

Parent Involvement Activity Research

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Abstract

The overall issue that led to this research was the problem with parent involvement with their children and how they interact with one another. Real life problems need to be addressed as far as the barriers and gap between the development of effective parent involvement. The factors that are considered but not limited to are age, learning abilities, communication, and attitudes present. Hornby (2011) explained that societal factors play a big role when looking at history, demographic issues, and economic issues. The purpose of this study was to look at the different contributions that repeat within the activities and surveys done by the participants. The participants being studied are families that are enrolled at Head start and the Andy Taylor Center in Farmville Virginia. The data being collected is based on the families answers on the survey about the activities sent home and some demographic questions. This is a mixed methods study focusing on qualitative data based on how family fun activities affect parent involvement. The quantitative data looked at how involved the families were during the activity based on the answers they gave on a scale from 0 to 10. Themes that are shown throughout this research are gender differences, single parent households, and parental education. Branching off of those themes I focused on motor coordination, patience, bonding time within these families. After conducting surveys and sending them out to our participants, my research methods class as a whole got a 16% response rate out of the 100 surveys we sent out.

Introduction

The research problem in this study is the parent involvement with their children. Relating to other studies about the same issue, Becker and Epstein (1982) explained that it is useful to involve parents in learning activities with their children at home. This type of parent involvement is different from the type of parents that physically come into the classrooms and assist teachers with side work that needs to be done with students. Manning and Swick (2006) also focused on a study about teachers' beliefs about parent involvement and they found that sociocultural backgrounds, experiences and childhood experiences of the parents have a great impact on

how engaged they are with their child at home. If they are lacking leadership roles then it can affect the child's learning abilities. Deficiencies in these studies are the lack of interviews or surveys they could have gathered to have better insight on their research problem. The significance of the study is being able to assess parent involvement issues, finding the root of the problem and creating solutions. By doing this, hands-on activities were sent home for the families. For example, the activities were, an obstacle course, creating finger friends, your own pizza, cupcake flower and an emotional flip book. This influenced my research because I was able to look at the statistics of each activity on the survey and see what family engaged in the activity, if they enjoyed it, what improvements could have been made, what they liked most about it.

Literature Review

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is the participation of the guardian or parent with their children engaging in communication, academics and their aspirations for their child's achievements. Wojtkiewicz's (200) research on parental involvement with the youth had many factors that caused negative or positive outcomes. Gender differences in children, single parent households, and parental education are factors that change the outcome of family involvement.

Gender Differences

The involvement of parents can differ depending on the sex of their child. Research has shown that generally daughters experienced more attention with their education more than sons did. One of the reasons is due to social conditions and expectations when girls get older, their parents are more involved and stricter on the grades when they get in school. Daughters also may report more parental involvement because they have more positive experiences with their parents (Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000). Comparing this article, Raley and Bianchi (2006) explain that there is not much of a difference in the involvement of their son or daughter's education. However, a fathers investment in their child's life is greater when it is a boy. The gender of the

child has implications based on how the parent spends time with them, is involved, invests and treats them. Sometimes insufficient attention is paid to both genders which can result in the altering behaviors in a child (Raley & Bianchi, 2006). A critique for Raley and Bianchi's findings is they could have also used a longitudinal study to conduct in depth surveys or interviews to gather the involvement progression over time instead of just finding other research articles and studies. They also could have seen a pattern or long term effects on the child. Examining Gagnon & Garst's (2019) findings, they stated that parents that are too much involved and become overbearing can limit children from being independent and learning on their own. The association with overparenting is mostly negative in younger children.

Single Parent Households

Results have shown that children living in a single parent household will have lower education achievements. Also, children that are living in a home with a step parent are at risk of lower educational outcomes because they first went through the divorce family process and then they are adjusting to the new home environment. When living in a single parent household, the parent can not divide the time or attention with the other parent since there is not one. Sometimes a parent can be too busy to give the child the education involvement that they need. The single parent is going to be more involved with work and financial obligations than their child (Guetto & Panichella, 2019). Furthermore, there was a study on single parent households and the gender relationships with boys or girls. Even though single parent households have negative outcomes on education involvement with the parents, girls that live with their fathers have better scores than any other parent-gender relationship. A factor that was not included in the research is the reasoning for why the child is in a single parent household. If it was a greater reason then that could have also played a part in less involvement (Lee & Kushner, 2008). There was no evidence of difference in same gender relationship involvements but, where both articles overlapped was the decline involvement in single households.

Parental Education

In the research findings by Solyali and Celenk (2020), parents' level of education, income, and the number of children they have, affects the child's educational success, attitude, support, and livelihood due to lack of involvement (Solyali & Celenk, 2020). While using quantitative research to support the child's success rate with family involvement, a survey model pattern was used. Children whose parents were graduates from a university or equivalent to that, had higher support with their children than parents who were secondary or primary graduates. The key factor in linking parental involvement in their children's education is if the parent learned their own skills in schooling to apply to their children. Parents with high level education have bigger expectations for their children and become more engaging. Thinking about the parents personal beliefs, motivation and behaviors will affect the relationship between them and the child (Eccles, 2005). Children with involved and educated parents make them more confident, they get the experience and resources that they need. Compared to Eccles, Khan (2015) both said that to ensure children get the engagement they need with their parents, they need to provide more opportunities and discipline with their child. My study with parent involvement with family fun activities will allow me to see if these three factors played a role in how the family engaged, if the activity was completed, and how well the child performed.

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 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 the 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 nonprobability sample for this study was based on 100 children (ages three to five years old). Seventy-nine children attended Head Start in three counties. Head Start is a federally funded subsidized preschool for families with economic need. Twenty-one children attended 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 the children to return outstanding questionnaires. This resulted in 20 questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a 16% response rate.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the returned surveys was 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 "How involved was your family throughout the activity?" The attributes for this item were "Scale 0-10; 0 = not at all, 10 = a great amount." For this study the independent variable is if the family completed the activity. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was "Did your family complete this activity?" The answer choices for this item were "1. Yes 2. Started, but did not complete 3. No (please skip to activity 5)." Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables.

Findings

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 to make these activities better?" To answer the research question, "How do family fun activities affect family involvement?", inductive open coding was used to determine reoccurring themes in the respondents' responses.

Qualitative Findings

Of all the surveys, 16 of them had three common themes throughout the time span of engaging in these take home activities that then were recorded on the surveys. The three common themes in the 16 surveys with five different activities are motor coordination, bonding time together, and learning patience.

Motor Coordination

This theme was seen 5 times out of the 16 surveys. The question on the survey that asked 'what did your child learn from these activities?', many families stated that signs of motor skills were shown. One parent responded to the question with "learning how to cut with scissors and gluing". Another parent wrote down "I also learned how to trace better." Both tasks included specific movements to perform the activities they were given, teaching them new skills. Another response was "...I really liked jumping around while doing the activity." This was shown when the child did the obstacle course activity. The responses that had to do with motor skills were them finishing the activities and having fun. The difference with a couple of the other surveys is they would state problems with instructions or rate the activity low.

Bonding Time

The theme was seen 10 times out of 16 surveys. The question on the survey that asked "what did your family enjoy most about these activities?", many family members expressed that they enjoyed the time spent together. Survey 12 states, "Me and my family and son enjoyed doing the little things we did together." Another parent on survey 15 said "we enjoyed spending time together doing something educational, it is always fun, family time." A parent explained that not only did the family enjoy how simple the activities were but they "even enjoyed doing it with their siblings." This theme is important because one of the purposes of doing these activities is to bring the families together and have them all work on the activity. The similarity that this theme had with the others was all the parents stated the child's skills and outcomes but almost every single survey had the follow up saying that they loved spending time with one another.

Patience

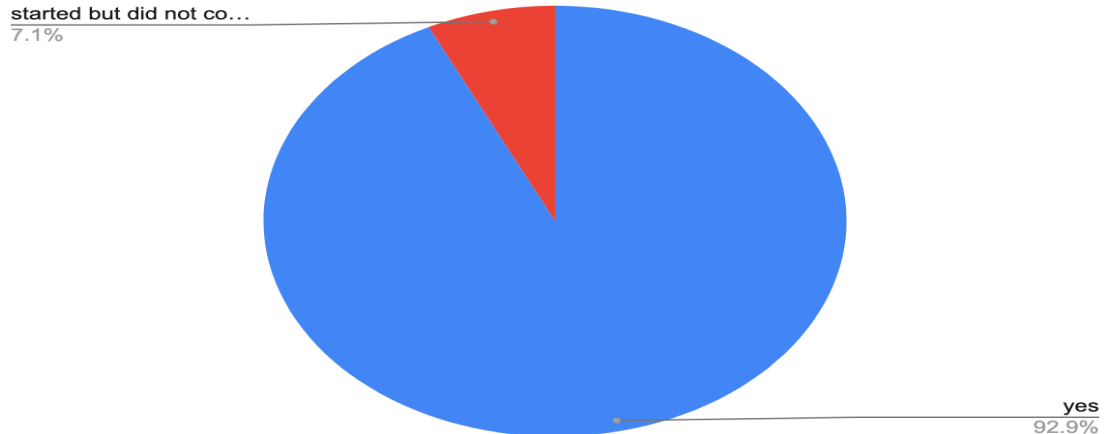
Four times out of the 16 surveys patience was shown with the answers the family provided. The survey asked “what did your child learn with these activities?” One of the parents answered “patience, not giving up if something doesn't go her way or look how she expected it to.” Survey 14s answer to this question was “it takes time and patience to complete things but also fun to do together.” Doing these activities and having to follow directions “helped with the child's mood and patience” which was stated in survey 4. This is an important theme because children are learning to control their emotions and when to use them. When doing a task, patience is key and these children can apply it in school and as they are growing up.

Quantitative Findings

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 attributes for this item were “Scale 0-10; 0 = not at all, 10 = a great amount.” It is coded on a 0 to 10 scale. The mean for this data is 8.142. The standard deviation for this variable is 2.567.

For this study the independent variable is if the family completed the activity. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was “Did your family complete this activity?” The answer choices for this item were “1. Yes 2. Started, but did not complete 3. No (please skip to activity 5).” Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables. The survey showed that 13 people said “yes” and one person said “started but did not complete.”

Completion of Activity



When we look at the independent variable next to the dependent variable, the mean scores are influenced. One respondent rated the family involvement 7 out of 10 and also answered 'started but did not complete' when asked about completion of the activity. Another individual rated the involvement of the activity a 9 out of 10 and answered 'yes' for completion of the activity. There was also a respondent who did a rate of 10 out of 10 for the activity and answered 'yes' for completion of the activity. By looking at the variables in the data, you can see that if the family completed the activity by answering 'yes' then there was a higher number rating on the scale for how involved the family was throughout the activity. The respondent that did not thoroughly complete the activity rated it lower on the scale.

Conclusion

The growing research on gender differences, parental education, and single parent households associates with parent involvement. The outcome of these findings show that they do have an affect on the engagement and can alter the child's learning. Showing that girls receive more of the attention, parents with high education levels are more proactive and two parent households are more involved. Along with that, based on the activities the children did with their parents they showed motor coordination, patience, and bonding time, leaving the average of the involvement on a scale from 0 to 10 an 8 which is a success. The data of the

surveys showed that the higher completion rate of the activity the more involved the family was. The motive behind this research is comparing my findings with the other research that I have included in this paper. Looking at if family fun activities are sent home to families, are they going to have positive engagement and what other factors of the families background play a part in this. In our survey we asked about race, income, and what kind of guardian they were to the child. Taking a step forward and sending these hands-on activities home was to encourage a more lively environment and hopefully apply it to their academics to better the success rate in the future.

Citations

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