

**Are the Parents Really Involved?**

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### **Abstract**

Parental involvement changes based off the family. Every family takes on different circumstances that contribute to how much family involvement a child will experience. The purpose of this study is to see how much family involvement changes based of different factors. Data will be collected through a mixed method study. The quantitative data that will researched will be “How involved was your family throughout the activity?” and “What school does your child attend?”. The qualitative data that will be researched will be “What did your family enjoy most about these activities? Why?”, “What did your child learn from these activities?” and “What recommendations would you suggest making these activities better?” The data that was conducted is an evaluation to determine whether or not family fun time activities are in fact improving family involvement. One practical implication of this study is there was only a 20% response rate.

## **Introduction**

Parental involvement around the Farmville area has shown some declined compared to other areas around it. Family Fun-time Activities (FFA) are activities made by Longwood University students who created 5 different activities to send home that could possibly increase parental involvement. If we send home Family Fun-time Activities (FFA), then family involvement will increase. A survey was sent to determine the parental involvement within families at Head Start and the Andy Taylor Center. The purpose of this of this study was to determine if family fun time activities are in fact improving family involvement.

## **Literature Review**

### **Definition**

Parental involvement is the key to a successful home learning environment. Parental involvement can be described as the educational morals a parent has for their kids and how much the parent interacts with their child's teacher (Nokali et al., 2010). Parental involvement varies drastically based on the child and the family. In some instances, parental involvement can be every day and constant. While others can be once a week or once a month. Parental involvement not only involves the parents but also the teachers and other school employees (Yulianti, 2021). There is no right or wrong way to be an involved parent (Irimescu, 2010).

### **Father's role and Academic learning**

Society teaches us that a father figure/role plays a huge a part in a child's life. It was found from Baker (2018) that father involvement was not linked to a children's self-regulation or

academic skills. Both parents directly affect their child through their own interactions in life, which is how children learn. A father's role can affect the child with the father being in direct contact with the child (Han, 2021). Residency also does not play a part in a child's relationship with their father, nor did it have a connection to academic success (Han, 2021). Han (2021) found that fathers do play a role in a child's academic learning.

### **Child Development**

Parental involvement is said to create a healthy and safe environment for a child (Irimescu, 2010). Many times, parents have to do what's best for the child even if it is not what the child or parent want (Pažur & Drvodelić, 2022). How a parent interacts with their child as a preschooler develops how their relationship with continue through their adolescent (Pažur & Drvodelić, 2022). Parents involvement is often times based on how their own childhood experiences (Irimescu, 2010). One key factor of parental involvement is spending quality time with the child (Pažur & Drvodelić, 2022). This could be anything that the child finds interesting like their own hobbies or family fun time activities.

### **Socioeconomic Status**

Money has will always play a huge role in how people function. Tazouti and Jarlégan (2019) found that socioeconomic status (SES) has a strong link to academic achievement. Parents who have a higher SES tend to have children with higher academic achievement. (Tazouti & Jarlégan, 2019). Tazouti and Jarlégan (2019) also found that mothers have a strong parental role no matter their SES than fathers do. SES examines what class or group a person is in. This is determined by how much education you have as well, the higher your education, the

higher your SES. Kaiser (2017) found that SES is linked to competent children. The higher a parent's SES is the more competent their child will be (Kaiser, 2017).

Overall, the literature shows that a family parental involvement is based off a number of things. A father's presences in a child's life have an effect of their academic achievements. Although they are linked together father still play an important role for the child's academic role. Another factor that effects parental involvement is socioeconomic status. If a parent is having two job it can be difficult for the parent to be very involved for that child. Both socioeconomic status and father's role both effects how a child develops. The survey that was distributed will conclude how much parental involvement is affect by other factors.

## **Data and Methods**

### **Instrument**

A survey questionnaire was created by the 50 members of the Social Research and Program Evaluation team at Longwood University. The survey asked both open and closed ended questions. Items on the survey were designed to evaluate SMART objectives of the five activities that were completed the previous week by Head Start and Andy Taylor Center families. Items were included that also addressed demographic information, enjoyment of activities, family involvement, and completion of the activities. Hard copies of the questionnaire were delivered to Head Start and the Andy Taylor Center.

### **Sample**

The non-probability sample for this study was based on 100 children (ages three to five). Seventy-nine children attend Head Start in three counties. Head Start is a federally subsidized preschool for families with economic need. Twenty-one children attend the Andy Taylor Center

which is located on a college campus, and families apply and pay for their children to attend. Attached to the questionnaire was a children's book to incentivize families to return the survey. Guardians of the children were asked to complete the survey and return it to the preschool the next day. Teachers sent a reminder home with children to return any outstanding questionnaires. This resulted in 16 questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a 16.1 % response rate.

### **Quantitative Analysis**

Quantitative analysis of the returned surveys was based on the closed ended questions. For this study the dependent variable is family involvement. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was "How involved was your family throughout the activity?". The answer choices for this item were a scale 0-10; 0 = not at all, 10 = a great amount. For this study the independent variable is which preschool the child attends. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was "How involved was your family throughout the activity?" "What school does your child attend?" The answer choices for this item were 1. Head Start and 2. Andy Taylor Center. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables.

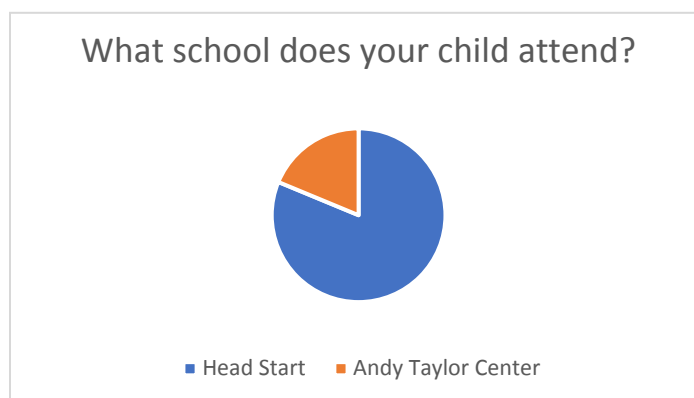
### **Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative analysis of the returned survey was based on open-ended questions. The open-ended questions on the survey were "What did your family enjoy most about these activities? Why?", "What did your child learn from these activities?", and "What recommendations would you suggest making these activities better?" To answer the research question, "how does the pre-school a child attends encourage parental involvement?", inductive open coding was used to determine reoccurring themes in the respondent's responses.

## Findings

### Quantitative Findings

The dependent variable of this project is “How involved was your family throughout the activity?”. Based on 16 responses, the mean of the dependent variable was 8.5. The standard deviation of this sample is 2.14. The independent variable of this project is “Where does your child attend? (Which Childcare program: Head Start or Andy Taylor Center)”. The mean of the independent variable of the sample is 1.27. Based on the 16 responses the standard deviation for the independent variable is 0.59. head start families had a mean involvement of 8.5. Andy Taylor Center families had mean involvement of 8.33. The findings conclude that Head Start families have a higher involvement of those who responded.



### Qualitative Findings

The open-ended questions of the survey contained 3 themes, enjoyment, spending time together, and learning and/or expanding a skill. There are 7 out of 16 surveys that contain enjoyment of the activities. Enjoy of the activities was one of the main goals of sending home the activities. Survey 3 said, “Our family really enjoyed how simple the activities were and how much our child enjoyed them, even completing some with siblings.” This family enjoyed the

simplicity of the activities. They also enjoyed incorporating others into the activities. Another quote from survey 12 that said, “yes, my family and son enjoyed doing the little things.” This quote tells us that enjoyment came from more than just the activities as a whole. Enjoyment also came from making memories and doing miniscule things. Survey 16 says, “Myself and two sons enjoyed the different learning outcomes that came along with the activities....” This family enjoyed the aftermath of the activities. Overall, many families found some sort of enjoyment throughout the activities, whether that be the actual activity or a small portion.

There are 9 out of 16 survey that contain spending time together. Family fun time activities are designed to elevate families spending time together. Survey 10 said, “Doing them together. Alexa says she loves doing things with mom and dad.” This family found that their child liked doing the activities with their mom and dad. Meaning the child enjoys spending time with the parents. Another quote from survey “She loved cutting and gluing. She loved making stuff and jumping with everyone.” This quote relates to spending time together because the parent explained that the child got more family members involved so everyone could spend time together. Many of the families found that spending time together was a mutual enjoyment.

There are 7 out of 16 surveys that mention learning and/or expanding a skill. An underlying goal of Family Fun-Time Activity is for the children to learn something they didn't know. Survey 7 said, “My child learned how to be creative.” This child learned how to express their creativeness throughout various Family Fun-Time Activities. Another quote from survey 2 said, “Shouri learns how to cut and glue and how to trace better.” This quote expands on the child expanding on a skill since they already knew how to trace, they just bettered the skill.

## **Conclusion**



There are different ways to measure parental involvement. The most expressed way parental involvement is measured is through the child's home life and how much the parent is involved with their child's education. Throughout the study that was conducted we found that parental involvement varies. There was no direct link of which school a child attended to how much parental involvement a child experienced.

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