Abstract

Family-school engagement in early childhood encourages positive child outcomes and helps parents feel valued in promoting their children’s learning and development. The purpose of this poster is to (1) explore the state-of-the-science of early childhood family engagement intervention research, and (2) examine the prevalence of specific early childhood family engagement strategies in the empirical research. Results may suggest directions for the field regarding the nature and efficacy of early childhood family interventions.

Introduction

- Uniquely, children benefit when families are engaged in their education (Christenson & Shure, 2001).
- Positive interactions between parents and children’s care providers are predictive of important cognitive (e.g., language), social-emotional (e.g., relationships), and behavioral (e.g., compliance) outcomes for children (Stickle, Wix, Kwon, & Sayer, 2013).
- Establishing family-school engagement practices during early childhood may prepare parents to develop valuable and constructive relationships with both their children and their children’s care providers during early childhood and beyond.
- Family-school engagement in early childhood positions families to feel valued in their child’s development and learning.
- Despite the benefits for both children and parents when families become engaged during early childhood, few studies have systematically examined the prevalence of family-school engagement interventions.
- Furthermore, past research has primarily focused on exploring effects for academic outcomes relative to other important child outcomes, and has not differentiated between parent involvement interventions (focused on activities) and family-school partnership interventions (focused on relationships).

Research Questions:

1. What is the prevalence of research on early childhood parental involvement and family-school partnership interventions?
2. What specific strategies are utilized and examined in early childhood family-school engagement intervention research?
3. Which specific structural and relational approaches are being used in family-school engagement intervention early childhood research?

Methods

- A broad search of the literature yielded over 14,000 abstracts (e.g., ERIC, PsychINFO) from 2001-2011.
- Abstracts were coded by researchers, and studies that meet the following criteria for inclusion were retrieved:
  - Investigated parent involvement (Fisher & Ramirez, 2005) or family-school partnerships (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001) interventions among children in grade 12 or younger; and
  - Presentated outcomes for children, parents, teachers, schools, communities, or partnerships.

Results

- The current study is a subsample consisting of early childhood studies from birth to age 8.

Coding Variables

- Studies were coded based on:
  - Sample and setting characteristics
  - Intervention type
  - Parent involvement or family-school partnership
  - Structural (e.g., behavior and/or emotion management) and relational (e.g., parent-child relationship) components of the intervention
  - Outcomes (e.g., reading competency, child behaviors)

Coding Procedures

- Six trained individuals coded the studies, with 15% of the studies coded by two or more coders.
- Regular meetings were held to address inter-rater reliability concerns including questions that arise from the coding process, discrepancies, and consensus among coders.

Discussion

- Family-school partnerships are distinct from parent involvement. They are child-focused approaches wherein families and professionals cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to enhance opportunities and success for children and adolescents across social, emotional, behavioral, and academic domains (Atkinson & Wabnberg, 2010; Dowler & Myers, 2010; Lino, Miller, & Arthur-Stavely, 2010).
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