

Introduction

The Getting Ready Project promotes school readiness in young children through its focus on parent-professional and parent-child relationships. This study is part of a larger, longitudinal study investigating the effects of the Getting Ready Intervention on children's school readiness, including children's social behaviors, cognitive and communication skills. To-date, the project has had positive effects on parent-infant relationships (Knoche et al., 2012) and early language and literacy outcomes in preschool-age children (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards & Marvin, 2011).

Parent-Teacher Relationships

It is during the early years of their children's lives, that parents begin to form their opinions and shape their behaviors, related to the importance of their involvement, in their children's growth and education. The interactions parents have with their children's preschool teachers can positively or negatively impact these opinions and behaviors (Chung, Marvin & Churchill, 2005). A positive parent-teacher relationship can bridge the home-school differences by providing consistent support for children's learning. Positive parent-teacher relationships can significantly increase interpersonal communication between parents and teachers and positive outcomes for young children (Sheridan, Clarke, Knoche, & Edwards, 2006). It is unclear, however, what role teacher and program characteristics play in teachers' confidence in promoting partnerships with parents and parents' perceptions of the parent-teacher relationship.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between teacher confidence in promoting parents as partners and parent perception of the parent-teacher relationship during the first year of the young child's enrollment in a preschool program?
2. What role does the number of children and families served have on teacher confidence in promoting parents as partners and parent perception of the parent-teacher relationship?
3. What role does teacher education level play in teacher confidence in promoting parents as partners and parent perception of the parent-teacher relationship?

Methods

Participants

N = 256 families
N = 64 teachers

Measures

- Parent and teacher demographic questionnaires
- *Teacher Efficacy for Promoting Partnerships* (TEPP) (Moen & Sheridan, 2013)
- *Parent Teacher Relationship Scale* (PTRS) (Vickers & Minke, 1995)

Analysis

- Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (r2)

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Results

Table 1

Parent Demographics

Characteristics	N= 256	Percentage
Parent Relationship to Child		
Mother	215	84.0
Father/Stepfather	29	11.3
Grandparent	1	0.4
Foster Parent	2	0.8
No Response	9	3.5
Marital Status		
Married	126	49.2
With Partner/Not Married	42	16.4
Divorced/Separated	32	12.5
Single, Never Married	47	18.4
No Response	9	3.5
Race		
White	191	74.6
African American	8	3.1
American Indian/Alaska	8	3.1
Asian	2	0.8
Two or more	8	3.1
Other	21	8.2
No Response	18	7.0
Language Preferred at Home		
English	202	78.9
Spanish	42	16.4
Other	5	2.0
No Response	7	2.7
Highest Level of Education		
Less than 12 th Grade	54	21.0
High School Diploma/GED	67	26.2
Training Beyond High School	60	23.5
2-Year College Degree	30	11.7
4-Year College Degree	12	4.7
Graduate Coursework/Degree	12	4.7
No Response	21	8.2

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for TEPP, PTRS, Teacher Education and Number of Children and Families Served

	TEPP	PTRS Total	PTRS-J	PTRS-C	Teacher Level of Education	# Children Served	# Families Served
TEPP	1.0	-0.044	-0.016	-0.067	-0.126	0.232	0.212*
		0.591	0.841	0.408	0.337	0.001	0.005
		151	150	152	60	177	171
PTRS Total		1.0	0.744	0.940	-0.015	-0.085	-0.155
			< .000	< .000	0.855	0.299	0.060
			235	232	145	151	146
PTRS-J			1.0	0.474	-0.037	-0.153	-0.073
				< .000	0.651	0.852	0.381
				232	144	150	145
PTRS-C				1.0	0.019	-0.182	-0.253*
					0.819	0.024	0.001
					146	152	147
Teacher Level of Education					1.0		
# Children Served						1.0	0.990*
							< .000
							171
# Families Served							1.0

Note: TEPP = *Teacher Efficacy in Promoting Partnerships*, PTRS = *Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale* (parent-report) (C = Communication Subscale; J = Joining Subscale)
*p < .01

Table 2

Teacher Demographics

Characteristics	Percentage	N= 64	Mean (Range)
Age			
No Response		58	37.67 (22-63)
		6	
Years of Experience			
No Response		61	10.05 (1-28)
		3	
Gender			
Male	1.6	1	
Female	95.3	61	
No Response	3.1	2	
Race			
White, non-Hispanic	93.8	60	
White, Hispanic or Latino	1.6	1	
American Indian/Alaska	1.6	1	
No Response	3.1	2	
Primary Language			
English	96.9	62	
No Response	3.1	2	
Highest Level of Education			
2-Year College Degree	12.5	8	
4-Year College Degree	57.8	37	
Graduate Coursework	15.6	10	
Graduate Degree	7.8	5	
No Response	6.3	4	
Early Childhood Endorsement			
Yes	71.9	46	
No	25.0	16	
No Response	3.1	2	
Classroom Schedule and Class Size			
		Children Served	Families Served
A.M. Only	31.3	20	17 (10-20)
P.M. Only	18.8	12	17 (15-20)
Both A.M. & P.M. Sessions	37.5	24	33 (19-51)
Full-Day Session	1.6	1	17
No Response	10.9	7	-

Summary

- No significant relationship was found between teachers' confidence in promoting parents as partners and the parents' perception of the parent-teacher relationship.
- A low, but significant relationship was found between the number of families served and teachers' confidence in promoting partnerships with parents.
- A low negative relationship was found between number of families served and parents' perception of communication with teachers.
- No significant relationship was found between teachers' education levels and a teachers' confidence in promoting parents as partners.

Implications

Teachers who serve a higher number of families at the beginning of the school year seem to have higher confidence scores on the TEPP. It is yet to be determined if this confidence is maintained. Further research is needed to determine if there is a connection between parent-teacher communication and teacher confidence when caseloads are high. How does a parent-teacher match/mismatch in primary language used effect the parent-teacher relationship and teacher confidence in promoting partnerships with parents?