 8, it can be said that 34.61% of the first graders, 37.83% of the second graders, 57.57% of the third graders, and 31.25% of the fourth graders used the garden/park/forest outside the house as a place in their family drawings. First graders (19.23%) made the house figure in family drawings the most (19.23%). The rate of describing the family only with a metaphorical drawing increases with age (first graders 15.38%; second graders 21.62%; third graders 27.27%; fourth graders 31.25%). Primary school students tended to depict family members standing (first graders 53.84%; second graders 62.16%; third graders 54.54%; fourth graders 43.75%) in family drawings. Example:

Picture 8. Second grade, father older, mother between brother and sister, smart clothes, smiling face, arms open, standing, at school.

Picture 9. Second grade, at the dinner table, close to the mother, smartly dressed.

Table 9. Objects/Entities in Family Drawings

Objects and Entities	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Child	6	23.07	25	67.56	24	72.72	21	65.62
Animal	4	15.38	6	16.21	4	12.12	1	3.12
Sun	10	38.46	18	48.64	7	21.21	6	18.75
Cloud	6	23.07	14	37.83	8	24.24	7	21.87
Raindrops/ Umbrella	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.12
Star/Moon	3	11.5	2	5.40	-	-	2	6.24
Rainbow	3	11.5	4	10.81	1	3.3	-	-
Flag	4	15.38	1	2.70	1	3.3	-	-
Flower	4	15.38	4	10.81	3	9.9	2	6.24
Tree	10	38.46	17	45.94	10	30.30	11	34.37
House	12	46.15	9	24.32	13	39.39	7	21.87
School	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-
Table/chair	3	11.5	5	13.51	3	9.9	2	6.24
Refrigerator/Television/Air Conditioner	2	7.6	2	5.40	1	3.3	-	-
Heart	9	34.61	8	21.6	7	21.21	9	28.12
Globe/Earth	-	-	1	2.70	-	-	-	-
Sea/River/Pool	2	7.6	3	8.10	-	-	-	-
Garden/Forest	3	11.5	9	24.32	-	-	-	-
Swing/Rope/Ball/Bike/Toy Baby/Helicopter	3	11.5	3	8.10	4	12.12	4	12.5
Tank/Car/Traffic Light	1	3.84	4	10.81	2	6.6	-	-
Sword/Weapon	-	-	2	5.40	-	-	1	3.12
Castle /Palace	2	7.6	1	2.70	1	3.3	-	-
Watermelon/Ice Cream /Cake	2	7.6	1	2.70	-	-	-	-
Doodles	2	7.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Family tree	-	-	-	-	1	3.3	-	-
Snowman	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.12
Total	26	100	37	100	33	100	32	100

According to the findings in Table 9, first-grade students mostly used house (46.15%), tree (38.46%), and sun (38.46%) in family drawings; second-grade students mostly used child (48.64%), tree (45.94%) and sun (48.64%); third-grade students mostly included child (72.72%), house (39.39%) and tree (30.30%); fourth-grade students mostly included children (65.62%), tree (34.37%) and heart (28.12%). In family drawings, the child figure was mostly drawn by third, second, and fourth-grade students. The heart figure was mostly drawn by first graders (34.61%). In the study, the object figures drawn by the children are the most frequently seen objects in the drawings of primary school children. The picture below shows a child painting the family inside the heart. For the child who draws this picture, it evokes family love. Example:

Picture 10. Fourth grade, nuclear family, on vacation, standing, playing, stylish illustration, heart.

Table 10. Comparison of Primary School Curriculum Perspective and Family Metaphors

Education and Curricula Values, Subjects, and Outcomes	Themes	Inference Based on Verbal Metaphors	Inference Based on Family Drawings
Family Type	*Family members* *Relatives and kin relations*	Nuclear family (f=25) Extended family(f=10)	Nuclear family (f=67) Extended family(f=14) Metaphor Extended family(f=45)
	Quality of time spent with family members and friends	Enjoyable actions done together (f=39)	Actions (f=93)
Value tokens such as love, respect, solidarity, etc.	*Communication with family members: Gestures and facial expressions, tone of voice*	-	Facial expression (f=75) Arms (f=95)
	Family life (values such as love, respect, etc.), cooperation	(f=40)	Drawing objects form(f=120)
	Contribution to the family budget	-	Cooperation (f=2)

From Table 10, it is understood that primary school students' verbal metaphors in terms of curricula and values mostly produced metaphors under the themes of *"Quality of time spent with family members and friends" (f=40) and "Quality of time spent with family members and friends"* and the value perspective of the curriculum. In their verbal metaphors, children also referred to family-type information. When we look at the metaphors of family drawings, it can be said that they produced drawing metaphors containing Family Type Knowledge (nuclear family f=67, extended family f=14, metaphor extended family f=45). In the drawing metaphors, it was determined that children produced metaphors that could point to the achievements of the curriculum and the values of the curriculum such as family life (f=120), *quality of time spent with family members and friends (f=93), communication with family members (f=75)*. Children used markers for the gestures of family members in their drawings (f=95). In summary, it can be said that children's metaphors for family drawings carry more information in terms of curriculum perspectives and curriculum outcomes.

Discussion and Conclusion

The following results were obtained in this research on family perceptions of primary school children.

Results from Children's Family Drawings for Children's Emotional and Social Development

It may be argued that the majority of the study's participants come from nuclear families. the fact that the families the kids sketched were said to be their own families. In children's family drawings, the mother-child, mother-child-sibling, or mother-child-sibling-relatives configurations suggest single-parent households. Dunn, O'Conner, and Levy (2002) also showed that children aged 7-9 living in stepparent and single-parent families were more inclined to exclude their parents, and children living with their parents were more likely to draw them together. Interesting family drawings by some kids showed their deceased father holding a particular item, nevertheless. For instance, one of the kids in this study used a long vertical line to depict his departed father and put him in his place in the household. This boy appeared to have accepted the loss of his father. Yet, it might be assumed that the child's desire for his father was evidenced by the fact that he placed himself between his sister and his deceased father. Because of this, it can be argued that family drawings convey more

information than word family metaphors. Traces of the dissolution of the family, one of the most fundamental movements of society, are also reflected in family drawings. Yet, children's pictures of extended families should be viewed carefully. It is possible that these drawings were created while being influenced by the course material. Because of this, it might be advised to use family drawings to learn about the child while also using oral life stories.

Another result of the study showed that as the grade level increased, children tended to portray themselves closer to their siblings, if they have any. This result can be considered a sign that some of the children gained autonomy and started to separate from their parents safely. However, the tendency to draw themselves far away from family members increases in individuals with special needs (Elumar, 2021), and drawing themselves far away from the mother can also be considered emotional isolation (Fury et al., 1997). In this study, it can be considered that a small number of children who drew themselves very far away from their family members may be individuals with special needs. However, it was seen in the family drawings that emotional closeness to the mother continued in the primary school years. A study that found that 60-72-month-old children drew themselves closer to their mother and some children did not draw themselves supports our results (Akpınar, 2015). It was observed that a small number of children drew themselves larger than the family members, and this result was due to the child's self-definition as a collective element of the family rather than an egocentric idea. However, another reason why children drew themselves closer to their mothers may be that the acceptance level of mothers is higher than that of fathers in the face of negative behaviors and that emotional distancing from fathers begins with age. The results of an experimental study indicated that mother-father-child closeness decreased in middle childhood, but mothers spent more time with their children and tended to behave more warmly than fathers (Marceau, Ram, & Susman, 2015). Fathers are generally regarded as the symbol of authority in the home. It can also be considered that fathers' more restrictive behaviors may be effective in increasing the distance between father and child. The change in the distance between children and family members may be a result not only of emotional development but also of socialization.

A family is a small community where one enjoys being together and where pleasant actions are performed. According to the results of this study, children tend to perceive the family as a structure where they play games and have fun together. The results showing that primary school children play, walk, etc. with their loved ones in love-themed drawings support this result of the study (Tozduman-Yaralı et al., 2016). Although some cross-cultural studies reveal that fathers allocate more time to their children for play and educational activities due to the influence of social context (Craig & Mullan, 2011), in this study, it was observed that the actions involved parental togetherness. This is a desired situation to be seen in children's drawings. Because it is considered that the communication in the family is strong (Yavuzer, 2021). It can be said that the students who drew the family fighting came from a family in conflict and reflected this situation in their drawings. Because family drawings also reflect children's emotions (Mair et al., 2014). In this study, it was understood that children identified the family's actions in family drawings with moments that gave them happiness, emphasized the dynamic structure by drawing the family standing up, and reflected family conflicts in their drawings. However, it was observed that primary school children's family drawings reflected negative emotional states that deeply affected the child such as fights, albeit rarely, in addition to the meanings that children attributed to the concept of family sociologically.

According to another result of the study, primary school children tend to draw the father figure larger than the mother figure. In the first years of primary school, the father is the

biggest human figure in family drawings per reality. This tendency may stem from the fact that children see the father as the authority of the house and that the father represents power. The results of a study showed that the father's influence on the child continues with the drawing of larger father figures in both divorced and non-divorced families (Spigelman, et al., 2008). In addition, in this study, it was determined that primary school children mostly drew family members as smiling. In the literature, children's drawing of family members with smiling faces is explained by the feeling of happiness, and their drawing with open arms is explained by the feeling of trust and healthy communication (Ahi, Cingi, & Kıldan, 2016; Aykaç, 2012). The smiley face symbol is widely used in the expression of basic values such as love and happiness. It is also seen in social media that emotions are expressed with face emojis. One of the reasons why children draw family members with smiling faces may be positive emotional experiences within the family.

Children's Family Drawings in terms of Children's Linear Development

These findings regarding the representation of gender in family drawings are consistent with the data on child drawing development. Children perceive the genders of family members correctly; however, they fail to reflect this in their drawings to the extent that they are younger. Especially the family drawings some of the third and fourth-grade students can be accepted as a reference to the inadequacy of human figure drawing development. Because after the age of seven (Schematic Period), children are expected to be able to draw human figures with details in their drawings, to reflect their imagination of space in their drawings and to have relationships between the objects drawn, and to be able to distinguish gender in human drawings after the age of nine (Halmatow, 2017). However, in this study, it was determined that although the children were 9-10 years old (Realistic Period), they drew the human figure as a stickman without gender markers.

Results from Children's Family Drawings for Education and Training Programs

Primary school students' use of smiling faces in their family drawings is another indication that they have developed the ability to link happiness with family. One of the main values taught in Turkish primary school curricula is happiness. The values that keep the family together are one of the family-related outcomes in the Social Studies Curriculum (2018a, b, and c) (such as love and respect). Their family drawings revealed that these values were learned in primary school. In light of this, it is reasonable to assume that some of the study's participants have attained the fundamental concept of happiness, which is something that primary school curricula and programs are designed to help students learn. Towards the upper years of primary school, it was found that the figures of parents were drawn more equally. There could be a number of causes for this: Social advancements for gender equality among children may have grown with age. Children may have completed the family and society cooperation curriculum. With age, one can anticipate a qualitative improvement in children's thinking about abstract ideas like justice and equality. As the grade level increases, it can be considered that children grow more aware of gender equality. Additionally, it is well known that the power and role of parents within the family are increasingly being equalized in today's societies. The change in parental responsibilities may encourage children to regard parents as having equal power.

The research of family drawings made by primary school pupils revealed that they can reveal details about the family structure, developmental stages, socialization tendencies, and emotional states. The concept of family is typically organized around nuclear and large families. However, there may be children from single-parent families as a result of divorce,

death, and abandonment, as well as parentless children who are sheltered in Children's Homes Site and Dormitories. For this reason, especially in the Social Sciences Curriculum (MoE, 2018b), it is recommended to be sensitive to single-parent children in the classroom while presenting the theme of "Living in Our House". The idea of family is incorporated in the axis of communication within the family within the context of the "Communication" topic in the Turkish Language Teaching Program (MoE, 2018a). In this regard, it can be suggested that the themes related to family in primary school curricula should be organized in a way that covers all students.

In this study, primary school students mostly included children, house, tree, sun, cloud, and heart figures in their family drawings. In a study on kindergarten students' perceptions of teachers, it was found that metaphorical drawings such as sun, rainbow, and heart were most frequently used around the place where the teacher was located (Ahi et al., 2016). It can be said that young children tend to associate their loved ones with objects such as house, tree, sun, cloud. It was observed that the inclusion of objects such as houses and trees in family drawings was related to the fact that the family is a structure with strong roots and wide branches (relatives) like a tree and a peaceful and safe place to shelter-protect.

In this study, children's depiction of their families as individuals with whom they mostly engage in activities together can also be accepted as a projection of their school and family experiences. One of the achievements of the *My Family* theme of the Social Sciences Curriculum (2018, a-b-c) includes the act of *spending quality time with the family*. Children can gain awareness about the quality of time spent with the family through instructive actions and activities in lessons. In this way, experiences at the affective and behavioral levels at home can be transferred to the cognitive level through the outcomes of school lessons. However, it should be kept in mind that children's family drawings will mostly reflect their real experiences. For example, in this study, it was determined that few children who were exposed to domestic violence reflected their experiences in their drawings. It should not be ignored that these emotional conflicts experienced outside of school may reflect negatively on children's school life. Since drawings allow students to reflect on their inner worlds, they have been suggested to be used as a recognition-reflection tool in teacher training and classroom practices of teachers (Farmer, Leonard, Spearman, Qian, & Rosenblith, 2016). Children convey their life events and experiences through drawings (Çetin & Güneş, 2021). Because drawing activity helps young children to create organized structures from their experiences; that is, to make abstractions (Papandreou, 2014). It can be suggested that teachers should use children's family drawings as a tool for understanding individual differences and reorganizing their experiences by the general objectives and perspective of primary school curricula.

The Relationship between Verbal and Linear Family Metaphors

When the metaphors produced are analyzed, it can be said that first graders produced metaphors for the theme of *work done together*, second graders produced metaphors for the theme of love, and the theme of *fight* was not associated with family in the students' mental schemas. For the first graders, family means *a union with which enjoyable work is done together*. In their metaphors, it is understood that thought is not yet independent from the action. In the second, third, and fourth grades, on the other hand, depending on the use of emotion words (adjectives), it can be thought that the mental schema that family is *a union that requires love and respect* has increased. In addition, the increase in *fight*-themed metaphors in the fourth grade may indicate the meanings that boys attribute to gender identity, the transition to early adolescence, and conflict within the family. Family drawings

contained more family-type markers than verbal metaphors. Some of the children's family metaphors may have been shaped under the family outcomes in the curricula, some may have been shaped according to whether the family is nuclear or large, and some may have been shaped according to their feelings about the family. It can be said that primary school children's perceptions of the family, the smallest structure of Turkish culture, are generally positive.

Suggestions

The effects of students' family communication and family perceptions on achievement are known. In order to track their productivity and the quality of their relationships at home, parents might ask their children to draw any time they spend at home in addition to the family drawings. Children's family drawings can be used to supplement the necessary course material and help the value transmission function of educational programs. It may be proposed to explore the relationship between factors like as intelligence, talent, etc., and the fact that some students are somewhat behind their peers in terms of drawing progress despite being in advanced grades. It may be proposed to study the reasons for the tendency of certain youngsters to sketch their parents equally. Parents, kids, and instructors can all be questioned in-depth in this regard. In this manner, the potential effects of education programs on kids' perceptions of parental social roles can be assessed. In today's world when family engagement in education has become highly vital, it may be suggested that a course on *Children and Family* should be offered notably in departments that educate teachers for elementary and secondary school. Family education programs can be organized to support family communication. Future research could simultaneously gather drawings from children of how they see their families, teachers, and the classroom setting.

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