

Influence of Early Childhood Care and Education Workshops on Awareness of Parents



Home Science

KEYWORDS : Early childhood, Education, Preschoolers, Parents workshops, ECCE

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ABSTRACT

The research study was carried out on randomly selected 50 parents of a private preschool of the Parbhani town, Maharashtra state. The sample included of 45 mothers and only 5 fathers of preschoolers. For enhancing awareness of parents of preschool students, need based workshops were designed and launched. It comprised of four full days workshops, for 5.30 hrs per day. These intensive workshops included of lectures and demonstrations followed by discussions. The topics covered in it were importance of early childhood years, components of wholesome development, characteristics and needs of preschoolers, inculcation of good food and learning habits in preschoolers, monitoring & growth assessment of preschoolers, parenting styles and their influence on preschoolers, conducive home environment, importance of use of quality reading & writing material; appropriate preschool child education methods, informal teaching methods, detrimental effects of early and improper introduction of reading and writing skills on development of preschoolers etc. To study the influence of these workshops on awareness of parents with regard to ECCE, they were assessed once prior to the initiation of the workshops based on a structured checklist and were reassessed after the completion of the workshops. The collected data were pooled, analyzed, tabulated and discussed. The areas identified for parental awareness regarding preschool student's development, care and education indicated there is dearth need of creating awareness among preschool parents about the proper child upbringing and child education so as to reduce ill effects of it on their development, care and education. After attending workshops on ECCE, highly significant improvements were recorded in the knowledge awareness of parents about preschoolers' development, care, parenting styles and education. These parental workshops on ECCE significantly enhanced their awareness about it. It is recommended that all preschools must conduct workshops exclusively for the parents for enhancing their knowledge in ECCE in order to get good parental support for preschooler's development, care and education.

INTRODUCTION

There are greater achievement benefits when parents attend and actively support school activities of their children (Kapoor S, 2007). The more actively parents are involved in their children's learning, more are the achievements of children. The parents and teachers need to hold hands and provide ultimate support in synergy and help children to achieve their potential to the maximum. Therefore Early Childhood & Family Education Unit coordinates parent and family education in

favour of UN Convention on the rights of child. It seeks support to parents and encourages the participation and promotion of their role in development of children. Systematic Early Child Development Programmes are an excellent investment that significantly improves health and educational level of young children. Henderson and Berla (1994) reviewed and analyzed eighty-five studies documenting the comprehensive benefits of parental involvement in children's education showing parent involvement activities when effectively planned and well implemented resulted in substantial benefits to children, parents, educators, and the school too. Thus parental education programmes on ECCE provide necessary knowledge and skills to raise their children successfully and even build self reliance (Myers, 1992). In fact, many parents feel inadequate in teaching roles. Effective programs have taught parents how to create a home environment that encourages learning and how to provide support and encouragement that is appropriate for their children's development level (Quigley, 2000). Clarke Stewart K A (1983) stated that using parental skills, involving them in school enhances success of the children in many spheres. Therefore this research study was taken up with the objectives to plan & implement the need based workshops for improving the parental awareness about Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) and to assess the influence of these workshops on awareness in the area of early childhood development, care & education .

RESEARCH METHODS

The research study was carried out on randomly selected 50 parents of a private preschool of the Parbhani town. The sample included of 45 mothers and only 5 fathers of preschoolers. For enhancing awareness of parents of preschool students,

need based workshops were designed and launched. It comprised of four full days, for 5. 30 hrs per day. The intensive workshops included of lectures and demonstrations followed by discussions. The topics covered in it were importance of early childhood years, components of wholesome development, characteristics and needs of preschoolers, inculcation of good food and learning habits in preschoolers, growth assessment & monitoring of preschoolers, parenting styles and their influence on preschoolers, conducive home environment, importance of use of quality reading & writing material; appropriate preschool child education methods, informal teaching methods, detrimental effects of early and improper introduction of reading and writing skills on development of preschoolers etc. To study the influence of these workshops on awareness of parents with regard to ECCE, they were assessed once prior to the initiation of the workshops based on a structured checklist and were reassessed after the completion of the workshops. The collected data were pooled, analyzed, tabulated and discussed.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that forty percent of the preschoolers' parents were graduates followed by post graduates (15 %) and higher secondary school educated parents (12%). Majority of the mothers i.e. 56 percent reported to be involved in preschool child's care and studies followed by both the parents (22%) while remaining 10-12 per cent, other family members like grandparents, sister, brother etc and fathers were involved in child care. Forty two per cent of the parents were having family monthly income ranging between Rs 20,000-30,000 and remaining 36 and 22 per cent having Rs 10,000 - 20,000 & above 30,000 respectively. Fifty eight per cent of the parents were hailed in the age range of 20-27 yrs and remaining 42 percent in 28-35 yrs range. Forty- 42 per cent of the selected parents' families were found to be either medium or small in size. About 52 per cent of the parents belonged to nuclear family, while remaining of them belonged to joint (34%) and extended families (18 %).

Table 1 Background variables of preschool parents enrolled in the ECCE workshops

Parents background variables	Percentage of parents (50)
Educational level	
SSC	06.00(3)
HSC	24.00(12)
Graduates	40.00(20)
Post graduates	30.00(15)
Involvement in preschool child care & education	
Mothers	56.00(28)
Fathers	12.00(6)
Both	22.00(11)
Others	10.00(5)
Family monthly income (Rs)	
10,000-20,000	36.00(18)
20,000-30,000	42.00(21)
Above 30,000	22.00(11)
Age (yrs)	
20-27	58.00 (29)
28-35	42.00 (21)
Size of family	
Small (Below 4)	42.00(21)
Medium (5-8)	40.00(20)
Large (Above 8)	18.00(9)
Type of family	
Nuclear	52.00(26)
Joint	34.00(17)
Extended	18.00(9)

Figures in parentheses indicate frequencies

Table 2 denotes influence of ECCE workshops on parental awareness about early childhood development & care, parenting styles. It was found that majority of the parents were not aware (4-38%) about growth assessment & monitoring of preschoolers, needs of these students and ways to fulfill them, importance and provision of multisensory activities, use of waste material /products for the development of play material for child at household level, use of indigenous play & play material, importance of early years in child's wholesome development, importance of conducive home environment for children, parenting styles adopted and its influence on preschoolers, need of immunization for maintaining health of children, nutritional needs of children, components of development, importance of hygiene and health , provision of various play material for all round development of children. While 42-56 per cent of the selected parents had knowledge about fulfilling child's curiosity in day today life, allotment of enough time for play activities, inculcating good food habits during early years, necessity of parental involvement in play and care activities of children. After attending intensive workshops on ECCE for generating parental awareness about early childhood development & care, parenting styles; there was significant improvement in knowledge level of majority of parents in almost all aspects of child care. These results are in line with Kreider, 2002 stating that numerous early childhood programs that included parent/family involvement have shown significant positive results in helping children transition to kindergarten and succeed during the primary grades, especially among disadvantaged children and those at risk of school failure It cannot be assumed that parents instinctively know how to involve themselves in their children's education.

Table 2 Influence of ECCE workshops on parental awareness about early childhood development & care, parenting styles

Parental awareness	Percentage of parents (n-50)		't' values
	Pre test	Post test	
Well aware of childhood development & care, parenting styles		80.00 (40)	
Importance of early years		64.00 (32)	
Components of wholesome development		56.00 (28)	
Needs of preschoolers & ways to fulfill them		64.00 (32)	
Inculcating good food habits in preschoolers	20.00 (10)	70.00 (35)	7.50**
Nutritional needs of preschoolers	32.00 (16)	62.00 (31)	3.38**
Importance of hygiene &health	06.00 (3)	64.00 (32)	6.42**
Need of immunization	54.00 (27)	64.00 (32)	1.02 ^{NS}
Growth assessment & monitoring	36.00 (18)	64.00 (32)	3.62**
Parenting styles and influence on preschoolers	32.00 (16)	56.00 (28)	3.15**
Conducive home environment	26.00 (13)	66.00 (33)	4.13**
Involvement in play &care activities	04.00 (2)	70.00 (35)	6.88**
Provision of play material	26.00 (13)	66.00 (33)	4.90**
Provision of multi sensorial activities	22.00 (11)	66.00 (33)	4.94**
Time allotment for play activities	56.00 (28)	70.00 (35)	1.46 ^{NS}
Fulfillment of child's curiosity	38.00(19)	70.00 (35)	0.61 ^{NS}
Use of Indigenous play & play material	08.00(4)	62.00 (31)	6.86**
Development of play material from waste products	48.00(24)	90.00 (45)	5.09**
	42.00(21)	84.00(42)	2.93**
	16.00(8)	80.00(40)	9.27**
	12.00(6)		9.32**

- Non Significant

**-. Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 indicate influence of the ECCE workshops on awareness of parents regarding preschoolers' education. It was seen that 4-38 per cent of the parents were unaware of effects of introduction of early and improper 3 R's i.e. reading , writing and arithmetic skills in children ,importance of use of AV aids in teaching preschoolers, age appropriate introduction of 3 R's, informal methods of teaching 3's, suitable educational methods for preschoolers, efforts for development of pre writing abilities, use of quality reading and writing material, use of teaching aids for development of reading skills at home, parents concerned for full light, ventilation and aeration while studying at home, efforts for language development by repeating new word for their language development, use of pointing finger while reading etc. More than 64 per cent of these parents knew about the informal examinations and no competitions for preschoolers, importance of attending parents meet, clarity of pronunciation of words and importance of sending children to pre-school regularly.

Overall, highly significant results were noted in parental knowledge after attending training on these aspects indicating the need of conducting such workshops regularly throughout the year for parents for enhancing their knowledge as well as getting support in development of children from their families.

Table 3 Influence of the ECCE workshops on awareness of parents regarding preschoolers' education

Parental awareness	Percentage of parents (50)		t values
	Pre test	Post test	
Well aware of child education			
Development of reading & writing skills			
Use of quality reading & writing materials	36.00(18)	80.00 (40)	4.97**
Ill effects of introduction of early and improper reading & writing methods	14.00 (7)	64.00 (32)	5.96**
Reinforcement of 3 Rs	04.00 (2)	56.00 (28)	6.88**
Informal teaching	06.00 (3)	64.00 (32)	7.65**
	06.00 (3)	70.00 (35)	8.76**

** - Significant at 0.01 level

These results indicate that after attending workshops on ECCE, highly significant improvements were recorded in the knowledge awareness of parents about preschoolers' development, care, parenting styles and education. Similarly Henderson and Mapp (2002) noted that the effective teacher outreach to parents included meeting face to face, sending materials to home, and keeping in touch about progress of child and it rated strong and consistent gain in students performance in both reading and math. It also showed that the workshops conducted for parents on helping their children at home were linked to higher concerns and honor in sustaining improved student achievement.

Thus there is dearth need of creating awareness among preschool parents about the proper child upbringing and child education so as to reduce ill effects of it on their development, care and education.

CONCLUSION

Parental workshops on ECCE significantly enhanced their awareness about it. It is recommended that all preschools must conduct workshops exclusively for the parents for enhancing their knowledge in ECCE in order to get good parental support for child development, care & education.

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