

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**Parents Knowledge about Their Child's Daycare:
What do they Know and What do They Want to Know?**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the notification of directors in daycare centers regarding parental knowledge about structural and procedural characteristics of the daycare, 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 (Shraub, 2013). This study is a 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 effect of notification of directors about the correlation between desired parental knowledge about the daycare and common knowledge in their possession, when this adjustment have been based on the findings of earlier research in this subject. In addition, we checked whether the respective change depends on the quality grade received in the previous research. We hypothesized that a change will be shown in the correlation between the information that the parent wants to receive and the information he actually receives as a result of granting of feedback and information sheets. We further hypothesized that the respective change will not be found in correlation with the quality grade received in the previous research, because daycare-parent partnership has only small part in formal daycare quality assessment.

The study population included 154 parents of toddlers in 22 daycare centers. Prior to this study, and as a introduction, the directors and daycare center supervisors (those who supervise daycare centers that participated in the previous study, and others) took part in an explanation lecture describing the findings of the previous study (Shraub, 2013). In present

study, the daycare centers were divided into two groups, depending on the type of report: partial/detailed.

Each director took part in a meeting in which they were presented with an average score of "parental knowledge" in all of the daycare 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 structural and procedural characteristics of the daycare. Seven parents were randomly selected from each daycare to answer a phone distributed interview about the daycare. In the current study parental knowledge was divided into two main domains: knowledge about the daycare (refers to 5 sub domains: daycare activities, curriculum, payments and vacations, caregivers turnover and food menu) and knowledge about the child (refers to 7 sub domains: child's behavior, food, sleep, diaper changing, health, participation in activities, child development). Parental level of knowledge was set by comparing the answers of the parents to those of the director. This study is focused on the correlation change between common knowledge in the parent possession and that which he would want to receive.

The findings suggest that a decrease has been shown in the correlation score between the common and desired knowledge in domains related to the child, while at the same time an increase has been shown in domains related to the daycare. Significant differences were found for the four sub-domains relating to daycare: curriculum, vacations and payments, turnover of caregivers and food menu. And for three sub-domains related to child: sleep, health, and child development. It appears that the directors realized that parents want more information about the daycare following the feedback, and gave more information than before. It is possible that a lot of information is also transmitted following the technological changes that made the information transition from daycare to a parent easier. Nevertheless, the information given

was not necessarily in the sub-domains parents wanted, thus a situation of lack and excess of information simultaneously, which contributed to the decrease in the correlation. With regard to the information about the child, in some domains, there was an increase in the information transmitted and desired and in some, a decrease occurred. For example, for information about the child, in sleep sub-domain only there has been an increase both in the common knowledge and desired knowledge, and an improvement in the amount of parents who get the knowledge they want. However, in two other sub-domains- health and child development, a decrease occur in knowledge desired by the parents. It can be assumed that the decrease in interest behalf of the parents is caused by acclimation to the fact that information is not transmitted. It should be noted that such information is also not possible to transfer by technological means, as opposed to information about the daycare that is easier to transference. Finally, the findings showed that there is no connection between the difference for the daycare and for child and daycare quality grade.

In conclusion, the findings show that it is possible and may be, by the notification of directors and supervisors of the daycare centers about the importance of routine information sharing with the parents and about the knowledge desired by them, to promote and improve the communication between the parents and their children's daycare center. Nonetheless, the current study does not shed enough light on the reasons that led to the changes in the degree of correlation. This suggests that a more thorough and comprehensive intervention program is required as opposed to one feedback meeting (even if the feedback was detailed and clear enough). Furthermore, it appears that despite the understanding of the directors in the importance of information sharing with the parents, there are no resources to implement it in practice in the everyday reality of day-care.