

5-2022

IMPROVING PARENTING FOR FAMILIES WITH INVOLVMENT IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM: PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND PARENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Laura Velazquez

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IMPROVING PARENTING FOR FAMILIES WITH INVOLVMENT IN THE CHILD
WELFARE SYSTEM: PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND PARENTS
IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Laura Velazquez

May 2022

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ABSTRACT

Child neglect has been a concerning topic in today's society. Therefore, parent classes have been implemented as a method of prevention services. Through evidence based interventions and the effective outcomes programs parenting classes have stopped incidents of child neglect and abuse by providing parents with the knowledge, education and skills to prevent this from occurring. This research was qualitative, and the data collected allowed the researcher to discover the outcomes of how parent education can prevent child neglect. This study had 15 participants, 8 parents, and 7 social workers (N = 15). The findings from this research both from a parent and social work perspective pinpoint how parenting classes educate parents on child neglect and provide them with the tools they need to improve parenting. In addition, parent classes educate parents on how child neglect can be prevented and the importance of its awareness today. The overall purpose of this study was to help future studies obtain more insight into how parent education can prevent child neglect.

Keywords: child neglect, parent education, parent, social worker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for motivating and encouraging me while working on this research project. First, I would like to start by thanking my husband Alex, who encouraged me to get an education and who has supported me throughout this journey. Secondly, I would like to thank my parents Maria and Rodrigo for teaching me to be a helping and loving person, as well as teaching me that all hard work has its reward. Thirdly, I would like to thank all my friends and classmates for all the help they provided me when I felt insecure about an assignment and for listening to me when I was feeling overwhelmed. Lastly, I would like to thank all my professors, especially Dr. McAllister. She was the first professor I met when I was applying for the B.A program and who has guided me throughout these past 3 years. Thank you for all the inspiring conversations we had along the way.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

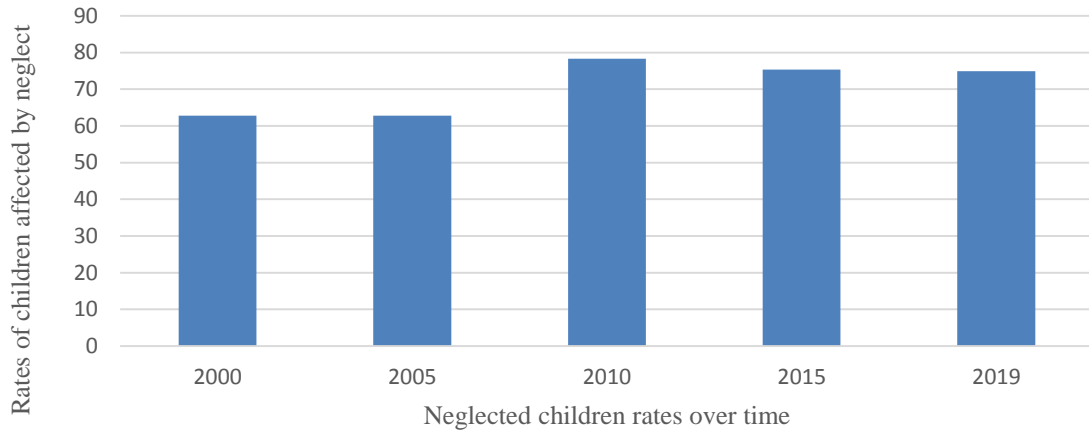
Child neglect has been an enduring social issue in the United States of America. The most common form of child maltreatment (Avdibegović & Brkić, 2020), neglect is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs (Child Welfare, 2019). Figure 1 below displays the scope of child neglect in the United States over the past two decades (2000-2019). As seen in Figure 1, child neglect has increased over the years. According to the Administration for Children and Families in the 2000s, 62.8 percent of the victims suffered from neglect. In 2005, child neglect remained the same but in 2010 child neglect increased by 15.5 percent. In 2015, child neglect slightly decreased to 75.3 percent and continued to decrease throughout 2019 to 74.9 percent. Overall, in 2010 the rates of children being affected by neglect were the highest and remained at 70 percent from 2010 to 2019 (Child Maltreatment, n.d).

Figure 2 shows the scope of child neglect among racial groups of the children who reported to have experienced neglect. Based on the data on Figure 2, in the 2000s, 50.6% were white, 24.7% were African American and 14.2% were Hispanic. In 2005, 49.7% were white, 23.1% were African American, and 17.4% were Hispanic. In 2010, 44.8% were white, 21.9% were African American, and 21.4% were Hispanic. In 2015, 43.2% were white, 21.4% were African American, and 23.6% were Hispanic. According to the Administration for Children

and Families, in 2019 the most updated data shows that American Indian children have the highest percentage of neglect at 14.8 and the African American population fell into second place with 13.7 percent. This data shows how the White population had the highest rate of children being victimized by neglect from 2000 to 2015. In addition, the data reflects that the percentage of African American children suffering from neglect remained constant by staying between 20 to 24 percent throughout the 19 years but was classified as the second-highest population being affected in 2019. On the other hand, the Hispanic race was the lowest population affected by neglect out of the three races. Lastly, the data does not determine what the percentage is for the White and Hispanic races in 2019.

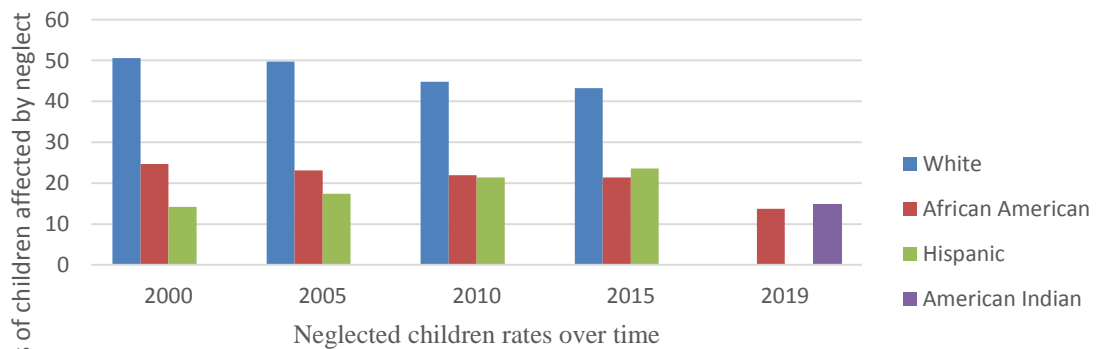
Some of the causes by which children are being neglected are because of their parents, their environment, and how the family lives. Infants and younger children are more likely to suffer from neglect due to them depending on their parents or caregivers (Avdibegović & Brkiü, 2020). Other causes of neglect include parents lacking parenting skills, substance abuse, and trauma. The child's environment also has a lot to do with experiencing neglect. For instance, a lower socio-economic status within a family, a lack of education, poor parent, and child relationship, and being a single parent are all factors that conclude a higher chance of a child being neglected. In addition, how the family lives can cause neglect due to poor community support, the child's physical, psychological, behavioral, and societal development in the long term (Avdibegović & Brkiü, 2020).

Figure 1
Children Negelct in America from 2000-2019



(Source: Administration fro children and family)

Figure 2
Child Neglect Among Race



(Source: Administration fro children and family)

Interventions

Child development has been affected by neglect throughout America. In the past year's laws have been implemented to prevent child neglect, but it is still a common issue. Child abuse and neglect not only affect the child's physical development, but it can also impact their brain development in the long term (Child Welfare, 2019). In order to prevent this issue on January 31, 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was enacted as an intervention to prevent child abuse and neglect (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019; US Congress, P. L. 93-247). CAPTA provides grants to states for the prevention, assessment, investigation, treatment, prosecution of child abuse and neglect. In addition, CAPTA has established a federal set definition of child abuse and neglect, which is any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker; which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm (US Congress, P. L. 93-247, 1974; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

Throughout the years there have been many changes to this act to improve preventive measures for child abuse and neglect. For example, in 1986, the Children's Justice Act program was added to CAPTA to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases such as child abuse and exploitation. In 1989, the Child Abuse Prevention Challenges Grants Reauthorization Act was amended in 1990, the McKinney Homeless Assistance

Amendment Act was added to CAPTA to help children and homeless families or families at risk of homelessness with certain preventive services. A series of acts were also included in CAPTA that also help. Another major amendment that was added was the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 but was effective until May 2017. This act requires certain procedure and provision such as, identifying and assessing all reports that involve children known or suspected to be victims of sex trafficking and training child protective services workers, so that they can be able to identify, assess and provide comprehensive services for children of sex trafficking victims (Child Welfare, 2019). In 1988, the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention That Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act was added. This act gave grants to help collaborate with updating, developing, monitoring, and implementing plans for selfcare (Child Welfare, 2019). In 2018 the Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorized Act was made to provide immunity from civil and criminal liability.

All the amendments that are part of CAPTA have developed improvements to better assist children who have experienced child abuse and neglect. CAPTA has been amended multiple times by CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, and has continued to be reauthorized throughout 2015,2016, 2018, and lastly in January 2019 (Child Welfare, 2019). Overall, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act has implemented interventions that have prevented child abuse and neglect in children and has provided services to the children and their families in the United States.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is an intervention that focuses on a macro level. From a micro perspective, there are interventions that focus especially on parent programs to prevent and address child neglect. After the reauthorization of CAPTA, in 2010 parent education was implemented as a core prevention service (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019; US Congress, P. L. 93-247). Therefore, different types of interventions are made for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Some of the parent programs which are also known as parent training or parent education, have been available for parents through Child welfare services that are evidence based and have had effective outcomes. For example, in the article Effect of Parenting Programs on Child Maltreatment Prevention: A Meta-Analysis, describes how parenting programs have successfully reduced child maltreatment, by providing parents with techniques that increase parental knowledge and developmental parenting skills. In addition, improving parenting is the most important goal of child abuse prevention. This emphasizing that is important to understand and design effective parenting education programs to help prevent child abuse and neglect (Barth, 2009). Furthermore, parent education programs have shown improvement and benefits according to the previous articles, and through interventions approaching parent training it has reduced risk of punishment and child abuse. As parent learn alternatives methods when approaching difficult situations. Overall, parent education programs are designed to approach all communities and cultures to have a most effective outcome (Child Welfare, 2019).

Rationale and Purpose of Study

Despite the interventions made to prevent or limit child neglect, child neglect is still one of the highest forms of abuse. Social workers have an ethical obligation to address social issues (NASW, 2017). Furthermore, according to the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (CSWE, 2015), “social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education” (p. 7). This means that all social workers have a responsibility to report child neglect and provide children with the support children need when experiencing negative factors caused by neglect. The purpose of this study is to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of parenting interventions. Most specifically, this study will ask the following question: What are ways to improve the effectiveness of parenting training intended for parents with involvement in the Inland Empire child welfare system?

Study Significance

This study will increase the knowledge of improving parent training effectiveness and contribute to previous research, so that social workers can advocate for the prevention of child neglect and so the awareness of the topic is discovered by parents, regarding how parenting education can help prevent or redirect parents' skills in order to prevent and decrease child neglect. On a macro

level, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines neglect and provides help to the state and promotes and continues policies on the prevention of child neglect. On the micro level, parenting training is implemented in order to help parents find successful methods to prevent or avoid neglect towards children. Practices both on the macro and micro level help social workers define what parenting skills are more beneficial and effective among parents when experiencing being a neglectful parent.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter analyzes how parent education prevents child neglect. The first section in this literature review has information that was obtained from peer reviewed studies to address how parent training classes have or can prevent child neglect. The second section discusses how limitations on these studies have been taken into consideration. The third section contains the theoretical perspective guiding this research and the fourth is a critical analysis of the theoretical perspective guiding this research.

Synthesis of the Literature

The topic on how parent education can prevent child neglect has been studied worldwide. For instance, a study in Turkey conducted by Gulirmak and Orak (2010) evaluated the efficiency of web-based distance for the prevention of child emotional neglect and abuse by increasing the awareness of emotional abuse and appropriate attitudes toward child-rearing. This study was based of quasi-experimental and randomized controlled design methods, where the participants were parents aged between 18-65 years old. In the study, 30 participants were the experimental group (n=30), and 30 participants were part of the controlled group. Data was collected among these two groups by gathering information based on the forms parents answered. Lastly, the study concluded

that the education program does prevent child emotional abuse and neglect, and that it also created a large increase in emotional abuse awareness.

Other studies have been made regarding parent education preventing child neglect in Canada. A study was made in Montreal, Canada by Sicotte et al. (2018) examined whether the form of maltreatment experienced by the child moderates the effects of a parent training program (PTP) on the probability that the child's case will be closed at the child protective services agency (CPS). The study method was based on the setting of CPS from the Canadian province of Quebec, which described that when a child 0- 18 is in danger due to forms of maltreatment such as neglect, physical and sexual abuse, the agency opened a case and offers different programs and services to end it. In the study there were 368 participants in the experimental group (n=368) and in the controlled group, there were also 368 participants (n=368). The data used in the study came from the Montreal CPS agency. The results in the study determined that the participation in Incredible Years program increased the probability of children's cases being closed by 39%, above and beyond the effects of the other services usually provided by CPS (Sicotte et al. 2018).

Another study was from Quebec, Canada, by Letarte et al. (2010) explored the effectiveness of parent training programs in improving parenting practices implemented in a child protection service. This study was based on a repeated measured design of pre- and post-test measures, which included 35 participants and were divided into two groups. One had 9 participants that were part of the control group (n=9), and the parent training program's group was part

of the Incredible Years program which had 26 participants (n=26). Data was collected by trained research assistants doing home visits where the pretest was conducted and then data was collected again through a posttest after the parents training program ended. As a result of this study, the program Incredible Years has a positive impact on parenting practices and parents' perception of their child's behavior, as well as their monitoring strategies (Letarte et al., 2010).

A multinational study was conducted in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and Iran by Chen & Chon (2016) that focused on evaluating the effectiveness of parenting programs in reducing child maltreatment and modifying associated factors as well as to examine the moderator variables that are linked to program effectiveness. This study was based on a metaanalysis, where studies were found on electronic databases. From there 11 studies were used to evaluate the effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs. Based on a checklist that had 10 items that applied to the research method, such as trial design, participants, interventions, randomization, and outcome measures (Chen & Chon, 2016). As a result of this study the meta-analysis concluded that parenting programs are effective intervention approaches for the prevention of child maltreatment (Chen & Chon, 2016).

Limitations of Existing Studies

Existing studies faces three major limitations. First, the aforementioned studies were carried under a quantitative methodology. Second, the studies focused are more on worldwide and are not specific to Southern California. Third,

previous studies did not implement material on social workers and parents together. These limitations can continue to increase as new data is being contributed to the research. In conclusion, the research will address existing limitations of previous studies by conducting more qualitative research, focusing on studies in Southern California, and implementing studies that include social workers and parents together

Synthesis of Theoretical Perspectives Guiding this Research

Introduced in 1958, John Bowlby's attachment theory stated that children develop expectations about the extent to which children will receive support when stressed, and these expectations shape the relationship they will form later in life (Bowlby, 1988). The theory was first focused on just children and their caregivers and then was extended to adult's romantic relationships and later friendships. Throughout the years attachment theory continued to develop. For example, in 1969 there was an evolution in the attachment theory which focused on the bonds between a person and an attachment figure. In 1973 the attachment theory was based on how experiences with an attachment figure shaped a person's attachment style.

According to Ainsworth (1991) there are seven key assumptions to the attachment theory: (1) attachment or bonding behaviors are considered to be adaptive, increasing the capacity of individuals to survive; (2) the development of these tendencies is primarily shaped during specific phases in life; (3) the preference of individuals towards specific figures, such as their parents, is not

inherent; (4) monotropy, it assumes that infants primarily seek support from a single individual, usually the mother; (5) this preference towards a primary attachment figure or caregiver primarily evolves from the provision of support and sensitivity during social interactions, especially in threatening contexts; (6) these experiences with caregivers, over time are combined to shape the thoughts, beliefs, expectations, emotions, memories, and behaviors about the self and about other individuals which is called internal working models of social relationships; (7) lastly, constant separation from a familiar caregiver, or continuous changes in who the primary caregiver is can prevent the formation of adaptive attachment behaviors (Ainsworth, 1991).

Albert Bandura is a developmental and educational psychologist that developed the social learning theory in 1977. Bandura's purpose of this theory was to describe the importance of observing, modeling, imitating behaviors, attitudes, and the emotional reactions of people (Bandura & Walters, 1963). The social learning theory is also defined by the importance of how environmental and cognitive factors have a lot to do with people's learning and behaviors (Bandura & Walters, 1963). In addition, social learning theory describes observational learning and the mediational processes. Observational learning focuses on how children observe other people and see them as models that provide them with behavior examples. The mediational process is the process after observing the behavior and finding a response before the behavior is or is not imitated (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Attention, retention, reproduction, and

motivation are the four mediational processes that contribute to the social learning theory.

Bandura also developed the modeling theory that describes that through observation people can adapt to behavior (Bandura, 1969). Modeling theory is based on observation and imitation from the media and how it can influence the behavior, knowledge, attitude, and value of people. There are four stages of modeling theory: (1) seeing an action done in the media, (2) viewers identify with the actor, (3) the viewer imitates the actor, and (4) viewers get motivated if the activity gets rewarded (Bandura, 1969). This illustrates that people can be guided by observing other people, then observers will model and adapt those behaviors.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) established the strengthening family's approach and protective factors framework in 2008. Their focus was to work on the prevention of child abuse and neglect for children between the ages of childbirth to five-years-old (Browne, 2016). Browne (2016) states that there are five protective factors that were created which could reduce the exposure to risk factors and create healthy families and positive child development. These five factors are: (1) parental resilience, (2) parenting Stressors and Stress Parents, (3) children, and trauma, (4) facilitating parental resilience, (5) social connections. Overall, all these theories relate to the prevention of child neglect and can teach parents how to prevent child neglect.

Critical Analysis of Theoretical Perspectives Guiding this Research

The Theory Evaluation Scale (TES) was developed in 2019, by social work scholars Rigaud Joseph and Mark J. Macgowan and is a tool that allows social worker students, researchers, and other professionals to critically evaluate the quality of theories (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). The TES recommended the following nine criteria for theory analysis: coherence, conceptual clarity, philosophical assumptions, connection with previous research, testability, empiricism, limitations, client context, and human agency (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). For instance: (1) coherence where information should be given in a well-developed and consistent manner; (2) conceptual clarity, by giving clear information and evidence; (3) philosophical assumptions by well explaining the axiological, ontological, epistemological, and methodological connections within the theory; (4) connection with previous knowledge to make sure the theory is based on previous research; (5) testability involves actual research being done and hypotheses being conducted; (6) empiricism, which makes sure that theories are as effective to all populations; (7) limitations that outline that there are some concepts that can change the outcome of the research; (8) client context, this goes based on the client's experience, to be able to understand their actions; (9) lastly, human agency, which is how people positively face problems (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019).

According to Joseph and Macgowan (2019), each criterion on the TES is graded using a range of 1-5, five being the highest and one being the lowest point. Based on the total number of points each theory scores, it determines the quality of the theory. For example, 1-10 is poor, 10-19 is fair, 20-29 is good, and

30-45 is excellent (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). After the theories were reviewed and scored, the Attachment Theory's score ranged at 32, the Modeling Theory scored a total of 34, and the Strengthening Family's Approach and Protective Factors Framework scored 33 (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

Critical Analysis of the Culture of Poverty Theory, the Social Justice Theory, and the Theory of Empowerment with Joseph & Macgowan's Theory Evaluation Scale (TES)

Criteria	Description	Score		
		AT*	MT**	SFAPFF***
1	The theory has coherence.	5	5	5
2	The theory has conceptual clarity.	5	5	5
3	The theory clearly outlines and explains its philosophical assumptions.	3	3	3
4	The theory describes its historical roots in connection with previous research.	5	5	4
5	The theory can be tested and proven false via observational and experimental methods.	4	2	2
6	The theory has been critically tested and validated through empirical evidence.	4	2	2
7	The theory explains its boundaries or limitations.	2	2	2
8	The theory accounts for the systems within which individuals interact with people around them.	2	5	5
9	The theory recognizes humans as active agents within their environment.	2	5	5
Overall score		32	34	33
<i>Theory quality based on overall TES score: Attachment Theory</i>				
<i>Theory quality based on overall TES score: Modeling Theory</i>				
<i>Theory quality based on overall TES score: The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework</i>				
*Attachment Theory				
**Modeling Theory				
***The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework				

When evaluating the theory and using the scale, the scores of the theories mentioned above all ranged in the 30-45 and fall under the excellent quality of the theories. This concludes that the theories are efficient for professionals to use

as resources and for students to learn and enhance their skills by using these theories (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019).

Even though the theories all scored excellently, there are limitations and strengths in them. Table 1 displays the high and low scores within each of the theories. For instance, the Attachment Theory scores low on three categories, how the theory explains its boundaries and limitations, how the theory accounts for the system within which individuals interact with people around them, and how the theory recognizes humans as active agents within the environment. In addition, the highest score on the evaluation of the Attachment Theory was on the theory's coherence, conceptual clarity, and the theory describing its historical roots in connecting previous research. In the Modeling Theory, the low scores fall under how the theory can be tested and proven false via observational and experimental methods, how the theory is being critically tested and validated through empirical evidence, and how the theory explains its boundaries and limitations. On the other hand, the highest score was on the Modeling Theory's coherence, conceptual clarity, how the theory describes its historical roots in connecting previous research, how the theory accounts for the system within which individuals interact with people around them, and how the theory recognizes humans as active agents within the environment. Lastly, for the Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework, the low scores were tested and proven false via observational and experimental methods, how the theory is being critically tested and validated through empirical evidence, and how the theory explains its boundaries and limitations. However,

the highest score falls under the theory's coherence, conceptual clarity, how the theory accounts for the system within which individuals interact with people around them and how the theory recognizes humans as active agents within the environment. Out of the three theories, the Modeling Theory has the highest score according to the Theory Evaluation Scale.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter contains different sections regarding the research methodology of this study. The first section will illustrate the ethics and protection of human subjects. The second section will illustrate the research design, where the purpose and method of the research will be explained. The third section will include information on the sampling methods. The fourth section will talk about the data collection instruments and procedures, which will be used through primary data of qualitative research. The fifth section will focus on sensitizing concepts, while the last section describes the interview transcription process and data analysis procedures.

Ethics and Protection of Human Subjects

After completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)'s *Social Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel*, the researcher sought approval to conduct this research from the California State University of San Bernardino Institutional Review Board. In this study, there is informed consent that describes the procedure of the study step by step, including purpose, risk, and benefits. The researcher took COVID-19 precautions and did not meet in person for interview. All collected data from the research is stored

safely in a password-protected computer where only researchers will have access to the information. In addition, all research files that contain data will be destroyed after a 3-year period.

Research Design

This study is an exploratory research design to explore how parent education can prevent child neglect. This area is understudied and will require more detailed research in order to conclude the outcomes. The method used for this research will be most specifically qualitative. The qualitative research paradigm allowed the researcher to have a deeper understanding of what the participants have experienced. (Grinnell & Unrau, 2013; Royse, 2017). In general, qualitative research findings lack generalizability (Grinnell & Unrau, 2013; Royse, 2017); nonetheless, this approach helps the researcher assess the views of participants in relation to parent education and child neglect.

Sampling

The research was conducted through a non-probability sampling method. One of these methods, is purposive sampling method where participants with common characteristics were interviewed. The researcher also used the expert sampling method in which participants will be experts on the subject matter regarding parent education and child neglect. The sample consists of parents with past or current involvement in the child welfare system and social workers who provide or have provided parenting services to parents in Southern

California. This study targeted 15 participants, 8 parents and 7 social workers (N = 15).

Data Collection and Instruments

For this qualitative study, the researcher developed an interview guide to collect primary data in a semi-structured manner where 6-8 social workers will be interviewed. Parent education classes are classes that can teach and improve parent skills. The goal was to talk to social workers who have and have not attended education classes and ask them the following questions. What are the reasons why parents attend parent education classes? What would lead parents to participate in these classes? Why are parents interested in learning more about parent education? If people do not participate why not? In addition, the goal is to gain the social worker's perspective on parent education classes.

6-8 parents were interviewed. Some of the interview questions for the parents were as follows: How do you discipline children? What activities do you use to address and redirect child behavior? What are three tips you can give to improve child-parent relationships? What do you think will help the parent community become more aware of child neglect and its prevention? How have the parenting training you received helped you become a better parent? Questions for the social workers include the following: Would you please describe how effective are classes that educate parents on the prevention of child neglect in the agency where you work? What are the pros and cons of parent education classes preventing child neglect? What can be done to improve parent education

classes? What are some techniques that you recommend to parents to improve the parent and child relationships? The aforementioned questions are consistent with the purpose of this study. Finally, the researcher asked demographic questions for descriptive statistics purposes.

Procedures

In this research, the researcher used virtual data collection following the COVID -19 safety protocols. Participants were invited to participate in the study by sending emails and making phone calls. A flyer was made to send out to the participants so they can have a visual perspective of the research. The procedure of the interviews was via phone call or zoom, during the time and availability of the participants. At the beginning of this interview the researcher was introduced and provided with further information regarding the purpose of the research, such as rules and procedures. The researcher asked if participants have any questions or concerns. Afterward, participants were verbally asked for consent, as they have already received an email form of content. The researcher asked participants for permission to record the interview and let participants know that the camera will be turn off and name will have to be changed for confidentiality. In addition, each participant was sent a question inquiry to fill out. Lastly, participants were reminded that participation is confidential, and that the data will be stored in a safe location. The researcher mentioned how the participants have just completed was designed to investigate Improving parenting for families with involvement in the child welfare system: perspectives of social workers in southern California. If the study was found to be

destressing in any way, please do not hesitate to reach out for resources such as the 211 SoCal United Way by dialing 211, if you need to be connected to mental health services in Riverside County, call the CARES Line at (800) 499-3008, or Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor, free 24/7. The researcher thanked all for their participation and for not discussing the contents of the decision question with other students, and if they had any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Laura Velazquez or Professor Carolyn McAllister, MSW, PHD, Professor of Social Worker at cmcallis@csusb.edu. A copy of the group results of this study can be obtain through, the CSUSB ScholarWorks website after June 2022.

Sensitizing Concept

This study contains the following sensitizing concepts that help readers understand the research: child neglect, parent education, parent, and social worker. Each of these terms are described below:

Child Neglect: is any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker; which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm (US Congress, P. L. 93-247; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

Parent Education: which is based on programs that are used to help parents understand their child's behavior and enhance parent practices to promote positive interactions between parent and child (Child Welfare, n.d.).

Parent: could be foster parent, grandparent, any caregiver with legal custody of the child. This person should receive or have received parent education for child maltreatment.

Social Worker: Any person providing child welfare services, including parenting classes (May or may not be a professional social worker, i.e., one with a social work degree).

Data Analysis

In the research, the data that was collected from parents and social workers was based on two questionnaires with different questions for the two different groups. Each questionnaire had open-ended questions and both questionnaires had questions that could be answered based on participants' work, personal experience, or ways they would do things. Throughout the interviews with all participants, the researcher recorded the zoom meeting, with cameras off at all times, and later on transcribed all information into a word document. In order to comply with the confidentiality terms of the researcher, all documentation saved by the researcher was titled by numbers in the order participants were interviewed. The researcher also used a constant comparison method to code all the data received through this research. According to Memon et al. (2017), the constant comparison method is a way to analyze information that is qualitative which uses both coding and stimulation of comparison of parts of data being gathered; therefore, as the researcher used

the constant comparison method, the researcher identified themes between the social worker and parents that were repetitive and different or common.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION

Introduction

Throughout this chapter, information gathered from parents and social workers will be evaluated regarding participants' thoughts and responses on how parent education can prevent child neglect. In addition, demographic information was obtained from all participants. During this research, themes were outlined, which were observed to cross over between parents and social workers. Overall, the limitations and implications of the study are also stated in this chapter.

Qualitative Data Analysis

In this research study, demographic questions were asked to eight parents and seven social workers, which is broken down in Table 2. In the research interviews, all participants were women over twenty-six years old. The ethnicity of the participants ranged from eleven out of fifteen being Hispanic American/Latinos. In addition, two participants classified themselves as White/Caucasian, one Black/African American, and one classified as other. Participants' education level ranged from 20% having some college education, 27% of the participants had an associate degree and 53% had a master's degree. Participants' marital status varied from four out of the fifteen being single, ten of the fifteen being married and one being divorced. Furthermore, 60% percent of the participants were employed full time, 20% had part-time employment and 20% were

unemployed but not looking for work. Income levels from each participant ranged at 6% of the participants making from \$25,000-49,000 thousand dollars, 73% make from \$50,000 to \$99,000 thousand dollars, 13.33 % making \$100,000 to 200,000 thousand dollars, and 6% made more than \$200,000 dollars annually. The number of household members in the participant's homes ranged from 27% having more than five members, 20% of the participants having four members, 20% of the participants having three members, 20% of the participants having two members, and 6.5% of the participants having one member in their household. Lastly, 33% percent had no members under eighteen years of age, 33% percent had one member, 27% had two members, and 6% had more than three members.

Table 2. Demographics Information

Age	Number	Frequency
Under 25	0	0%
Over 26	15	100%
Ethnicity		
White/ Caucasian	1	6.67%
Hispanic American/ Latino	11	73%
Black/ African American	2	13.33%
Other	1	6.67%
Education		
Some college	3	20%
Associates degree	4	27%
Master's degree	8	53%
Gender		
Female	15	100%
Marital Status		
Single	4	27%
Married	10	67%
Divorced	1	6%
Employment		
Employed full-time	9	60%
Employed part-time	3	20%
Unemployed but not looking for work	3	20%
Income		
25,000-49,000	1	6%
50,000-99,000	11	73%
100,000-199,000	2	13.33%
More than 200,000	1	6%
Household members		
Zero	1	6.5%
One	1	6.5%
Two	3	20%
Three	3	20%
Four	3	20%
More than 5	4	27%
Member under 18 of age		
Zero	5	33%
One	5	33%
Two	4	27%
More than 3	1	6%

Parents Intake

When conducting the research, parent responses to the questions were analyzed through their experiences and on how parent education can prevent child neglect. Even though only four parents had attended parent education classes before, the other four parents provided input of how attending parent education classes would help them. Three main categories were found among the parent interviews, educating parents, gaining information on the topic, and bringing awareness to the parents on child neglect.

Educated

All parents stated that parent education classes gave parents more knowledge and a better idea of what child neglect is. In addition, parents mentioned that attending parent education classes provided them with more awareness of child neglect and how it can be prevented. A parent stated

If she had more parenting classes before she had kids it would help, about the different ways that discipline can be implemented (anonymous informant #4).

Parents also mentioned that parent education classes assisted parents in learning how culture has a lot to do with how they view child neglect. For example, parents mentioned that as they were raised, their parents would spank them or send them to sleep without dinner and they viewed it as a norm but through parent education classes, parents have gained better skills when parenting. Parent education classes not only educated parents but also brought more awareness on child neglect to parents.

Implementation

From the parent interviews, the researcher learned that parent education classes allow parents to practice at home the techniques they learn in the classes. This has helped the parents better practice parenting styles with their children instead of just acting impulsively. In addition, parent education classes allowed for parents to implement discipline in a safe and healthy matter for both the parent and child. Another parent mentioned in the interview that:

I have been able to adapt certain things because I was able to get some perspective, of where I need to change before, I wasn't really given options, but after I went to parent education classes I ask my kids what they want and gave them a voice (participant #8).

The researcher also observed that parents wanted to change how they implement discipline with their children as a result of how their parents raised them without having a voice because they were children. Therefore, parents attending parent education classes allowed parents to better their parenting styles and allow their children to know it is okay to have an opinion and be heard.

Awareness and Prevention

When interviewing parents, the researcher discovered that parent education classes gave parents awareness of the consequences of child neglect, as well as what to do to prevent it, and what to do when witnessing it. Parents stated that it is important to be aware and have access to parent education classes because it is very uncommon. Awareness can be used to prevent child neglect and should be promoted more often among the parent community. All

parents suggest that it should be promoted in places assessable to the parents such as hospitals, churches, mental health clinics, libraries, and especially in schools. A parent stated:

In the child, first-year doctors should provide parents with the information of how child neglect can impact the child's growth negatively, and how it can harm the child physically and emotionally (participant #1).

This builds more on other researchers that study how educational programs increase emotional abuse awareness (Gulirmak & Orak, 2010). Overall, parent's education classes brought awareness and prevention to parents through different perspectives.

Social Work Intake

Intake from the social workers was also obtained and considered in this area. The results the researcher found were different themes compared to the parent's themes. Three main categories were found among the social worker interviews, which were the involvement of awareness, barriers, and mental health.

Support

While interviewing social workers the researcher also found that parent education classes that were provided to parents provided them support in various ways. One way is by teaching the parents ways to prevent child neglect and guiding them with the necessary tools to prevent it. Another method of support parents receive from attending parent education classes was through parents being able to share their stories with each other and share suggestions of what

has worked for them. In addition, the researcher was able to find out how social workers saw that parent's coming together during parent education classes taught parents more of who their support system can be and how to manage obtaining support when needing help. According to a social worker in a school setting:

Another good thing about parent education classes is that parents get to see the school system as a support, and they get to see different staff there and they can learn about the different roles they have and how we can support them with their children (Participant #6).

Parent education classes also provided parents with support such as additional resources that can be used when facing certain challenges that can lead to the prevention of child neglect. Not only did the researcher discover that parent's education classes from a social worker's perspective brought support to the parents but barriers for parents were also identified.

Barriers

In the study, social workers stated that when parents tried to attend parent education classes, at times faced certain barriers. For instance, language has been an issue when attending parent education classes. Social workers mentioned that some parents did not go because the classes are only offered in English and most of the parents attending were from the Latin X community. The researcher also discovered that parent education classes were not that accessible for parents. In addition, the researcher notice that parent education

classes were only available for parents in the mornings, and this interfered with their work schedules. According to a social worker:

Making them more assessable mostly for working parents, the ones maybe working 10 to 12 hours a day. Making parent class that happen maybe at 5 pm. If parents are required to attend on weekly basis it can make it a little difficult because it is more important for parents to put food in the table (Participant #10).

Therefore, social workers suggest methods of how the barriers could be addressed to better improve parent education classes.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

After the interviews, the researcher also discovered that parent education provides parents with information on how neglect can be a factor in mental health issues and substance abuse. The parental psychiatric disorder can impact parent behaviors such as emotional unavailability, irritability/overreactions, blames the child, and distorted expectation of reality can impact on the child by causing neglect (Duncan & Reder, 2000). The researcher also mentioned how social workers believe that through parent education classes parents can learn more about mental health and how parents who have any type of mental health challenges can be a component of child neglect. Another social worker said:

Increase in awareness of mental health and normalizing it a lot more can help the parent community become more aware of child neglect. I feel like a lot of the parents I deal with that I have worked with I had to file child

abuse reports because of neglect and them having mental health issues themselves or also have some sort of addiction (participant #13).

Mental health issues can also be linked to substance abuse among parents causing parents to neglect their children. Studies have shown that mental health characteristics of abusive or neglectful parents have been due to depression and substance abuse (Chaffin et al.,1996). This emphasizes the impact of how teaching parents at parent education classes on how mental health and substance abuse are concepts of child neglect is important for parents to learn that there is a relationship between neglect and mental health issues.

Similarities

In the study, some of the categories overlap between parents and social workers such as education, awareness, and prevention. These three categories were topics that were both discussed in the parent and social worker interviews. For instance, from both parent and social worker perspectives, they mentioned that parent education classes were educational. In addition, they also acknowledged that parent education classes should be more advertised in order to bring awareness to the community. This leads to the prevention of child neglect. Lastly, parents mentioned how parent education classes taught them the causes of child neglect and how to prevent child neglect, while social workers viewed parent education classes as an important step for parents to be educated and to practice the techniques they learned at home, to avoid child neglect.

Implications of Findings for Social Work Practice

Through the research of this project, some of the findings stated that parent education classes from social work and parent perspectives provides education on child neglect and the tools they need to improve parenting. According to Barth (2009), most parent education programs help parents develop appropriate expectations from their children and teach them how to treat them with empathy and nurturance, as well as to use positive discipline. This helps parents better understand what can lead to child neglect and ways to prevent it. Another aspect of the study focused on the prevention of child neglect through parent education classes. Daro (1994), stated that programs based on helping parents enhance knowledge on child development, reinforcing parent skills, and ongoing support to parents reduces the negative outcomes that are caused by parents being stressed. Therefore, parent education classes can impact parents in a positive way with the prevention of child neglect. Lastly, the study found that prevention also has a lot to do with awareness with the factors of child neglect. Tyler et. al (2006), stated that increasing awareness is essential in order to stop the violence and neglect cycle. Overall, the information gathered from the study will help future studies gain more insight into how parent education classes can prevent child neglect.

Limitations and Strengths

Some strengths of this study were that it was cost-free. Through this study the research is able to further evaluate the ways that parent education classes can prevent child neglect which also makes it a strength. Another strength found

is how the researcher conducted qualitative research. This allowed for the participants to be more detailed and the research more in-depth (Sumeracki, 2021). The study also had some limitations with the participants, which were all women; therefore, input from a male perspective was missing. In addition, there were only 15 interviewers and only from the Inland Empire. This minimizes the study's ability to expand the research from getting information from different perspectives in different counties of California. Not all parents and social workers attended parent education classes, so if parents and social workers all attended parent education classes then the study would have further insight. Lastly, although this study had limitations, the study has helped evaluate the importance of how parent education classes can prevent child neglect.

Summary

In conclusion, this chapter collected qualitative data and analyzed it through utilizing code and identifying themes when interviewing parents and social workers in the study. The demographic and personal data collected from both parents and social workers was interpreted based on their experiences of how parent education classes can prevent child neglect. In addition, three themes were found among parents: awareness/prevention, implementation, and education. Three themes were also found among social workers: mental health/substance abuse, barriers, and support. Lastly, some implications for findings in social work were discussed on how parent education can prevent child neglect and how the information in the study can help other studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

TERMINATION AND FOLLOW UP

Introduction

Through this chapter, the process of termination of the study is discussed and communication of the findings is reviewed. In addition, the dissemination plan is also explained and talks about when the research will be published and how to get access to it once it is. Lastly, there is a section that talks about the ongoing relationship with the participants of the study, and its focus is to inform participants that they will only be interviewed once.

Termination of Study

When conducting the study, the researcher terminated participants by informing them that the interview was a one-time participation procedure. At the end of each interview, participants were asked if they had any follow-up questions or needed any clarification on the topic. The researcher also asked participants if there were any suggestions of what could be done to improve the questions asked to them. Afterward, the researcher thanked the participants that were being interviewed for their time and input on the research. Lastly, since the research is confidential the data collected will be stored in a safe location for three years, and then all data will be destroyed.

Communication of Findings and Dissemination Plan

The research will be accessible through the California State University, San Bernardino's website, Scholarworks, after June 2022. Once the research is published, the public will have access to it to read and review. The researcher will inform the participants from the study via email that the research has been published and that they can access it through the Scholarworks website.

Ongoing Relationship with Study Participants

In this study, the researcher does not plan to have an ongoing relationship with the participants because they are not gathering data through a long period of time. After interviewing the participants, the researcher concluded the interviewees' participation within the study by informing them that there would be no further interviews and they will be contacted once the research is published.

Summary

In summary, this chapter reviewed the process of termination of the study. In addition, the communication of findings and dissemination plan was described among interviewing participants. The researcher also explained how there was no further contact with the participants after the interview and how participants will be contacted to let them know that the study has been published.

APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Informed Consent

The study that you are asked to participate in is designed to investigate how parent education can prevent child neglect. The study is being conducted by graduate social work student Laura Velazquez under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Professor of social work at California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB). This study has been approved by the California State University of San Bernardino Institutional Review Board.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine how parent education can prevent child neglect.

Description: You will be asked some questions regarding how effective parent education can be in the prevention of child neglect. The questions will be asked to parent, or former or active social workers.

Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are allowed to refuse to participate at any time.

Confidentiality: Your responses will remain confidential, and the data collected will be safely stored, where only the research team will have access to it.

Duration: This study will take approximately 30 minutes to be completed.

Risk: There are no more than minimal risks to participants in this study, although there could be some discomfort when answering some of the questions. If that occurs, please feel free to skip the question or stop your participation altogether.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to participants in this study. However, the findings from this study will provide child welfare stakeholders (including the participants) with a better understanding of how parent education can prevent child neglect.

Contact: Please direct any questions or concerns regarding this study to Dr. Carolyn McAllister. Email: cmcallis@csusb.edu Office number: (909) 537-5501.

Results: The results of this study will be disseminated via the Scholar Works website after June 2022.

.....

This is to certify that I consent for this interview to be recorded.

_____ | _____
Place an X mark here | Date

This is to certify that I consent in the study.

_____ | _____
Place an X mark here | Date

Interview

1. When working with parents, how do you recommend parents discipline their children?
2. When working with parents, how do you recommend parents encourage positive behavior in their children?
3. When working with parents, how do you recommend parents to discourage unwanted/negative behavior in their children?
4. What are some good things about parent education class, if any?
5. What can be done to improve parent education classes?
6. How have the parenting training classes provided to parents helped them if at all?
7. On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 the lowest score and 10 the highest score), how much has the parenting training helped parents you have worked with? _____
8. Why did you choose that score?
9. Why is that score not lower (1-3)?
10. What would have made this score higher (9 or 10)?
11. What are three tips you can give to improve child-parent relationships?
12. What do you think will help the parent community become more aware of child neglect?
13. What would you recommend as ways to prevent child neglect?

Interview

1. How do you discipline children?
2. How do you encourage positive behavior in your children?
3. How do you discourage unwanted/negative behavior in your children?
4. What are some good things about parent education class, if any?
5. What can be done to improve parent education classes?
6. How have the parenting training classes you received helped you become a better parent, if at all?
7. On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 the lowest score and 10 the highest score), how much has the parenting training helped you become a better parent? _____
8. Why did you choose that score?
9. Why is that score not lower (1-3)?
10. What would have made this score higher (9 or 10)?
11. What are three tips you can give to improve child-parent relationships?
12. What do you think will help the parent community become more aware of child neglect?
13. What would you recommend as ways to prevent child neglect?

Questionnaire

Demographics:

1. Where does your age range from?

- under 25
- over 26

2. What is your ethnicity?

- White/Caucasian
- Hispanic American/Latino
- Black/African American
- Native American/ American Indian
- Asian American/ Pacific Islander
- Other, please specify: _____

3. What is your highest degree or level of school completed?

- Less than high school diploma
- High school degree or GED
- Vocational/Trade diploma
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

4. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Other please specify: _____

5. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other please specify: _____

6. What is your current employment status?

- Employed Full-time

- Employed Part-Time
- Unemployed but looking for work
- Unemployed but not looking for work
- Retired
- Other please specify: _____

7. What is your annual household income?

- Less than 24,000
- 25,000 - \$49,000
- 50,000 - \$99,000
- 100,000 - \$199,000
- More than \$200,000

8. Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 5

9. How many of your household members are people under 18?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

Interview questions developed by Laura Velazquez.

APPENDIX B
IRB APPROVAL

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administrative/Exempt Review Determination
Status: Determined Exempt
IRB-FY2022-60

Carolyn McAllister Laura Velazquez
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Carolyn McAllister Laura Velazquez:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Improving Parenting for Families with Involvement in the Child Welfare System: Perspectives of Social Workers in Southern California " has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risks and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's [COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#) for more information regarding campus requirements.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

- **Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.**
 - **Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.**
 - **Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.**
 - **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.**
-

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