

Empowering Jewish and Arab Families and children by college students in a multicultural city in Israel

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Who Are At-Risk Children and their Families?

- At-risk young students as those who demonstrate one or more of the following:
- Difficulties learning to read
- Difficulties working with numbers and math concepts
- Negative behaviors in class, family and friends
- (Shmid National Report, 2005)



Children At Risk in Israel

There are 2000000 children in Israel

15% -330000 are at risk

Most of them are of 7-12 years old

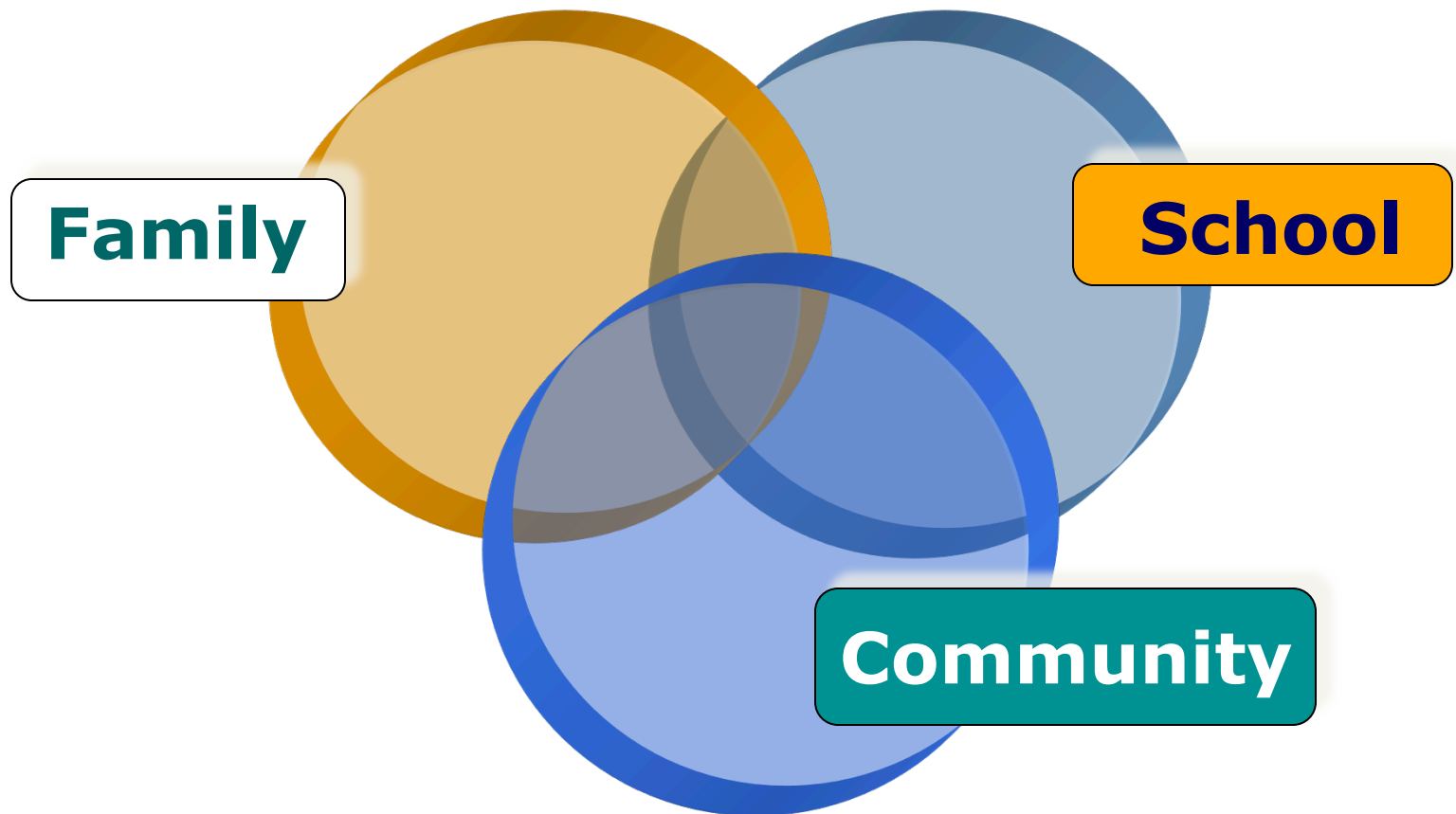
18% of them are new immigrants.

school Family partnerships

Research Results

- Family involvement outcomes –
- Higher student attendance
- More and better completion of homework
- Higher student achievement
- Higher student satisfaction with school
- Higher parent satisfaction with school
- More parent participation at the school
- Higher graduation rate from high school
- Higher continuation to college and technical schools

**OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE
OF FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY
ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING – Joice Epstein**



School Family partnership requires collaboration on many levels

- Ministry of Education
- Teacher college preparation
- City educational leadership
- School site leader
- Classroom teachers
- Parents
- Local businesses

Intervention Programs designed to Support for Parent Engagement

- In 1960s, [USA federal](#) government legislated intervention program for early education.
- [Head Start](#) Education Act were first federal programs to support disadvantaged students across states. Many other programs have been legislated since then.
- Head Start included family involvement, termed parent education, and child health (dental, immunizations, breakfast)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB Act)

- This law allocates federal funds
 - To develop programs
 - Allow parents to review their children's progress
 - NCLB, Title I, and other section of ESEA-
Encourage parents



HIPPY in Israel

- This intervention program for early education children was developed by the Hebrew University to help Mothers of low
- SES in Israel acquire the skills needed to help children develop cognitively and emotionally focusing on mother-child warm affections.
- The program was implemented in many countries such as: Australia, Brazil, Italy and many more countries.

The program: Empowering Jewish and Arab Mothers in the mixed City Akko



The Multi Cultural city of Akko



The Intervention Program

- This framework was designed to promote collaborations in which children's risk at school failure were moderated by college students.
- The main objectives of the program were:
 - 1. to reduce educational and social gaps among vulnerable at-risk children.
 - 2. to empower parents' involvement in their children's education at home, in school. and within the community.
 - 3. to promote two-way communication and trustful parent-teacher relationships.

Participants

- The parents: were identified as being at-risk on the basis of **demographic characteristics** (immigrants, single parents, Arab minorities, low socio-economic background).
- Their children display multiple functional (behavioral, attention, academic, social) problems reported by their teachers.
- The children were of 6-7 years old (first grade),

The Participants-The College Students

- The college students majored in counselling and education (third year).
- 20 Jewish and Arab students participated.
- Students' ages ranged from 21 years to 32 years. Half were single, the others were married with 1-2 children.
- The schools: Two Jewish and two Arab primary schools
- Their principals, 4 school counselors and 10 first grade Jewish and Arab teachers.

The Program

- Each student was assigned to a school and a family (Jewish students to Jewish schools and Arab students to Arab schools).
- The students were asked to gather information about the child from the teacher twice a year.
- Observation of the child in class and the school brake (twice a year).
- These observations were conducted by the student at the beginning and the end of the school year.

Proceedings of the Program

- The students were instructed to visit the parents' homes twice a month and spend with the mother and child 1-2 hours.
- The first meetings were to create a close and trustful relationship between the mother, child and the student.

Parent's Participation in the Program

The students showed the parents how to read stories out loud to children so that they connect books-reading to stories.

Parents were asked to place word signs around the home that the child can read

Parents play counting games, then addition facts and subtraction facts games, fractions, Uno, Suduko,...

Parents play money games with children

Parents share daily measuring things with children – cooking; items – sofa, TV, computer, phone; spaces as rooms, closets

Schools purchase back-pack programs that bring materials and instructions to parent.

Parents assist children with homework preparation.

Out of school enrichment activities.

Parent and teachers agree on student behavior

Rules

- Student-teacher-parent discuss and set reasonable shared rules, e.g. Respect others.
- Students and adults speak up and discuss when a rule is broken.
- The trio determines wise consequences when a rule is broken.

Enforcement techniques

- Direct eye contact
- Close proximity to child
- Firm, assertive tone
- Consistency in enforcement

Communicating with Parents: home and school connections

- Two-way, face-to-face is best mode
- E-mail short messages, only a few words as opened by smart phones
- Teacher-prepared weekly newsletters
- Positive student note or daily award

Communicating with Parents at School

- Student performances
- Open House once or twice a year
- Parent-teacher conferences, formal and informal
- Breakfast with the site leader
- Fathers' Day, Mothers' Day,

Results-

- **Teacher child interactions:**
- Majority of the mothers claimed that the teachers don't display warm and careful behavior to the children, they are ridged and
- Distant from the children. Accordingly the children don't like the teachers " She always shouts and tells me what to do".
- The teachers complained that the children are coming to school without their homework they are violent, and often look neglected (no personal hygean).

Teacher-Parent interactions

- The Arab teachers maintain that they have very little information about the child and family because of poor communication. They blame the parents of negligence.
- The Jewish teachers relate warmly to the families and treat them warmly.
- The Arab parents complained that the teachers don't inform them about the learning assignments and the teachers are not showing any interest in their children.

Teacher parent interactions

- The Jewish mothers seem to be more involved. They communicate more often with the teachers and the teachers encourage their participation.
- Previous studies of parental involvement in low SES indicate that these parents are interested in their children's studies (Hanafin & Annelynce, 2002), yet schools do not involve these parents in decision taking issues. As a result these parent feel that they are not wanted and often they are distressed and anxious. As a result they don't communicate often with the teachers.
- Our results show that mothers of low SES are concerned about their child's success in school, and they would like to participate at the schools. However in the Arab schools, the teachers are not showing warmth and empathy towards them which indicates that already in the firts grade parents are distant from the school.

Barriers in mothers interactions

- Majority of the mothers are single. At the age of 30 the Arab mothers raise 3-4 children (Jewish single mothers have 1child. Most of them work full time and they seem isolated from their families and very lonely.
- They don't think that they have to help the children with their work at home (they consider that the teacher's responsibility).
- However, the Jewish and Arab mothers have high expectations for their children's education in the present and in the future.
- Some of the mothers miss the emotional capital to add their children in their learning at home as well as their lack of time , motivation and material resources to add their children.
- Help with homework:
- Setting a daily schedule for the children.

Effects and Outcomes of the program

- The mothers and children developed trustful and warm relationships with the students.
- The mothers gain useful skills to help their children read and prepare their homework.
- The teachers in all the schools commented in the last meeting between the teachers, mothers, the school counselor and principal the improvement in the children's achievement, their personal appearance, their behavior and the improved interest and communication that the parents eniciate.