
Summary

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Stepping out from home and moving to a preschool can be a difficult process for children. This shift would involve coping with new environment, adjusting to new routines, share materials with others, separate themselves from those whom they love and are being loved. These first experiences in adapting to a new environment conditions the rest of their school life. Children therefore need support from their family and teachers.

Not only children but parents also go through a difficult phase when child leaves home and enters a preschool. They experience a sense of loss, separation and isolation. It is therefore necessary to seek appropriate ways to orient parents and children well before they enter preschool. Researches revealed that one hallmark of any successful Early Childhood Programme is the degree to which it involves parents. Communication between parents and teachers has become increasingly important. This means that parents must recognize and exercise their education, knowledge and creative capacities and the schools should provide a platform to exercise them. Such direct linkages can foster changes in the child's varied world of learning and get the maximum out of it.

Rationale

Transitions, usually being difficult for young children should be planned carefully. Researches reveal that this is the most impressionable period of one's life and it is during this time that vital foundation is laid for optimum development of an individual's personality. It is therefore very necessary to reduce stress and anxiety and instead provide a homely atmosphere when child enters a preschool. Just moving a child from one location to another can upset the child. Thus, there should be a healthy co-ordination between children, parents and teachers.

The present study aims at understanding the process of transition from home to preschool and preparing an educational package for parents and teachers to facilitate the smooth transition from home to preschool.

The present study

Designing, developing and implementing an educational package in form of Educational Training Programme (ETP) for facilitating first transition from home to pre-school.

Objectives

- To understand the transition process from home to preschool.
- To study the transition program of different private schools of Baroda.

- To design and develop a package to facilitate transition.
- To study the effectiveness of the package developed to facilitate transition from home to pre-school.

Procedure

Nature of the study

A descriptive, development-cum-intervention study was undertaken to meet the said objectives of the study. The study was conducted in three phases.

Phase – I : Understanding the process of transition from home to pre-school

Sample

To understand the transition process from home to preschool and study the transition programme of different private schools of Baroda, the subjects who were interviewed included parents of 35 preschoolers, all the concerned preschool teachers and available supervisors of 6 different private schools of Baroda. The schools were Tejas Vidyalaya, Shaishav School, Alembic Vidyalaya, Baroda High School-Alkapuri, Utkarsh Vidyalaya and Navrachna High School. A purposive sampling technique was used for sample selection.

Tools and techniques

Parents were interviewed at their residence and for teachers focus group interviews were conducted at school. A semi structured interview schedule was used to collect information from parents.

Phase - II : Development of an educational package (ETP)

Based on the available literature and responses from the parents and teachers the investigator prepared an educational package to facilitate transition from home to preschool in the form of video and pamphlet for parents and teachers.

Phase - III : Effectiveness of the developed educational package

Sample

During the III phase of the study the developed video film was shown to all 184 parents whose children were on the threshold of going to preschool or were just one week old in the school. These parents were from Tejas Vidyalay, Utkarsh Vidyalaya, Meera School and Chetan Balwadi – a Laboratory Nursery School of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (Faculty of Home Science, MSU, Baroda). Besides, the film was also screened for 66 teachers and academicians in the field of Early Child Development and Education.

Tools and techniques

To find out the effectiveness of the developed educational package (ETP) a film review questionnaire was developed by the investigator. This questionnaire was used to collect responses from all the 250 respondents comprising 184 parents and 66 teachers and other professionals related to the field.

The questionnaire included questions regarding visuals, audio, language used, messages covered, duration of the film. It included both open as well as close ended questions.

Three months later a sub-sample of 21 parents and 12 teachers purposively selected were interviewed. This was done to find out whether the information provided in the video and pamphlet were used or not for the transition process. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and subsequently translated into English.

Data analysis

The data was analysed both quantitatively, in terms of frequency & percentage and qualitatively through content analysis in terms of the theme of the responses.

Findings

Phase - I : Understanding the transition process

The present study was conducted in three phases. The findings of the Phase-I were -

A. Opinion of parents

- Majority of the parents (77%) felt children need to be prepared for the transition from home to preschool, whereas 23% of them said that there was no need for this preparation.
- The parents were not preparing their children for transition in an appropriate manner.
- Most of the parents were worried when their children left for school. Because children may cry, may not eat or how they may adjust or not.
- Parents expressed that they felt horrible and helpless when they left their children. Some of the parents said that they felt like taking their children back home.
- Most of the parents reported that in the initial days their children were crying and did not like to go to school.
- All the respondents (100%) said that no orientation was provided for child's preparation for this transition from home to preschool before the school started. Only after the schools started parents meeting was conducted.

B. Opinion of the teachers

- Teachers expressed both parents and children must be prepared for school.
- Children need to be toilet trained and also be able to converse in local language and should follow the formal set up in the school.

- The parents must relate the positive aspects of school and teacher etc. so that the child feels motivated enough to come to school.
- The teachers noted that initially children cry a lot. So, requisite teachers should be there to comfort the new entrants.
- The teachers felt children going to play center adjust faster and normally, over-protected children took a longer duration to settle in the class.

Phase - II : Development of an educational package

An educational package comprising of a video film and a pamphlet were developed by the investigator. The content validity and the technical validity of the educational package were established with the help of content experts and technical experts in the field.

Phase - III : Effectiveness of the developed educational package

- All the respondents (100%) which included parents, teachers, supervisors, professionals in the field of Early Child Development and Education agreed that there is a need for such a of film on the transition process from home to preschool.
- Out of total 250 respondents 47.2% of them rated the video film as very good, 38.8% as excellent, 13.5% and 0.5% as good and fair respectively. None of the respondents rated it as poor.

Concluding remarks

The results clearly indicated that parents need to know about the importance of preparing their children for school in an appropriate and effective manner. There should be a close link between home and preschool and a healthy co-ordination between parents, teachers and children. The educational package in form of ETP was found need based and of immense utility for parents and teachers. Consequently, children were found to be benefitted. The parents were really very happy and expressed that each and every parent must experience this Educational Package to facilitate the transition process for children from home to preschool.

Recommendations

- Educational Transition Programme need to be developed for municipal schools and schools in the rural and tribal areas.
- Extension studies could be undertaken to understand the transition from preschool to primary school.
- A refresher course for teachers could be designed and implemented to facilitate smooth transition.