**The Effect of Family Involvement Towards Children's Behaviors**

Nathan Martin

Longwood University

SOC-345-03: Social Research and Program Evaluation

Professor Pederson

November 22nd, 2023

**Abstract**

The lack of Family involvement is a major issue between children and parents/guardians. This issue can heavily impact the children’s daily lifestyles and behavior within their lives at home and outside of home. The purpose of this study is to gather information regarding the effectiveness of different levels of family involvement through family fun time activities which were sent home to families at a Head Start Program. This mixed method study in which information was gathered from qualitative and quantitative data, found the overall effectiveness of family involvement through these activities which were based on the parents/guardians highest level of education received. Through this numerous themes were recorded based on the surveys received back . These themes include the involvement that took place within the families, the skills learned by the children completing the activities, and overall no suggestions or no response towards what we could improve off sending these activities home. The research concluded that these activities sent home to families affected family involvement for the better through all levels of education the parents/guardians received.

In contemporary educational discourse, the issue of family involvement in children's development stands as a significant research problem. The dynamics between parents or guardians and their children play a crucial role in shaping the daily lives and behaviors of the latter. This study dives into the specific concern of family involvement, examining its impact through the introduction of colored clothespin wheel activities within a Head Start Program. Grounding this research in a broader context, the importance of understanding and enhancing family involvement takes center stage. In an era marked by evolving family structures and educational paradigms, the need to address this issue is more pressing than ever. As societal dynamics shift, acknowledging the pivotal role of familial engagement becomes important for educators, policymakers, and families alike. A comprehensive review of existing studies addressing family involvement forms the backdrop for this research. While previous studies have contributed valuable insights, deficiencies exist in the understanding of how different levels of parental education may influence the effectiveness of family involvement initiatives. This literature emphasizes the necessity of conducting further research to bridge this knowledge divide. By advancing the significance of this study, it becomes evident that the findings will not only contribute to the academic discourse but will also offer practical insights for educators, policymakers, and families navigating the intricate landscape of family involvement. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, understanding the nuances of effective family engagement becomes instrumental in fostering holistic child development.The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of family involvement, specifically through colored clothespin wheel activities, on children's daily lives and behaviors within the Head Start Program. By addressing the deficiencies in existing literature and recognizing the evolving societal context, this research aims to provide valuable insights that contribute to the advancement of family involvement strategies in early childhood education.

**Literature Review**

**Effects of Family Involvement**

According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), family participation in outside school events that include helping with homework, school based events, attending school events, and even parent-teacher communication have all led to positive indicators of student achievements. These achievements include teachers ratings of student contempance, student grades, and higher achieving test scores (Hoover-Dempsey., 2005). However, Hoglund et al. (2015) argued that more family involvement for low-income families have a higher effective rate for succes for their children in schools such as their overall grades and behavior (Hoglund et al., 2015). Its widely seen that the more active families are with family fun time activities the more successful their children are. This is supported by Olmstead’s (2013) article which explains the findings that principles and teachers have experienced that parents with lower family involvement have children who are less achieving in school. Compared to families who have higher family involvement which then their children achieve well in school (Olmstead, 2013).

**Theories on Family Involvement**

Epstein (2010) brought forth a theory that suggests parents' involvement at home doesn’t affect their kids' success at school. Solely, the teachers' job is to educate them and not the parents. However, principles and teachers suggest otherwise that the involvement of the families at home plays a big role in the children's success at schools (Epstein, 2010). On the other hand regarding family involvement theory, Manz (2014) brings forth the ideas that the early stages of children development are key. Such as children under the age of three receiving a good amount of family involvement leads to great success in and outside of school (Manz et al., 2014). To conclude this, Walker et al. (2005) conducted an experiment where they found that parents who are more involved with their children academically are more likely to achieve more. They also began wondering why parents want to be more involved with their children. Which brought forth findings such as parents feeling like if they are not heavily involved with their children's lives in and outside of education then they would not be successful or achieve as much. Which according to the study is true( Walker et al., 2005).

**Impact of Family Involvement**

According to Stitt & Brooks (2014) they discussed the overall impacts on family involvement. Where they found the more a family is involved with family fun time activities the more beneficial it is towards their children. Regarding not only their education but also their children's overall social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development as fully educated children (Stitt & Brooks, 2014). Balli et al. (1998) discussed the impact the federal funded program of head start has played a role in families and their children's lives. Arguing that the head start program is a starting point for families to get more involved with their children's lives academically which can lead to their successful achievements afterwards (Balli et al., 1998).

**Data and Methodology**

**Instrument**

A survey questionnaire was created by eight individuals of the SocialResearch and Program Evaluation team at Longwood University. The survey consisted of 14 questions, 11 close-ended questions and three open-ended questions. The first question on the survey asked respondents for informed consent. Any respondent who answered “no” to the informed consent were not able to see any other questions. The survey included questions that measured family involvement, family enjoyment, evaluation of SMART objectives, and demographics. The survey was sent online through Qualtrics. Head Start teachers emailed links to the survey to the parents/guardians, and children brought home books with a QR code attached.

**Sample**

The non-probability sample for this study was based on 17 children (ages three-five) who attend Head Start in rural Virginia. Head Start is a federally subsidized preschool for families with economic need. Family fun time activities were sent home with children. Parents/Guardians have been asked to complete the survey online (QR Code) attached to the children's book, following completing the clothespin counting wheel activity with your child. Teachers sent out a reminder email to parents/guardians to complete any outstanding surveys. This resulted in 4 questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a 4% response rate. Therefore, data from the previous years (2019 and 2022) on Family Fun Time Activities were added to analysis. This resulted in 66 completed surveys to be used in analysis (four from 2023, 20 from 2022, and 42 from 2019).

**Quantitative Analysis**

Quantitative analysis of completed surveys is based on the close-ended questions. For this study, the dependent variable is family involvement. The item from the survey that was used to operationalize this was, “On a scale from 0 to 10, how much did this activity encourage your family to work together?” (0=not at all, 10+a great amount). For this study the independent variable regards the parents/guardians highest level of education. The question utilized consists of “What is the highest degree of education you have completed?”, where there are numerous different answer choices in all ranges of education. The answers include some high school, High school diploma or GED, Certification from a trade/vocational school, Some college, Associates degree, Bachelor's degree, Graduate degree or more. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze these variables.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative analysis of the completed survey was based on open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were, “What did you enjoy about this activity?”, “What are your suggestions for improving this activity?”, and “Typically, what activities do you do with your child?”. To answer the research question, “Does participation in family fun time activities affect family involvement?”, inductive open coding was used to determine recurring themes in the respondents' responses.

**Findings**

**Qualitative Findings**

Family fun time activities contain three themes: involvement between the children and the parents/guardians by completing the activity, skills learned by the children following the activity, and more activities/ no suggestions in regard to the question asking for suggestions on the activity. These are all three themes found based on the data collected from the surveys of the parents following finishing the clothespin wheel activity.

***Involvement***

Another theme found following reviewing the thirty seven surveys received includes the overall involvement between the family and children after completing the clothespin activity. Where 24 out of 48 surveys related to family involvement from the activity. Respondent 22\_10 states “Doing them together, Alexa said she loves doing things with mom and dad”, this statement clearly correlates to an increased involvement between family and child due to this activity. Another statement by Respondent 19\_3 suggests “Time spent together and being able to do crafts, it opened the door for other simple activities”. Which provides another similarity that depicts the involvement created due to the activity. Also, Respondent 19\_7 states, “We enjoyed sitting down together doing this activity as a family. He felt like a big boy doing homework and making something with his own hands. We will allow him to do more activities”. This statement once again suggests the effect of involvement of family based on the activities sent home to families. It can clearly be determined that there is an increase in overall family involvement following doing and finishing the activities sent home to these families.

***Skills Learned***

Approximately 19/48 responses included information about what children have learned after finishing the activities. Such as Respondent 19\_15 which states “ We all gained experience in following directions and working together”. Which provides information that their child learned to follow directions within the activity and hopefully apply it to other activities as well as working together. Also, Respondent 22\_01 stated that they learned “practicing cutting with scissors, listening to and following instructions, and practicing counting”. This respondent’s child learned basic hand skills compared to the previous respondent’s child who gained solid motor skills. Respondent 22\_2 stated that her child “learned how to cut and glue and how to trace better”, which again provides the childs learning motor skills as well as basic skills following completing these activities.

***More Activities/No Suggestions***

Out of forty eight surveys, twenty eight mentioned either adding more activities or no suggestion at all towards the clothespin wheel. Respondent 22\_2 stated “More activities” which regards sending more activities for their child to complete which can furthermore affect their family involvement. Compared to that statement, Respondent 22\_6 suggests not only sending more activities but “make some more activities harder” . Also another Respondent 19\_6, suggests “more activities about writing”. Other than the numerous responses about adding more activities with slight suggestions, twenty one out of the thirty seven responses left no answer to the question. Which in terms means there are no issues with the activities sent home with the children. Numerous responses suggested adding more activities in particular about writing

In summary, a good amount of information can be gathered following evaluating all the surveys and their responses. Such as establishing three themes found which include involvement, skills learned, and more activities/no suggestions. It was found after reviewing the open ended questions within the surveys that family involvement overall increased due to the activities sent home. Also, the children gained a lot of motor and basic skills because of the activities which taught them or influenced their actions. Finally, very few suggestions were asked besides just adding additional activities to be sent home which under these circumstances it can be argued that it would increase more family involvement and more skills learned or perfected.

**Quantitative Findings**

The dependent variable regards discovering overall family involvement found by participating and completing this activity. The independent variable includes the overall effectiveness of family involvement based on their highest level of education completed following this activity. The respondents were given multiple choices of answers such as “Some High School”, “High School Diploma/GED”, “Vocational School”,“Some College”, “Associates Degree”, “Bachelor's Degree”, and “Graduate Degree or More”. The hypothesis is if parents are more involved with their children they are better behaved compared to the parents that are less involved with their children.

The mean score for family involvement is 7.19. The Standard Deviation is 2.60 for family involvement. This shows that the answers on this survey varied greatly between 1-10.

Table 1

Mean and SD of Family Involvement

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Family Involvement

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mean 7.19

Median 7.00

Mode 10.00

Standard Deviation 2.60

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Note. N=66*

Table 1 shows the levels of answers from a scale of 1-10 regarding the overall effectiveness of the family involvement following completing the activity. The mean of the answers as previously stated is 7.19.

Table 2

Mean + SD of Highest Level of Education with Family Involvement

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Highest Level of Education Responses

Some High School 8.500000

High School Diploma/GED 6.416667

Vocational/Trade school 7.846154

Some College 6.894737

Associates Degree 7.555556

Bachelor's Degree 6.428571

Graduate Degree or More 9.000000

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Table 2 shows the average amount of selected answers of the question regarding the highest level of education the parents/guardians received. The numbers listed are based on the 38 respondents of the survey.

The original hypothesis stated if parents are more involved with their children they are better behaved compared to the parents that are less involved with their children. But what the data shows is the average response of the parents/guardians highest level of education received. This data is being collected to compare families' overall involvement with their highest level of education received.

This research project set out to do research on public perceptions regarding increased spending on social security, aiming to understand the underlying factors influencing these views and their implications for societal well-being. The findings reveal a notable consensus among respondents, with a majority expressing the belief that more resources should be allocated to social security programs. In summarizing the findings, it is evident that the views expressed align with concerns raised in the literature review and introduction. The existing body of research identified the challenges and gaps in social security systems, highlighting the need for increased financial support. The findings of this project substantiate these concerns, emphasizing the resonance of public sentiment with the identified issues. Tying these findings to the bigger picture, the widespread endorsement of increased spending on social security speaks to the perceived importance of social safety nets in contemporary society. The acknowledgment of these needs reflects a collective understanding of the role social security plays in ensuring the well-being and stability of individuals and communities. In a broader context, this consensus underscores the societal demand for policies that prioritize and enhance social support systems. In conclusion, this study leaves the reader with a profound insight into societal expectations regarding social security. The findings suggest a collective recognition of the necessity for increased investment in these programs to address the evolving challenges faced by individuals and families. As society grapples with complex economic and demographic shifts, the resonance of the public's call for heightened social security spending serves as a compelling call to action. The reader is invited to consider the implications of these findings on the ongoing discourse surrounding social policy, urging a thoughtful reflection on the role of robust social security systems in fostering a resilient and compassionate society.

**References**

Balli, S. J., Demo, D. H., & Wedman, J. F. (1998). Family Involvement with Children’s Homework: An Intervention in the Middle Grades. *Family Relations*, *47*(2), 149–157. <https://doi.org/10.2307/585619>

Epstein, J. (2010, November). *School Family community partnerships - wordpress.com*. Kappan Classic. https://jreadingclass.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/school-family-community-partnerships.pdf

Hoglund, W. L. G., Jones, S. M., Brown, J. L., & Aber, J. L. (2015). The evocative influence of child academic and social-emotional adjustment on parent involvement in inner-city schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *107*(2), 517–532. <https://doi-org.proxy.longwood.edu/10.1037/a0037266>

Hoover‐Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why Do Parents Become Involved? Research Findings and Implications. *The Elementary School Journal*, *106*(2), 105–130. <https://doi.org/10.1086/499194>

Manz, P. H., Gernhart, A. L., Bracaliello, C. B., Pressimone, V. J., & Eisenberg, R. A. (2014). Preliminary development of the parent involvement in early learning scale for low-income families enrolled in a child-development-focused home visiting program. Journal of Early Intervention, 36(3), 171–191.

Olmstead, C. (2013). Using technology to increase parent involvement in schools. Techtrends : Linking Research and Practice to Improve Learning a Publication of the Association for Educational Communications & Technology, 57(6), 28–37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-013-0699-0>

Stitt, N. M., & Brooks, N. J. (2014). Reconceptualizing parent involvement: parent as accomplice or parent as partner? Schools: Studies in Education, 11(1), 75–101.

Walker, J. M. T., Wilkins, A. S., Dallaire, J. R., Sandler, H. M., & Hoover‐Dempsey, K. V. (2005). Parental Involvement: Model Revision through Scale Development. *The Elementary School Journal*, *106*(2), 85–104. <https://doi.org/10.1086/499193>