Provider Behaviors Potentially Impacting Enrollment, Engagement, and Attrition in Home-Based Parenting Programs: A Qualitative Analysis

Devin Barlaan, PhD[1], Salena King, MS[1], Jens Jespersen, PhD[1], Lana Beasley, PhD[1], Helen Milojevich, PhD[2], Stormie Fuller[2], and David Bard, PhD[2]

Oklahoma State University[1], University of Oklahoma Health Center[2]

Introduction

- Home-based parenting programs can reduce risk factors commonly associated with child maltreatment[1] by providing parent education, promoting healthy child development, and targeting family safety.[2]
- The success of home-based parenting programs relies heavily on the family's enrollment, engagement, and retention.[3-4]
- There are common provider barriers that hinder the success of family outcomes[3] and researchers have focused on the causes of enrollment, engagement, and attrition in these programs to enhance family outcomes.[4]

Purpose

- The current study explores the ways in which provider behavior relates to enrollment, engagement, and reduced attrition for families in home-based parenting programs.

Methods

Participants:
- A purposive sampling method was used. The sample included 21 providers in three home-based programs (Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and SafeCare).
- All providers identified as female.
- The median age range was 40-49 years old.
- Most providers identified as White/Caucasian (71%), Black/African American (14%), and Hispanic/Latino (5%).

Procedures:
- Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify thoughts and behaviors of providers that impact enrollment, engagement, and attrition.
- Interviews were conducted by trained data collectors and last approximately 1 hour.

Analysis:
- Interviews were transcribed and cross-checked for accuracy by University-trained research assistants with inter-rater reliability being 85% or higher for all transcripts.
- A template approach was utilized to analyze data using NVivo 11 Software.

Results

- The providers believed that their approach and outreach efforts were the most important behaviors impacting enrollment in home-based parenting programs.
- Providers described that providing support to families and effective communication were the most important behaviors impacting engagement in home-based parenting programs.
- Providers explained that providing resources and setting goals were the most important behaviors impacting retention.
- Across all three stages, providers emphasized the importance of four specific behaviors:
  1. Building rapport, specifically through active listening,
  2. Providing support,
  3. Tailoring their approach, and
  4. Checking in on families.
- Providers shared personality traits that promoted rapport building, including being non-judgmental, reliable, empathetic, genuine, and relatable.

Figure 1

Provider Behaviors that Impact Participant Enrollment, Engagement, and Retention

Enrollment
- Approach
  - Answer questions
  - Be conversational
  - Express excitement
  - Tailor approach
- Outreach to families
  - Contact ASAP
  - Discuss referral source

Tailor approach to family; Make family feel comfortable

Engagement
- Check in with families
- Active listening
- Good communication
- Don't be forceful
- Be reliable
- Allow processing of struggles
- Use welcoming body language
- Engage the children

Provide information and education; Build rapport

Flexibility: scheduling of visits; program requirements; implementation of curriculum

Encourage family

Retention
- Provide resources
- Meet needs of family
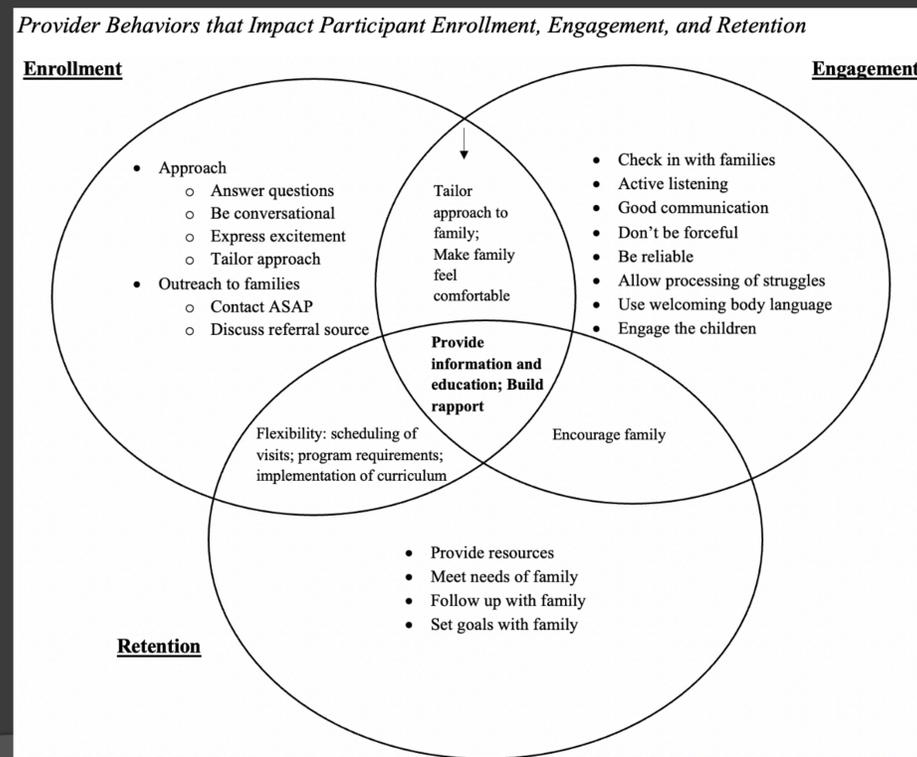- Follow up with family
- Set goals with family

Conclusion

- This study demonstrates a myriad of provider behaviors that impact the continuum of engagement.
- Given that provider approach and rapport building emerged as major themes, this research holds relevance to the hiring and training of home-visiting program providers.
- Overall, workforce structure and training that includes behavioral strategies to improving enrollment, engagement, and retention in home-based parenting programs is paramount in achieving program success, and therefore family well-being.

Selected References

[1] Chen, M., & Chan, K. L. (2015). Effects of parenting programs on child maltreatment prevention. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *17*(1), 88–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838014566718

[2] Mytton, J., Ingram, J., Manns, S., & Thomas, J. (2014). Facilitators and barriers to engagement in parenting programs: a qualitative systematic review. *Health Education & Behavior: The Official Publication of the Society for Public Health Education*, *41*(2), 127–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198113485755

[3] Beasley, L. O., Ridings, L. E., Smith, T. J., Shields, J. D., Silovsky, J. F., Beasley, W., & Bard, D. (2017). A qualitative evaluation of engagement and attrition in a nurse home visiting program: From the participant and provider perspective. *Prevention Science*, *19*(4), 528–537. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-017-0846-5

[4] McCurdy, K., & Daro, D. (2001). Parent involvement in Family Support Programs: An integrated theory. *Family Relations*, *50*(2), 113–121. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2001.00113.x

Correspondence