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Qualitative Findings

The last take home activity sent home with the head start children included a survey that parents or guardians were encouraged to fill out. The survey included both open and closed ended questions. The surveys were sent back to school with the children and then the responses to the survey questions were collected and analyzed. Through the analysis of the surveys three major themes were identified based on the overall responses of the parent’s answers to the open ended questions. The three themes that emerged from the answers to the open ended questions were: team work, having fun while learning, and the importance of spending time with family.

Many parents who completed the survey wrote about how their children enjoyed putting the activities together with them. Respondent one said “We learned to do team work.” On another survey respondent fifteen wrote, “We all gained experience in following directions and working together.” Both of these responses show that the children learned the beginning of teamwork. In another case, respondent sixteen wrote “We gained that we can work together and have fun.” This is similar to the second theme that was identified: having fun while learning, because in both cases the families had fun. This is important because it shows what children can gain from just a little parent involvement.

Another important theme that was evident through the responses on the survey was the idea that you can have fun while learning. Respondent four wrote about how their child enjoyed the Animal Dice activity the most and had fun while playing it, and then specifically stated that their child “learned to take turns.” In this response it is clear that the child had fun, but also learned an important lesson children should be taught to practice. In another case, respondent five wrote “Our family was able to bond. We learned that we can learn and have fun at the same time.” It is apparent that the majority of the take home activities allowed parents to be involved with their children, and that the involvement will continue through the activities because respondent eleven suggested that the activities were “fun learning activities that we can keep playing in the future.”

The third theme that appeared through the responses to the open ended questions on the survey was the importance of spending time with family. Many respondents said that they gained family time through the activities and were thankful they did not have to plan the activities. Respondent thirteen wrote, “We were together doing these activities; my brother, me, and my son. We don’t usually do these kinds of things together. I want to continue doing things together. My son was happy and it was fun.” A number of parents who have busy work schedules forget the importance of spending time with their family. When children are young, it is important for them to have the support and involvement of their family. Through these activities this parent was able to acknowledge how much fun it is to spend time with their family, and that they wanted to continue doing so.

In summary, three very important themes were discovered through the answers to the open ended questions of the survey. The three themes that were established through the responses of the survey were all important for children to learn at a young age. Overall, parent involvement occurred and it was evident that a lot of families gained many different things from the activities. Whether it was simply having fun, or being able to teach their child an important lesson the purpose of the take home activities was accomplished.

References

Survey citation?