ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS: AN INVESTIGATION OF FOSTER PARENT-CHILD CHARACTERISTICS

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OBJECTIVES

• Discuss how different parenting characteristics effect child development
• Identify what the foster system is, and discuss foster child outcomes
• Review a research study that investigates foster parent characteristics as compared to those of traditional parent characteristics
• Distinguish ways to enhance foster child outcomes
NASP DOMAIN

- Domain 7: Family–School Collaboration Services
- System Level Services
THE ROLES OF A PARENT

• Parents are taxed with establishing the health and safety for their child, and with equipping them to be functioning members of society.

• The relationship between a parent and child has been shown to influence the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development/outcomes of the child.

• Numerous parenting characteristics are of great importance for building a healthy parent-child relationship.
  • Involvement, Attachment, Communication, Discipline Practices
  • Maltreatment
FOSTER CARE

• What is foster care?
• Common reasons for placement:
  • Maltreatment
  • Abandonment from a parent
  • Parental illness (mental and physical)
  • Parental incarceration
  • Parental substance/alcohol abuse
  • Death of parent
• 401,000 to 415,000 children in F.C. at any given time
  • Number of males and females typically even
• Foster Child outcomes
  • Despite foster programs’ best efforts, foster children’s outcomes are typically negative
THE FOSTER CARE EXPERIENCE

• What happens when the child is separated? (Bruskas, 2008)
• Parent-child relationships in foster care (Storer et al., 2014)
  • Lack of connection and bond with care provider
  • Perceived lack of fit or mismatch within their homes
  • Chaotic home environments marked by judgement and reactivity
• Major relationship barriers in Foster Care (Rabley, Preyde, & Gharabaghi, 2014)
  • Temperament of the child
  • Placement Stability
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the levels of parenting characteristics of foster parents and traditional parents?
2. Do levels of parenting characteristics differ between foster parents and traditional parents?
3. If levels of parenting characteristics do differ between foster parents and traditional parents, which specific foster parent characteristics need attention or score lower?
METHODS

• Grant reward
• IRB approval
• Quasi-experimental design
  • Foster parents and traditional parents were utilized
• Participant eligibility
• Participant recruitment
  • Recruitment through PATH
  • Recruitment through 3 schools across North Dakota
• Passive consent
• Demographics Survey
• Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition—Parenting Relationship Questionnaire (BASC-3 PRQ).
  1. Attachment
  2. Communication
  3. Discipline Practices
  4. Involvement
  5. Parenting Confidence
  6. Satisfaction with School
  7. Relational Frustration
• Scoring and Reporting computer software for the BASC-3 PRQ provided $T$ scores for each scale.
DATA ANALYSIS

Participant Flow
- 129 subjects participated in the study
- 1 case had missing data; 1 case was a multivariate outlier
- Total participants included in final sample: 127
  - 72 traditional parents & 55 foster parents

Data Screening
- Histograms were utilized to visually inspect the data.
- Correlation matrix for multicollinearity
- Box’s Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices and Levene’s $F$ Tests for homogeneity of covariance

SPSS software
- Descriptive Statistics
- Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)
- Bonferroni's Correction
  - ANOVA on each dependent variable

Turn & Talk Activity
## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Measures of Parent-Child Relationship Characteristics as a Function of Parent Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Attachment</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Discipline Practices</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Parenting Confidence</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Satisfaction with School</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Relational Frustration</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Parents</td>
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<td>51.24</td>
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<td>Foster Parents</td>
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</table>
## OVERALL RESULTS

### Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for Parent-Child Relationship Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Multivariate $F^a$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Attachment $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Communication $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Discipline Practices $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Involvement $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Parenting Confidence $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Satisfaction with School $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>Relational Frustration $F^b$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
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<td>Parent</td>
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<td>.086</td>
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<td>.005</td>
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*Note. Multivariate $F$ ratios were generated from Pillai’s Statistic.*

*a Multivariate $df = 7, 119$.  
b Univariate $df = 1, 125$
The MANOVA indicated a significant difference exists between traditional parent and foster parent characteristics.

The ANOVA’s indicated a significant difference in 5/7 parenting characteristics:
- Attachment
- Communication
- Discipline Practices
- Parenting Confidence
- Satisfaction with School

No significant difference in Involvement and Relational Frustration.
Research tells us that healthy parent-child relationships are indicative of positive child development/outcomes.

Foster parent-child relationships are significantly lower than traditional parent-child relationships.

Foster children typically have negative outcomes.

It can be implied that promoting better foster parent-child relationships will enhance resiliency and promote positive academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes later in life.

**DISCUSSION**

- What do these findings imply about foster child outcomes?
- Findings in light of previous research
- Limitations
- Recommendations
- Practical implications
“Every child, no matter what the circumstances into which they are born, deserves the same loving support, encouragement, and resources as our own children.”

-Foster Care to Success
REFERENCES


