



Home visiting and family involvement: Exploring the quantity of program participation to family outcomes

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Introduction

Background

- Home-based family involvement is a powerful predictor of school readiness and appears to be preferred among ethnic minority, low-income caregivers of young children (Fantuzzo et al., 2000).
- Interventions based in the home, such as home visiting, are perhaps the most salient and culturally meaningful ways to promote child outcomes and family involvement.
- Large scale evaluations of home visiting as a method of service delivery are impeded by the enormous variation in program targets and goals (Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004).
- In a landmark evaluation of EHS, Raikes et al. (2006) identified quantity, quality, and visit content as critical components of home visiting interventions.
- Moreover, although measures of family involvement exist for preschool and elementary school-age children (Fantuzzo et al., 2000; Manz et al., 2004), the literature lacks the application of high quality, psychometrically sound measures of home-based involvement practices for families with young children.

Purpose:

- The current research examines the initial application of the newly developed Family Involvement Questionnaire for Toddlers (FIQ-T) and investigates whether variables related to the quantity of home visiting are effective at supporting family involvement in the education of young children.

Research Questions

- Is there a predictive relationship between mid-year and end-year administrations of the FIQ-T?
- Does the quantity of program participation in a home visiting intervention predict family involvement in young children's education?

Method

Participants: *N* = 48 caregivers participating in a larger program evaluation (Project CARES) of a two-year home visiting intervention in a large urban city in the Northeast.

- The home visiting program serves low-income, ethnically and culturally diverse families with toddlers. The program focuses on increasing parent-child interactions through books and toys.

Demographic	% of Sample
Child Ethnicity	57% Latino, 31% African American, 1% Caucasian
Child Language	48% English, 34.5% Spanish
Caregiver Years in US	25% ≤ 6 years, 50% ≤ 18 years
Caregiver Employment	66% Unemployed, 20% Full time, 14% Part time
Caregiver Education	59% Completed high school
Marital Status	50% Never married, 39% Married

Method (cont.)

Measures:

Family Involvement

- The newly developed Family Involvement Questionnaire for Toddlers (FIQ-T) was used to examine how families are involved in young children's education at home. The FIQ-T has 22 items on a four point Likert scale (Rarely-Always) and takes 10-15 minutes to complete. Internal consistency $\alpha = .871$.
- The FIQ-T was administered at the middle (Jan/March) and end of the PCHP program year (May/June) in 2007-2008.

Quantity of Home Visiting variables

- The number of home visits received are routinely collected by the home visiting program and were used in the present analysis.

Data Analyses:

- Bivariate correlations were conducted to examine relationships between key demographics and home visiting variables
- Hierarchical Regression was used to examine whether the quantity of home visits received was related with family involvement on the FIQ-T in the overall sample and for the program cohorts (one and two years of intervention).
- Because mid-year scores on the FIQ-T were significantly correlated with end-year FIQ scores ($r = 0.352, p < .01$), the mid year FIQ-T scores were entered first in all HR models.

Results

Bivariate correlations

- No demographic variables were found to be significantly correlated with family involvement.

	Ethnicity	Language	Years in US	Employment	Education	Marital Stat.	FIQ-T (End Yr)
Ethnicity	1.000						0.124
Language	-0.052	1.000					0.189
Years in US	0.084	-0.191	1.000				0.114
Employment	0.055	0.102	-0.130	1.000			-0.045
Education	0.070	0.062	-0.062	0.094	1.000		-0.193
Marital Stat.	-0.038	0.176	0.072	0.022	0.084	1.000	-0.083

(Significant correlations in bold italics)

Hierarchical Regression

Family Involvement (FIQ-T)

- Mid-year family involvement scores as measured by the FIQ-T were found to significantly predict end-year family involvement, $\beta = .352, t(60) = 2.92, p < .01$. Mid-year family involvement scores also accounted for a significant proportion of the variance, $R^2 = .124, F(1,60) = 8.50, p < .01$.

Results (cont.)

Home visiting and Family Involvement

- Although all models including mid-year FIQ and quantity of home visiting significantly predicted end-year FIQ scores (all p 's $< .05$), the number of home visits received was not found to predict family involvement ($t(46) = 0.192, p = 0.849, n.s.$) in the overall sample or for those children receiving only one year of service ($t(27) = -0.785, p = .439, n.s.$)
- However, in examining the relationship of home visitation and family involvement for children who had received two years of the program, the quantity of home visiting significantly predicted families involvement in young children's education ($t(16) = 2.230, p < .05$). Greater quantities of home visiting corresponded with higher scores of family involvement.
- Furthermore, the inclusion of home visits received results in a significant improvement in the model ($\Delta R^2 = .193, p < .05$). The quantity of home visiting uniquely accounted for 19.3% of the variance.

Discussion

- The FIQ-T was successfully applied to a sample of low-income, Latino families with young children.
- Family involvement scores measured by the FIQ-T at mid-year were found to significantly predict later family involvement scores assessed at the end of the program year.
- Implications of this finding include initial insight into the relationship of family involvement over time and supports for the use of the newly developed FIQ-T.
- Although not demonstrated in the full sample, quantity of home visiting was found to significantly predict family involvement measured by the FIQ-T for children who received two years of intervention.
- These results highlight the importance of full and continued program participation across two years in achieving family outcomes.
- **Limitations:**
 - Baseline assessments of family involvement were not collected.
 - The sample size is a small and provides limited power to see more subtle effects.
 - Minimal data on comparison group children did not allow for them to be included in the analyses.
- **Future research:**
 - Next steps should examine content and quality of home visiting variables in relation to outcomes.
 - Further studies could examine key other variables that may play role in families' involvement in education.

References

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