Teacher’s Perspectives on their Interactions with Parents – The first steps towards building capacity

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“For many schools parental engagement seems to be the worst problem and the best solution.”

Harris and Goodall, 2008 (Commentary)
Acknowledgements

Queensland College of Teachers

Supervisors:
Professor Matthew Sanders
Dr Julie Hodges
Overview

The Survey

- Benefits
- The Gap
- Current Research
- What is Parent Engagement
The Survey

What is Parent Engagement

Benefits

The Gap

Current Research
Defining Parent Engagement

“Parent engagement involves all people in the life of a child or young person working together to create a stimulating and supportive environment for their learning and development.”

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2017
The Survey

Benefits

What is Parent Engagement

The Gap

Current Research
Benefits of Parent Engagement

For children
- Academic
- Learning
- Wellbeing

For teachers
- Job satisfaction and self-efficacy
- Reduced occupational stress and burnout
- Decreased turnover

Emerson et al., 2012; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Mansour & Martin, 2009; Sheldon, 2007; Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, & Spencer, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2011; Wilder, 2014
The Survey

- Benefits
- What is Parent Engagement
- Current Research
- The Gap
Teacher Training

• Pre-service teacher training differs
• 82% of Australian teachers stated their biggest need is ‘parent and community involvement’

Doecke et al., 2008, Saltmarsh, Barr & Chapman, 2015
The Survey

Benefits

The Gap

What is Parent Engagement

Current Research
The Current Research

Overall objective – Develop and evaluate an intervention for teachers to enhance their skills for building relationships with parents.

Research questions
a) Nature of parent-teacher interactions
b) Impact of parent-teacher interactions for teachers
c) Skills and support for teachers to enhance parent engagement

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
About the participants

• **639 participants**

• **Gender** – 87.1% female, 12.7% male, .2% other

• **Age** – Mean: 45 years, Range: 21-75 years

• **Years in education** – Mean: 17.31, Range: 0-51 years

• **Position in the school**
  • Early childhood education: 3.8%
  • Classroom teacher: 67.3%
  • Principal/deputy principal: 3.7%
  • Head of Curriculum: 5.0%
  • Others: e.g. Guidance officer, HOD, Special education teacher

• **Year levels taught**
  • Pre-kindergarten/Kindergarten: 7.36%
  • Prep – Year 6: 53.68%
  • Year 7 – 12: 49.45%
School information

• School type
  • State: 49.1%
  • Independent state: 15.5%
  • Catholic: 10.3%
  • Independent Catholic: 3.1%
  • Other independent: 14.2%
  • Special school: 2.5%

• School size
  • Mean: 936.15
  • Range: 29 - 4104

The Home-School Wellbeing Survey - Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
Parent-Teacher Interactions

Time Interacting per Week

Mean: 3.27 hours
Range 0 – 25 hours

Frequency of Difficult Conversations

- Daily +: 7.2%
- Weekly +: 26.6%
- Monthly +: 26.6%
- Every couple of months: 20.2%
- Yearly +: 6%
- Rarely: 13.1%

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
Impact on Teachers following Interactions with Parents

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
Impact on Teachers following Interactions with Parents

• Similar for Prep-year 6 teachers compared to year 7-12
  • Except leave teaching, lower for year 7-12 teachers
• Not related to school ICSEA
• Related to frequency of difficult conversations
• Related to poor emotional adjustment

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
Experience of Offensive Behaviour in Past 12 Months

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
Would you benefit from skills?

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017

![Bar Chart]

- Definitely yes: 27.3%
- Probably yes: 32.1%
- Maybe: 24.1%
- Probably not: 14.7%
- Definitely not: 1.9%

Percentage of Participants
Participate in Free PD on a Saturday?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, if worthwhile content</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe/Unsure</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kirby, Sanders & Hodges, 2017
“Parents are focusing on their child and have good intentions. They are not the enemy.”

– Primary school teacher
Thank you!

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