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# First Graders' Awareness of Home Environment and Elementary School

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to consider the home environment and awareness of elementary school students in the first grade of elementary school, and to find ways to support them. Participants were 31 1st graders in elementary schools nationwide. Data collection was conducted from June 6, 2017 to July 7, 2017. The focus group interview was used as a data collection method for this study. Results were analyzed as 'The Changing family environment that first graders think' and 'First graders' awareness of elementary school'. 'The Changing family environment that first graders think' include 'Changes in language used by parents', 'Changes in how parents and families live', and 'What to do after school'. 'First graders' awareness of elementary school' was analyzed as 'Awareness of Elementary school life', 'Awareness of peers', 'Awareness of homeroom teacher', and 'Awareness of learning'. As the conclusion of this study, we suggest that because the children have more free time than attending kindergarten, they need quality programs and support plans to support their first grade primary adjustment. Also, we propose a common problem facing first-year students: the difficulty of adjusting to study and support for how to study in an easier way.*

**Keywords:** Elementary School Adaptation, First Grader, Home Environment, School Adaptation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1st graders differ in their adaptation to elementary school depending on their home environment [1]. 1st graders are having a hard time reacting to kindergarten and other parents [2]. Children's problem behaviors can also occur when parents over-interfere with their children's lives or show negative parenting attitudes [3]. There is a big difference between children attending kindergarten and elementary school [4]. It is important for children to successfully adapt to elementary school because it has a lasting effect not only in childhood but also afterwards [5-6].

It is meaningful in that 1st graders' awareness of elementary school can help them find ways to apply for 1st graders. In order for elementary school students to adjust to school, various relationships, such as parent-child relationship, peer relationship, teacher-1 grade relationship, etc., influence [7-8]. Exploring the school adaptation process in first graders is an important process [9], and it is necessary to consider the effective relationship for school adaptation in first graders [10]. To find out why 1st graders are unable to adapt to

elementary school and how to support, it is necessary to listen to 1st graders' demand. In this study, through interviews, I examined the awareness of the home environment and elementary school in the 1st grade. By considering the awareness of 1st graders' home and elementary school life, children can be assisted in early school adjustment [4].

Therefore, this study aims to find out about the home environment different from what the 1st graders thought, and to recognize the awareness of the 1st graders in the elementary school. Following are the research questions.

Research question 1. What is the changed home environment that first graders think?

Research question 2. What is the awareness of elementary school that first graders think?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Participants

31 elementary school children from Seoul, Incheon, Gyeonggi-do and Gangwon-do participated. Participants selected 1st grader of elementary school children who volunteered to study adaptation support for elementary school children conducted by the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education. All of them were first graders in elementary school, and children who were about 4 months old after entering the school were considered as participants. .

### 2.2. Data Collection

Data collection was conducted from June 6, 2017 to July 7, 2017. The researcher explained to the interviewer the purpose of the interview, and then proceeded. The interview was conducted by moving the interviewer to the area where the children live. As it was difficult to conduct individual in-depth interviews for the first graders in elementary school, a focus group interview was conducted by gathering 2 to 4 participants in one place. 31 children were asked once each, and interviews continued until repeated stories emerged and were saturated.

The interview was conducted in a semi-structured format. The structured questions are shown in Table 1. In addition, in an unstructured interview format, the interviewer talked about elementary school life in a free atmosphere with the children. Table 1 shows structured interview topics and examples of question. Structured interview topics used in this study are 'Kindergarten differences from elementary school', 'Preparing school', 'Adapting school', and 'After school'.

**Table 1. Example of structured questions used in interviews**

Structured interview topics	Example questions
Kindergarten differences from elementary school	Parents talk more than they do in kindergarten Differences between kindergarten and elementary school About the first impression of elementary school
Preparing for elementary school	Preparing for elementary school life while attending kindergarten What you expected to do when you become an elementary school student?
Adapting to elementary school	The story you share the most with your parents after you become an elementary school student What you don't want to do as an elementary school student? What you want from parents after you become an elementary school student?

	About peers About homeroom teacher Favorite subject Difficult subject
After school	What you want to do after school? What time do you spend at home? About an academy

### 2.3. Data Analysis

All collected data were transferred. Based on the transferred data, the common reactions of the participants were summarized. Based on the responses of the participants, it was analyzed as 'The Changing family environment that first graders think ' and ' First graders' awareness of elementary school '. ' The Changing family environment that first graders think ' include ' Changes in language used by parents ', ' Changes in how parents and families live', and 'What to do after school'. ' First graders' awareness of elementary school' was analyzed as ' Awareness of Elementary school life ', ' Awareness of peers ', ' Awareness of homeroom teacher ', and ' Awareness of learning '.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. The Changing Family Environment that First Graders think

#### 3.1.1. Changes in Language used by Parents

Most of what parents say to first graders was related to their studies. Instead of having a conversation between the parents and the child, the parents kept saying that the child should not cause problems to the child.

“Dad and Mom always say to get along with friends, don't fight, be careful with cars. Always be careful.” (2017.07.07. 28<sup>th</sup> child)

“When I was in kindergarten, my parents said “listened attentively to the teacher”. By the way, since I'm in elementary school, my parents want to “study hard without doing anything else”. (2017.07.09. 11<sup>st</sup> child)

“My mom and dad were kind when I was in kindergarten, but They were very strict when I was in elementary school.” (2017.07.09. 12<sup>nd</sup> child)

“When I was 7 years old, I received a lot of praise from my dad. I don't know why it's messing up. I'm very confusing. They guess I usually don't study.” (2017.07.09. 13<sup>th</sup> child )

Parents of first graders were adopting the method of corporal punishment and scolding. First graders in elementary school knew that their friends were being punished and scolded by their parents.

“When I went to my friend's house. My friend's mom hit my friend because my friend wasn't listening to his mom.” (2017.07.09. 12<sup>th</sup> child)

“When I came to elementary school, I often scolded by my mom. My mother often said to me “Don't fight with my brother!”. (2017.07.06. 7<sup>th</sup> child)

Parents did not listen carefully to first graders. When the children became elementary school students, their parents did not listen to their stories. The children were upset because their parents listened to younger brother or younger sister. The children were sad to their parents who treated themselves like adults.

“My parents don't listen to me. They only listen to my younger brother.” (2017.07.11. 14<sup>th</sup> child)

“When I was in kindergarten, I was praised. But my parents only praise my younger sister now. My parents think of me as an adult. I'm still a child.” (2017.07.11. 15<sup>th</sup> child)

### **3.1.2. Changes in How Parents and Families Live**

Parents did not play with children as much as before. Parents told their children to study or play alone because they are in first grade. Even if the whole family was at home, each one had to do each other's work.

“My mom always drinks coffee. I just play alone. Dad goes to work and is not at home.” (2017.07.11. 16<sup>th</sup> child)

“My mom tells me to play alone because I'm all grown up now.” (2017.07.11. 14<sup>th</sup> child)

“My mom does housework or computer, and My dad keeps watching TV.” (2017.07.01. 27<sup>th</sup> child)

The time for children to be alone at home increased. Children said that after becoming an elementary school student, the time spent playing with his or her parents has been greatly reduced. The children said that it became more common to eat lunch or dinner alone.

“I do my homework at home. I have never played with my mom since I became an elementary school student.” (2017.07.06. 10<sup>th</sup> child)

“I often stay alone at home. Sometimes I eat alone. Sometimes my grandmother takes care of it. I read a lot of comic books at home.” (2017.06.23. 25<sup>th</sup> child)

### **3.1.3. What to Do After School**

Children's time to attend academy increased. children attended various academies such as swimming, vocal music, piano, art, taekwondo, Chinese characters, and jusan. This is presumed to be due to the fact that elementary schools do not provide all services, unlike in kindergarten, where special activities are resolved and housed.

“I go to swimming, vocal music, piano, and art academy.” (2017.07.06. 8<sup>th</sup> child)

“I feel I go to a lot of different academies. Taekwondo, piano, Chinese characters, Jusan, after school.” (2017.07.06. 9<sup>th</sup> child)

“When I come home from elementary school, I am home alone. My mom and my dad go to work and there's nobody at home other than me.” (2017.07.09. 13<sup>th</sup> child)

Children liked and disliked after-school education. There was a child who thought it was simply play time. On the one hand, there was a child who said it was fun and helpful to adjust to elementary school. This seems to be because the level of education varies depending on the competence of teachers who provide after-school education.

“I quit after school. It's just not fun.” (2017.07.16. 17<sup>th</sup> child)

“After school, our elementary school classrooms just play.” (2017.07.16. 18<sup>th</sup> child)

“After school classes are fun and good. I guess it helped me adjust to elementary school.” (2017.07.07. 31<sup>st</sup> child)

“I do a lot of making during my life craft activities, so I get better and better. Thanks to that, I can play clay better than ever.” (2017.07.11. 15<sup>th</sup> child)

“I am participating in coding activities and English classes as an after-school class. It wasn't really fun at first, but it became more and more fun and easy.” (2017.07.07. 29<sup>th</sup> child)

### 3.2. First Graders' Awareness of Elementary School

#### 3.2.1. Awareness of Elementary School Life

The children said they were sorry to be elementary school students without more preparation. Since kindergartens and daycare centers and elementary schools are very different, children thought it would have been great if children had prepared and became an elementary school student.

“The kindergarten teacher didn't teach me what to do at elementary school.” (2017.07.04. 4<sup>th</sup> child)

“You're going to write a reminder, you're going to diary. You will dictate again. You are going to do math. You will not have enough time to play. I've heard stories like this, but I didn't know what this meant.” (2017.07.06. 8<sup>th</sup> child)

Children had high expectations for elementary school life before entering elementary school. However, children were struggling because they were not given enough play time in elementary school. They said that more playtime would help adapt to elementary school.

“When I go from kindergarten to elementary school, the playground is wide, so I wanted to play every day. I wanted to play a lot.” (2017.07.04. 5<sup>th</sup> child)

“After school, the best thing I want to do is play, but I can't play every day. Playing with a cookie class or something helps to adjust to elementary school.” (2017.07.01. 2<sup>nd</sup> child)

“I played a lot in kindergarten, but only a little in school. It's hard because the time to play suddenly decreases.” (2017.07.04. 3<sup>rd</sup> child)

One thing that changed when children attended kindergarten and first grade in elementary school was that play time decreased and study time increased. Children wanted to be given a little more time to make or take a break, but children had a lot of time studying, so children were having difficulty adjusting.

“Kindergarten starts with play, and elementary school has to read books.” (2017.07.06. 10<sup>th</sup> child)

“When I was in kindergarten, I thought I could go to elementary school and do a lot of art, origami, and making.” (2017.07.11. 15<sup>th</sup> child)

“I wanted to do things like making clothes, making wallets, drawing people, and making umbrellas.” (2017.07.11. 16<sup>th</sup> child)

“In the old days, I had a lot of time to play and eat with my friends. I had more time to play. But in elementary school, there is less time to play. The break is really a bit.” (2017.07.15. 23<sup>th</sup> child)

#### 3.2.2. Awareness of Peers

Unlike the kindergarten children, children attended elementary school and had a bad perception of their friends. The children were telling them that their friends had a lot of curses and frequent fights. There was also a story of playing a lot of dangerous pranks.

“Kindergarten friends are kind, but elementary school friends are a little bad. I have two girlfriends in the same class and They keep fighting.” (2017.07.01. 1<sup>st</sup> child)

“Our classmates just fight during breaks. They fight after teasing each other. They run around and fight after a chicken fight. Even if the teacher tries to dry, I keep fighting. My friends are naughty. Much more than before.” (2017.07.08. 22<sup>th</sup> child)

The children said that in the past, these friends didn't say anything bad or bad every day. Children said that they had less time to talk and play with children than before.

“One of my classmates gets scolded by the teacher every day. By the way, when he was in kindergarten, he wasn't scolded by the teacher.” (2017.07.08. 21<sup>th</sup> child)

“I have one best friend in kindergarten and elementary school. When we were in kindergarten, we played together every day. Now we play together twice a week. I don't have enough time to play with my best friend.” (2019.07.07. 29<sup>th</sup> child)

### **3.2.3. Awareness of Homeroom Teacher**

Children's awareness of teachers were largely negative. There was also a child who called his homeroom teacher "Captain Screaming", and the children talked a lot that they wanted the teacher not to scream. There was a child who said school life was uncomfortable because of the teacher.

“When I and my friend talked so small, the teacher yelled at me for being noisy. I don't want you to do this.” (2017.07.07. 29<sup>th</sup> child)

“My teacher is "Captain Screaming" I'm worried that the teacher keeps yelling at us. So I can't have fun in the classroom.” (2017.07.16. 20<sup>th</sup> child)

“My school life is so uncomfortable because of my teacher.” (2017.07.16. 19<sup>th</sup> child)

### **3.2.4. Awareness of Learning**

In general, children responded that studying was too difficult. The children wanted the teacher to teach them easily. They were hoping for a fun way to study, like borrowing books from the library and learning about things they didn't know.

“I have a harder study book. It's not fun, it's too trivial.” (2017.07.04. 6<sup>th</sup> child)

“I love borrowing books from the library. It's fun. I wish I could learn this way.” (2017.07.07. 31<sup>th</sup> child)

The children hated learning by being scolded by the teacher. The children said that it was difficult because they had too many “do not do” while studying. The teacher said that elementary students would not allow their friends to discuss in a small voice. Children wanted to study in a more free atmosphere.

“My teacher is nagging me that I should study well often. Also, I was scolded by my teacher for not studying well.” (2017.07.06. 8<sup>th</sup> child)

“There are so many things that my teacher says to me, "do not do". When I try to draw on the board, the teacher says, "Don't do it because it comes out of chalk!" Say When you talk to your friends for a moment, they say 'noisy.'" (2017.07.07. 29<sup>th</sup> child)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is as follows. First, the first grade felt that the language used by parents and the way they lived with their parents changed negatively. First graders struggled to adapt to the sudden changes of their parents and complained of difficulties. The children wanted their parents to change slowly. First graders often participated in academies and after school classes. Parents' participation in education reduces children's behavior in school and improves their academic ability. We suggest that because the children have more free time than attending kindergarten, they need quality programs and support plans to support their first grade primary adjustment. Second, the 1st graders perceived elementary school negatively. The 1st graders said he or she would like to prepare more and become an elementary school student. In the 1st grade, the play time was short, so there were many aggressive friends. The 1st grader had a negative awareness of being scolded by the teacher. We propose a common problem facing first-year students: the difficulty of adjusting to study and support for how to study in an easier way.

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