



Low Cost Strategies to Predict and Increase School Parent Involvement: The Benefit of a Needs Assessment



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Introduction

- Research indicates that early school parent involvement (PI) positively affects children's adjustment to school, as well as their academic and social trajectories (Hayakawa, Englund, Warner-Richter & Reynolds, 2013; Hill & Taylor, 2010; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999).
- Williams & Sanchez (2013) identified the primary barriers for parent involvement of inner-city parents as time poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources and lack of awareness.
- While there is a breadth of evidence supporting the social and academic benefits of improving parent involvement and the barriers to family-school participation, there is a paucity of research regarding cost-effective methods for predicting and improving parent involvement.
- The Midwest Child-Parent Center Preschool-3rd grade (MCPC) intervention program is an evidence-based early childhood intervention program targeting school-based intervention for high risk multi-cultural communities in three Midwestern states. An integral requirement of the MCPC program is weekly school and home parent involvement facilitated and monitored by each program site.
- Given the importance of early parent involvement and a strong family-school connection, the program proposed methods for predicting and increasing parent involvement and identifying families at risk for low participation.

Methods

Participants

- 991 preschool children from urban, economically disadvantaged communities who attended an MCPC preschool during the 2012-2013 school year
- 88% free or reduced price lunch, 62% female, 59% African American, 39% Latino, 40% single parent caregiver, 80% MCPC participants

Methods Cont.

Measures

Intent

- Through a parent survey and needs assessment, parents responded to questions asking "Do you plan to attend parent involvement activities in: child development, health and nutrition, meeting with teachers, volunteering in one's child's classroom and/or professional/educational trainings"

Follow Through

- Parents' follow through on their intended parent involvement was assessed using PI logs which documented information about the event: type, duration, date, location, and family member in attendance.

Analysis

- Covariates included in analysis are: family race and ethnicity, child's gender, single parent caregiver, free or reduced lunch status, parents' highest level of education and parental beliefs about the importance of education.



Results

Table 1. Regression analysis of parent planning predicting year-end participation, by event type

Event parents plan to attend...	Total participation in any school event			Participation in child development events			Teacher meeting			Volunteering in classroom			Career, education, professional development events			Health, safety, nutrition events		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
meetings with teachers	1.44***	0.41	0.09	0.01	0.09	0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	1.66*	0.77	0.07	0.48***	0.12	0.12	0.22**	0.07	0.08
volunteer in school	2.92***	0.36	0.20	0.14	0.08	0.05	0.03**	0.01	0.09	4.42***	0.68	0.19	0.54***	0.11	0.15	0.35***	0.07	0.15
school events	2.90***	0.39	0.18	0.24**	0.09	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.02	3.44***	0.74	0.14	0.61***	0.12	0.16	0.43***	0.07	0.16
career and vocational	2.11***	0.35	0.15	0.23**	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.01	2.49***	0.66	0.11	0.46***	0.10	0.14	0.33***	0.06	0.14
GED	1.75***	0.33	0.13	0.20**	0.07	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.04	1.49*	0.64	0.07	0.46***	0.10	0.14	0.23***	0.06	0.10
financial skills	1.76***	0.36	0.12	0.13	0.08	0.05	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	2.08**	0.68	0.09	0.43***	0.10	0.12	0.21***	0.06	0.09
health, nutrition workshops	2.89***	0.36	0.20	0.18*	0.08	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.02	3.72***	0.68	0.16	0.62***	0.11	0.17	0.50***	0.07	0.21
child development	2.49***	0.37	0.17	0.26***	0.08	0.09	0.01	0.01	0.02	2.58***	0.70	0.11	0.57***	0.11	0.16	0.33***	0.07	0.14

Note: *p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

- Endorsing intent to participate on the parent survey predicted parents' follow through.
- Parents who endorsed interest in a particular parent-involvement event not only attended that event domain, but others as well.
- Some parents denied any intent to participate in the program's parent involvement activities. **This response accurately predicted non-participation.**

Discussion

- A needs assessment tool effectively identified families whose children are at risk for not receiving the benefits of early school parent involvement and thus are in need of additional support.
- Administering a parent survey and needs assessment targeting PI that includes information like time availability, and specific areas of interest eliminate the major barriers to PI of inner-city parents outlined by William and Sanchez (2013).
- Surveying intent for PI activity attendance at the beginning of the academic year appropriately informs program tailoring and accurately identifies those most at risk of family non-participation.

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For more about the Child-Parent Center P-3 program, please visit cpcp3.org



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