

Exploratory Analysis of Parent Engagement in Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

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Parent Engagement

- Parent involvement in education is associated with improved behavioral and socio-emotional outcomes for children, parents, and teachers (Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999; Christenson, 1995; Davies, 1993).
- Parent engagement extends beyond parent involvement to include behavioral and psychological indicators that demonstrate a parent's active, long-term commitment to their child's learning and development.
- Family engagement in services for children is linked to several positive outcomes.
When families are engaged:
 - Retention, satisfaction, and levels of participation are improved (Hoagwood, 2005) and barriers are reduced (McKay & Bannon, 2004);
 - Children's access to intervention are increased (Angold, Messer, Stangl, Farmer, Costello, & Burns, 1998);
 - Improvements are observed in parenting skills and knowledge, and parent-child interactions (Charlop-Christy & Carpenter, 2000); and
 - Positive outcomes for children are observed (Kazdin & Whitley, 2003).
- Parent engagement is operationalized through roles and responsibilities such as active participation in decision-making, communication and collaboration with teachers, and follow through on methods to support learning during out of school time.
- Linking engagement strategies to the delivery of high quality treatments may amplify the potential long-term impact of effective treatments for children and families (Dishion & Stormshak, 2007; Hoagwood, 2005).
- Family risk factors (e.g., low-income, single parent, low maternal education) may be related to a parent's ability to engage in their child's education and assist in developing goals and intervention plans for their child (Baydar, Reid, & Webster-Stratton, 2003).

- Parent and teacher perceptions of acceptability and satisfaction with intervention services and the degree to which they believe that their needs are being met may also relate to parent's degree of engagement in the consultation process.

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

(CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996)

- Conjoint behavioral consultation (CBC) is a structured, indirect model of service delivery wherein a consultant works collaboratively with parents, teachers, and support staff to address the academic, behavioral, and social needs of a child (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996).
- CBC promotes a partnership by focusing on the interactions between the child and primary systems in his or her life, thus strengthening the relationship across home and school through joint goal setting and collaborative decision-making; while building skills and competencies within families and schools and promoting participation and collaboration among systems.
- CBC has received substantial empirical support for addressing a variety of academic, social, and behavioral needs for children in elementary (Sheridan et al., 2001) and early childhood programs (Sheridan et al., 2006).
- An empirically supported measure is needed to examine parent engagement in the consultation process to assist in future intervention efforts for children and families.
- Research has yet to investigate the relationship between parent engagement in consultation and (a) family risk factors, (b) parent acceptability, satisfaction, and perceptions of goal attainment with consultation, (c) teacher acceptability, satisfaction, and perceptions of goal attainment with consultation.

PURPOSE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- The *purposes* of this study are to determine the psychometric properties of a parent engagement scale, and to identify the relationship between family factors and their degree of engagement in CBC.
 - What is the reliability of the Engagement in Consultation Scale?
 - What is the relationship between parent risk factors (i.e., socioeconomic status, mother's education, number of adults in the home) and parent engagement in CBC?
 - What is the relationship between parent and teacher satisfaction, acceptability, and perceptions of consultation outcomes and parent engagement in CBC?

METHODS

Participants:

- Participants were involved in federally-funded investigations examining CBC as a means to promote parent engagement, positive child outcomes, and home-school collaboration in a variety of school settings.
- Parents of 30 children referred for CBC due to behavioral, academic, and social-emotional concerns were involved in this study.

Table 1
Participant Characteristics

| Variable | Teacher | Parent | Child |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| Age | | | |
| Mean | 37.25 | 37.50 | 6.96 |
| SD | 9.61 | 9.46 | 3.17 |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 8% | 4% | 82% |
| Female | 92% | 96% | 18% |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| White | 70% | 89% | 85% |
| Other | 30% | 11% | 15% |
| Socioeconomic Status (SES) | | | |
| Less than \$15,000 | | 11% | |
| \$15,000 - \$30,000 | | 25% | |
| Over \$30,000 | | 64% | |
| Number of Adults in Home | | | |
| One | | 33% | |
| Two or more | | 67% | |
| Education Level | | | |
| Less than college degree | | 52% | |
| College degree | 72% | 32% | |
| Advanced degree | 28% | 16% | |

Note. Reported percentages are based on valid percentages for the total sample.

Setting

- CBC cases were conducted in preschool, elementary, and middle schools in a moderately sized Midwestern community.

Variables and Measures

- Parent Engagement in CBC: Examined using the *Engagement in Consultation Scale*.
 - Assessed six principles representing parental behavioral and psychological engagement in the consultation process:
 - *Shares Information, Participates in Decision-making, Communicates Effectively, Provides Supportive Statements, Is Sensitive and Responsive, and Engages in Actions to Facilitate Positive Child Outcomes.*
- Family Income:
 - Parents reported family annual income based on 3 categories ranging from less than \$15,000 to more than \$30,000.
- Social Validity
 - Goal Attainment Scale (GAS; Kiresuk, Smith, & Cardillo, 1994)
 - 5-point Likert scale assessing parent and teacher perceptions of the degree to which consultation goals were met
 - Consultant Evaluation Form (CEF; Erchul, 1987)
 - 12 item, 7-point Likert scale measuring parents' and teachers' satisfaction with the consultant
 - Behavior Rating Intervention Scale - Revised (Acceptability factor; BIRS-R; Elliott & Von Brock Treuting, 1991) 15 item, 6-point Likert scale assessing parents' and teachers' acceptability of CBC

Procedures

- Development of the scale was based on previous literature in the areas of family involvement in education and client engagement in mental health settings, and group consensus.
- Six broad areas of consultee engagement were identified: Shares Information, Participates in Decision-making, Communicates Effectively, Provides Supportive Statements, Is Sensitive and Responsive, and Engages in Actions to Facilitate Positive Child Outcomes.
- Independent coders participated in two phases of piloting and met to discuss reliability results and revise the scale after each phase.
- 30 interviews were randomly selected from an existing database of CBC cases completed by school psychology graduate students between 2001 and 2008.

- Independent coders listened to audiotapes of the second interview in the CBC process (Conjoint Problem/Needs Analysis Interview) and identified statements made by parents that represented their engagement in the consultation process.
- Interviews were randomly assigned to a team of 5 coders who had been trained in the use of the Engagement in Consultation Scale.
- Data for parental risk factors were collected prior to the completion of CBC casework. Data for social validity measures were collected at the conclusion of CBC casework.

DATA ANALYSIS

- Correlational analyses were conducted to determine inter-rater reliability of the Engagement in Consultation Scale. Correlational analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between parent engagement in CBC and social validity outcomes (i.e., perceptions of acceptability, satisfaction, and goal attainment).

RESULTS

- Reliability:
 - 25% of interviews were coded for inter-rater reliability.
 - Ratings were considered reliable if they were within 1 rating of each other.
 - Inter-rater reliability for the parent engagement measure was assessed using the intraclass correlation coefficient from a single-measure, one-way random effects model.

Table 2
Inter-rater Reliability

| | % Agreement |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Exact Agreement | 68.75% |
| Within 1 | 100% |

Table 3
Inter-rater Reliability

| | Intraclass Correlation Coefficients |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Single Measure | .645 |
| Two Measures | .784 |

Table 4

Summary of correlations between parent engagement and household annual income, parent and teacher acceptability, satisfaction, and perception of outcomes in CBC.

| Variables | Parent Engagement |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Household annual income | .33 |
| Maternal education level | -.06 |
| Number of adults in the home | .08 |
| Parent acceptability | -.02 |
| Teacher acceptability | .28 |
| Parent satisfaction | .39 |
| Teacher satisfaction | -.30 |
| Parent perceptions of outcomes | .09 |
| Teacher perceptions of outcomes | .31 |

Note: Correlations in bold are considered medium based on Cohen (1992).

DISCUSSION

- The Engagement in Consultation Scale has demonstrated acceptable levels of interrater agreement and reliability. Additional refinement of scale items may assist in improving the consistency between this scale and other empirically-supported measures used in the consultation process.
- Household income was the only family risk factor related to parent engagement. It may be anticipated that as household income increases, parents may have more time and resources to actively participate in the consultation process.
- Parent satisfaction and teacher perceptions of consultation outcomes are also moderately related to parent engagement. As parents are more engaged, they are more likely to be satisfied with the consultation process and teacher perceptions of positive child behavior changes may also increase.

- As parent engagement in consultation increases, teacher satisfaction with the consultation process may decrease. When parents are more actively involved in planning and delivering intervention services for their child, teachers may perceive that it is parents, rather than the consultation process, that is responsible for the child's behavior change.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The Engagement in Consultation Scale is in need of further psychometric investigation. Research is needed to assess its construct and concurrent validity, and properties with teacher consultees.
- The small sample size (N = 30) limits the generalizability of these findings. Replication of this investigation with a larger, more diverse sample is needed to validate the conclusions and improve the external validity of the findings.
- None of the correlations obtained in the assessment of the relationship between parent engagement and family income/social validity reached significance, potentially due to the small sample size.
- Parent engagement during one stage of CBC (problem analysis and treatment planning) and one interview (Conjoint Needs/Problem Analysis Interview) was assessed. Future studies may investigate change in parental engagement throughout the CBC process using the Engagement Scale.
- The preliminary analyses reported here are correlational, and do not infer that CBC causes engagement. Experimental manipulation is necessary to determine whether CBC actively facilitates engagement among parents.
- Research examining additional parental and familial variables that may hinder or promote parent engagement in the consultation process is needed to inform future intervention efforts for children and families.
- Further investigation is needed to determine if parent engagement in the consultation process is related to child outcomes.
- Investigations are needed to determine if the engagement of other members of the consultation team (e.g., teacher and consultant) are related to parent engagement in the consultation process. Additional members of the consultation team may also assist in assessing the engagement of other team members to strengthen the validity of this scale.

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Case Code: _____

Engagement in Consultation Scale

Coder: _____

Interview: _____

Please use the following scale to rate the consultee’s effectiveness in relation to each principle:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse | Neutral | Mostly engaged, could have been better | Totally engaged, it could not have been better |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Sharing Information

Definition: The consultee provides information to the team that is pertinent to the child’s development and facilitates the consultation process.

Consultee’s engagement in relation to *Share Information*:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse | Neutral | Mostly engaged, could have been better | Totally engaged, it could not have been better |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| 1. Provides relevant information regarding child strengths, needs, or behaviors | Yes | No | NA |
| 2. Shares relevant information about the family/home environment (parent) and/or classroom/school environment (teacher) | Yes | No | NA |

Notes: _____

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Participates in Decision-Making

Definition: The consultee actively collaborates with the team to make decisions throughout the consultation process.

Consultee's engagement in relation to *Participating in Decision-Making*:

| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse 1 | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse 2 | Neutral 3 | Mostly engaged, could have been better 4 | Totally engaged, it could not have been better 5 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| 1. Participates actively in defining target behavior, goals, data collection, or intervention procedures | Yes | No | NA |
| 2. Provides relevant suggestions or feedback | Yes | No | NA |

Notes: _____

Communicates Effectively

Definition: The consultee is able to communicate with team members clearly and appropriately.

Consultee’s engagement in relation to *Effectively Communicating:*

| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse 1 | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse 2 | Neutral 3 | Mostly engaged, could have been better 4 | Totally engaged, it could not have been better 5 | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| | | | | | 1. | Communicates agreement/disagreement in a calm manner | Yes | No | NA |
| | | | | | 2. | Asks questions for clarification | Yes | No | NA |
| | | | | | 3. | Communicates concerns with team members in a clear and direct manner | Yes | No | NA |
| | | | | | 4. | Uses “minimal encouragers” to convey understanding or facilitate the conversation (e.g., um-hmm; gotcha; OK) | Yes | No | NA |
| | | | | | 5. | Maintains involvement throughout the discussion without dominating the conversation | Yes | No | NA |

Notes: _____

Provides Supportive Statements

Definition: The consultee asks questions, makes statements, or responds nonverbally to demonstrate a sense of trust, respect, and understanding to other team members.

Consultee's engagement in relation to provide *Supportive Statements*:

| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse 1 | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse 2 | Neutral 3 | Mostly engaged, could have been better 4 | Totally engaged, it could not have been better 5 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| 1. Respects the opinions of team members | Yes | No | NA |
| 2. Acknowledges the concerns, perspectives, or ideas of team members | Yes | No | NA |

Notes: _____

Is Sensitive and Responsive to Team Members

Definition: The consultee is empathetic and responds to team members in a way that is respectful/non-abrasive. The consultee demonstrates an awareness of the needs and demands placed on other team members and adjust their expectations of the consultation process accordingly.

Consultee's engagement in relation to *Sensitivity and Responsiveness of Consultee to Team Members:*

| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse 1 | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse 2 | Neutral 3 | Mostly engaged, could have been better 4 | Totally engaged, it could not have been better 5 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| 1. Expresses an understanding of the demands placed on team members | Yes | No | NA |
| 2. Suggests appropriate expectations for child | Yes | No | NA |
| 3. Responds to information shared by team members | Yes | No | NA |

Notes: _____

Engages in Actions to Facilitate Positive Child Outcomes

Definition: The consultee actively participates in the consultation process by assisting in data collection, intervention implementation, and providing suggestions and feedback on the use of these techniques to assist with child progress throughout the consultation process.

Consultee's engagement in relation to *Skill Development*:

| Totally disengaged, it could not have been worse 1 | Mostly disengaged, it could have been worse 2 | Neutral 3 | Mostly engaged, could have been better 4 | Totally engaged, it could not have been better 5 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

1. Assists in creating or improving upon data collection or intervention plans Yes No NA
2. Provides evidence or verbal summaries about their use of data collection and intervention procedures (e.g., experiences collecting baseline data or intervening at home or in the classroom) Yes No NA

Notes: _____

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