

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**Parental Knowledge and Perception  
Regarding the Quality of Daycare in Israel:  
Is it Possible to Make a Difference?**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master's Degree in the School of Education, Bar-Ilan University

Ramat Gan, Israel

2016

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the notification of directors in day care centers regarding parental knowledge about structural and procedural characteristics of the day care, has brought about a change in the director's sharing behavior and whether or not thus had an impact on the level of parental knowledge about the daycare center. This study was a follow-up study to previous research, which examined the knowledge that parents have on the educational environment daycare (Avisror, 2013). This study is part of a more elaborated study that explores the relationship between the home and the daycare.

Many studies describe the importance of information sharing between daycare staff and parents, regarding the child's individual experiences, needs and development. It is assumed that this routine of information sharing will bring to better, more sensitive care and support for the child. The study examined the impact of the level of report (partial/detailed notification) to the day care director of the parents' knowledge about the daycare center, the perception and actions of the director regarding parental knowledge, and whether these activities have improved the knowledge of the parents. We hypothesized that following a change in the directors behavior pattern, improvement will be shown in parental knowledge about the daycare. We further hypothesized that directors who received detailed report would show greater improvement than those who received partial report.

The study population included 154 parents of toddlers in 22 daycare centers. Prior to this study, and as an introduction, the directors and daycare center supervisors (those who supervise day care centers that participated in the previous study, and others) took part in an explanation lecture describing the findings of the previous study (Avisror, 2013). In the present study, the daycare centers were divided into two groups, depending on the type of the report: partial/detailed.

Each manager took part in a meeting in which they were presented with the average score of "parental knowledge" in all of the day care centers and their "parental knowledge" score in their own daycare. In addition, the detailed research group was presented with details of the parental knowledge scores by domains. Then the directors were interviewed and asked to answer a questionnaire about the structural and

procedural characteristics of the daycare. Seven parents were randomly selected from each daycare to answer a phone distributed interview about the daycare. Parental level of knowledge was set by comparing the answers of the parents to those of the director. Finally, the daycare directors were asked to answer a follow-up questionnaire, in which they were asked to report about any changes which took place regarding the distribution of information to parents following the participation in the study.

The findings suggest that supervisors who received an explanation about the importance of parental knowledge, changed their approach to the information transferred to parents and their involvement in the daycare. This change is not seen in the directors' approach. Importantly, the research findings indicate a significant improvement in parental knowledge, but the explanation for this improvement is not clear. Qualitative examination carried out, indicates that some improvement may be related to the attitude of the daycare supervisor. Also, the findings show no improvement in the quality evaluation of the daycare and satisfaction by the parents, and there was no difference in assessing the daycare and satisfaction with the conditions of the detailed report versus the partial report. It is important to note that the hypothesis regarding the specific question "will there will be a change in the director's positions regarding the transfer of information development" has been refuted, since the managers did not convey any developmental information routinely to all parents of daycare.

In conclusion, the findings show that by informing the supervisors and the directors of day care centers, about the importance of the routine information sharing with the parents and about the limited parental knowledge about the daycare, changes can be seen in their perceptions. It may be that consequently an improvement can be seen regarding the parental knowledge about the daycare (but not about their child). The reasons for the improvement in parental knowledge may be related to the degree of the supervisors' involvement.