

# Investigation of the Effect of Family Education Program on Primary Care Parents/Care Staff of Children

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## Abstract

It is important to support the families who give primary care to the child, so that the child can gain the expressed skills and moreover, the family can be a healthy family. These supports should be started from a very early period. Under these considerations, in the research, it was aimed to develop a family education program about communication, parental attitudes and developmental needs for parents/caregivers who provide primary care to 36-72 months old children and to give this family education to parents/caregivers who provide primary care to children, as a result of the training provided. In this study, it was aimed to determine the effectiveness of education. The parallel mixed method model, which converges from mixed research methods, was used in the research. In this context, the research was carried out with the members of the City Council of Ankara Keçiören Municipality. After the research, it was seen that they stated that should be careful while communicating, the importance of paying attention to their parental attitudes, and that they developed awareness of how important communication is. In the light of the results obtained from the parents/caregivers at more frequent intervals.

**Keywords:** family education, communication, parental attitudes, preschool period

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## 1. Introduction

All kinds of support provided by parents/caregivers who provide primary care to children in the early years make significant contributions to the developmental areas and developmental needs of the child (Aral et. al., 2020; Kandır and Alpan, 2008; Sak et. al., 2015). All kinds of habits, knowledge and experiences that can be gained to children in early childhood, which is a very important period in a child's life, can be effective in shaping his personality (Ihmediah and Oliemat, 2015; Karaca, Gündüz and Aral, 2011). In this context, it is emphasized that the effect of effective communication and consistent behaviors in the family is very important in the education of children (McKay et. al., 2010).

Mutual love, respect, acceptance and empathy are important for effective communication in the family and for displaying consistent behaviors. Communication, which is defined as the process of conveying feelings and thoughts to the other person through different channels, may not always be effective for a number of reasons. One of the biggest obstacles to communication is the misunderstanding or misunderstanding of the messages, which can result in conflict and negative consequences (Şahin and Aral, 2012). In order to communicate effectively, families should use clear statements about what they want from children, listen to children, understand them and support them in expressing their feelings. In order to achieve all these, parents must ensure that the communication continues in a consistent manner at all times and in all situations (Aral and Kadan, 2018a; Baxter and Akkoor, 2011; Sağlam, 2017).

While reasoning their children and communicating effectively with them, families try to teach them some behavioral patterns and display different attitudes towards their children with the effect of this expectation. These attitudes of families shape the developmental needs of children, their communication styles, and therefore their communication and interaction the future (Aral and Kadan, 2018a; Palut, 2008; Sağlam, 2017). While there are parental attitudes that are not suitable for the developmental needs of the child and allow the child to do whatever he/she wants, there are also parents who raise their children in a military order. In addition to all these, it is important to internalize the democratic attitude, which is suitable for the development of child, allows him to express his feelings and thoughts, has rules, and at the same time maintains consistency (Han and Lee, 2018). In this way, it will be possible to realize the desired level of communication within the family and to respond to all the developmental needs of the child. In the researches, there are studies that take into account the developmental characteristics of their children, deal with intra-familial communication and examine parental attitudes (Çalışkan and Aslander, 2014; Duncan et. al., 2009; Fitzpatrick and Koerner, 2016; Karadağ, 2015; Kaya et. al., 2018; Keverevski and Iliev, 2017; Lök et. al., 2016; Major et. al., 2022; Öztürk and Fidan, 2020; Şahin and Aral, 2012; Van et. al., 2017). However, it is also noteworthy that these mentioned studies are in the screening method, and that experimental studies have been conducted abroad and recently in Turkey (Bauer and Webster-Stratton, 2006; Işık and Demircioğlu, 2021; Mingebach et. al., 2018; Öztürk and Fidan, 2020; Piquero et. al., 2016). Therefore,

it is thought that the development of effective communication, parental attitudes and family education programs for the development of children, which are encountered in the field, and which are also a whole in the development of the child, will contribute to the field. From this point of view, it was aimed to determine the effect of the family education program on the effective communication, parental attitudes and awareness levels of children's developmental needs of parents/caregivers who provide primary care to children.

## 2. Method

The model, study group, data collection tools, data collection method and data analysis sections of the research, carried out to determine the effect of family education program on the effective communication, parental attitudes and awareness levels of the parents/caregivers who provide primary care to children are given below.

### 2.1 Research Model

In the research, the interview method, are of the qualitative research methods was used. The data of the research, which was planned as a quasi-experimental design without a control group, were collected through interviews before and after the training.

### 2.2 Study Group

In the study, parents/caregivers who provide primary care to children in early childhood were studied. In this context, a meeting was held with the Keçiören Municipality Keçiören City Council Women's Council for the research and after the permissions given by the authorities, a meeting was held with all the parent/caregivers in the Women's Council, and the purpose of the study was explained. Forty- six parents/caregivers who volunteered to undertake the primary care of a child aged at least 36-72 months were included in the study. Of the parents/caregivers included in the study, 67,4% were 44 years old and over, 93,5% were married, 58,7% were mothers and 41,3% were primary caregivers such as grandparents, 60,9% were literate primary or secondary school graduates, 23,9% were high school graduates, and 15,2% were university graduates. It was determined that 73,9% of children given primary care had two or more siblings, 56,5% of the children were boys and 43,5% were girls.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

In the research, "General Information Form" and "Semi- Structured Interview Form" prepared by the researchers were used. In the study, a family education program consisting two sessions prepared for parents/caregivers who provide primary care to children was prepared and implemented.

*General Information Form:* It is the form developed by the researchers to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the parents/caregivers included in the study. In the form, there are questions about the age, marital status, educational status of the parents/caregivers, the number of siblings of the children they provide primary care, and their gender.

*Semi- Structured Interview Form:* It is a form prepared by researchers to determine the level of awareness of parents/caregivers about communication, parental attitudes and the child's developmental needs before and after the education. After the form was prepared, it was presented to the opinion of the expert faculty member and the form was given its final shape according to the expert's opinion. In the form, there are questions to determine whether the parents/caregivers had problems in communication, if they had problems, what they did for the problem they experienced, whether they received any training application. In addition the form includes questions about whether communication in the family and parental attitudes are important in a healthy family structure, what are the developmental needs of children, and how these needs can be met. As a post-test, there are questions about what will happen to them and their children with the education they receive, what are the positive and negative aspects of the educational received, and whether there is on area that they want to be changed for education.

*Family Education Program:* Developed for parents/caregivers who gave primary care to 36- 72 months old child and consisting of two sessions, the training program has its philosophical basis from pragmatism, its psychological basis form Ralp Tayler's views, and its theoretical foundations from Social Development Theories, Behavioral Theories and Psychoanalytic Theories. In the philosophy of education called pragmatism, it is emphasized that the pre-learning of the learners is important in order for learning to take place successfully and it is necessary to shape on these learnings (Bakır, 2006). Ralp Tayler, on the other hand, draws attention to the use of repetitions in learning and the connection of the subjects during learning (Demirel, 2017). On a theoretical basis, Social Behavioral Theory emphasizes the importance of being a role-model in the realization of learning. It is mentioned in the psychoanalytic theory that the behaviors of the parents towards their children will be internalized by the children and thus contributes to communication and developmental needs should be considered for the healthy development of children in the psychoanalytic theory (Aral and Kadan, 2018b). All these factors were taken into consideration in the preparation of the which the parents/caregivers would take an

active part.

#### 2.4. Data Collection

The research was carried out by interviewing the members of Keçiören Municipality Keçiören City Council Women's Council. Keçiören Municipality was contacted for the research and after the permissions given by the authorities, interviews were held with the parents/caregivers the purpose of the training was explained to the parents/caregivers, consent forms were signed by the mothers who agreed to participate voluntarily, and the training was implemented in July 2021. Before the training started, pre-tests were applied to the parents/caregivers. Then, the parents/caregivers were divided into two groups, and the family education program was implemented in 1,5 hour sessions for each group. The trainings were organized as morning- afternoon sessions. After the training, post-test applications were applied to the parents/caregivers.

#### 2.5. Analysis of Data

The answers given by the parents/caregivers were analyzed with the SPSS statistical program, and content analysis was carried out in the analysis of qualitative data. Descriptive statistics technique was used for the sociodemographic characteristics of the parental/caregivers. In the content analysis, categories and subcategories were created for the answers given by the parents/caregivers. The form created for content analysis was presented to the opinion of the instructors who are experts in the field, the form was finalized according to the expert opinions, and the data was coded by two independent researchers. As a result of content analysis, pre-test categories were divided into, difficulties experienced in communication, what is done case of difficulties in communications, lessons/seminars/courses taken for effective communication and where is taken, the effect of parental attitudes on communication, and the developmental needs of children. The post-test categories were divided into categories as changes in communication changes as a result of reflection on children, positive aspects of training and aspects that need to be change/improved in education. The answers given by the parents/caregivers were coded by two independent researchers according to the content analysis, the inter-researcher reliability was found to be 100%, and the answers given by the mothers were coded as M<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>, ..... M<sub>46</sub>.

### 3. Findings

The findings of the research carried out to determine the effect of the family education program applied to parents/caregivers effective communication within the family, developmental needs of the child and parental attitudes are given below.

As pre-test parents/caregivers before the training, "Do you have difficulties in communication?" question was posed. Half of the parents/caregivers answered that they had difficulties (n=23), while half of them stated that they did not have any difficulties (n=23). While the answer to the question "In which area do you experience the difficulty" directed to the parents/caregivers who have difficulties was given the answer to have difficulty in expressing oneself at the highest rate (n=12), this answer was given to people who are not sincere (n=6), prejudices of people (n=3), conflict of ideas (n=2), communication with the child (n=1), difficulty in listening (n=1) and not being able to look people in the eyes (n=1). While M<sub>1</sub> of the mothers expressed the difficulty in communication as "The people on the other hand are stubborn and defend that their opinions are right, even if they are wrong.", M<sub>24</sub> "I think that I can't explain myself fully" and M<sub>41</sub> "It bothers me that they look sullen and uninterested." stated as.

What do you do to parents/caregivers in such communication problems? question was posed. While the parents/caregivers gave the answer not speaking at the highest rate (n=12), this answer was being patient (n=6), closing the issue (n=5), empathetic approach (n=2), being upset (n=1), staying in the background (n=1) followed by receiving information (n=1). M<sub>13</sub> from mothers "I cut off communication in such situations" while giving the answer, M<sub>26</sub> "I empathize and approve as much as they understand." M<sub>33</sub> "I have difficulty in listening. I try to overcome them by listening more" expressed their opinions.

Parents/caregivers were asked whether they had received any seminars/lessons/trainings on communication. Parents/caregivers were identified as those who received training (n=14) and those who did not receive training (n=29). While the parents/caregivers who received training stated that they received this education while they were high school or university students (n=6), this rate was followed by public education centers (n=4), and workplace (n=4) answers respectively. M<sub>9</sub> of the mothers said "Training meetings were held in the company I work for on this subject. Unfortunately I don't remember the name of the person" M<sub>17</sub> "Yes, I took a course at the university" have given their answers.

Another question posed to parents/caregivers as a pre-test is to what extent effective communication can affect the creation of a healthy environment in the family. While the parents/caregivers had moderate (n=25) effects at the highest rate, this rate was followed by high (n=10) and unaffected (n=2) answers respectively. There are also parents/caregivers who gave the answer I don't know (n=9) to this answer. Mothers M<sub>37</sub> "If there

is effective communication within the family, there will be no conflict anyway.” M<sub>46</sub> “Sharing is not possible in an environment where there is absolutely no very important communication” have given their answers.

Another question posed to parents/caregivers as a pre-test is to what extent parental attitudes can be effective in the communication between family members. While this question was answered at the most moderate level (n=23), this answer was followed by very (n=12) and no effect (n=1) answers respectively. She stated that she did not know from the parents (n=8). Mothers M<sub>15</sub> “High rate”, M<sub>35</sub> “Communication between parents and their children try to communicate. Within the framework of respect and love without discrimination between children” expressed their opinions.

The last question posed to the parents/caregivers as a pre-test is what the developmental needs of the children might be and what can be done to meet these needs. The highest rate of communication (n=15) was given to this question. This ratio varies respectively according the child with love and respect (n=10), providing education (n=4), health care (n=3), and the needs of the child (n=3), getting information about the child’s development (n=2), spending with the child (n=2), giving importance to the child’s feelings (n=2), treating children equally (n=1), being careful about what children do (n=1), followed the answers. The answer to the question, I don’t know (n=7) was also given. Mother M<sub>28</sub> said “I think there are different needs suitable for all ages. It is necessary to pay attention to this.” M<sub>32</sub> “Conscious social environment, cultural and educational arts and sports activities”, M<sub>44</sub> “Children have spiritual and social needs as well as physical some of these can be met at school and in the circle of friends” expressed their opinions.

After the implementation of the training program, the parents/caregivers were asked questions about what they gained through training, and they were asked to express their thoughts about the training program. In this context, the first question posed was what are the aspects you want to change in yourself after the training program? This question was answered with the highest rate of being careful while communicating (n=38), and this rate was respectively parental attitudes (n=24), focusing on developmental needs (n=15), increasing empathy (n=8), retraining (n=2) and nothing I want to change (n=2) followed. M<sub>3</sub> from mothers said “I realized that I should give my children more opportunities. I’m not supposed to be a very protective mother.” M<sub>21</sub> “I will approach the setbacks a little more positively.” M<sub>27</sub> “I intend to use body language more effectively and increase empathy” and M<sub>45</sub> expressed their thoughts as “To be able to display a more democratic attitude.”

Secondly, in the post-test, the question of what kind of changes will occur in children after education was asked. While parents/caregivers answered this question at the highest rate feel-good individuals (n=24), happy individuals (n=17) and self-confident individuals (n=14) answered this question respectively. They answered this question (n=12) as I don’t know parent/caregivers. M<sub>9</sub> from mothers said “I need to give opportunities, not be protective and listen more to increase my child’s self-confidence” M<sub>16</sub> “I think I can understand him better” expressed their opinions.

Parents/caregivers were asked what the positive aspects of the education received could be? As the positive aspect of the education received, the answers given that it shows the positive aspect of communication at the highest rate (n=18), and that it is effective (n=18). These answers were followed by parental attitudes (n=15), developmental needs (n=14), teaching communication (n=8), empathy (n=8) and showing negative aspects of communication (n=1). Parents/caregivers (n=8) stated that they did not know. Mothers expressed their thoughts as M<sub>6</sub> “I should treat other people and children the way I need to be treated” M<sub>17</sub> “I have become conscious about my child’s development process” M<sub>19</sub> “Effective communication” M<sub>42</sub> “The right attitudes have been drawn for myself and the audience.”

Finally, the question of what aspects of the training program need to be changed/ improved was also asked? While the answer to this question is that there is nothing that needs to be changed at the highest rate (n=38), this rate is interactive (n=3), providing plenty of examples (n=3), aiming at adolescence (n=2), training more frequently giving (n=2), and working with more people (n=1) were followed. M<sub>38</sub> from mothers said, “Interactive and more abundant examples can be used. Thank you” and M<sub>40</sub> “Training is planned for exchange period. We thank you I think it will be more beneficial to reach more people” expressed their opinions.

#### 4. Discussion

As a result of the intra-familial communication, parental attitudes and developmental needs of children training program prepared for the parents/caregivers who care for these children who have children in early childhood, the parents/caregivers have difficulty in expressing themselves in the answers of the points they have difficulty in communication directed as a pre-test. They mentioned issues such as judgements, conflict of ideas, and lack of empathy. They answered the measures they took in the face of these difficulties as not speaking, withdrawing, and being with silent. Although this situation is not seen as a desirable situation, it can sometimes be seen that the individual hesitates to express his thoughts in society and does not speak in response. It is seen that he does not know how to express his thoughts, and prejudiced attitudes often take place under his refrain from expressing himself (Aydemir, 2021; Çalışkan and Ayık, 2015; Erdoğan, 2018; Koç, 2016; Şahin and Aral, 2012). As a result of such a situation, as in the result of the research avoidance of communication may become common.

As a result of the research, it is seen that the applied training program is effective. As a matter of fact, the answers given to the pre-test questions asked before the training to the question of how much communication within the family affects the healthy family, and the answers to the question of what you want to change in yourself after the training, being more conscious about communication confirm this situation. Similarly, it was observed that although the parents/caregivers gave different answers to the question asked about the attitudes of the parents as a pre-test before the education and the questions about the developmental needs of the children, they were not completely clear in terms of parental attitudes and developmental needs. However, after the implementation of the training program, it was observed that they would focus more on the developmental needs of their children, pay more attention to the attitudes of their parents, and try to display a democratic attitude, in addition to communication to the question posed as the post-test. Parents are very important people in their children's lives. Their unconscious actions or behaviors will always have the potential to leave a deep impact on the child who takes the parents as role models. Knowing the developmental needs will also contribute to the child's being a self-confident and happy individual (Bauer and Webster-Stratton, 2006; Duncan et. al., 2009; Güzel and Arkar, 2018; Kaya et. al., 2018; Mingeback et. al., 2018; Niccols, 2009; Piquero et. al., 2016; Ural et. al., 2015). This was also stated that by the mothers in the post-test. In addition, when we look at the point that mothers focus on as the positive aspects of the education program, it is seen that the importance of effective communication, parental attitudes and developmental needs. All of these stated situations are important in terms of showing that the education has achieved its purpose.

Similar to the findings of the research, it was concluded in the researches that education programs for effective communication, parental attitudes and the developmental needs of children create awareness in parents and they treat their children and spouses with this awareness (Bögels et. al., 2014; Brietenstein et. al., 2012; Bühler et. al., 2011; Dere-Çiftçi and Aksoy, 2015; Emerson et. al., 2021; Güzel and Arkar, 2018; Isanejad and Chahardoli, 2017; Jouries et. al., 2019; Kirby and Sanders, 2014; McCafrey, 2015; Meybodi et. al., 2019; Nicholson et. al., 2002; Solomon et. al., 2017; Swanlund, 2010; Wyatt et. al. 2008). However, reaching more people, applying for longer periods and focusing on the adolescence period, which are stated as the missing aspects in the education program, are also seen as an important stimulus for future research.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As a result of the research carried out to determine the effect of the family education program applied to the parents/caregivers on effective communication, the child's developmental needs and parental attitudes; it was seen that the issues they had difficulty in communicating were the problems they experienced in expressing themselves, they preferred to close the issue and remain silent, the majority of them did not receive communication training, effective communication and parental attitudes were moderately effective in creating a health family environment at home, and they stated that the most important need of the child was communication. After the implementation of the training program, the parents/ caregivers stated that they wanted to have more effective communication skills, that they would apply their parental attitudes more carefully, that they would focus on the developmental needs of their children that their children would be happier, that they wanted to have more effective communication skills, that they wanted to change themselves, that they learned communication as a positive aspect of the training program have expressed their opinion. They wanted the training program to be of a longer duration to be presented to different people and to focus on the developmental needs of adolescence. Based on the results obtained from the research;

- Applying the training program to different samples,
- Conducting longer-term training programs,
- Providing training programs with more interaction and
- It can be suggested to prepare and present training programs in which different developmental stages are also addressed.

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