

# **Parent Participation in Early Childhood Education**

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6923 OT Doctoral Capstone Project

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### *Introduction*

The focus area of this capstone project was program development. School-based parent involvement was directly linked to higher reading achievement and self-regulated learning in both reading and numeracy (Daniel et al., 2016). Additionally, Parent involvement in preschool and kindergarten was significantly associated with less retention during elementary school (Miedel & Reynolds, 2000). The purpose of this capstone project is to improve the parent volunteer program at Generation One academy and ensure that parents are given opportunities to be involved in the early education setting. By increasing parent involvement, we will see if there is an impact on the student's assessments, attendance, and classroom behavior.

### *Processes/Methodology*

The project began by conducting parent/teacher surveys. The teacher survey gathered information on current parent volunteering and student behavioral concerns in the classroom. The parent survey assessed parent knowledge on the volunteer process, and current barriers to volunteering. Using the survey results, the student began communicating with parents and teachers to improve the volunteer process. This included sending out reminders, re-creating QR codes to track volunteering, posting weekly parent accolades, and increasing the frequency of communication with parents/teachers. Using the teacher survey results, the student researched self-regulation strategies. These strategies were put into an educational handout and given to each teacher to implement as needed. An efficient sign-in process was created for events by using a QR code connected to a google form, making it easier to track attendance during events. The student collaborated with agency mentor and planned a volunteer appreciation event to recognize active parents. Lastly, the student tracked school attendance, collected/organized

Devereux Early Childhood Assessments (E-DECA), Circle, and Universal screening scores to see if students with increased parent involvement displayed better scores/attendance.

### *Outcomes*

The student increased the overall number of families to volunteer from 193 to 507. The post-implementation parent survey results display 96.3% of parents reported a better understanding of the volunteer process with improved communication, and an 80% increase in understanding where to find activities to complete for volunteering (QR code). The post-implementation teacher survey results display that 50% of teachers reported an increase in parent involvement, and 40% of teachers reported recognizing a positive difference in the students whose parents are more involved. Students whose parents were more involved attended on average 80% or more of school days tracked over the 14 weeks. The universal screen displayed a 17.9% improvement in the social/play skills section from beginning of year to middle of year. The circle scores displayed students whose parents were more involved as on track in math and vocabulary scores. These outcomes display the importance of sustaining this improved volunteer program within the school system and the benefits of regular parental involvement.

### *Conclusion*

This capstone experience highlights the importance of parent involvement in early childhood education and the positive impact it can have on academic and behavioral outcomes. Increased parent involvement in occupational therapy interventions will ensure the skills that the parents learn are carried over to the home environment and lead to long term improvement in the students.

## References

Daniel, G. R., Wang, C., & Berthelsen, D. (2016, January 12). *Early school-based parent involvement, children's self-regulated learning and academic achievement: An Australian longitudinal study*. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*.

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Miedel, W. T., & Reynolds, A. J. (2000, February 14). *Parent involvement in early intervention for disadvantaged children: Does it matter?*. *Journal of School Psychology*.

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