

Family Fun Time Activities

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### **Abstract**

This study explored how parental involvement and family fun time activities have improved a child's academic performance. Parental involvement is very important in a child's education because of the learning and growing in a child. In this study, there were 99 surveys sent out to the Andy Taylor Center and Head Start. There were 16 surveys returned, within these surveys there were five family fun time activities included for each family to complete, which were finger friends, cupcake flower, emotion flip book, pizza party, and obstacle course. The purpose of this study was to find out how involved the families were in the activities and the enjoyment response of the activities. Results in this study indicate the quantitative findings which were on a 0 to 10 scale of "how involved was your family throughout the activity?" The response rate for the 16 surveys was 16.2%. The qualitative findings were based on closed-ended questions for the parents. The themes that were presented throughout this paper were enjoyment, learning outcomes, and parental involvement. The following themes are very important because of the positive outcomes it has on parents and children. The implications of the study was to measure how family involvement can improve family fun time activities.

### **Introduction**

The research question that is presented in this study is "How can family involvement improve family fun time activities." The family fun time activities are a good way to get the parents engaged with their children. Throughout this paper there will be points covering what parental involvement is. Parental involvement is when parents or a parent come together to support and improve a child's life. Parent engagement includes the educational pursuits parents pursue both at home and in the classroom and how parents and educators interact (DeLoatche,

2015). Parental involvement plays a huge role in children especially in head start children because they are just starting with going to school. A positive feature of parental involvement at home and school appears to be a routine, which includes parents routinely asking kids how their day was at school (Dove, 2015). When this is taken into consideration this leads to improvement in a child's academic performance and social development, and socio-economic status.

### **Academic Performance**

Parent involvement is very important when it comes to the component of the academic performance of that child. Policies and practices intended to support students' successful transition to school, including improved academic performance, may be informed by research findings on changes in parent participation at home and school from pre-K to first grade (Powell, 2012). When parents are involved in their children's academic performance; it will continue to improve as they move up to the next grade. Pre-Kindergarten is the best way to start when being involved in academics with that child because it allows them to collect as much involvement from their parents and succeed in different areas. The importance of literacy skills has led to a strong emphasis on children's early development, notably in the areas of decoding, language, and the alphabet, as well as a focus on early intervention for the prevention of reading issues (Dove, 2015).

### **Social Development**

Social development is a major component of parental involvement without this, children would not know how to interact with classmates or peers around them. Parents' socialization goals and the activities and materials provided to their children both inside and outside the home are likely to be influenced by readiness beliefs (Barbarin, 2008). Social development is the method used to teach kids about their society and how to behave in it. It's a method for teaching

people new attitudes, viewpoints, and behaviors. Parents from social and cultural groups that are less prevalent in a society than the main social group may also have quite different expectations and understandings of what it means to be educationally helpful to their children (Berthelsen, 2008). Both parents being involved in the child's social development led to fewer behavior problems within that child. There has been research done that states father involvement in a child can differ because of the genders between boy and girl. The interaction terms of gender and father involvement revealed that the outcomes of father involvement in the domains of play and leisure outdoors on social competence and anger aggression were significantly different for boys and girls. Higher father involvement in play was negatively associated with social competence in girls but positively associated with boys (Torres, 2014).

### **Socio-economic status**

The socioeconomic status of a parent plays a role in a child's life. How a parent's social class determines how well of an education that child will receive. Education is a major component of a child's life and the amount of education they can get is very important. The Socio economic status of a parent could have a major positive or negative outcome in a child's life. This could lead to a lot of different factors in a child's life because of the parents social class. Over the course of the Head Start program's first year, nearly 40% of low-income moms acknowledged having depression occasionally or on a regular basis. Mothers who occasionally had depression reported decreased involvement in activities at home and at school, as well as less interactions with their child's teacher, compared to mothers who never experienced depression (LaForett & Mendez, 2010.) This shows that mothers that were low income struggled a lot when it came to their child's first year of Headstart. Meanwhile, parents who had never experienced depression were more likely to be pleased with their child's teacher than either group of

depressed mothers (LaForett & Mendez, 2010.) Empirical research often reveals trends that demonstrate how academic success is lower for kids from lower socioeconomic status (SES) families than for counterparts from higher SES families (Mayo & Siraj, 2015.) Academic success is not the only thing that plays into the socioeconomic status. However, the quality time that the parents spend with their child and the amount of leisure time also plays a huge role in socioeconomic status. In working-class and poor families children have substantial control over their leisure activities; they experience long stretches of leisure time, more child-initiated play and daily interactions with extended family. In these families parents display a sense of dependency towards institutions such as school that does not allow them to object or intervene on behalf of the child and the results of their dealings often leave them feeling powerless and frustrated (Mayo & Siraj, 2015.)

## **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 there 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 the Head Start and the Andy Taylor Center.

### **Sample**

The non-probability sample for that study was based on 100 children (ages three to five years old). Seventy-nine children attend Head Start in three counties. Head Start is a federally 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 children to return outstanding questionnaires. This resulted in 16 questionnaires being returned. Overall, there was a 16.2% 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 answer choices for this item were a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being not at all and 10 being a great amount. For this study the independent variable is social class. The item from the questionnaire that was used to operationalize this was, "What is your annual household income?" The answers 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**

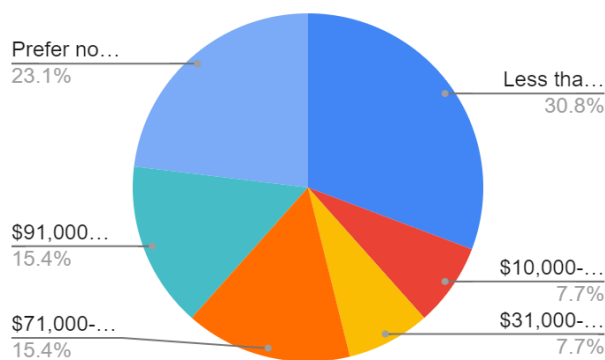
Qualitative analysis of the returned surveys was based on open-ended questions. The open-ended questions on the survey were, "What did your family enjoy most about these activities? Why?", "What did your child learn from these activities?", and "What

recommendations would you suggest to make these activities better?" To answer the research question, "How family fun time affects family involvement?", inductive open coding was used to determine recurring themes in the respondents' responses.

## Findings

### Quantitative findings

My dependent variable is family involvement. It's coded on a 0 to 10 scale. The mean of the dependent variable is 8. The standard deviation of the dependent variable is 2.35. My independent variable is annual household income.



30.8% of parents made less than \$10,000 in their household. 7.7% of parents made between \$10,000- \$30,999. 7.7% of parents made between \$31,000- \$50,999. 15.4% of parents made between \$71,000- \$90,999. 15.4% of parents made between \$91,000 or more. 23.1% of parents prefer not to answer. The households that made less than \$10,000 mean was an 8.3 on parent involvement. The households that made \$10,000- \$30,999 mean was an 8.5 on parent involvement. The households that made \$31,000- \$50,999 mean was an 10 on parent involvement. There were no respondents that made between \$51,000- \$70,999, so there was no mean for that category. The households that made \$71,000- \$90,999 mean was an 10 on parent involvement. The households that preferred not to answer mean was a 7 on parent involvement.

From the findings above from the annual household income, parents that made between \$71,000 – \$90,999 and \$91,000 or more have a higher rate of parent involvement within their children. Parents that preferred not to answer about their annual income had a percentage of 23.1% which is one of the highest percentages than all of the other percentages presented.

### **Qualitative Findings**

The following themes: enjoyment, learning outcomes, and parental involvement are major components for a child when it comes to family fun time activities. We see how these three themes can have positive outcomes for children. The more involved the parent is the better the outcomes will be for the child. From all 16 of the surveys, the involvement has led to great things for the children and the family. There were a lot of skills that the parents and children learned from the family fun time activities. Lots of parents enjoyed doing these family fun activities with their children.

When looking at enjoyment within the family fun time activities, there were a lot of respondents that enjoyed the activities. 8 out of 16 respondents mention in their surveys that they enjoyed the activities and how fun they were. For example, respondent number 16 said, “She and her sons enjoyed the different learning outcomes that came along with the activities, and that directions were easy to follow.” Respondent number 16 is saying that she enjoyed learning the different activities with her children. Respondent number five said, “it’s fine when you want to do something. It is fun and enjoyable for kids and the family, and it can be a learning skill but fun for the kids.” Responded number five is saying that she enjoyed the activities overall and that they were fun for her kids and her family. Respondent number four said, “what her family enjoys most about these activities is the time spent together, having talks, and learning skills.”



Respondent number four is saying that the enjoyment has increased a lot of family time within the family. The enjoyment part is very important when it comes to these activities because you want the parents and the children to be involved and have fun when doing these activities together.

When looking at the learning outcomes in the family fun time activities, there were a lot of positive outcomes from the families. 15 out of 16 respondents said that their child had learned different skills and different learning outcomes from these activities. Respondent number 15 said, "her child learned patience and not giving up if something doesn't go her way or look how she expected it to." The respondent is saying that these activities, it is teaching her child how to persevere and not give up when things are tough and do not go her way. Respondent number 12 said, "their child learned their shapes, finger toys, how to color, and their colors." The learning outcomes and skills that come with the family fun time activities are very important because these children can take these skills and apply them to the real world. Not only does it have a major influence on the children it also has somewhat of an influence on parents as well because they are learning these skills with their children. Being involved with the family fun time activities, it will allow the children to learn better because their parents are involved with their education.

When looking at parents' involvement in family fun time activities, there were a lot of parents that were involved with doing the activities with their children. All 16 respondents were involved with the family fun time activities with their children. Respondent number 9 said, "their family enjoys doing these activities together." This means that the involvement with the family is what made the activities more enjoyable. Respondent number 7 said, "the family enjoyed putting all the different shapes together on the pizza survey." The involvement with the family is what

led to them having fun and doing it together. Parental involvement is a major aspect of family fun time activities that is because the more involved the parent is there will be a better outcome for the child. Both parents and children are learning something different from the family fun time activities.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the family fun time activities improved the children's learning skills. This is very important because these were learning activities that were sent home for the children and their parents. Growing evidence points to the importance of including families in their children's education, both at home and at school, as a key strategy for improving learning outcomes for kids. Children achieve more in school and remain in school longer when schools and families collaborate (Berthelsen, 2008.) Even though there were 99 surveys sent out and only 16 were sent back, the findings indicated that most parents enjoyed the family fun time activities with their children. The data proved that family involvement improves Family Fun Time activities. Academic performance, social development, and socio-economic status are major components when it comes to parents and children. However, this paper talks about how these family fun time activities improve a child's learning skill and the involvement with the parents. The family fun time activities were a great way to get the family engaged with the children's learning habits. This study had a good turn out for the parents involved and the children.

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