

How does the Addition of Family Fun Activities Better Family Involvement?

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ABSTRACT

In our world today we struggle to come up with a universal understanding of what parent involvement for the betterment of the child truly looks like. Also how can the addition of the Family fun time activities, activities for the family to do in unison, help family involvement, youth's social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and occupational development is supported and promoted through Family involvement. A lot of people believe that we can measure parent involvement simply through their socioeconomic but others believe you can through finding who is specifically making time for activities and actively participating(Korfmacher, 2008). The purpose of the study was to look at the parent involvement while working on tasks that were given in the Family Fun Time Activity Kit. They surveyed all the responses from families from the Andy Taylor Center and the Steps Head Start Program both in Farmville, VA. In the survey were open ended questions on how you would change things and how you liked the activities. They followed by close-ended questions like their demographic and socioeconomic. This study is a mixed methods study examining the qualitative variable of family fun activities outside of school better family involvement among parents and children. The quantitative variable of their socioeconomic status or their annual household income to operationalize. In the surveys that were given back themes that kept popping up. I saw that spending time together, family togetherness, and the ease of activities were brought up a number of times. Overall parent involvement happens when availability is made through a good socioeconomic standing or status. The families in the study only wanted change in the difficulty level in the activities but all showed enjoyment together.

INTRODUCTION

In this day and age seeing eye to eye is difficult just as people are in disagreement on a universal understanding of what parent involvement for the betterment of the child truly looks like.

Bettencourt Gross (2020) finds parent involvement while interviewed is hard to explain by parents but while together parents reach agreement. When speaking on specific involvement

Wong-Fong K. Lau (2014) explains the importance of parent involvement and its very much related to receptiveness in the classroom and improvement in vocabulary. With kids today even having a vivid memory in great detail of early childhood involvement with the parents.

Korfmacher (2008) explains the need for further examination because of lack of participation which occurred in other studies as well. Family fun time activities are activities that let the family and child to work together and talk through activities at home. This is important for the child's social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and occupational development they're all supported and promoted through Family involvement. The literature review encompasses the research of if the addition of family fun activities outside of school better family involvement among parents and children. Also if socioeconomic factors or race and culture affect parent involvement or even the amount of time parents are in the house interacting with the child.

Whether it just be one guardian or both parents. How can we improve a family's involvement?

Literature Review

How does the addition of family fun activities outside of school better family involvement among parents and children? This is the question I will be trying to answer

throughout my research. If socioeconomic factors or race and culture affect parent involvement or just the amount of time parents are in the house interacting with the child. Whether it just be one guardian or both parents. How can we improve a family's involvement?

Korfmacher (2008) describes in great detail early childhood involvement with the parents. They went on home visits to get up close and dig deeper into important aspects of early childhood involvement with parents subject to parents approval. They measured it through two "terms." The participation of the family or interactions like a game or just playing around speaking with the child. The other was engaging with the child or the "emotional quality" of family interactions during the program (Korfmacher, 2008). An important factor that was noted was the influence of the researchers being in the vicinity watching. Of course they could put on a facade and influence the factors in the review and the researchers noted all of that. In the end the conclusion was a need for more research and "measurement" through the need for more in home research(Korfmacher, 2008).

A study done by Champine(2018) and others also needed more research to back their findings. They still got great information on the 158 caregivers of the children, parents or guardians etc., on participation leading to good outcomes in children behavior. The children in the study were from the age of six and below with mostly white boys as subjects meaning the parents as well were mostly white. The study also measured "cultural competence" or better yet skills that can be used to communicate with others of different cultures (Champine, 2018). With results supporting the benefit of family and parents learning skills that are stronger and seeing positive outcomes in the child's early learning has a strong connection with participation and the outcome. They were testing the cognitive ability to interact with different cultures.

It's not very clear if every caregiver or parent all have the same or similar understanding in parent engagement. With a loss of understanding in unison there would be a disconnect between the relationship of parent and school or even worse parents using strategies that are ineffective. The study focused on the findings of one urban area predominantly low income with subjects mostly being African American or Latinx families. The men and women in the study interviewed about 63 parents to gather all their findings, compare them and come to a conclusion (Gross, 2020). They got back nine different answers from all the families centering on ensuring engagement with the child but an agreement in how parents understand the concept. The information in the study is vast and scarce because as of twenty twenty or two years ago this was the first study that compared the results of “perspective” in early learning.

When reading and continuously seeing the need for measurements of engagement and involvement I wanted to know how it would go about and what the outcomes were. The biggest problem they were facing in the research were the barriers of the families at home. If most of our parents or families were asked for information on our personal life or even interactions with their children we wouldn't get a lot of responses. It is hard to get straight forward responses or even confident ones because most parents don't want to be critiqued or even want a person telling them what could be better for their kid. It's hard to find common ground sometimes with specific families. The centered on asking fourteen child care providers on their communication with parents and how its received by them. While some were great indicators the barriers that were discussed were seen and through programs and training for parents it could be diminished (Barnes, 2016).

Coba-Rodriguez on Latina mothers with their children. There was a lack of research in some marginalized groups so they decided to shine a light to see how these families responded.

The families were all a part of the Head Start program that provides resources academically and socially for income qualifying families. They found that these mothers in suburban areas were coming up with low cost solutions to get them ready for preschool. In better words instead of letting there work schedule or language barrier hurt the process they went above and beyond with a strong family involvement. They were even said to be creative in coming up with ideas to better them and make the transition a lot easier on the both of them (Coba-Rodriguez, 2020).

The next study rather than letting parents come up with activities they wanted to know if the involvement of the parent increases development in the child or even quicker development than most (Kim, 2021). The study found that even just a homework assignment with a parent or guardian engaged could be beneficial in pushing for accelerated or even just normal child development. The benefit of dialogue with parents about or on the homework goes a long way as they saw it through eighteen to twenty weeks.

In all the research I accumulated the socioeconomic aspect of the families was a factor. The next piece of research I came up on was a sociological stance with accounts on how children's participation in these programs have a connection to the amount of money their parents make. In current times judgment is different no matter if you have a child or not your socioeconomic position will most likely be the difference between your son or daughter getting intervened for help in an educational sense. They understood that in modern times we must look at two separate categories family and country specific. The most educational lower achievers were from different social backgrounds and with a mix of early education by privileged families it hurts the early intervention.

Finally I wanted to close on the findings of Peart and Bryant (2000) on what the realities parents face with early childhood development (Peart, 2000). They spoke to parents wanting an

idea of how they feel about the relationship between the programs/teachers/board and do they have an understanding of what is going on and the procedures. They were all left in ignorance and out of the loop so if questioned about it all they weren't able to say.

Data and Methodology

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 close 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 activities. Hard copies of the questionnaire were delivered to Head Start and 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 ___ questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a ___% response rate.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the returned surveys is based on the close-ended questions. For this study the dependent variable is family involvement. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was a scale asking, “How involved the family was throughout the activity?” The answer choices for the item were zero to ten, zero being not at all and ten a great amount. For the study the independent variable is socioeconomic status. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was “What is your annual household income?” The answer choices for this item were Less than \$10,000, \$10,000 – \$30,999, \$31,000 - \$50,999, \$51,000 – 70,999, \$71,000 - \$90,999, \$91,000 or more, and Prefer not to answer. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the returned surveys was based on open-ended questions. The open ended questions on the survey were, “Did your family complete this activity?” , “Did your child cut out the leaves for this activity?” , and “Was your child able to use the glue successfully to complete the activity?” To answer the research question, How does the addition of family fun activities outside of school better family involvement among parents and children? Inductive open coding was used to determine reoccurring themes in the respondent’s response.

Quantitative Findings

The dependent variable of the study is “How involved the family was throughout the activity?” Based on the sixteen samples the mean of the dependent variable is 8.5 . While the standard deviation is 2.14. The independent variable of the study is “What is your annual household income?” In summary about 33% household income was less than \$10,000, Both \$10,000-\$30,999 and \$31,000-\$50,999 incomes were about 17%, incomes \$71,000-\$90,999 and \$91,000-or more where both 8%, and finally all who preferred not to answer was about 17%. The data that was given back was very helpful but we lacked more parent participants. The amount of participants that chose to complete the survey/study wasn't enough to gather the best possible data.

Qualitative Findings

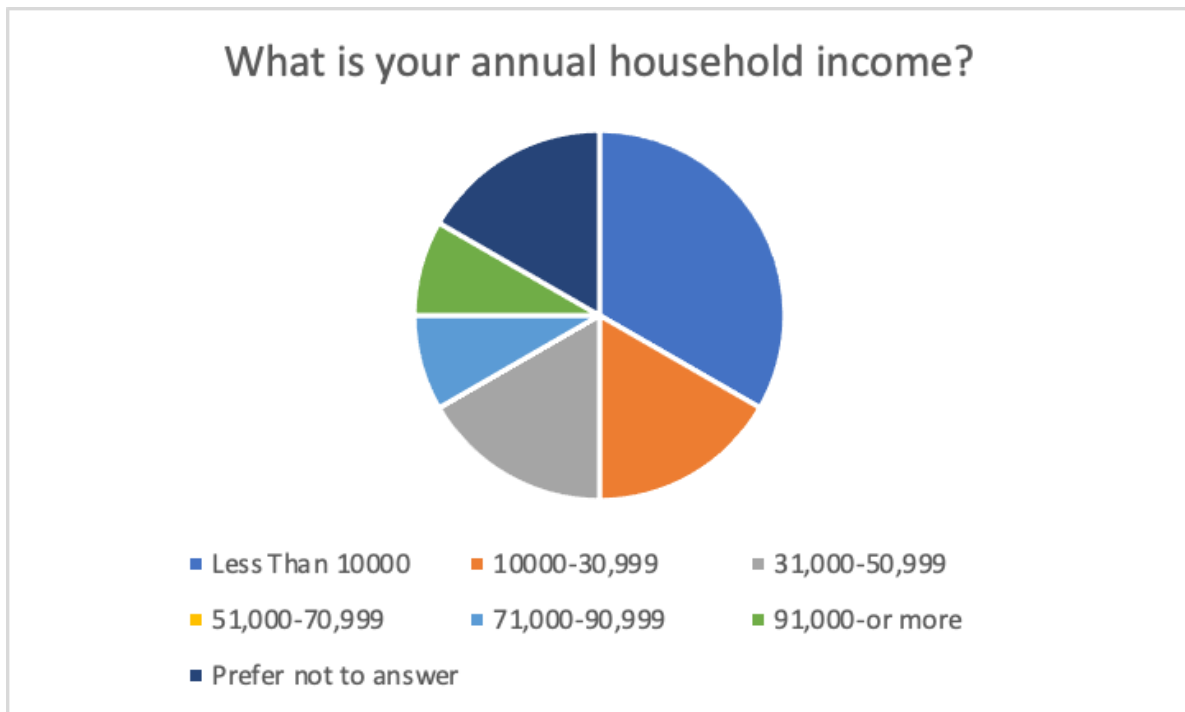
Throughout the surveys that were given back I saw a few recurring themes that just kept popping up. I saw that spending time together, family togetherness, and the ease of activities kept being brought up in the subjects' own words.

The ease of activities was only mentioned a few times in the surveys, about three times, but you could see a trend of it with most of the survey implying that there was ease but using different words to explain this. For instance in the first survey the parent wrote, “A free convenient activity to do as a family” “pre-packed” “easy to follow instructions.” The parents enjoyed the ease of the activity because it required less work to set up and explain the activity. Another time

ease was mentioned was in the third survey, “Our family enjoyed how simple the activities were and how much our child enjoyed them, even completing some with siblings.” With ease came more family participants written by the parents. It's hard to get others in the family to want to join the activities if they see others struggling to understand. I only saw one survey that believed that the activities were too easy for their child. The next theme was “Spending time together” and I saw it recurring in a lot of these surveys to be exact about 5 times. “It's fun when you want to do something fun and enjoyable for kids and family, it can be a learning skill but fun for the kids.” You can see that the parent on survey four understood that to make the learning process go smoothly for younger kids, a family member or members helping along the way goes a long way or these kids will just lose focus. Another quote I picked up was from survey eight, “Seeing her helping me with the activities and having a good time.” The parents enjoyed how their daughter was willing to show them how to do the activity, making the activity inclusive for all of them. I saw the theme occur around five times in the surveys, a very consistent theme. Finally the final theme was “Family togetherness.” The theme was as consistent as spending time together; they both came up the same amount of time on the surveys, about five times. “It's fun when you want to do something fun and enjoyable for kids and family, it can be a learning skill but fun for the kids,” these parents enjoyed how the activity disguised family togetherness and learning without making the child feel like they're just learning but bonding with the family. In the tenth survey the parent said, “Doing them together Alexa says she loves doing things with mom and dad.” So we could see the child enjoyed the activity solely because her parents were helping her do it together rather than make it a one parent activity. The activity and child was the glue to bring them together.

Conclusion

The Longwood University research team conducting social research came up with the survey questionnaire used. The survey was used to see how and if the Andy Taylor Center and the Steps Head Start Program families met SMART objectives of the five tasks. Receiving back a particularly small amount of responses. Only 20% of families completed the surveys out of 99. Resulting in the mean for the quantitative data for the survey question measured from 0-10. The answer choices for the item were zero to ten, zero being not at all and ten a great amount. “How involved the family was throughout the activity?” Based on the sixteen samples the mean of the dependent variable is 8.5 . While the standard deviation is 2.14. The next question being “What is your annual household income?” In summary about 33% household income was less than \$10,000, Both \$10,000-\$30,999 and \$31,000-\$50,999 incomes were about 17%, incomes \$71,000-\$90,999 and \$91,000-or more where both 8%, and finally all who preferred not to answer was about 17%. The data that was given back was very helpful but we lacked more parent participants. The amount of participants that chose to complete the survey/study wasn’t enough to gather the best possible data.



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