HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
A PARENT EDUCATION WORKSHOP

Lauren Rivera

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HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
A PARENT EDUCATION WORKSHOP

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Child Development

by
Lauren Ashley Rivera
December 2020
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Approved by:

Laura Kamptner, Committee Chair, Psychology
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ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, research studies have demonstrated that academic success has a significant impact on a child’s long-term outcomes (e.g., Duncan et al., 2007). The purpose of this project was to provide parents with the information and skills to help their child succeed in elementary school. A 6-session workshop titled Helping Your Child Succeed in Elementary School was created which included the following topics: attachment, parenting style, positive discipline, and creating an enriched home environment. After attending the workshop, the four parent participants reported an increase in their knowledge of the importance of establishing a secure attachment with their child, the importance of a parent’s parenting style, how to discipline without punishment, as well as the importance of creating an enriched home environment. Results are discussed in terms of how parenting is a skill which can be learned, and there are many benefits for parents who attend parent education workshops, including how to help children succeed in school. Future workshops could consider including fathers, teen parents, teachers, as well as offering the workshop virtually.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all the families. All children need love and support, and parents or guardians are there to provide it. If you are ever seeking answers, trust science and research.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Children who are successful in elementary school experience many significant positive long-term outcomes including higher academic achievement, better mental and physical health, and better interpersonal relationships. While studies have identified which aspects of a child’s home environment contribute to school readiness and success in the elementary years, this information is rarely communicated to families. The purpose of this project is to create a parent education workshop to inform parents of research-based practices they can implement at home to help their child be successful in elementary school and beyond.

Over the last decade, research studies have demonstrated that academic success has a significant impact on a child’s long-term outcomes (Duncan et al., 2007). Children who perform well in elementary school have significantly better outcomes compared to those who perform poorly: they score higher on intellectual and academic measures and are more likely to graduate from high school and attend a four-year college (Campbell et al., 2002; Entwisel et al., 2005). They are also less likely to experience teen pregnancy or use illicit drugs, and are more likely to have a higher level of income, own a home, and stay off of public assistance (Campbell et al., 2002; Entwisel, 2005). In addition, they are less at risk for depression, have lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors, have a more resilient pattern of health, and are healthier in adulthood.
By contrast, children who perform poorly in elementary school are more likely to experience negative outcomes including being more likely to be held back a grade or placed in special education, and they are at higher risk for dropping out of high school, being unemployed, engaging in criminal behavior, and using illicit drugs (Bjerke, 2012; Duncan et al., 2007; Entwisel, 2005; Feister, 2010; Goos et al., 2013; Lansford et al., 2016; Roderick, 1994). They are also more likely to experience health problems starting at an early age and have a shorter life expectancy compared to those who perform well in school (Lansford et al., 2016). They are also more vulnerable to mental health problems (e.g., depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, eating disorders), social skill deficits, poor interpersonal relationships, and are more likely to engage in risky behaviors (Jensen-Campbell et al., 2017; Romano et al., 2014; Smokowski et al., 2004). In sum, early school performance has a far-reaching impact on subsequent child, adolescent, and adult outcomes.

Influences on Children’s Academic Success

Research studies have identified several key factors of a child’s early home environment that are significant predictors of their later academic success in elementary school. These include parent-child interaction style, discipline style, and the extent to which the home environment is academically-enriched.
Parenting Styles and Academic Outcomes

Research studies have identified several key factors of a child’s early home environment that are significant predictors of their later academic success in elementary school. These include parent-child interaction style, discipline style, and the extent to which the home environment is academically-enriched.

Attachment Research. Attachment research describes the importance of the quality of the relationship a child has with his/her caregiver which is based on the caregiver’s responses to the child’s needs (Ainsworth, 1964). If the parent responds to the child’s needs in an appropriate and sensitive manner, the child will learn that he can depend on his parent for care, and a secure attachment will be established (Ainsworth, 1964). If a parent responds inconsistently or ignores the child’s needs, the child will learn that he/she cannot rely on his/her parent for getting his/her needs met and he/she will develop an insecure attachment (Ainsworth, 1964). The quality of this attachment relationship ultimately impacts a child’s brain development (and all other developmental domains), and influences his ability to interpret his experiences and deal with future stressors (Bowlby, 1978; Sroufe et al, 2005).

The hard-wired attachment system serves as a protection for young children because it increases their chance for survival (Davies, 2011). For the child, the most vital aspect of the environment is her caregiver who she is biologically preprogrammed to seek out to get her needs met (Bowlby, 1979). When a parent is reliable and helps the child feels safe, the child’s development
is impacted in many positive ways, including engaging in fewer risk-taking behaviors, which increases her chances of survival (Bosman & Kerns, 2007). On the contrary, when a parent is unstable, unreliable, and makes the child feel unsafe, the child is more likely to be aggressive, impulsive, and take risks which decreases her chance of survival (Bosman & Kerns, 2007). Children rely on their caregiver not only for survival, but also for closeness and comfort (Bowlby, 1958; Cassidy & Shaver, 2008).

The “type” of attachment a child develops with their primary caregiver is a significant predictor of later developmental outcomes. There are four different attachment “styles”, i.e., secure, insecure-ambivalent, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-disorganized (Ainsworth, 1964; Main & Solomon, 1990). Research studies show that a “secure” attachment leads to better developmental outcomes than an insecure attachment as shown below.

Parents of securely attached children are consistently responsive and sensitive to their child’s needs (Ainsworth, 1964). They are emotionally available and loving, and they respond to their child’s signals in a timely and appropriate manner (Davies, 2011). Furthermore, they know how to soothe their child’s distress (Karen, 1990). This parent shares enjoyment with their child and values close relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 2009). These mothers tend to be less anxious, display more resilience, and have better coping skills (Al-Yagon, 2007). Mothers of securely attached children are consistently available to their child, both physically and emotionally (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).
Children classified as securely attached have the most favorable emotional, social, cognitive, and mental health outcomes. They value close relationships and are able to seek help when distressed because they trust that others will be emotionally available to them (Davies, 2011; Ziv, Oppenheim, Sagi-Schwartz, 2004). They have more effective communication skills and are more empathetic (Bohlin, Hagekull, & Rydell, 2000; Moss & Lorent, 2001). Secure children display fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and they use active and constructive coping when dealing with distress (Brumariu, Kerns, & Seibert, 2012; Granot & Mayseless, 2001; Kerns, Abraham, Schlegelmilch, & Morgan, 2007). They have higher self-worth and fewer peer problems (Bohlin et al., 2000; Keskin & Cam, 2010).

Compared to their insecurely attached peers, securely attached children have been found to have higher academic motivation, higher grades in language arts, and higher levels of class participation (Duchesne & Larose, 2007; Jacobson & Hoffman, 1997; Moss & Laurent, 2001; Srouf, 2005). They are also more engaged in school tasks, have better attention, and have more confidence in exploring their surroundings (Bacro, 2011; Duchesne & Larose, 2007; Jacobson & Hoffman, 1997; Moss & Laurent, 2001). Securely attached children also show better understanding and comprehension of learning material, have better concentration, are more ambitious, and have higher levels of perseverance and self-confidence than their insecurely attached peers (Granot & Mayseles, 2001; Zimmerman, 1989). Furthermore, they are more disciplined, are better able
to delay gratification, and have better executive functioning (Granot & Mayseles, 2001; Marchetti et al., 2014; Zimmerman, 1989). Lastly, they tend to perform better in school and have a higher grade point average (Bacro, 2011; Duchesne & Larose, 2007; Jacobson & Hoffman, 1997; Moss & Laurent, 2001).

With better adaptive coping strategies, securely attached children are more highly engaged in school and are able to re-engage when encountering challenging tasks (Pitzer & Skinner, 2016). They have advanced self-regulation which has, in turn, been linked to using more effective learning strategies and better problem solving skills (Jacobsen & Hofmann, 1997; West et al., 2013; Xia et al., 2016). Self-regulation is also associated with the tendency to initiate tasks independently, persisting and completing school tasks, and regulating attention and focusing on tasks without distraction (which has been linked to greater literacy and math achievement) (Sawyer et al., 2015; Xia et al., 2016).

Secure attachment has also been found to influence peer relations in the school environment. Compared to their insecurely attached peers, securely attached children are more prosocial and tend to have more positive qualities in their friendships (Abraham & Kerns, 2013; Bacro, 2011; Cohn, 1990). They also tend to be more sociable, honest, likeable, and are more independent (Granot & Mayseles, 2001). They are less likely to act aggressively toward others and are more likely to display leadership qualities (Granot & Mayseles, 2001). Positive peer relationships have, in turn, been linked to better writing, advanced math performance, and overall higher school achievement as these children feel more
supported by peers and teachers which creates a more positive learning experience (Delay et al., 2016, Friedrich et al., 2015, Pitzer & Skinner, 2016).

There are three types of insecure attachments, including insecure-ambivalent, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-disorganized.

Parents of children classified as having an insecure-ambivalent attachment are inconsistent when responding to their child’s needs. Responses of parents to their child range from being sometimes sensitive and responsive to being neglectful and dismissive (Benoit, 2004). They show overall less affection, acceptance, sensitivity, cooperation, and skill in handling their child, and they tend to place their own needs before the child’s (Cassidy & Berlin, 1994; Benoit, 2004). These parents are often struggling with depression, feel less competent, show exaggerated negative affect, and view the child as less adaptable (Moss et al., 2016).

These parenting inconsistencies have been found to result in the children developing less independent behavior and instead relying heavily on their parent for care and expressing more clingy, anxious, and helpless behaviors (Berlin & Cassidy, 2003; Rosnay & Harris, 2002). Studies have found that they are emotionally confused and preoccupied with their attachment needs, and they have the expectation of not getting their needs met (Bar-Haim, Aviezer, Berson, & Sagi, 2002). Ambivalent children show excessive immaturity and passivity, less initiative, and are more socially withdrawn; they are also more likely to become
victims of bullying, have poor self-esteem, and poor coping strategies (Bohlin et al., 2000; Davies, 2011; Moss et al., 2016).

Parents of children classified as insecure-avoidantly attached consistently ignore and/or reject their child (Ainsworth, 1964). The goal is to make the child “independent”, and these parents show little to no response when the child is distressed (Ainsworth, 1964). These parents tend to punish the child for being distressed, are dismissive of the child’s needs for nurturance, speak negatively about their child, and seem angry and intolerant of their child’s needs (Davies, 2011).

As a result of their caregiver’s rejection, the insecure-avoidant child learns at a very young age to take care of themselves (Ainsworth, 1964). This child uses isolation, suppression, and lack of affect as defense mechanisms to protect him/herself from expected rejection (Davies, 2011). Children with insecure-avoidant attachments tend to have higher levels of hostility, show more bullying behaviors, express unprovoked aggression, and have more negative social interactions (Brumariu et al., 2012; Davies, 2011; Moss et al., 2016). They often appear sullen and are opposed to seeking help when in need (Bohlin, 2000).

Parents of children with an insecure-disorganized attachment often maltreat their child and they typically have a history of unresolved trauma (e.g., sexual abuse, physical abuse, loss of a parent) (Bohlin, 2000; Davies, 2011). These parents tend to be anxious, fearful, and show intense emotions, and frequently show chaotic, unpredictable, severely abusive, violent, and intrusive
behaviors toward the child (Davies, 2011; Moss et al., 2016). They show little involvement and encouragement in regard to the child’s academic experiences (West, Matthews, & Kerns, 2013).

These parents’ chaotic behaviors increase the likelihood of child maladaptation such that the child feels fear without solution, confusion, and abnormal behaviors (Davies, 2011; Moss et al., 2016). When distressed, the child appears fearful of his/her caregiver and may approach a stranger or engage in self-stimulation behaviors to cope (Davies, 2011). The child often displays contradicting behaviors such as fearful smiling or motionlessness trance states when held, and is unable to regulate intense emotions which is apparent in their often significant levels of anxiety (Brumariu, 2013; Davies, 2011). Such children also tend to be less proactive and unable to problem-solve (Colle & Del Giudice, 2011). By middle childhood, they tend to show the lowest scores in cooperation and self-regulating behaviors (West et al., 2013). Such children are at very high risk for substance abuse and psychopathology (Davies, 2011; Moss et al., 2016).

The three insecure parent-child attachment styles have a number of adverse influences on academic success. Children who are insecurely attached tend to have poor self/emotion regulation and lower executive functioning (Moss et al., 2009). They also tend to experience more confusion with assignments and have trouble planning, persisting, and completing tasks (Moss & Laurent, 2001; Soares, Lemos, & Almeida, 2005). They frequently devalue classroom activities and are less likely to participate in classroom activities (Jacobson & Hoffman,
They also often feel less competent, show little interest in learning or striving for goals, and tend to blame their failure on external factors (Soares, Lemos, & Almeida, 2005). They struggle with sustained attention and are more easily distracted (Jacobson & Hoffman, 1997; Moss & Laurent, 2001; Soares, Lemos, & Almeida, 2005; West, 2013). Compared to their securely attached peers, they are more likely to have lower scores on cognitive measures of memory, knowledge, comprehension, crystallized intelligence, and even IQ tests putting them at a higher risk for having a lower grade point average (Jacobson & Hoffman, 1997; Moss & Laurent, 2001; O’Connor & McCartney, 2007; West, 2013).

Insecurely attached children also tend to have more problems in peer relations compared to their securely attached peers. They are perceived as more aggressive by peers, are more likely to be rejected by peers, and they tend to perceive themselves as more rejected and unwanted by peers than they actually are (Cohn, 1990; Granot & Mayseless, 2001; Marcus & Cramer, 2001). Aggressive and antisocial behaviors have, in turn, been found to predict academic difficulties and to be associated with cognitive deficits (Fite, Hendrickson, Rubens, Gabrielli, & Evans, 2013). Peer rejection has also been linked to low achievement motivation, a lack of confidence in academic performance, and rule-breaking behaviors which all contribute to poor academic performance (Fite et al., 2013, Fite & Wimsatt, 2012). Insecurely attached
children also tend to question teacher authority and blame others for their shortcomings (Soares, Lemos, & Almeida, 2005).

An insecure attachment also has a number of negative influences on emotional competencies which can impact school performance. Insecurely attached children are more likely to develop anxiety and negative moods which have, in turn, been associated with decreased working memory performance and lower academic performance, especially in math and science (Bohlin et al., 2000; Brumariu & Kerns, 2012; Cassidy, 1994; Owens et al., 2012). Insecure children are also less self-reliant, have a lower sense of self-efficacy, are more passive, and are more likely to use avoidance as opposed to more effective problem solving strategies (Colle & Del Giudice, 2010; Kerns et al., 2007; Rosnay & Harris, 2002). They also tend to have poor coping skills which make them more likely to give up when facing challenges, especially in math and language arts (Pitzer & Skinner, 2016; Valas, 2001). Maladaptive coping has, in turn, been found to be negatively correlated with competence, autonomy, strategizing, engagement, and commitment (Skinner, Pitzer, & Steele, 2001). Lastly, insecurely attached children also often have difficulty identifying their own emotions and tend to interpret situations in a more catastrophic manner compared to securely attached children (Brumariu et al., 2012; Colle & Del Giudice, 2010; Rosnay & Harris, 2002).

**Baumrind’s Parenting Styles.** A second body of research studies on parent behavior and child outcome is Diana Baumrind’s research on parenting
styles. She outlined three parenting styles, i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Baumrind, 1966) (with Maccoby and Martin [1983] adding the fourth style, i.e., neglectful). Each parenting style can be distinguished by parent behaviors and values, and the standards their children are expected to follow (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Parenting “style” refers to parenting practices consisting of the dimensions of warmth/responsiveness and control/demandingness (Baumrind, 1966; Sears et al., 1957). Warmth/responsiveness refers to the extent to which a parent shows the child affection and nurturance, the parent’s level of interest in the child’s life, the parent’s consideration of the child’s feelings and ideas, and the extent to which the parent fosters the child’s individuality (Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000; Hughes, 2013). Control/demandingness refers to the parent’s level of demandingness for conformity and maturity, the amount of supervision a parent implements, the parent’s method of discipline and punishment, and the type of communication the parent shares with the child (Aunola et al., 2000; Hughes, 2013). High versus low levels of each of these two dimensions results in the four parenting “styles”, i.e. authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Each parenting style promotes different outcomes, and there is significant evidence to show that the most favorable child outcome comes from the “authoritative” parenting style (Baumrind, 1989; Darling & Steingberg, 1993).

The authoritative parent is high in warmth and implements moderate control (Aunola et al., 2000). This parent is sensitive to the child’s needs and
establishes a close, enjoyable, emotionally-fulfilling relationship with their child (Williams, 2012). Authoritative parents praise their child, express affection through hugs and kisses, show sympathy when the child is upset, and show interest in the child’s daily activities (Rossman & Rea, 2005). This parent interacts with the child in a rational manner, encourages bidirectional communication, and explains the reasoning behind rules that are established with the child (Baumrind, 1966; Darling & Steingberg, 1993). The authoritative parent values the child’s autonomy but also enforces discipline from an adult perspective rather than by the child’s desires or by outside influence (Baumrind, 1966). This parent acknowledges the child’s objections, interests, and qualities, and also sets higher expectations for future behavior (Baumrind, 1966). Instead of using punishment, the authoritative parent uses inductive discipline, i.e., reasoning and explanations, not punishments, to guide the child toward independence, cooperation, psychosocial maturity, and academic success (Baumrind, 1966; Darling & Steingberg, 1993).

The child of the authoritative parent has many positive developmental outcomes. These children are more independent, cooperative, prosocial, and are able to adapt to their environment (Dornsbusch et al., 1987; Rinaldi & Howe, 2012). They have good social competencies, are more self-regulated, have better mental health, and higher self-esteem (Calafat et al., 2014; Jabagchourian et al., 2014; Uji et al., 2014). They are also less likely to be involved in bullying and are the least influenced of all four groups by peer pressure (Dornsbusch et
al., 1987). They are also less likely to show externalizing behaviors, experience depression, or fall victim to substance abuse (Calafat et al., 2014; Milevsky et al., 2006; Rinaldi & Howe, 2012; Trenas et al., 2013).

Children from authoritative families tend to have the best academic outcomes. They are more achievement-oriented, and can work independently on school tasks (Baumrind, 1971; Fan & Zhang, 2012). They are also more adaptable, have the fewest learning problems, and have the best grades compared to other children (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Rossman & Rea, 2005). They have low levels of failure expectation and are less likely to drop out of school compared to children whose parents use the other parenting styles (Aunola et al., 2000; Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009; Rossman & Rea, 2005). They also have higher cognitive complexity and are less likely to give up when facing a difficult task (Aunola, 2000).

The authoritarian parent, by contrast, utilizes a harsh parenting style, i.e., low warmth and high control (Aunola et al., 2000). This parent does not trust their child and attempts to control the child based on an absolute standard which is usually based on religion or some higher authority (Baumrind, 1966). The parent places a high value on obedience and tends to use harsh and forceful punishment (e.g., corporal punishment, yelling, and/or threats) when the child does not comply with the parent’s set standard and/or beliefs (Baumrind, 1966). This parent believes that the child should have little autonomy and instead demonstrate high levels of responsibility in order to instill a respect for work.
(Aunola et al., 2000; Baumrind, 1966). The authoritarian parent also discourages open communication and expects their child to accept the parent’s word without any objection (Aunola et al., 2000; Baumrind, 1966). This parenting practice is centered on the parent’s needs rather than the child’s needs (Aunola et al., 2000).

The child of the authoritarian parent tends to be more passive and helpless, lacking in self-enhancing attributions, and is submissive to authority (Aunola, 2000). This child often experiences the highest level of parental control, and tends to feel that their parent does not trust them (Aunola, 2000). They are more conforming and obedient, and are more dependent on a highly structured environment (Fan & Zhang, 2012; Milevsky et al., 2006). They tend to prefer working under close supervision and are afraid to challenge authority (Fan & Zhang, 2012). They also tend to show more aggression, and are more likely to have a lower self-esteem and a poor self-concept; furthermore, they are also at higher risk for poor physical and mental health (Calafat et al., 2014; Milevsky et al., 2006; Trenas et al., 2013; Uji et al., 2014; Zahra et al., 2013).

In the school setting, children from authoritarian families tend to have poor overall functioning and are more likely to have learning problems (Rossman & Rea, 2005). They typically have low achievement motivation and a lower grade point average compared to children from authoritative families (Dornbusch et al., 1987). They have difficulty working independently, are less adaptable, and less able to problem solve in the learning environment (Baumrind, 1971; Fan &
Zhang, 2012). They are more likely than children from authoritative households to show more problem behaviors including internalizing and externalizing problems (which in turn are associated with lower grades, and lower reading and math achievement, e.g., Rossman & Rea, 2005; Villaincourt et al., 2013; Zahra et al., 2013). They are also more at risk of struggling with hyperactivity and impulsivity which are also significant predictors of academic difficulties (Baumrind, 1971; Sayal, Washbrook, & Propper, 2015).

The permissive parent shows high warmth but low control in their parenting practice (Baumrind, 1989; Maccoby 1983). They tend to behave in a non-punitive and lenient manner, and often give in to the child’s desires, actions, and impulses (Baumrind, 1966). This parent tends to give the child few responsibilities and avoids exerting control over the child but will attempt to use manipulation to accomplish obedience (Baumrind, 1966). This parent typically ignores the child’s misbehavior and will make threats about punishment but fail to follow through because they fear their child will not like them if they use discipline (Rossman & Rea, 2005). The permissive parent presents herself as a resource for the child rather than as an example or active role model who is responsible for the child and will often allow the child to navigate their own behavior (Baumrind, 1966). This parenting style is associated with low levels of supervision and is supportive of the child’s autonomy and independence (Baumrind, 1991; Milevsky et al., 2006).
The child of a permissive parent tends to be self-centered, immature, and less self-regulated, but also often has a high self-esteem and fewer psychological and somatic symptoms (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Hughes, 2013; Lamborn et al., 1991). These children also tend to lack social competencies and have more behavioral problems (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Lamborn et al., 1991). They also are more likely to be impulsive and involved in risk-taking and drug experimentation (Day et al., 2006; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Milevsky et al., 2006; Williams, 2012). Finally, they also typically lack self-discipline, and tend to be more aggressive and frequently clash with authority (Hughes, 2013).

In the school setting, children from permissive families tend to have poor academic competencies (Lamborn et al., 1991). They often give up when facing challenging tasks and have difficulty working independently (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Fan & Zhang, 2012). They often have higher levels of internalizing problems which are, in turn, associated with poor writing performance and lower grade point average (Rossman & Rea, 2005; Villaincourt et al., 2013). They are also less self-regulated which, in turn, is associated with poor working memory, less attention flexibility, and lack of inhibitory control skills which negatively impacts reading comprehension and math performance (Day & Connor, 2017; Piotrowski, Lapierre, & Linebarger, 2013). They have more problem behaviors in school and are less engaged in school tasks (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Finally, the neglectful parent is uninvolved and shows low warmth and low control (Aunola et al., 2000; Slicker, 1996). This parent shows the least
responsiveness toward their child of all four parenting styles. Further, they do not show affection towards their child nor do they supervise or monitor their child’s behavior (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Slicker, 1996). They establish minimal demands for mature behavior and do not encourage or assist with their child’s self-regulation (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Slicker, 1996). Furthermore, this parent tends to have poor communication with their child and often responds negatively to their child, including using frequent punishments (Hoeve et al., 2011; Hughes, 2013; Lombardo, 2014). The neglectful parent tends to do what is convenient for them and prefers to spend less time with their child (Lombardo, 2014).

The child of the neglectful parent generally has the worst outcomes and performs poorly across all domains (Lamborn et al., 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1999). They have poor social-emotional development, and they learn early on to not depend on others (Hughes, 2013; Lombardo, 2014). They also have trouble trusting others, making it difficult for them to form relationships (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Hughes, 2013; Lombardo, 2014). They tend to be emotionally withdrawn, experience more stress and anxiety, and show higher levels of delinquency, a higher risk for substance abuse, and are more likely to be involved in bullying as either the victim or the bully (Atik & Guneri, 2013; Hoeve et al., 2011; Lombardo, 2014). These children tend to have poor self-concepts, high rates of misbehavior, and experience more psychological distress (Lamborn et al., 1991).

In the academic setting, children from neglectful families tend to have the poorest school performance (Calafat et al., 2014). They tend to have more peer
conflict and show the highest level of externalizing problems which are associated with lower grades in school (Fletcher et al., 2008). They tend to be less optimistic which is, in turn, associated with low academic achievement (Cenk & Demir, 2015). They show increasingly poor academic achievement over time, more maladaptive and task-avoidant learning strategies, high levels of passivity in regard to academics, and they doubt their competence (Aunola et al., 2000; Pinquart, 2015).

Summary. In sum, the parent-child relationship has a significant impact on children’s overall developmental outcome, including their academic performance by impacting brain development, self-regulation, mental health, cognitive functioning, and social-emotional competencies. Research studies demonstrate that the parenting behaviors which promote the best academic outcomes are establishing a secure attachment relationship (i.e., warm, sensitive, responsive caregiving) and practicing an authoritative parenting style (i.e., warmth/responsiveness with moderate control) which utilizes inductive discipline.

Discipline Styles and Academic Outcomes

The method of discipline a parent uses when trying to guide their child’s behavior also impacts child outcome, including academic performance. While discipline is often thought of as punishment, it actually refers to a parent’s method of “teaching” their child with the goal being to stop unwanted, unacceptable, and bothersome behavior (Hall, 2013; Siegel & Bryson, 2016).
The method of discipline a parent uses at home serves as a model for how a child learns to communicate and cooperate with others (Miller, 2013), and as discussed below, it impacts the child’s brain development, academic success, self-regulation, and executive functioning.

**Punishments as Discipline.** “Punishment” can be defined as a parent intentionally making a child feel guilty, humiliated, or fearful in an attempt to change the child’s behavior (Hall, 2013). Examples of punishment include time-outs, harsh words, withdrawing love, angry gestures, and inflicting physical pain (i.e., corporal punishment) (Hall, 2013; Knox, 2010).

When a parent uses corporal punishment, there are a number of negative developmental outcomes for a child. First, a child has a heightened sense of fear which, in turn, negatively impacts the child’s brain development (Jaffee & Christian, 2014; Tang & Davis-Kean, 2015). Corporal punishment triggers a higher secretion of the stress hormone cortisol which slows a child’s cognitive development (Gershoff, 2016; Knox, 2010). Corporal punishment and physical abuse also tend to result in a smaller hippocampus (which is associated with memory) and an over-activated amygdala (which is associated with responses to emotional stimuli) making children more prone to depression and addiction (Gershoff, 2016; Hecker et al., 2016; Jaffee & Christian, 2014). Corporal punishment also results in a reduced amount of grey matter in the prefrontal cortex which is associated with social cognition, as well as a reduced amount of white matter which coordinates the communication among brain regions.
Lastly, both corporal punishment and non-physical punishment have the same appearance on brain scans, suggesting that all types of punishment have similar consequences in regard to the child’s brain development (Siegel & Bryson, 2016).

Using punishments to correct a child’s behavior also have negative influences on a child’s learning. Children who are physically punished at home are more disengaged at school, and they are more likely to complain and refuse to cooperate when completing school tasks (Kucynski, 1984; Tang & Davis-Kean, 2015). They also tend to score lower in math and reading, and are overall less effective in the classroom (Baumrind, 1966; Tang & Davis-Kean, 2015).

Punishment slows cognitive development and places a child at a higher risk for diminished executive functioning (i.e., attention, inhibition, and cognitive flexibility) (Bindman et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2013). Punishments are also associated with poor working memory and overall lower academic performance (Hecker et al., 2016). Corporal punishment also predicts externalizing behaviors, cheating in school, and breaking school rules (Barnes et al., 2013; Gordon, 1989).

Self-regulation is also negatively affected by punishment. In response to being physically punished, children tend to become increasingly angry and dysregulated, and are less able control themselves or understand what they have done wrong (Siegel & Bryson, 2016). Their coping mechanisms often include having meltdowns, bullying others, and feeling defeated (Gordon, 1989). While
harsh punishment may result in short-term compliance, it tends to increase problem behaviors over time (Gershoff, 2013).

**Positive Child Guidance as Discipline.** The alternative to using punishment to guide children’s behavior is *positive child guidance* (also referred to as “developmentally-appropriate practice”) which leads to more beneficial child outcomes (e.g., Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). Based on child development research, the focus of positive child guidance is to create a desire and motivation within the child to do what is considered right by building a strong adult-child relationship, creating opportunities for growth, and encouraging as well as supporting the child when he/she is facing new challenges (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). In place of punishment, parents provide reasons and explanations for rules and setting limits, and alternatives to redirect their child’s behavior (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). Positive child guidance is more supportive of the child’s needs and is based on research that demonstrates that children learn best through experience and that they have a need to know and understand the relevance of what they are learning and doing (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013).

Positive child guidance has benefits for children’s brain development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). When parents use positive guidance, the child’s brain is able to recover from short term stress (Gershoff, 2016). Compared to children whose parents use traditional punishments, children whose parents use positive child guidance have increased levels of white matter in the brain which
helps with responding to stress and also facilitates neuronal communication (Sheikh et al., 2014). They also have more gray matter in the brain which is associated with such personality factors as empathy, consciousness, and openness to experience (Matsodaira et al., 2016). Lastly, they also have greater hippocampal and amygdala volume which are associated with memory and stress modification, as well as emotion regulation (Luby et al., 2012; Whittle et al., 2014).

Positive child guidance fosters intellectual growth and a motivation to learn which, in turn, promotes academic success (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). Children are less distracted, more engaged, and are more cooperative in school (Kuczynski, 1984). Research studies show that positive child guidance results in children attaining a higher grade point average compared to children who are punished (Bronstein, 1993): they have higher scores in math and reading, and more advanced language development (Tang & Davis-Kean, 2015). These children are also more likely to have a richer vocabulary and better communication skills (Suskind, 2015). Lastly, they score higher on measures of cognition including attention, following directions, naming objects, and motor skills (Berlin, 2009).

Positive child guidance also improves the development of self-regulation in children. Children learn to pause and reflect when dealing with difficult situations (Siegel & Bryson, 2016), and they learn to manage their stressors both in the short- and long-term (Gershoff, 2016). They are better able to internalize
rules of conduct and are better able to regulate behavior versus complying for the sake of avoiding punishment (Suchodoletz et al., 2011). Finally, they enjoy interactions with their parent and are more willing to control their behavior and impulses in order to keep the peace (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

“Academically-Enriched” Home Environment

In addition to parenting style and discipline style, an “academically-enriched” home environment can positively influence their child’s academic success. This includes “academic socialization”, a rich home reading environment, positive parent-child communication strategies, and enrichment activities.

Academic Socialization. Academic socialization refers to parents valuing education at home through their involvement in school and learning-related tasks (Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011). When parents hold high aspirations for their child and frequently express the importance of school, they are providing a home environment that supports learning (Jeyens, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2015; Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004). For example, helping with homework, showing interest in the child’s progress, showing excitement about reading and math, placing the child’s education as a top priority in the home, and using regular schedules and routines to encourage the child’s autonomy and organization (especially in regard to academics) are all ways that a parent’s presence, involvement, and supervision instills positive academic values and habits (Rosenkoetter & Barton, 2002; Roche & Ghazarian, 2011; Suizzo et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2014;
When a parent instills in the child a sense that education is important, a child is more likely to have higher academic motivation and achievement (Jeyens, 2007; Miliotis & Masten, 1999; Suizzo et al., 2015). They are also more likely to have advanced cognitive development and score higher in reading and math (Moon & Hofferth, 2016; Parmar et al., 2004; Taylor et al., 2014). In addition, they are more likely to understand how daily life unfolds due to practicing routines at home and, in turn, have higher grades and better school conduct (e.g., following directions and being more organized) (Fiese, 2002; Roche & Ghazarian, 2011; Vorderman, 2016). Finally, they tend to have a more positive attitude about school and believe that academic performance is important (Fei-Yun Ng et al., 2017).

**Home Reading Environment.** Studies have found that an enriched home reading environment supports a child’s readiness for, and success in, school (Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011). An “enriched home reading environment” refers to a parent reading aloud with their child, and a child having exposure and access to appropriate reading material (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Lawson, 2012).

Reading to a child from infancy on, telling fun stories, and serving as a model for reading are all considered to be a bridges to literacy because they stimulate learning through identifying letters and words, and they teach a child the importance of reading (Bradley, 1994; Chung & Keckler, n.d.; Cunningham &
Stanovich, 1997; Hart & Risley, 1995; Spagnolia et al., 2006). Parents who create a rich home reading environment will increase their child’s desire to read, provide a reading role model, and impact the child’s brain to associate reading with pleasure (Sim et al., 2014; Trelease, 2011).

By reading to the child, parents provide support for the child’s education and create structure for the child’s reading habits (Bradley, 1994; Bradley 1995). Research has found that parents who read to their child help to create feelings of joy, affection, and amusement toward reading (Chung & Keckler, n.d.; Frederickson et al., 2013; Trelease, 2011). Print materials in the home (e.g., magazines, newspapers, and books) should be carefully selected, age appropriate, and easily accessible (Bradley, 1994; Chung & Keckler, n.d.; Frederickson et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2014).

A child who comes from an enriched home reading environment tends to have many academic advantages (Sanacore, 2012). They are more likely to have an advanced vocabulary, better phonological awareness, better grammar, and better language skills (Hart & Risley, 1995; Lawson, 2012; Taylor et al., 2014). They also tend to be more persistent, better able to sustain their attention, more likely to read well, and they tend to succeed across all curriculum areas (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Lawson, 2012; Sanacore, 2012). They are more likely to ask questions regarding text which, in turn, promotes reading comprehension (Chung & Keckler, n.d.; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). They are also more likely to develop a lifetime habit of reading which in turn predicts
achievement in elementary grades, high school, and college (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Taylor et al., 2014). Lastly, these children tend to have more knowledge about the world from the extensive exposure to reading (Trelease, 2011).

Parent-Child Verbal Communication (i.e., “Parent Talk”). Parents are a critically important source of language for their children and they serve as a partner for the child’s developing communicative competencies; therefore, reaching one’s potential for success is also largely dependent on the spoken language environment provided by parents (Im-Bolter et al., 2013; Sohr-Preston et al., 2013; Suskind, 2015). Research studies show that children benefit dramatically when their parents use plenty of high-quality positive verbal communication (Spagnolia et al., 2016; Suskind, 2015). High-quality verbal communication consists of the parent tuning into what the child is focused on, using appropriate language, and engaging in conversational exchange with a child (Suskind, 2015). High-quality verbal communication also consists of language that is rich in vocabulary and is practiced regularly within daily interactions (Sohr-Preston et al., 2013; Spagnolia et al., 2006; Suskind, 2015). Furthermore, in a high quality language environment, parents use language that is clear, responsive to the child’s needs, positive in nature (vs. negative and critical), and used instrumentally in explanations, clarifications, and narratives (Sohr-Preston et al., 2013; Spagnolia et al., 2006). Lastly, allowing a child to express themselves, considering the child’s thoughts and opinions, showing
empathy for the child, and encouraging and praising the child’s efforts also promote the child’s development (Froiland, 2011; Froiland, 2013; Matsdaira, 2016; Vorderman, 2016; Wallace, 2015; Suskind, 2015).

Some examples of high quality communication include extra talk, spatial talk, and language that promotes a growth mindset (Suskind, 2015). Extra talk can be described as the continuation of back-and-forth verbal interactions (i.e. “This ice cream is delicious!”, “Who is mommy’s precious girl?”, “You’re doing great!”) and has been found to increase children’s vocabulary (Suskind, 2015). Spatial talk refers to language that teaches children how things relate to each other physically such as indicating sizes and shapes of objects (e.g., larger, smaller, round, pointed, tall, short) and has been found to predict children’s mathematical skills (Suskind, 2015). Language that promotes growth mindset (e.g. “You worked really hard on that” instead of “You’re smart”) teaches the child to view success as a result of hard work rather than innate qualities and has been found to increase child engagement and resilience (Suskind, 2015; Zeng, Hou, Peng, 2016).

Children who experience high-quality verbal communication with their parents tend to be more successful in school regardless of socioeconomic status or parent education level (Sohr-Preston et al., 2013; Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011). They tend to have a larger vocabulary, strong comprehension skills, and advanced language skills which, in turn, predicts achievement in math, science, and overall educational attainment (Sad, 2012; Sohr-Preston et al., 2013).
Research studies have found that children who experience a high-quality language environment with their parents also tend to be more focused in school, more persistent, and experience more joy in learning (Deci & Ryan, 2008). They also tend to be more resilient, determined, and accepting of learning challenges (Vorderman, 2016; Zheng, Hou, & Peng, 2016; Vorderman, 2016). Lastly, they see learning as meaningful, worthy, and purposeful which, in turn, promotes positive academic outcomes (Froiland, 2011).

**Home Enrichment Activities.** Research studies have found that informal learning activities in the home positively impact the child’s academic readiness and success (LeFevre et al., 2009; Skwarchuck et al., 2014). For example, parents support their child’s developing mathematical skills by playing games that involve counting, playing board games with a die or spinner, measuring ingredients when cooking, talking about money when shopping, talking about time with calendars and clocks, and making collections (LeFevre et al., 2009; Skwarchuck et al., 2014). Parents can facilitate their child’s cognitive development through interactions that lead to discussions and reasoning by engaging their children in conversation during trips to outdoor parks, walking trails, nature centers, and museums (Bjorklund & Reubens, 2004; Jant et al., 2004; Zimmerman, 2016). Other examples of informal learning activities that have been found to promote learning are identifying words on signs, making up rhyme songs, printing words, teaching the sounds of letters, helping children read words, and asking children “Wh” questions (i.e. “what”, “how”, “why”) (Bjorklund &
Reubens, 2004; Jant et al., 2014; Skwarchuck et al, 2014). Parents scaffold the child’s learning by being sensitive to the child’s needs and supporting the child so that he or she may participate in the activity successfully (Bjorklund & Reubens, 2004). Informal learning activities give the child an opportunity to practice and enhance their skills and comprehension in different contexts outside of school (Bjorklund & Reubens, 2004; Jant et al., 2014).

Informal learning activities give children an advantage in school (Ramani & Siegler, 2016). These experiences enable children to make connections between previously shared experiences and new experiences (Zimmerman, 2016). Children who have more informal learning experiences have been found to have better mental control and better problem solving skills (Bjorkland & Reubens, 2004). They also tend to have enhanced numerical knowledge, use more sophisticated counting strategies, and are better at executing mathematical information quickly and efficiently compared to children who experience fewer home learning activities (LeFevre et al., 2009; Ramani & Siegler, 2016). These children are also able to communicate in more elaborate ways both verbally and non-vorably (e.g., pointing, manipulating objects, functionally using an object) (Jant et al., 2014). Such activities also enhance children’s understanding of events and facilitate memory transfer (Jant et al., 2014). Lastly, participation in these home learning activities has been found to promote substantial and stable gains in numerical knowledge and literacy skills (LeFevre et al., 2009; Skwarchuck et al, 2014).
Summary

Research studies have found that a child’s performance at the end of third grade is predictive of long-term academic and other life outcomes (Entwisel, 2005). Parenting practices beginning in infancy (i.e., parenting style, discipline style, enrichment activities) have been found to influence a child’s brain development, cognitive functioning, and self-regulation which are all predictive of academic competencies and long-term outcomes. “Positive” parenting practices (i.e., a secure attachment, authoritative parenting, positive child guidance, enriched home environment) are associated with better long-term outcomes such as higher academic achievement, higher income, and better physical and mental health. By contrast, “poor-quality” parenting practices (i.e., insecure attachment, harsh and/or neglectful parenting) are associated with dropping out of high school, teen pregnancy, criminal behavior, poor physical and mental health, and lower socio-economic status.

As discussed below, current parent education programs rarely offer parents information on how to help their child succeed. Instead, programs that are available typically offer remedies for behavioral problems for parents of young children and teenagers, and they rarely inform parents of the long-term outcomes of various parenting practices.

Current Parent Education Programs

Existing parent education programs tend to be implemented in home- and center-based environments (e.g., “Parents as Teachers”, Parent University, The
Incredible Years) (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Mashburn, 2018; Webster-Stratton, 2013; Parents as Teachers National Center, 2018). These programs are usually targeted toward parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds and/or who are young and/or unmarried (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). Many of these programs are usually offered to parents of young children or to parents of children with externalizing behavioral problems (i.e., Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Conduct Disorder) (Bornstein, 2002). There are also other programs directed toward parents who have been incarcerated or are on parole which focus on changing parent attitudes about neglect and abuse, and also on protecting children from violence (“Parent Education”, 2009).

Although these programs do offer quality information, they generally teach parents behavioral modification techniques and how to manage parent frustrations and child behavior problems (Bornstein, 2002). According to Bornstein, what lacks is an emphasis on the importance of parent-child relationships which has the most significant influence on healthy growth, psychological well-being, and is the strongest predictor of optimal child outcomes (Bornstein, 2002). Furthermore, current parent education programs typically do not include research-based information for parents on how to help children succeed in school or optimize their child’s developmental outcome (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; “Parent Education”, 2009). They do not offer parents an integrated approach that covers parenting techniques as well as aiding a child
with elementary school success. Thus, there are few resources for parents to turn to in regards to parenting for their child's academic success.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of the current project is to create a parent education program that will provide parents with the information and skills on how to help their child succeed in school. It is expected that: 1) parents will gain a better understanding of the importance of early academic success for later schooling and life success; 2) parents will increase their knowledge about parenting behaviors that can aid (or hinder) their child's long-term outcomes including their academic competencies; 3) parents will gain more knowledge about enrichment activities they can implement at home that will help their child academically; and 4) parents will learn ways to create a secure parent-child relationship.

It is expected that this information will help parents gain a better understanding of how to best assist their children to succeed in school and lead them down a more optimal developmental trajectory. Children will also benefit from this program because their parents will be more understanding of their children’s needs, and children will have better academic outcomes, and a greater chance of long-term success.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this project was to provide parents with the information and skills to help their child succeed in elementary school. Parents attended a 6-session workshop titled “How to Help Your Child Succeed in Elementary School”.

The topics for each of the six 2-hour sessions were those factors found in research studies to be essential in promoting children’s long-term academic and overall success (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Workshop Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Introduction/Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why Doing Well in School Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long-term outcomes of doing well in elementary school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How Parenting Matters in Children’s School Success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attachment styles and academic outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baumrind’s parenting styles and academic outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session II</td>
<td>Discipline (Part 1) – Punishment versus Positive Child Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is discipline?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Punishment” and child outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Positive child guidance” and child outcomes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Participants

Participants were parents of elementary school-age children recruited from local schools. A total of four female Hispanic parents attended each of the six sessions. The average age of the participants was 31.3 years (range: 28 to 37 yrs.). Parent education levels included the following: one high school diploma;
another reported some college; the third reported a Bachelor’s degree; the last reported graduate studies and beyond. One parent reported having two children ages 1 and 6; another parent reported having a 7 year old; the third parent reported having three children ages 2, 12, and 17; the last parent reported having one 6 year old child. One participant reported that she was also a sixth grade teacher.

Measures

At the beginning of the first session, participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and a pre-workshop self-assessment created for use in the current project. At the end of the six sessions, participants completed the post-workshop self-assessment and a class evaluation form.

Pre- and Post- Self-Assessment

Participants were given a 10-item parenting knowledge pre-class self-assessment developed by the researcher to determine participants’ perception of their knowledge of the key areas to be covered in this parenting class (APPENDIX A), including the importance of early academic success, how parent behaviors (i.e., attachment, parenting style, and discipline without punishment) can aid or hinder long-term child outcomes, and the importance of creating an enriched home environment. The post-workshop assessment was the same version as the pre-self-assessment (APPENDIX B).

Demographics
Participants were also asked to provide information regarding their age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, number of children (and children’s ages), and parenting experience at the start of the workshop (APPENDIX C).

Participants were given a post-workshop class evaluation that assessed their opinion of the parenting workshop (APPENDIX D).

Procedures

Participants were recruited through local schools (see APPENDIX K for flyer) with the help of teachers. Sessions were held at the local library in a meeting room on once a week.

The researcher arrived early to each of the six sessions to set up the meeting room and lay out the necessary materials for that day’s session (e.g., powerpoints, handouts, etc.). Bottled water and cookies were set out for the participants.

At the beginning of the first session, participants were given the pre-assessment and demographics forms.

At the beginning of each session, participants received the material to be covered in that session, including both the powerpoint presentation as well as the supplemental handouts.

At the end of the last session, participants completed the post-assessment and the class evaluation form.
Development of Project Materials

Session 1: Why Academic Success is Important; How Parenting Matters

The powerpoint and supplemental handouts for Session 1 are in Appendix E (E-1 to E-8).1

First, parents were introduced to the overall purpose and topics to be covered in the 6-session workshop.

Since research have found that children’s elementary success is predictive of long-term outcomes including academic achievement, socioeconomic status, physical and mental health, and delinquent and criminal behaviors (Campbell et al., 2002; Entwisel et al., 2005), parents were informed about the importance of children’s performance in elementary school in predicting long-term outcomes.

In addition, research findings have demonstrated that parenting style has a significant impact on child outcomes, including academic success (Moss & Laurent, 2001). Thus, the four attachment styles were discussed, including parent behaviors and child outcomes of each attachment style, along with how each impacts academic competencies. In addition, research on Baumrind’s four parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful) were reviewed as they are also predictive of academic outcomes (e.g., Aunola et al., 2000; Baumrind, 1991; Dornbusch et al., 1987).

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1 The supplemental handouts that go with specific powerpoint slides are indicated by a code in the upper right corner of the powerpoint slide
Session 2: Discipline (Part 1) – Punishment versus Positive Child Guidance

The powerpoint and supplemental handouts for Session 2 are in Appendix F (F-1 – F-8).

Since research studies on punishment have found that discipline style influences a child’s brain development, academic success, self-regulation, and executive functioning (Bindman et al., 2015; Gershoff, 2016; Tang & Davis-Kean, 2015), the two discipline styles (i.e., punishment vs. positive child guidance) and the child outcomes of these discipline styles were discussed.

Session 3: Discipline (Part 2) - Foundations of Positive Child Guidance

The powerpoint and supplemental handouts for Session 3 are in Appendix G (G-1 – G-7).

Positive child guidance strategies, which are based on child development research, create intrinsic motivation in the child to do what is considered “right” because of the strong parent-child relationship, the opportunities for growth, and the encouragement provided from parents (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). Therefore, the foundations of positive child guidance (e.g., being responsive to children’s feelings and emotions, being respectful of children, helping build children’s self-esteem, striving to maintain and emotionally-close relationship, and communication strategies) were covered in this session.

Session 4: Discipline Part 3 – Positive Child Guidance Strategies

The powerpoint and supplemental handouts for Session 4 are in Appendix H (H-1 – H-4).
Positive child guidance has been found to not only meet children’s needs but it also facilitates cooperation between the parent and child (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013). In this session, parents were provided with specific positive child guidance strategies concerning responding to a child’s needs and setting limits with children which include active listening, using “I-messages”, redirecting children’s behavior, negotiating, giving children “closed choices”, and ineffective communication strategies.

Sessions 5 and 6: Creating a Home Environment to Help Children Succeed in School

The powerpoint and supplemental handouts for Session 5 are in Appendix I (I-1 – I-8). The powerpoint and supplemental handouts for Session 6 are in Appendix J (J-1 – J-6).

Research studies have found that children perform better in school when their parents provide them with learning activities within the home environment as well as other contexts outside of school (i.e., museums, parks, libraries) (Suizzo et al., 2014; Suskind, 2015; Taylor et al., 2014; Trelease, 2011). The topics covered in these two sessions included “academic socialization”, the home reading environment, verbal communication, and enrichment activities.

In Session 5, “academic socialization” was defined (i.e., helping with homework, following regular schedules, parent expressing the importance of school) as it has been found to impact academic outcomes (e.g., higher grades, better school conduct) (Jeyens, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2015). Next, because
research studies suggest that the home reading environment increases a child’s school readiness and likelihood of academic success, parents were informed of how to provide a supportive home reading environment (e.g., reading aloud with the child, having print materials in the home) followed by a description of the child academic outcomes (e.g., language skills, academic achievement) (Trelease, 2011).

Session 6 informed parents about the importance of verbal communication and enrichment activities that support children’s academic success. Research studies have found that children who experience high-quality verbal communication with their parent tend to be more successful in school; thus, the concept of high-quality verbal communication was discussed (e.g., appropriate language, empathy, clarifications, extra talk, spatial talk, back-and-forth interactions), and the child outcomes (i.e., vocabulary, language skills, educational attainment) (Sohr-Preston et al., 2013; Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011).

Next, because research studies have also found that children who experience more informal learning activities tend to have higher cognitive functioning and academic success, parents were informed of enrichment activities (e.g., field trips, board games, cooking) and the child outcomes (e.g., school readiness, problem solving skills, communication skills) (Bjorklund & Reubens, 2004; LeFevre et al., 2009). At the end of this session parents completed post-class assessments.
CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Pre- and Post- Class Assessment

The results of the pre- and post-class assessment are based on the 4 participants who attended all sessions of the parenting workshop.

Parenting Knowledge Pre- and Post-Assessment

Results for the pre- and post-assessment are shown in Table 2 below. Participants’ overall perception of their knowledge increased for all ten items. Item 1 asked how knowledgeable participants felt about how elementary success affects later schooling and success in life. Compared to the first class, participants felt more knowledgeable at the end of the six sessions. Items 2 and 3 asked parents how knowledgeable they felt about how parenting style impacts their child. In comparison to the pre-assessment scores, participants felt more knowledgeable at the end of the six sessions. Item 4 asked about different discipline styles and their effect on long-term outcomes; again, parents indicated an increase in knowledge at the end of the workshop. Item 5 asked parents about how knowledgeable they felt about what supports brain development; parents showed an increase in knowledge at the end of the workshop. Item 6 and 7 asked about parents’ knowledge of how to support their child academically. Post-assessment scores were again higher than pre-assessment scores. Item 8 asked parents about their perceived knowledge of how to discipline their child without punishments; compared to pre-assessment scores, parents showed an
increase in knowledge at the end of the workshop. Item 9 asked parents about the importance of reading to their child from infancy on. Parents showed a slight increase in knowledge for this item at the end of the workshop. Finally, item 10 asked parents about their knowledge of providing an enriching language environment (“Parent talk”) and why it is important. Compared to the pre-assessment, parents showed an increase in knowledge on the post-assessment.

Table 2. Pre- and Post-Means for the Parenting Knowledge Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Pre-Test (N=4)</th>
<th>Post-Test (N=4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. …how elementary school success affects later schooling and success in life</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. …how to develop a secure attachment with your child and why it’s important</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. …how different parenting styles help or hinder your child’s success in school</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. …how different discipline styles affect your child’s long term outcomes as well as how well they do in school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. …what supports your child’s brain development</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. …what kinds of activities at home will help your child academically?</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. …how to best assist your child to succeed in school and support their optimal development?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. …how to “discipline” your child without the use of punishments?</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. …the importance of reading aloud to your child from infancy on?</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. …how to provide lots of rich “Parent Talk” for your child and why it’s important</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Class Evaluation

The post-class evaluation indicated that parents found the parenting workshop to be beneficial and useful.

The first question asked participants how useful they found the information presented in the workshop and why or why not. Overall, participants indicated the information presented was insightful, informative, and helpful (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>&quot;Very helpful. Helped me understand how certain reactions from a parent affects the child’s mentality.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>&quot;Very helpful because it will form a better relationship with your kids.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>&quot;All the information was insightful and educational!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>&quot;I found the information very useful especially the examples.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second question asked participants what information was most useful to them (Table 4). Two out of four participants stated that everything was useful to them. One parent found the information on stages of development most useful; two parents found the information on communication to be most useful; and one parent found the information on attention span most useful. Lastly, one parent found the information on discipline without punishment to be the most useful.
Table 4. What Information Was the Most Useful for You?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Everything. From the tips on how to talk to your child correctly, to the explanations of a child’s development by age.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>&quot;Everything was useful but what was most useful is the way you talk to your child.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>&quot;I didn’t know the attention span limits and since I have children of different ages, it helps to know what to plan and expect of/from them. I found the positive child guidance and communication info very useful and interesting.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>&quot;How to discipline my child without punishment.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third question asked for the participant’s opinion on what could be added or changed to improve the workshop (Table 5). In general, all four participants stated the information presented was enough. None of the participants made recommendations as to anything that could be changed or added. One participant wrote “N/A” and verbally stated that she did not have any suggestions because the information presented was enough and that nothing needed to be changed or added.

Table 5. In Your Opinion, What Could Be Added or Changed to Improve the Workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>&quot;Everything explained in the workshop was enough for me.&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>&quot;Nothing, everything about the workshop is very helpful.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>&quot;N/A&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>&quot;Nothing, thought the material was good and to the point.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fourth question asked participants if they felt more knowledgeable about how to help their child be successful in elementary school and why or why not (Table 6). All four participants stated that they felt more knowledgeable about how to help their child be successful in elementary school. One participant mentioned feeling more knowledge about how to communicate with their child. Another participant stated that they felt they could help their child succeed by creating an academically-enriched home environment. Another parent stated that they feel that they can apply the information with all of their children. Lastly, one participant reported feeling a new sense of competency in helping their child succeed.

Table 6. Do You Feel More Knowledgeable About How to Help Your Child Be Successful in Elementary School? Why or Why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>&quot;Yes, because it helped me understand how to communicate with my child to help his education expand.&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>&quot;Yes, I do. I feel I can help her be more successful by making our home more school related.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>&quot;Definitely! I feel I can apply all this information with all my children.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>&quot;I feel like I now know how to help them be more successful.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth question asked participants whether they would share the information from the workshop with others and why or why not (Table 7). All four participants stated that they would share the information with others because the
information was helpful and informative. Another reason was because the information was important. Last, one parent stated that she would share the information because children deserve a better upbringing.

Table 7. Will You Share the Information from the Workshop with Others? Why or Why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>&quot;Yes, because it was very helpful.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>&quot;Yes, because I believe all children need and deserve a better upbringing then past years.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>&quot;Yes. Lauren is very knowledgeable and informative. I really enjoyed the workshop and am interested in any other learning opportunities for parents.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>&quot;Yes, I will because it has important info on how to help children.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Findings. The demographic questionnaire also included a question of what participants hoped to learn from the workshop. Each participant’s responses are noted below (Table 8).

Table 8. What Do You Hope to Learn from This Workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>How to encourage more school work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>How to connect and interact with my child better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>How to support my children’s development, taking into account their ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>How I can better support him in school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current project was to create a parent education program that would provide parents with the information and skills on how to help their child succeed in school. The key motivation for this project stemmed from research studies which have found significantly better long-term outcomes for children who perform well in elementary school (Campbell et al., 2007; Entwisle et al., 2005). Studies have found, for example, that parents who establish a secure attachment with their child promote higher academic performance, better emotion regulation, and healthier peer relationships (Duchesne & Larose, 2007; Pitzer & Skinner, 2016). Second, parents who use the authoritative parenting style tend to have children who are less likely to drop out of school, more likely to have better mental health, and have higher self-esteem (Fan & Zhang, 2012; Rossman & Rea, 2005). Third, parents who practice positive child guidance tend to have children with more optimal brain development and more advanced language development (Copple & Bredekamp, 2013; Gershoff, 2016). Finally, parents who provide an enriched home environment for their child where education is valued tend have children who have higher academic motivation and achievement, as well as better cognitive and language development (Jeyens, 2007; Suskind, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015).

Overall, parents who attended the workshop indicated an increase in their knowledge of the importance of establishing a secure attachment with their child,
the significance of a parent’s parenting style, how to discipline without punishment, as well as understanding how to create an enriched home environment.

Pre- and Post-Workshop Assessments

Overall, the scores for the pre- post-workshop assessments indicated that participants benefited from the information presented in the 6-session workshop.

First, prior to the workshop, parents felt fairly knowledgeable about the importance of early academic success and by the end of the workshop, they reported feeling even more knowledgeable about this. Parents found it interesting that there was so much research-based information regarding early academic success and long-term outcomes.

The second main result concerned knowledge about the parenting behaviors (i.e., attachment, parenting style, discipline without punishment) that can aid (or hinder) long-term child outcomes. Prior to the workshop, parents reported feeling less knowledgeable about these topics. However, at the end of the workshop, parents reported an increase in their knowledge of the parenting behaviors that aid or hinder long-term outcomes. Results showed an increase in parents’ knowledge of the importance of developing a secure attachment with one’s child. Interestingly, parents expressed surprise when informed of the different attachment styles and their outcomes. During the session, parents expressed sympathy for children who were denied a warm and responsive relationship. Parents also discussed that they were intentionally warm and
responsive to their children because they lacked that in the relationships with their own parents. Parents felt much more informed about how to help their child develop a secure attachment which will benefit their children in the long-term. Parents also reported an increase in knowledge from pre- to post-assessments in how different parenting styles affect their child’s success in school. Parents expressed that they sometimes were subject to criticism for practicing an authoritative parenting style such as giving their child options or allowing back-and-forth negotiations (e.g., Aunola et al., 2000; Darling & Steingberg, 1993). Further, they often stated that their parenting styles were based on what they assumed was best for their child. It was discussed during this particular session that the most common parenting style is authoritarian which is characterized by the parent being less warm and more demanding (Aunola et al., 2000; Baumrind, 1966). Parents were relieved to know that more positive child outcomes result from the authoritative parenting style where parents are warm and moderately demanding (Aunola et al., 2000; Rossman & Rea, 2005). Finally, there was an increase in parent knowledge from the first to the last class session of how different discipline styles affect a child’s performance in school as well as their long-term success. Parents reported knowing what the word “discipline” meant, i.e., “to teach”. However, they expressed doubt about how to discipline their child without punishment. Three sessions were dedicated to informing parents about positive child guidance and how it relates to children’s later success in school.
(and beyond). This likely helped parents understand how their actions affect their child(ren) in a positive and negative manner in both the short and long-term.

The third main result concerned parents’ knowledge of enrichment activities which help children academically. Prior to the workshop, parents reported some knowledge of enrichment activities. By the end of the workshop, however, parents felt very knowledgeable about this topic. One reason for this may be that there were two entire sessions dedicated to helping parents understand how to create a home environment that helps children succeed which included information on “academic socialization”, the home reading environment, and field trips. The discussions during these sessions indicated that parents understood the importance of reading; however, they also learned about other activities that they can engage in with their child such as taking trips to outdoor parks, playing games that involve counting, or playing family games such as Monopoly, Bingo, or Dominoes. The parents seemed to especially enjoy the idea of “floor time”, i.e., a child-led activity that parents participate in, as well as nature hikes and cooking together. Parents also enjoyed the concept of using language not only to increase their child’s language development but also to promote a growth mindset which teaches children to view success as a result of hard work rather than innate qualities (Suskind, 2015). For example, instead of saying “Wow, you’re an artist!” parents can say “Wow, you really put a lot of work into this and it looks amazing!” Parents did report that sometimes language is a barrier because they expect their child to “know better”. However, after some
discussion of the importance of verbal communication, parents reported that they would try harder to communicate more clearly with their children as well as listen and respond to their child’s needs.

While knowledge did increase across all the assessment items, it is important to note that for many of the items, parents already appeared to have a fair amount of knowledge prior to the workshop. Thus, there was likely a ceiling effect in that there was not as big a gain in knowledge as a result of the workshop as there might have been if this workshop had been given to teen parents or more typical parents who would likely have had less knowledge about these topics at the outset.

Limitations

Although participants did gain some knowledge, there was not much room for an increase in knowledge. At the onset of this program, parents were already well-versed in the topics covered in the workshop. The real impact was not seen with these parents. Results would have been different if this program had been targeted toward teen parents or parents who have not attended other parenting workshops.

Post-Class Evaluation

At the conclusion of the 6-session workshop, participants completed a post-class evaluation. Altogether, participants stated that they found the class to
be informative and gave positive feedback about the content and how they will use what they learned to help their children.

All of the participants indicated that the workshop was helpful to them, and that the topics they found to be most useful were “communication” and “discipline without punishment.” All participants valued the information and the topics covered regarding the various parenting practices that have been shown to promote positive child outcomes and academic success. This suggests that this program would be of value for parents of children of varying age groups as well as others who work with children which was supported by participant statements during the workshop sessions. One participant, for example, stated that she would be applying the positive child guidance techniques in her classroom with her sixth-grade students. The same participant also stated that she felt she had a secure attachment with her 12 year old daughter and 17 year old son because she is warm with them, and they are honest and helpful to her. Another parent was very happy to know that she had been implementing the enrichment activity of “floor time” with her 7 year old son when he asks her to play Legos. Lastly, one participant stated that the most challenging parenting practice for her is providing explanations for rules and limits but further stated that she would start practicing communicating more because she knows it will benefit her 6 year old son. Research studies support the parenting practices covered in this workshop because children are more likely to do well academically, have better mental and physical health, and healthier interpersonal relationships during school age and
into adulthood when parents use these parenting practices `(Cambell et al., 2016; Duncan et al., 20007; Lansford et al., 2016).

All of the participants stated that they will apply what they have learned from the workshop with their children. They found the program to be “helpful” and “informative”. One participant stated that she would share the information because “children deserve a better upbringing”. Another parent stated that she felt she could now help her child academically by creating a more “school related” home environment. Another parent stated that she could apply what she learned to all of her children.

The comments made by participants in this project about their lack of knowledge in many of these domains is consistent with research studies that have demonstrated that the majority of parents know little about child development or positive child guidance (e.g., Yankelovich & DYG Inc., 2000; Bigner & Gerhardt, 2014). Thus, making this parenting material more widely available to parents, caregivers, teachers, and others would result in numerous benefits for children’s development and long-term academic success.

Lastly, parents expressed more enthusiasm toward structural parenting practices versus process based parenting practices. For example, parents were more comfortable with implementing enrichment activities or creating a home environment that supports learning. In contrast, they expressed that the most challenging parenting practices were the ones that were less tangible such as parent-child communication and discipline without punishment. The reason
could be that structural parenting practices are easier to carry out while process based parenting practices, such as communication and discipline without punishment might be more challenging because they require more time, practice, and change on behalf of the parent.

Recommendations for Future Workshops

One alternative for future workshops could be to present it virtually (e.g., as a Zoom Video conference) with breakout rooms for small group discussions. This would allow this program to be more accessible to parents and teachers. Google Forms could be used to collect participant information anonymously, and Poll Everywhere for sharing ideas and opinions. Parents could also be provided with the materials in a pdf file so they will always have access to it. A virtual presentation such as this would make it particularly easier for parents with young children to attend without having to worry about child care.

Also, considering that the target group is parents of young children, it would be important to be flexible with scheduling the sessions. Recorded virtual sessions could assist parents in accessing the class materials at a time convenient to them.

Another recommendation for future workshops would be to consider following up with parents after the workshop has concluded to see if parents might need any support in the topics that were covered. For example, they may need assistance regarding how to communicate with their child, or how to practice authoritative parenting practices.
In addition, research has found that when fathers attend parenting programs there is a reduction in dysfunctional parenting and an improvement of child behaviors (Zemp et al., 2016). It would be beneficial to encourage both parents to attend the workshop so that the parents can strengthen their teamwork as parents and be better able to provide their child with consistent and developmentally-appropriate parenting.

Lastly, this workshop could also be presented to teachers of young children. It could be provided as a professional development course offered virtually or in person. The benefit of this would be for teachers to be more familiar with developmentally-appropriate practices with the children that they work with. Further, they would be better able to share the information with parents so that there is a home-school connection that supports the child’s academic success.

Implications

There is still a lack of access to parent education programs that give parents a full understanding of what they can do to help their child be successful. Furthermore, most existing programs target parents of children up to age of kindergarten (e.g., Parents as Teachers) or focus solely on educational topics (e.g., Parent University). This limits what information parents have access to and what they learn regarding helping their children, especially parents of children of various age groups. The current program would be a good resource for parents with children of various age groups, but especially for parents of very young children because it provides them with empirically-based information on how to
potentially obtain the best outcomes for their child which can be fostered from infancy and beyond (Siegal & Bryson, 2016).

This parenting program could also be used in high schools because it would be beneficial for teen parents as well as anyone young person who is considering becoming a parent. Teen parents have many stressors including their relationships, economic status, and overall lack of parenting skills (Woods et al., 2003). Parenting is a learned skill and parenting programs directed toward teens have led to improvements in parenting attitude, knowledge, skill, as well as a positive influence on child behavior (Allen et al., 2014). After completing a parenting program, teen mothers have been shown to experience improvements in their role as a mother, show a more positive perception of childbearing experience, have more appropriate developmental expectations of their child, have an increase in empathy for their baby, and show reduced amounts of child-related stress (Allen et al., 2014). This type of program could help young parents thrive in raising their child which will ultimately lead to positive child outcomes.

This program could also be offered to parents by clinicians or other agencies that provide services for children. Research studies have found that after attending a parenting program, parents report high levels of need satisfaction, especially parents of young children (McConnal et al., 2012). Parenting programs have also been found to reduce child behavioral problems as well as enhance parent-child relationship quality (Zemp et al., 2016). Other studies have found that parents also experience reduced parent-related stress,
an improvement in their attitude about parenting, and greater use of authoritative parenting practices after completing a parent education program (Wolf & Hirsch, 2003).

Lastly, this program is cost effective, making it more sustainable. The materials for the parents were in a folder and each folder cost about $10. Parents kept the folders as a resource for themselves as it included all the information from the workshop. Considering that research has found that parenting programs reduce conduct disorders in children (Sanders et al., 2000), decision makers might be more supportive in funding and implementing this program for parents and the community as a whole.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this project was to create a parent education workshop that would provide parents with the information and skills on how to help their child succeed in school. The goal was to increase parents’ knowledge of the importance of establishing a secure attachment with their child, the importance of a parent’s parenting style, how to discipline without punishment, as well as the importance of creating an enriched home environment. Overall, the pre- and post-assessments indicate that parents had an increase in parenting knowledge across all of the topics covered in the course. There is a need for greater access to parent education workshops because parenting is a skill which can be learned, and there are many benefits for parents who attend such workshops, including how to help children succeed in school.
APPENDIX A

PARENTING KNOWLEDGE PRE-ASSESSMENT
Parenting knowledge

PRE-ASSESSMENT

Date ________________________________

Instructions: Circle the number that best reflects how knowledgeable you feel NOW about:

1. …how elementary school success affects later schooling and success in life
   Not at all                                 Very much
   1                  2                  3                  4                  5

2. …how to develop a secure attachment with your child and why it’s important
   Not at all                                 Very much
   1                  2                  3                  4                  5

3. …how different parenting styles help or hinder your child’s success in school
   Not at all                                 Very much
   1                  2                  3                  4                  5

4. …how different discipline styles affect your child’s long term outcomes as well as how well they do in school
   Not at all                                 Very much
   1                  2                  3                  4                  5

5. …what supports your child’s brain development
   Not at all                                 Very much
   1                  2                  3                  4                  5

6. …what kinds of activities at home will help your child academically?
   Not at all                                 Very much
   1                  2                  3                  4                  5
APPENDIX B

PARENTING KNOWLEDGE POST-ASSESSMENT
Parenting knowledge

POST-ASSESSMENT

Date ________________________________

Instructions: Circle the number that best reflects how knowledgeable you feel NOW about:

1. …how elementary school success affects later schooling and success in life
   Not at all    Very much
   1    2    3    4    5

2. …how to develop a secure attachment with your child and why it’s important
   Not at all    Very much
   1    2    3    4    5

3. …how different parenting styles help or hinder your child’s success in school
   Not at all    Very much
   1    2    3    4    5

4. …how different discipline styles affect your child’s long term outcomes as well as how well they do in school
   Not at all    Very much
   1    2    3    4    5

5. …what supports your child’s brain development
   Not at all    Very much
   1    2    3    4    5

6. …what kinds of activities at home will help your child academically?
   Not at all    Very much
   1    2    3    4    5
Background Information

1. Age: _____ years

2. Gender: ___male   ___female

3. Ethnicity:
   ___Hispanic  ___African American  ___Asian  ___Caucasian
   ___Pacific Islander  ___Middle Eastern  ___Bi-racial
   ___Other ____________

4. Highest level of education:
   ___ High school diploma
   ___ Some college
   ___ Bachelor’s degree
   ___ Graduate studies and beyond

5. Are you a parent, caregiver, teacher, or someone who works with children?
   ___ Parent
   ___ Teacher
   ___ Other (explain)

6. If you are a parent, how old is (are) your child(ren)?

   ________________________________________________________________

7. If you are a teacher, what grade do you teach?

   ________________________________________________________________

8. What do you hope to learn from this workshop?

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX D
CLASS EVALUATION
Class Evaluation

1. How useful did you find the information presented in this workshop? Why or why not?

2. What information was the most useful for you?

3. In your opinion, what could be added or changed to improve the workshop?

4. Do you feel more knowledgeable about how to help your child be successful in elementary school? Why or Why not?

5. Will you share the information from the workshop with others? Why or why not?
APPENDIX E

SESSION 1 MATERIALS
Helping Your Child Succeed in Elementary School

Session 1

Introduction and Overview

- 6 - session workshop
  - Session 1: Why Doing Well in School Matters & How Parenting Matters
  - Session 2: Discipline (Part 1) – Punishment versus Positive Child Guidance
  - Session 3: Discipline (Part 2) – Foundations of Positive Child Guidance
  - Session 4: Discipline (Part 3) – Positive Child Guidance
  - Session 5: Creating a Home Environment to Help Children Succeed in School
  - Session 6: Creating a Home Environment to Help Children Succeed in School (Continued)
Why Academic Success is Important and How Parenting Matters

Why Doing Well in School Matters

Elementary Success

How do you think elementary success affects children into adulthood?
**Long-term outcomes**

**Elementary school success**
- Higher academic achievement
- Higher income
- Less likely to experience teen pregnancy
- Less likely to use illicit drugs
- Better mental health
- Less health problems

**Poor elementary school performance**
- Held back in school
- Drop out of high school
- Teen Pregnancy
- Higher risk of unemployment
- Criminal behavior
- Poor mental health
- Shorter life expectancy

*(Campbell et al., 2002; Duncan et al., 2007; Entwisle et al., 2001)*

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**How Parenting Matters**

“The sign of great parenting is not the child’s behavior. The sign of truly great parenting is the parent’s behavior.”  
— Andy Johnson  
@truparenting.net

- **Attachment styles** and academic outcomes
- **Parenting styles** and academic outcomes
Attachment Studies

What is attachment?

- The quality of parent-child relationship
- Largely dependent on the “quality” of interactions with the caregiver day in and day out
- Foundation for later individual differences in personality and outcomes

(Scoul, 2008)
Secure attachment

**Parent behaviors**
- Warm
- Sensitively attuned to child
- Responsive to the child’s needs and signals

**Child outcomes**
- Better social development
- Better emotional development
- Better mental health
- Optimal brain development
- Better cognitive and language development

---

Insecure-ambivalent attachment

**Parent behaviors**
- Responds inconsistently
- Sometimes sensitive but also neglectful
- Does not know how to soothe the child
- Places their own needs before child’s needs

**Child Outcomes**
- Clingy
- Poor self-regulation (See E-4)
- Poor social and emotional development
- More likely to become a victim of bullying

---

(Blattin et al., 2000; Bronews et al., 2012; Danes, 2011)

(Blattin & Cassedy, 2002; Danes, 2010; Messa et al., 2016)
Insecure-avoidant attachment

**Parent behavior**
- Consistently ignores and/or rejects their child
- Psychologically and emotionally unavailable to the child
- Tense and irritable

**Child outcomes**
- Learn to take care of themselves
- Poor self-regulation
- Poor social and emotional development
- More likely to become a bully
- Prone to later behavior problems

(Burman & al., 2012; Deater-Deckard, 2011; Mee, et al., 2010)

Insecure-disorganized attachment

**Parent behavior**
- Severely abusive
- Intense emotions
- Dissociating behaviors
- Usually due to unresolved early trauma

**Child outcomes**
- Feels fear without solution
- Poor self-regulation
- Poor social and emotional development
- Poor cognitive development
- High risk for substance abuse and psychopathology

(Burman, 2013; Deater-Deckard, 2011; Mee, et al., 2010)
Attachment and Academic Competencies

Secure attachment

- Higher academic motivation
- Higher grade point average
- More independent in school
- Quality friendships
- Less aggressive
- More leadership qualities
Insecure attachment (ambivalent, avoidant, disorganized)

- Lower IQ
- High risk of low GPA
- Feels less competent
- More confusion with assignments
- More rejected by peers
- Little interest in learning or striving for goals

(Gohin et al., 2000; Boylan & Kerns, 2012; Darot & Maysneh, 2001)

Baumrind’s Four Parenting Styles
1) “Authoritative” Parenting Style

- **Parent:**
  - Warm, responsive, sets limits using reasons and explanations (no physical punishment)

- **Child:**
  - Best cognitive development, best language development, best social/emotional development, self-regulated

- **Academic outcomes:**
  - Best academic outcomes, best grades, more achievement oriented, fewest learning problems

(Aurelia et al., 2000; Caldeó et al., 2014; Fan & Zhang, 2012)

2) “Authoritarian” Parenting Style

- **Parent:**
  - Harsh, unresponsive, harsh control

- **Child:**
  - Submissive, lower self-esteem, high risk for poor physical and mental health

- **Academic outcomes:**
  - Lower achievement motivation, lower grade point average, more academic difficulties, difficulty working independently

(Aurelia et al., 2000; Caldeó et al., 2014; Fan & Zhang, 2012)
3) “Permissive” (indulgent) Parenting Style

- Parent:
  - Warm/responsive, but does not set limits or boundaries for the child
- Child:
  - Less self-regulated, self-centered, more behavioral problems, clash with authority
- Academic outcomes:
  - Poor school performance, less engaged in school, give up when facing difficult tasks

4) “Neglectful” (uninvolved) Parenting Style

- Parent:
  - Harsh, non-controlling, pays the least attention to the child, does what is convenient for themselves
- Child:
  - Worst outcomes; poor performance across all domains, higher rates of delinquency, poor socio-emotional development
- Academic outcomes:
  - Poorest level of school performance, low academic achievement, doubt their competence

(Alon & Gonen, 2012; Azevedo et al., 2009; Obidit et al., 2014)
Why parenting matters…

- Parenting behaviors influence academic success
- Brain development
- Mental health
- Cognitive functioning

The best outcomes

- **Secure attachment** – warm, sensitively-attuned, responsive
- **Authoritative parenting** – warm/responsive; sets limits with verbal explanations (no physical punishment)
Long Term Outcomes of Elementary Performance

Elementary School Success

- Higher scores in academics
- Higher scores on intellectual measures
- More likely to graduate high school
- More likely to attend a four-year college
- More likely to have higher income
- More likely to own a home
- Less likely to experience teen pregnancy
- Less likely to use illicit drugs
- Less risk of depression
- Lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors
- Fewer health problems as an adult

Poor Elementary School Performance

- More likely to be held back a grade
- More likely to be placed in special education
- Higher risk of dropping out of high school
- Higher risk of being unemployed
- Higher risk of criminal behavior
- Higher risk of using illicit drugs
- More likely to experience health problems at an early age
- Shorter life expectancy
- More vulnerable to mental health problems (e.g., depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, eating disorders)
- Fewer social skills
- Poor interpersonal relationships
- More likely to engage in risky behaviors

(Campbell et al., 2002; Duncan et al., 2007; Entwisel et al., 2005)
## Attachment Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Style</th>
<th>Parent behaviors</th>
<th>Child Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Secure Attachment          | • Warm  
• Sensitively attuned to child  
• Responsive to the child’s needs and signals  
                                                                                                               | • Better social development  
• Better emotional development  
• Better mental health  
• Optimal brain development  
• Better cognitive and language development                                                                 |
| Insecure-Ambivalent Attachment | • Responds inconsistently  
• Sometimes sensitive but also neglectful  
• Does not know how to soothe child  
• Places their own needs before child’s needs  
                                                                                                             | • Clingy  
• Poor self-regulation  
• Poor social and emotional development  
• More likely to become a victim of bullying  
                                                                                                              |
| Insecure-Avoidant Attachment | • Consistently ignores and/or rejects their child  
• Psychologically and emotionally unavailable to the child  
• Tense and irritable  
                                                                                                               | • Learn to take care of themselves  
• Poor self-regulation  
• Poor social and emotional development  
• More likely to become a bully  
• Prone to later behavior problems  
                                                                                                           |
| Insecure-Disorganized Attachment | • Severely abusive  
• Intense emotions  
• Dissociating behaviors  
• Usually due to unresolved early trauma  
                                                                                                               | • Feels fear without solution  
• Poor self-regulation  
• Poor social and emotional development  
• Poor cognitive development  
• High risk for substance abuse and psychopathology  
                                                                                                           |

(Brumariu, 2013; Davies, 2011; Moss et al., 2016)
**Self-Regulation**

**What is self-regulation?**

- Being able to manage thoughts and feelings to enable goal-directed actions
- Being able to find ways to cope with strong feelings so that they do not become overwhelming
- Learning to focus and shift attention
- Successfully controlling behaviors in order to get along with others and work towards goals
- Self-regulation has been found to promote wellbeing across the lifespan, including social, emotional, physical, and economic health, as well as academic achievement

**How can parents help a child self-regulate?**

- Interact with the child in warm and responsive ways
- Recognize and respond to the child cues timely and appropriately
- Provide physical and emotional comfort when the child is distressed
- Modify the child’s environment to decrease demands and stress
- Provide consistent routines and structure
- Model self-calming strategies
- Teach rules, redirect, and use effective, positive behavior management techniques that are age-appropriate

Attachment and Academic Competencies

Insecure attachment

- Lower IQ
- Lower grade point average
- Poor self-regulation
- Poor emotion regulation
- More confusion with assignments
- Have trouble planning, persisting, and completing tasks
- Devalue classroom activities
- Show little interest in striving for goals
- Blame failure on external factors
- Easily distracted
- Scores lower on cognitive measures (e.g., memory, knowledge, comprehension, crystalized intelligence)
- Poor peer relations (e.g., perceived as more aggressive by peers, rejected by peers, perceive themselves as more rejected by peers than they actually are)
- Difficulty identifying their own emotions
- Negative moods
- Use avoidance instead of problem solving
- More likely to give up when facing challenges

(Duchesne & LaRose, 2007; Moss & Laurent, 2001; Srouf, 2005)
Attachment and Academic Competencies

Secure Attachment

• Higher grade point average
• Higher academic motivation
• Higher levels of class participation
• Higher grades in language arts and math
• Better attention and concentration
• Better comprehension of material
• More ambitious
• Greater perseverance
• More self-confident
• Better self-regulation (e.g., problem solving, working independently, regulating attention)
• Able to delay gratification
• Better peer relationships (e.g., prosocial, honest, likeable, leadership qualities)

(Duchesne & LaRose, 2007; Moss & Laurent, 2001; Srouf, 2005)
## Parenting Styles

### Authoritative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Behaviors</th>
<th>Child Outcomes</th>
<th>Academic Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High in warmth/responsiveness</td>
<td>• Independent</td>
<td>• Best academic outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moderate control/demandingness</td>
<td>• Autonomous</td>
<td>• More achievement-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensitive to child’s needs</td>
<td>• More prosocial</td>
<td>• Able to work independently on school tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Close, enjoyable, emotionally fulfilling relationship with child</td>
<td>• Adapts to the environment</td>
<td>• Fewest learning problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Praises their child</td>
<td>• Increased social competence</td>
<td>• Best grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affectionate</td>
<td>• More self-regulated</td>
<td>• Low levels of failure-expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sympathetic</td>
<td>• Better mental health</td>
<td>• Less likely to drop out of high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bi-directional communication</td>
<td>• Higher self-esteem</td>
<td>• Higher cognitive complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explains reasons behind limits/rules</td>
<td>• Less likely to be involved in bullying</td>
<td>• More socially competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inductive discipline (reasons and explanations)</td>
<td>• Least influenced by peer pressure</td>
<td>• Better reading and math achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Better mental health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Less likelihood of substance abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Authoritarian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Behaviors</th>
<th>Child Outcomes</th>
<th>Academic Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Low warmth/responsiveness</td>
<td>• Passive</td>
<td>• Poor overall functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High control/demandingness</td>
<td>• Helpless</td>
<td>• Higher level of learning problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not trust child</td>
<td>• Submissive to authority</td>
<td>• Low achievement motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Absolute standards for child behavior based on religion or higher authority</td>
<td>• More conforming</td>
<td>• Lower grade point average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High value on obedience</td>
<td>• More obedient</td>
<td>• Difficulty working independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses harsh and forceful punishment (corporal punishment, yelling, threats)</td>
<td>• Dependent on high structure</td>
<td>• Less adaptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Believes child should have little autonomy and high level of responsibility</td>
<td>• Prefer high supervision</td>
<td>• Less able to problem solve in the learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discourages open communication</td>
<td>• More aggressive</td>
<td>• More problem behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expects obedience without question</td>
<td>• Lower self-esteem</td>
<td>• Lower reading and math achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Centered on parent’s needs</td>
<td>• Poor self-concept</td>
<td>• Hyperactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At higher risk for poor physical and mental health</td>
<td>• Impulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• More academic difficulties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Aunola et al., 2000; Calafat et al., 2014; Fan & Zhang, 2012)
## Parenting Styles

### Permissive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Behaviors</th>
<th>Child Outcomes</th>
<th>Academic Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High warmth/responsiveness</td>
<td>• Self-centered</td>
<td>• Poor overall functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low control/demandingness</td>
<td>• Immature</td>
<td>• Higher level of learning problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lenient</td>
<td>• Less self-regulated</td>
<td>• Low achievement motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gives in to child’s desires, actions, and impulses</td>
<td>• High self-esteem</td>
<td>• Lower grade point average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gives child few responsibilities</td>
<td>• Lack social competence</td>
<td>• Difficulty working independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoids exerting control</td>
<td>• More behavioral problems</td>
<td>• Less adaptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses manipulation to accomplish obedience</td>
<td>• Impulsive</td>
<td>• Less able to problem solve in the learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ignores child’s misbehavior</td>
<td>• Risk taking behaviors</td>
<td>• Hyperactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not follow through with discipline</td>
<td>• Higher risk of drug experimentation</td>
<td>• Impulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low supervision</td>
<td>• Lack self-discipline</td>
<td>• More aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive of child’s independence</td>
<td>• More aggressive</td>
<td>• Clash with authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher levels of internalizing problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Poor overall functioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack social competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More behavioral problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impulsive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Risk taking behaviors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher risk of drug experimentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack self-discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More aggressive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clash with authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher levels of internalizing problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Neglectful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Behaviors</th>
<th>Child Outcomes</th>
<th>Academic Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Low warmth/responsiveness</td>
<td>• Performs poorly across all domains</td>
<td>• Poorest level of school performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low control/demandingness</td>
<td>• Poor social development</td>
<td>• Higher levels of peer conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uninvolved</td>
<td>• Poor emotional development</td>
<td>• Higher levels of externalizing behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not show affection towards child</td>
<td>• Learn not to depend on others</td>
<td>• Poor grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does not supervise or monitor child’s behavior</td>
<td>• Difficulty trusting others</td>
<td>• Less optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sets minimal demands for mature behavior</td>
<td>• Emotionally withdrawn</td>
<td>• Lower academic achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor, often negative, communication with child</td>
<td>• Higher levels of stress and anxiety</td>
<td>• Uses maladaptive and task-avoidant strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequent use of punishments</td>
<td>• Higher levels of delinquency</td>
<td>• High levels of passivity in regard to academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefers to spend less time with child</td>
<td>• Higher risk for substance abuse</td>
<td>• Doubts their competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More about parent’s convenience</td>
<td>• More likely to be involved in bullying (victim/bully)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Poor self-concept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Day & Connor, 2017; Fan & Zhang, 2012; Rossman & Rea, 2005)
APPENDIX F

SESSION 2 MATERIALS
Session 2

Discipline Style Part 1
Punishment versus Positive Child Guidance

Discipline Style Part 1 – Punishment versus Positive Child Guidance

• What is discipline?
• “Punishment” and child outcomes
• “Positive child guidance” and child outcomes
Discussion question:

What is discipline, and how do you use it with children?

Discipline

- A parent's method of “teaching” their child
- Stop unwanted, unacceptable, bothersome behavior
- Teaches children how to communicate and cooperate with others

(Hull, 2013; Miller, 2013; Siegel & Bryson, 2012)
Punishment

- Fear, humiliation, guilt
- Time-outs
- Harsh words
- Withdrawing love
- Angry gestures
- Inflicting physical pain (corporal punishment)

(Hull, 2013; Knox, 2010)
Negative Outcomes of Punishment

- Child has a heightened sense of fear
- Higher levels of stress hormone cortisol
- Poor working memory
- Lower academic performance
- More problem behaviors


Child Outcomes

- Poor brain development
- Poor self-regulation
- Negative impact on cognitive development
- Increased problem behaviors over time
- Lower overall academic performance

(Source: Barret et al., 2013; Dinneen et al., 2010; Ferguson, 2015)
Positive Child Guidance

- Create a motivation within the child to do what is right
- Strong adult-child relationship
- Set limits (without use of punishments)
- Provide reasons and explanations
- Support child with new challenges
- Provide alternative behaviors
- Create opportunities for growth
- “developmentally-appropriate practice” (see F-7)
Child Outcomes

- Better brain development
- Higher grades
- Higher scores in reading and math
- Advanced language development
- Better communication skills
- Better cognitive functioning

[Goldoff, 2016; Luby et al., 2012; Mettabeha et al., 2016]
Discussion

What is discipline?

How do you use discipline with children?
Discipline

A parent’s method of “teaching” their child

The goal is to stop unwanted, unacceptable, and bothersome behavior.

The method of discipline a parent uses at home serves as model for how a child learns to communicate and cooperate with others.

Methods of discipline:

• Punishment

• Positive child guidance

(Hall, 2013; Miller, 2013; Siegal & Bryson, 2016)
Punishments as Discipline

Parents use punishments to intentionally make the child feel guilty, humiliated, or fearful in an attempt to change behavior.

Examples of punishments

- Time-outs
- Harsh words
- Withdrawing love
- Angry gestures
- Inflicting physical pain

Negative outcomes of physical punishment

- Child has a heightened sense of fear which negatively impacts brain development
- Higher levels of stress hormone cortisol which slows the child’s cognitive development (i.e., attention, inhibition)
- Poor working memory (smaller hippocampus)
- More disengaged in school
- Lower academic performance
- More problem behaviors

(Gershoff, 2016; Hall, 2013; Jaffee & Christian, 2014; Knox, 2013)
Outcomes of Punishment

1. How does punishment affect a child’s brain development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brain development</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol</td>
<td>• slows cognitive development (i.e., attention, problem solving, language development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overactive amygdala</td>
<td>• effects how a child responds to emotional stimuli making children more vulnerable to depression and addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hippocampus</td>
<td>• reduced memory functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced grey matter</td>
<td>• poor social development (empathy, consciousness, openness to experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced white matter</td>
<td>• poor communication among brain regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How does punishment affect a child’s learning?

- More disengaged in school
- More likely to complain and refuse to cooperate when completing school tasks
- Lower scores in reading and math
- Less efficient in the classroom
- Increased externalizing behaviors (i.e., breaking school rules)

3. How does punishment affect a child’s self-regulation?

- Tend to become angry and dysregulated
- Less able to control themselves or understand what they have done wrong
- Coping mechanisms often include meltdowns, bullying others, and feeling defeated

While harsh punishment may result in short-term compliance, it tends to increase problem behaviors over time.

(Bindman et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2013; Hecker et al., 2016; Siegal & Bryson, 2016)
Positive Child Guidance as Discipline

Positive child guidance, also known as “developmentally-appropriate practice”, is based on child development research. It is more supportive of the child’s needs considering that children learn best through experience and that they need to know and understand the relevance of what they are learning and doing without the use of punishment.

The focus of positive child guidance is to:

- Create a desire and motivation within the child to do what is considered right
- Build a strong adult-child relationship
- Create opportunities for growth
- Encourage and support the child when he/she is facing new challenges
- Provide reasons and explanations rules and set limits
- Provide alternatives to redirect the child’s behavior

(Copple & Bredekamp, 2013)
Young children’s attention spans are very short, leading many parents to mistakenly think that their young child has some type of attention disorder like ADHD. We know from research on children’s development that in general, the younger the child, the shorter her attention span. A child’s attention span is strongly influenced by the maturation of certain parts of the brain, and these develop slowly over the first 10 years of life.

Knowing that young children’s attention spans are short can help adults be more patient and understanding when young children:

- Can’t stay seated for a long meal
- Don’t sit patiently in a grocery cart
- Don’t like shopping and running errands with you
- Can’t sit still in their classroom seats
- Have trouble finishing a lengthy homework assignment

Having unrealistic expectations of a child’s attention span can lead adults to become frustrated and angry at a child, and/or to unfairly punish a child. Children, in turn, may feel inadequate, frustrated, shamed, and unaware of what they did wrong – which may result in acting-out behavior or even a meltdown.

**Attention span varies with the type of activity.** Interesting, enjoyable, engaging activities (including those that are challenging, fun, and/or involve a caregiver’s engagement) may hold a child’s interest for much longer than the average attention spans listed below. On the other hand, a less interesting, sitting-listening activity that is adult directed may not hold a child’s attention for long.

Although adults will do tasks because they know they need to or have been asked by others to do so, children do not naturally do this until they become older.

**Tip:** One way that’s been suggested to think about age span for *instructional* activities is to add “1” to a child’s chronological age. So, a 7 year old might have an 8 minute attention span.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Typical Attention Span</th>
<th>How to Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 – 7 months</td>
<td>Young babies may watch someone, copy their facial expressions, or trade sounds.</td>
<td>Take turns initiating or following baby’s cues. Be warm and interested. Let baby rest when baby turns away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May last a couple of minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - 15 months</td>
<td>Babies are distracted by almost anything, and they may attend to a particular toy or activity for up to one minute.</td>
<td>Follow baby’s cues about what he/she is interested in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>A toddler may spend 30 seconds on one activity or 2-3 minutes on several activities by themselves before wanting their caregiver’s attention. Toddlers are typically restless and easily distracted, and are constantly on the move.</td>
<td>Don’t have unrealistic expectations about what your toddler is able to do. Be supportive and encouraging; follow their lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Still restless and easily distractible. Alone, may spend 30-60 seconds on a single activity; with a caregiver’s active support and encouragement, may last 2 - 3+ minutes</td>
<td>Play with and talk with toddlers about what they are doing. Describe their actions, point out characteristics of whatever they are playing with (“The toy car has a red stripe on it!”). Be supportive and encouraging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ½ years</td>
<td>Toddler may spend about 2 minutes playing by herself on a single activity. Preferences constant attention from caregiver. With caregiver, play must last 5-8 minutes. Attention span is limited. Constantly curious and still easily distractible.</td>
<td>Play with and talk with toddler about what she is doing; describe her actions, characteristics of toys, her feelings, etc. Assist toddlers as needed in slowing down and calming down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Alone, a preschooler may spend 3-8 minutes on an activity. With a caregiver,</td>
<td>Follow the child’s interest; look for way to keep the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ½ years</td>
<td>Alone, may spend 8 – 10 minutes on an activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Alone, typical attention span is 7 – 8 minutes in a single activity. If a group activity, may play continuously for 5 – 10 minutes. Can sit and listen to a story or do a hands-on activity for 10 – 15 minutes. Then, will get restless and want to do something else. If engrossed in an activity, may be able to attend for up to 15 minutes and can ignore distractions. Caregivers can help sustain play by making sure child feels comfortable and successful with activity, and provides child with interesting things to do. Being supportive and encouraging will also help sustain play.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ½ years</td>
<td>Playing alone, may spend 2 – 3 minutes on a task chosen by an adult, e.g., picking up toys or getting dress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Playing alone can attend to a single interesting activity for 10 – 15 minutes or to a maximum of 5 – 10 consecutive minutes for instructional time/assigned task if it’s interesting. With other, can play 10 – 25 minutes. Is better at ignoring distractions. The more interesting a task is, the longer the attention span.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Alone, can attend to a single activity for up to 30 minutes.</td>
<td>Provide child with interesting activities and provide support as needed for a child to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 8 years</td>
<td>The maximum time for focused attention for a single instructional task is approximately 15 – 20 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 12 years</td>
<td>Focused attention increases to about 22 – 35 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 12 years</td>
<td>Focused attention increases to about 22 – 35 minutes.</td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late adolescence and adulthood</td>
<td>Attention span for learning/instructional tasks is approximately 20 – 30 minutes.</td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:
### Outcomes of Positive Child Guidance

1. **How does positive child guidance effect a child’s brain development?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brain development</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol</td>
<td>• Brain is able to recover quickly from short-term stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater amygdala volume</td>
<td>• Better stress modification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater hippocampal volume</td>
<td>• Better emotion regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased levels of grey matter</td>
<td>• Increased memory functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased levels of white matter</td>
<td>• Associated with personality factors such as empathy, consciousness, openness to experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **How does positive child guidance effect a child’s learning?**

- Fosters intellectual growth and motivation to learn which promotes academic success
- Less distracted, more engaged, and more cooperative in school
- Higher grade point average
- Higher scores in reading and math
- Advanced language development, richer vocabulary, and better communication skills
- Higher scores on cognitive measures (i.e., attention, following directions, motor skills)

3. **How does positive child guidance effect a child’s self-regulation?**

- Child learns to pause and reflect when dealing with difficult situations
- Able to manage stressors both in the short- and long-term
- Internalize rules of conduct (versus complying to avoid punishment)
- Enjoy interactions with parents and are more willing to control their behavior to keep the peace

(Berlin, 2009, Bronstein, 1999, Gershoff, 2016)
APPENDIX G
SESSION 3 MATERIALS
Foundations of Positive Child Guidance

Session 3

Foundations of Positive Child Guidance

1. Being responsive to children’s needs and emotions
2. Being respectful of children
3. Helping build children’s self-esteem
4. Strive to maintain an emotionally-close relationship
5. Communication strategies
1. Being responsive to children's needs and emotions
   - Big feeling/emotions
   - Sensitive attunement
   - Be engaged with the child
   - Be warm and friendly
   - Be supportive and encouraging
   - Watch the tone of your voice

2. Being respectful to children
   - Children want to feel loved and valued
   - How to show respect toward children:
     - Be honest with them
     - Understand their level of development
     - Be dependable and consistent
     - Guide their behavior, don't punish it
     - Protect their privacy and their dignity
3. Helping build children's self-esteem

- Self-worth
- Feeling capable and loved
- How to build your child's self-esteem
  - Showing encouragement and enjoyment
  - Avoid focusing on specific areas (e.g., sports, grades)
  - Give lots of opportunities to practice and master skills
  - Praise them when they achieve a goal or make an effort

4. Strive to maintain an emotionally-close relationship

- Decreases behavior problems
- Without emotionally-close relationship, children will not listen or care about what you say
- How to maintain emotionally close relationship
  - Warm, sensitively-attuned, responsive parenting
  - Parent time and attention
  - Floortime
  - Repair your relationship with your child
  - Create an emotionally-positive environment
5. Communication Strategies

- Provide reasons and explanations
- Give choices when possible
- State requests in a positive way

- For daily routines, for explaining limits
- Supports language development
- Supports brain development
- Helps children learn the right thing to do
- Is respectful of the child
- Child more likely to cooperate

Outcomes of Positive Child Guidance

- Effective in changing child behavior
- Increases child’s cooperation
- Helps child develop long-term self-control
- Teaches child the right thing to do
- Strengthens parent-child relationship
1. Being responsive to children’s feelings and emotions

a. Research shows that the most important thing in caregiving, for the child, is to “feel felt” – which means that the caregiver needs to recognize and respond appropriately to the child’s internal emotional state (Siegel & Bryson, 2012)

b. Children’s emotions come “first”, which means that before a child can learn, pay attention, or listen to reasoning, their emotions need to be recognized and responded to by caring adults

When a child’s feelings are acknowledged and responded to by a parent, the child:

- Feels understood
- Feels important and valued as a person
- Learns to identify his/her feelings
- Develops a positive self-esteem
- Gets their basic (psychological) needs met
- Is able to develop an emotionally-close relationship with the parent
- Is better adjusted

When a child’s feelings are ignored by a parent, the child:

- Develops feelings of shame
- Develops feelings of distress, which cause her brain to release the stress hormone cortisol (which negatively affects brain development)
- Does not get their basic (psychological) needs met
- Is unable to develop emotionally-close relationships

All feelings are acceptable: don’t tell a child not to feel a certain way – children feel what they feel. (Of course, they may not be allowed to “act” on those feelings)
2. Being respectful of children

Children and adults want to feel loved and valued, which only occurs when they are treated respectfully. When people are not treated respectfully, they feel bad about themselves, bad about others, and they do not feel like cooperating (Val-Essen, 2010).

Children, like all human beings, deserve to be treated as fully human beings, not as empty-headed things to be manipulated (e.g., Gonzalez-Mena, 2005)

How to respect children:

• be honest with them
• help and support them in their development
• be responsive and attentive
• be responsive to their feelings
• understand their level of development
• tell child ahead of time what will be happening
• treat them as the unique individuals that they are
• be dependable and consistent
• be warm, sensitively-attuned, responsive caregivers

(e.g., Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2004; Hendricks & Weissman, 2009; Val-Essen, 2010)

What communicates disrespect towards children:

• criticism
• shame
• ridicule
• tease or trick them
• threaten
• embarrass them
• hit and hurt them, punish them
• isolate them
• withdraw love
• blame them
• humiliate them
• frighten them
3. Helping build children’s self-esteem

Healthy self-esteem is like a child’s armor against the challenges of the world.

What is Self-Esteem?

- Similar to self-worth (i.e., how much a person values themselves)
- Feeling capable while also feeling loved
  - A child who is happy with an achievement but does not feel loved may eventually experience low self-esteem

How to Encourage Your Child’s Self-Esteem:

- Show encouragement and enjoyment in all areas of a child’s life
- Avoid focusing on a specific area; for example, success on a spelling test, which can lead to a child feeling that they are only as valuable as their test scores
- Giving children lots of opportunities to practice and master their skills
- Let children make mistakes and be there to boost their spirits so that they keep trying
- Respond with interest and excitement when a child shows off a new skill
- Praise them when they achieve a goal or make a good effort
4. Strive to maintain an emotionally-close relationship

- Warm, sensitively attuned, responsive caregiving
- Parental time and attention
- Be engaged with the child: be warm and friendly, use a positive tone of voice, show interest in what she is doing (especially important with very young children)
- Floortime (child-led activity with parent’s full participation)
- Listen for feelings, reflect feelings back to child
- Have fun with your family! Create family time; plan fun things to do
- Repair your relationship with your child
- Be supportive and encouraging
Positive Child Guidance
Communication Tips

1. Provide reasons and explanations: for daily routines, for explaining a limit, for everything

Talking with children in this manner:
- Supports their language development
- Supports brain development
- Helps children learn about their world (what’s ok, what’s not, and why; what the right thing to do is)
- Child is more likely to cooperate when there’s a reason for something (vs. ignoring, withdrawal of love and affection)
- Is respectful of the child
- “Andy, I can’t let you throw the ball at the window because that might break the window”

2. State requests in a positive way

Instead of: “Don’t slam the door
Try saying: “Please close the door gently

Instead of: “Don’t draw on the table”
Try saying: “You can draw on this paper”

3. Give choices when you can (and if you can’t, don’t).

This gives the child the opportunity to have a say in how things get done which supports autonomy, language skills, and thinking skills – and it increases the child’s compliance.

“Do you want to play with the playdoh or the blocks?”
4. Watch the words you use with children.

   Words can crush a child’s spirit or make them feel valued and loved.

   Refrain from using criticism, shame, and guilt: these are destructive words that can crush a child

5. Don’t use words “good,” “bad,” “nice,” and “naughty”

   These are loaded, ambiguous words that impacts a child’s self-esteem.

   Instead be more concrete and specific

   “John, I really liked how you helped Ben get up after he fell down.”

6. Help children use their words to express themselves

7. When talking to young children, get down to their eye level

8. Listen for feelings and reflect them back to the child

9. Give transitional warnings

   “Susie, in a few minutes we’re going to have a clean up and ready to go home”

10. Try saying “Can I help you?” when a child is struggling with something

11. Use correct pronouns when talking with a child to avoid confusion.

   “It’s time for you to wash your hands” vs. “It’s time to wash our hands”

12. Be respectful

13. Be supportive during play

   Be nearby, mirror to children what they are doing; don’t direct or become involved in children’s play

14. Do not interact when children become very absorbed in their own activity/play. These are times when adults can just remain nearby and help if needed.
Foundations of Positive Child Guidance

Outcomes of Positive Child Guidance

• Effective in changing behavior
• Increases child’s cooperation and compliance
• Helps child develop long-term self-control
• Teaches child what the right thing to do is
• Strengthens relationship between parent and child (which decreases the number of child behavior problems)
• Meets child’s basic (psychological) needs
• Focuses on child’s (and parent’s) feelings and needs
• Supports the development of an internal locus of control and personal responsibility
• Builds self-esteem
• Helps child develop better perspective-taking (and hence better relationship skills)
• Increases empathy for others
• Teaches the child problem-solving skills
• Helps child learn better communication and social skills
• Enhances child’s cognitive, brain, language, social, and emotional development, and mental well-being
• Is based on research-based knowledge of child growth and development
• Parent views “misbehavior” as a communication
APPENDIX H

SESSION 4 MATERIALS
Session 4

Discipline Style Part 3
Positive Child Guidance Strategies

When a child has a need
When a child has a need

- When a child is upset, crying angry, frustrated, etc.
  - Child needs to “feel felt”
  - Child’s emotions need to be acknowledged first
- How to help a child in need
  - Active listening

Active listening

- Attempt to put into words what you think the child is feeling
- Acknowledging emotional state helps calm the child
- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Let the child do most of the talking

Active listening

Step 1: Active listening phrase
  “You seem upset”

Step 2: Problem solving
  Figure out the problem and brainstorm possible solutions
Setting Limits

Setting Limits, Gaining Cooperation

- Intervene immediately when there is a risk of harm
- What we say and how we say it matters a lot with children
- Provide reasons and explanations for setting limits and asking children to do something
- Meeting child’s basic (psychological) needs decreases behavioral problems
- Plan ahead to prevent problems
How to set limits

- Use “I-messages” (See H-4)
- Use positive rephrasing
- Redirect the behavior
- Negotiate
- Give “closed-choices”

Six-step limit setting

1. Explain the rule
2. If limit is disregarded, state consequence for continued disregard
3. If limit is still disregarded, follow through with consequence
4. Have child decide when she can control herself and return
5. Go and help her succeed when she does go back so that she can experience acceptable behavior
6. Follow through with suspending privilege if child repeats behavior
When a Child Has a Need

**Active Listening** is a verbal response by the parent to the child that is used when the child has a problem or need (e.g., upset, angry, frustrated, crying, etc.). The parent attempts to put into words what she thinks the child is feeling.

**Step 1: The active listening phrase**

There are two parts to an active listening statement:

- Start with a “door opener” - “You seem...” or “It sounds like...”
- Then add a feeling word – “...you are really sad”

**Step 2 : The problem solving steps**

Once you have accurately identified what the child is feeling, proceed to figuring out what the problem is and then brainstorm possible solutions.

a. **Define** – Have the child talk about what happened to make them feel this way (e.g., “Can you tell me what happened?”). Repeat back to them what you hear them saying to check for accurate understanding of what happened.

b. **Brainstorm** – With the child, consider possible solutions (if any). Sometimes there isn’t anything that can be done, but continue to mirror their feelings to let them know that you care.

c. **Assist** – Help the child choose a solution to try out.

d. **Evaluate** – Plan a time to evaluate whether the solution worked. If necessary, try a different solution.

Active listening is a wonderful technique that promotes the development of an emotionally-close relationship between a parent and child.
1. Use “I-Messages” (See H-4)

2. Use “positive rephrasings”
   - tell your child what they CAN do instead of what they cannot do. Children are more cooperative when we say things in a positive, not negative way.
   - “Jill, the water needs to stay IN the bathtub – I’m afraid that it will ruin the floor” (vs. “Don’t splash water all over the floor”)

3. Redirect the behavior
   - “redirect” what the child is doing to a more appropriate place:
     “Michael, I see you are wanting to run. Let’s go outside so you won’t slip on a rug or hurt yourself on a piece of furniture.”

4. Use “when-thens”
   - This is another way to state in a positive manner the sequence of how things need to be done:
     “When you finish you lunch, then you can have some ice cream.”

5. Give “transitional warnings”
   - This gives children a “heads up” of an upcoming change; it helps prepare them psychologically, is respectful, and you’ll get better cooperation than if you just pull them away from what they are doing:
     “In a few minutes we’ll need to get in the car to go to the grocery store.”
6. Say “Yes!”
   - When a child asks you for something, say “yes” instead of the usual “no”
     
     Child: “Dad, can you read this book to me?”
     Dad: “Yes! Just as soon as I am finished with what I am working on here”

7. Use humor

8. Six-step limit setting
   1. Explain the rule
   2. If limit is disregarded, state consequence for continued disregard
   3. If limit is still disregarded, follow through with consequence
   4. Have child decide when she can control herself and return
   5. Go and help her succeed when she does go back so that she can experience acceptable behavior
   6. Follow through with suspending privilege if child repeats behavior
“I – Messages”

An “I-Message” is a terrific way to set limits.

It is a statement from a parent to a child that tells the child how their behavior (which is unacceptable to the parent) is making the parent feel – and how it is effecting others.

I-Message:

“When you leave the gate open, I am afraid the dog will run out.” (Instead of “Stop leaving the gate open!”)

- An I-message is more effective than simply telling a child to stop what they are doing because they tell the child why a certain behavior is not okay. Children are more likely to change their behavior when there is a reason.
- In addition, kids learn how their behavior affects their parent, which also makes them more compliant.
- Other benefits:
  - Child learns problem-solving skills
  - Supports language and cognitive development
  - Child learns good communication, social, and relationship skills
  - Child is not belittled/shamed/criticized
  - Promotes close relationship between parent and child
  - Enhances the child to take the perspective of another
“I – Messages”

How to Construct an I-Message

1. State what the unacceptable behavior is

   “When you throw the ball in the house...”

2. State your feelings about it

   “...I am afraid...”

3. State what effect the behavior has on you

   “...that it will break the lamp.”

4. Then move on to problem solving

   a. Brainstorm with child on possible solutions (e.g., play outside, take child to nearby park to play)
   b. Choose a solution
   c. Try it out! (If it doesn’t work, try a different solution you discussed)
“You Messages” and Other Ineffective Communication

- “You shouldn’t do that!”
- “You are being naughty.”
- “If you don’t stop that, then…”

Common ways adults communicate with children:

- **Commanding/ordering/directing**: (e.g., “Stop fidgeting” or “Clean this mess up right now”) causes the child to fear the adults power; makes the child feel resentful or angry, and the their feelings are not important.

- **Evaluation/judgment/criticism/blame**: (e.g., “Why do you always do it wrong?” or “Why do you act like that?”) makes a child feel inadequate, inferior, unworthy; influences children to keep feelings to themselves; child will judge themselves harshly.

- **Threatening/warning**: (e.g., “If you do that, you’ll be sorry”) causes child to feel resentful, fearful, or angry. Invites children to test the adult’s threat.

- **Preaching/lecturing/moralizing**: (“You shouldn’t think that way”) makes children feel like adults don’t trust their judgement; cause guilt/shame; causes resentment and defensiveness; child tunes adult out.

- **Probing/questioning**: (e.g., “Did you wash your hands like I told you?”) convey to a child a lack of trust; causes child to feel threatened; limits further communication

All of these convey unacceptance.
APPENDIX I

SESSION 5 MATERIALS
Creating a Home Environment to Help Children Succeed in School

Session 5

How can parents create a home environment that helps children succeed in school?

1. "Academic Socialization"
2. Home reading environment
3. Verbal communication
4. Enrichment Activities
1) What is “academic socialization”?

• Parent beliefs, values, and practices regarding school and learning

• Home-based involvement in school and learning

• Communicating messages to the child about the importance of education

Academic Socialization

• Parents:
  • Provide a home environment that supports learning (See I-3)
  • Use regular schedules and routines to encourage child’s autonomy and organization (See I-4)
  • Involved in school and learning-related tasks (e.g., homework help)
  • Place child’s education as a top priority at home (See I-5)
Academic Socialization

- Child outcomes:
  - Higher academic motivation
  - Advanced cognitive development
  - Higher academic achievement
  - Higher grades
  - Better school conduct
  - More organized
  - Believe academic performance is important (intrinsic motivation)

(Val-Yan Ng et al., 2017; Tiong, 2002; Jeynes, 2007)

2) Home Reading Environment
Home reading environment

- Read to a child from infancy on
- Serve as a model for reading
- Tell fun stories
- Helps a child’s brain to associate reading with pleasure

(Spiegel et al., 2004; Roshkind, 2013; Trelease, 2011)

Home Reading Environment

- Have plenty of print materials in the home that are
  - Carefully selected
  - Age appropriate
  - Easily accessible
- Websites for finding good book titles
  - www.chinaberry.com
  - www.Trelease-on-reading.com
  - www.ReadAloud.org

(Rudley, 1996; Taylor et al., 2014; Trelease, 2011)
Child Outcomes

- Many academic advantages
  - Tend to succeed across all curriculum areas
  - Better school readiness
  - More advanced vocabulary
  - Better language skills
  - Better able to sustain attention
  - More knowledge about the world from high exposure to reading
  - Develop a lifetime habit of reading which predicts achievement in elementary grades, high school, and college

(Leaves. 2012; Iacovos. 2012; Tuorio et al., 2014)
Parents: Provide a home environment that supports learning

- Value education at home
- Be involved in school and learning-related tasks (homework help)
- Set goals and hold high aspirations for child
- Express the importance of school
- Show interest in the child’s progress
- Place child’s education as a top priority at home
- Provide a good study environment (i.e., undisturbed/organized)
- Use regular schedules and routines to encourage child’s autonomy (e.g., self-sufficient, independent) and organization
- Celebrate child’s success and achievements
- Encourage hard work

(Jeyens, 2007; Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011)
Home Study Environment

- Create an organized “study zone”
- Study space is undisturbed – remove distractions (e.g., phone, TV, loud music)
- Study time – schedule regular study time; enough time to do work
- Focused learning- short burst of learning are more effective than long unfocused learning
- Plan to study when it is most effective (e.g., morning/evening)
- Uninterrupted time (40 mins) but not too long for one sitting, with regular breaks
- Include relaxation into the day (e.g. half-hour) – starting morning with this helps throughout the day
- Encourage child to focus on studying effectively and to do their best
- If child is not focused, switch subjects
- Use a “Do not disturb” sign

How to help you child avoid distractions

- Let people know your child is busy
- Switch off apps and electronics that are distracting
- Set a goal with the child and stay focused on that goal
- Clear desk – no visual distractions
- Put away items that are not needed

(Chin, 2004; Jeyens, 2007; Suskind, 2015)
• Students who **study late at night get worse grades** than those who study earlier in the evening

• Break up “screen time” with **physical activity** – good for developing ideas and regular sleep pattern, and reduces stress

• No screen time 1 hour before bed

• Planning ahead helps the child
  • figure out how to work **best**
  • learn to start long before the deadline
  • feel more in charge
  • increase the likelihood of completing tasks

• Children who plan work and review will see improvements

• Remain consistent to improve performance

• Children who learn how to budget time and follow good study skills are often well prepared to handle increased workloads as they get older

• Help child think of school as their job – let them know it is a priority

• Children learn and also practice being organized and responsible

• Help children keep track of assignments, develop an organization system, and use time wisely

• **Do not make excuses for your child**

(Chin, 2004; Jeyens, 2007; Suskind, 2015)
Motivating Your Child

• Try to make homework and school tasks fun
• Support your child’s school work
• Set the example – look up answers you do not know
• Do not set-up activities that interfere with homework or school schedule

Growth mindset

• Parent
  o Encourage an attitude that relishes hard work
  o “You worked so hard on that project” versus “Wow, you’re an artist”
• Child
  o Less likely to expect success to come easily, they have to work for it
  o Learns to accept challenges as part of the learning process
  o Knows that peers are intelligent, but does not see this as an obstacle to their own success

Goals

• Help your child set attainable, small, straightforward goals at the beginning of a task
• Your child will feel satisfaction from achievement of goals
• Once a goal is completed, set new goals

Celebrate success

• Write down achievements in a “success journal”
• Identifying successes builds belief in one’s ability

Praise

• Tell child you are proud when work is complete
• Work in rewards – occasional treats or fun weekend activity
• Let child know rewards and activities are contingent upon work getting done
• Avoid bribes

(Chin, 2004; Jeyens, 2007; Suskind, 2015)
Child outcomes:

• Higher academic motivation
• Higher academic achievement
• Advanced cognitive development
• Higher scores in reading and math
• Higher grades
• Better school conduct
• Better understanding of how daily life unfolds
• More organized
• More positive attitude about school
• Believe academic performance is important (intrinsic motivation)

(Jeyens, 2007; Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011)
Home Reading Environment

Parents:

• Read to children at least once per day
• Even when children become independent readers, continue to read to them through adolescence
• Plan trips to the library often (e.g., weekly)
• Have books in baskets around the house
• Limit screen time (TV, tablet, phone, computer, video games)
• Take children to events (e.g., story time, puppet shows) at local libraries or book stores
• Choose books that are related to the child’s interests
• The following websites have listings of titles of good books to read based on children’s ages:
  o www.chinaberry.com
  o www.Trelease-on-reading.com

(Spagnolia et al., 2006; Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011)
Home Reading Environment

Child Outcomes

• More advanced vocabulary
• Better grammar
• Better language skills
• More persistent
• Better able to sustain attention
• More likely to read well
• Tend to succeed across all curriculum areas
• More likely to ask questions about text (reading comprehension)
• Develop a lifetime habit of reading which predicts achievement in elementary grades, high school, and college
• More knowledge about the world from high exposure to reading

(Spagnolia et al., 2006; Suskind, 2015; Trelease, 2011)
Creating a Home Environment to Help Children Succeed in School (Continued)

Session 6

3) Verbal Communication
Parent-Child Communication

- Parents are a critical source of language for their children
- Potential success is largely dependent on the language environment provided by parents
- Parents serve as a partner for the child's developing communicative competencies
- Research has found that children benefit dramatically when their parents use plenty of high-quality positive verbal communication

High-Quality Verbal Communication

- **Parent**
  - Tune into what the child is focused on
  - Use appropriate language
  - Engage in conversational exchange with the child
  - Allow child to express themselves
  - Show empathy
  - Encourage and praise the child's efforts
- **Language**
  - Rich in vocabulary
  - Clear
  - Used regularly in daily interactions
High-Quality Verbal Communication

- **Extra Talk**
  - The continuation of back-and-forth verbal interactions
  - **Increases child’s vocabulary**

- **Spatial Talk**
  - Language that teaches children how things relate to each other physically
  - sizes, shapes, location
  - Predicts mathematical skills

- **Growth mindset (See J-3)**
  - Teaches children to view success as a result of hard work rather than innate qualities
  - Helps child see failure as temporary
  - Child becomes more determined and hard-working
Child Outcomes

- More successful in school regardless of SES or parent education level
- Higher educational attainment
- Higher vocabulary
- Strong comprehension skills
- Advanced language skills
- Higher achievement in math and science
- Experience a joy of learning

(Desai & Ryan, 2008; Frei, 2010; Smith, 2015)

4) Enrichment Activities
Enrichment Activities:

Interactions that lead to discussions and reasoning

- Parents
  - Scaffold their child’s learning
  - Support their child so that he/she may participate in the activity successfully

- Child
  - Practice and enhance skills outside of school
  - Makes connections between previously shared experiences and new experiences

Field Trips

- Trips to outdoor parks
- Walking trails
- Nature centers
- Learning centers
- Museums

See J-5

(Work cited: Barnett, 2014; Leffens et al., 2014; Sweeney et al., 2014)

Math activities

- Playing games that involve counting
- Measuring ingredients
- Talking about money
- Talking about time
- Making collections

[LeFevre et al., 2000; Showard et al., 2014]

Family Games

- Children learn to:
  - Follow rules
  - Focus
  - Take turns
  - Delay gratification
  - Decision making
  - Strategy
  - Cooperation

[Oryszczak & Reschke, 2008; Lev et al., 2014; LeFevre et al., 2000]

https://www.parenting.com/gallery/board-games-boost-brain-power
Verbal Communication

Parents

- Talk with children, not just “at” them
- Speak clearly and slow enough so young children can understand you
- Encourage children to “use their words”
- Listen carefully and be responsive to what children say
- Help children learn that language is effective
- Help children understand the meaning of common expressions (e.g., I’m out of gas)
- Talk with children about what they are doing, what you are doing, where you both are going, how something feels, their emotions, etc.
- Children learn language through live human speech (NOT by watching TV, playing video games, or computer games, or listening to audiobooks)
- Expand on what a child says – for example, when a child says “Kitty run”, you can say “Yes, honey, the kitty is running on the street”
- Don’t correct or criticize children’s speech errors – instead, mirror back to them the correct way to say/pronounce something
- Ask children questions that are open-ended, not just ones that have a yes or no response
- Model appropriate behavior in conversation (e.g., taking turns, the give and take of conversation, not interrupting)
Verbal Communication

• Tune in
  • Make conscious effort to notice what your child is focused on and, when appropriate, talk with your child about it

• Talk more
  • Narrating
  • Parallel talk - comment on what the child is doing)
  • A child who hears appropriate language will eventually use that language

• Take turns
  • Conversational exchange, active engagement between parent and child
  • Open-ended questions
    • “How did you build that?”
    • “Why do you want to go outside?”

Directives and Commands
  • Least efficient for brain building because they require minimal language in response.

Examples: “Sit down”; “Be quiet”; “Put on your hat”; “Give me the book”; “Don’t do that”

Instead of: “Put on your shoes”

Say: “It’s time to go to Aunty Linda’s house. Let’s put on your shoes so your feet won’t get cold or wet from the rain.”

(Suskind, 2015)
A Parent’s Guide to
ENCOURAGING A GROWTH MINDSET

What is a growth mindset?
Growth mindset is a concept developed by Carol Dweck, a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. It is the belief that a person’s abilities and intelligence can be developed through practice, hard work, dedication, and motivation.

What is a fixed mindset?
A fixed mindset is the notion that intelligence and talent alone will lead to success. People with a fixed mindset believe that these things are “fixed” and cannot be developed or improved upon. They believe that you are either born with it or not, and nothing can change that.

Why is having a growth mindset important?
Research has shown that children who have a fixed mindset are more likely to:
- Fear failure
- Give up on tasks they feel are too difficult
- Ignore feedback
- Avoid challenges
- Feel threatened by the success of others

Children who have a growth mindset are more likely to:
- Learn from their mistakes
- Be motivated to succeed
- Put forth more effort
- Take challenges head on
- Take risks
- Seek feedback
- Learn more
- Learn faster

Schoolhouse Live
Child Outcomes

- More successful in school regardless of SES or parent education level
- Higher vocabulary
- Strong comprehension skills
- Advanced language skills
- Higher achievement in math and science
- Higher educational attainment
- More focused in school
- More persistent
- Experience a joy of learning
- More resilient
- More determined
- Accept learning challenges
- See learning as meaningful, worthy, and purposeful

(Sohr-Preston et al., 2013; Spagnolia et al., 2016; Suskind, 2015)
Informal Learning activities - Interactions that lead to discussions and reasoning

➢ Field Trips
  o Trips to outdoor parks
  o Walking trails
  o Nature centers
  o Learning centers
  o Museums

➢ Activities that involve math
  o Playing games that involve counting
  o Playing games with a die or spinner
  o Measuring ingredients when cooking
  o Talking about money while shopping
  o Talking about time with calendars and clocks
  o Making collections

➢ Family games
  o Uno
  o Bingo
  o Dominoes
  o I Spy
  o Story Cubes
  o Battleship
  o Connect Four
  o Scrabble
  o Monopoly

(Bjorklund & Reubens, 2004; LeFevre et al., 2009; Skwarchuck et al, 2014)
Child Outcomes

• Better mental control
• Better problem solving skills
• Enhanced numerical knowledge
• More sophisticated counting strategies
• Better at executing mathematical information quickly and efficiently
• Able to communicate more elaborately verbally and non-verbally (pointing, manipulating objects)
• Better able to understand events
• Increased memory functioning
• Substantial and stable gains in numerical knowledge and literacy skills
APPENDIX K

WORKSHOP FLYER
Notice to all Parents

You are invited to attend a 6-session (2 hrs. each) Parenting Workshop on “How to Help Your Child Succeed in Elementary School”

The topics covered will include:

- Why parenting matters
- Attachment and child outcomes
- Parenting styles and child outcomes
- Discipline and child outcomes
- Positive child guidance
- Academically enriched home

Date and location: Thursdays at 5pm (January 9th - February 13th) at South Gate Library

Please RSVP via email Lauren.Rivera789@gmail.com
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