

Family Perceptions of Educational Planning for Children Receiving Mental Health Services

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Rationale

- Family participation in decisions that affect their children is a fundamental right of parents
- Family participation in education was codified in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and is a key feature of IDEA
- Family participation in education is a focus of Goals 2000, an agenda of the U.S. Department of Education

Participation in Educational Planning: Definitions Differ Widely

Dauber & Epstein(1993)

Parenting , communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and, collaborating with community organizations

Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994)

3 Dimensions: behavioral, affective, and cognitive

Cone, DeLawyer & Wolfe (1985)

Contact with teacher, educational activities at home, attending parent education/consultation meetings, classroom volunteering, parent-parent support, involvement with advocacy...

Simpson & Fiedler (1989)

attendance at IEP meetings, sharing information, suggesting & negotiating goals, monitoring implementation...

Participation in Educational Planning

Friesen & Kruzich

Participation in educational planning defined by: physical presence, engagement in group deliberations (speaking, expressing opinion, preference, giving information), and influence (evidence that engagement made some difference).

Family members as full partners in decision making regarding educational plans for children with serious emotional disorders

Study Purpose

1. Illustrate an approach to measuring participation in educational planning.
2. Report findings from the Family Participation Survey.

Study Method

- This analysis is part of a larger study of family participation in children's mental health services.
- A survey was designed to gather data on participation by parents while their child was receiving in- or out-of-home treatment based on exploratory work with family focus groups.
- Eligible participants were parents with youth aged 0-20 who received 3 or more months (in-home) or 30 or more continuous days (out-of-home) treatment between 9/1/96 and 8/31/98.
- Sample recruited from randomly selected chapters of Federation for Families Mental Health and mailing list of Research and Training Center at Portland State University.

Data Collection

- Data collected in 1999-2000.
- 876 willingness forms returned; 646 in home version and 221 out of home.
- 372 usable in-home surveys returned from 44 states, 57.6% response rate.
- 338 respondents with children receiving treatment services while living at home (doesn't include 30 caregivers with children <4 years of age).



Demographics - Child

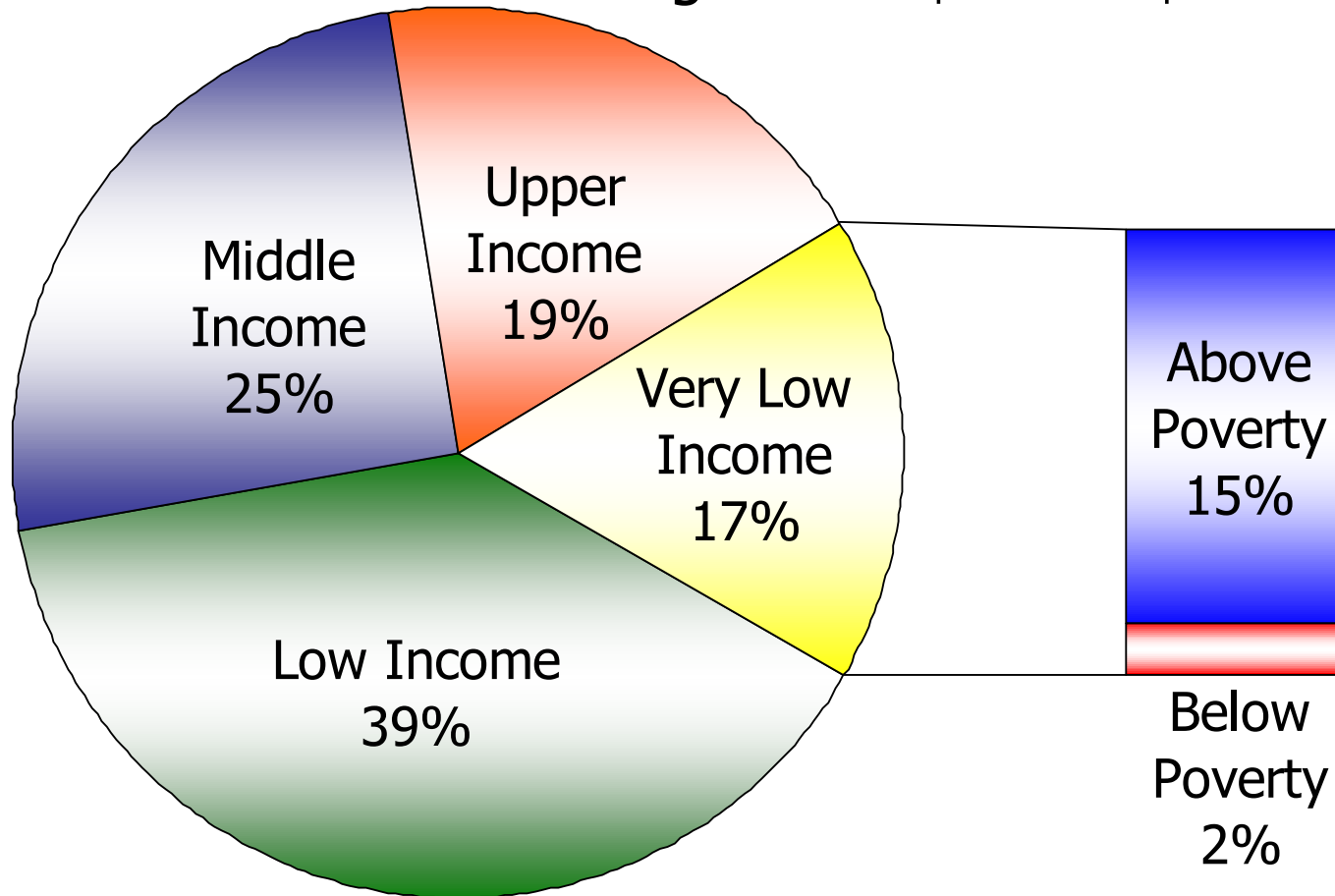
Race	White	84%		
	African American	4.2%		
	Hispanic	3.6%		
	Other	8.2%		
Sex	Male	75%		
	Female	25%		
		Mean	SD	Range
	Age	11 yrs.	3.5	4-19
	Onset age	5 yrs.	3.6	1-18
	Age received 1st services	7 yrs.	3.5	1-17
	Number of diagnoses	3.2	2.1	1-13
	Severity Index	12	4.6	2-28

Demographics - Caregiver

Age		Mean = 44 (6.8)
Education	H.S. diploma or G.E.D	46%
	≥ College Degree	51%
Gender	Female	96%
Race	White	89%
	African American	4%
	Hispanic	3%
	Other	4%
Marital Status	Married	68%
Relatedness	Biological/Adoptive Mother	87%
Has Custody		92%

Demographics - Caregiver cont.

- Income Median Range \$35,000—\$44,999
<\$5K+ —\$75K

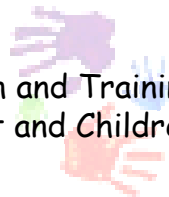


Research Questions

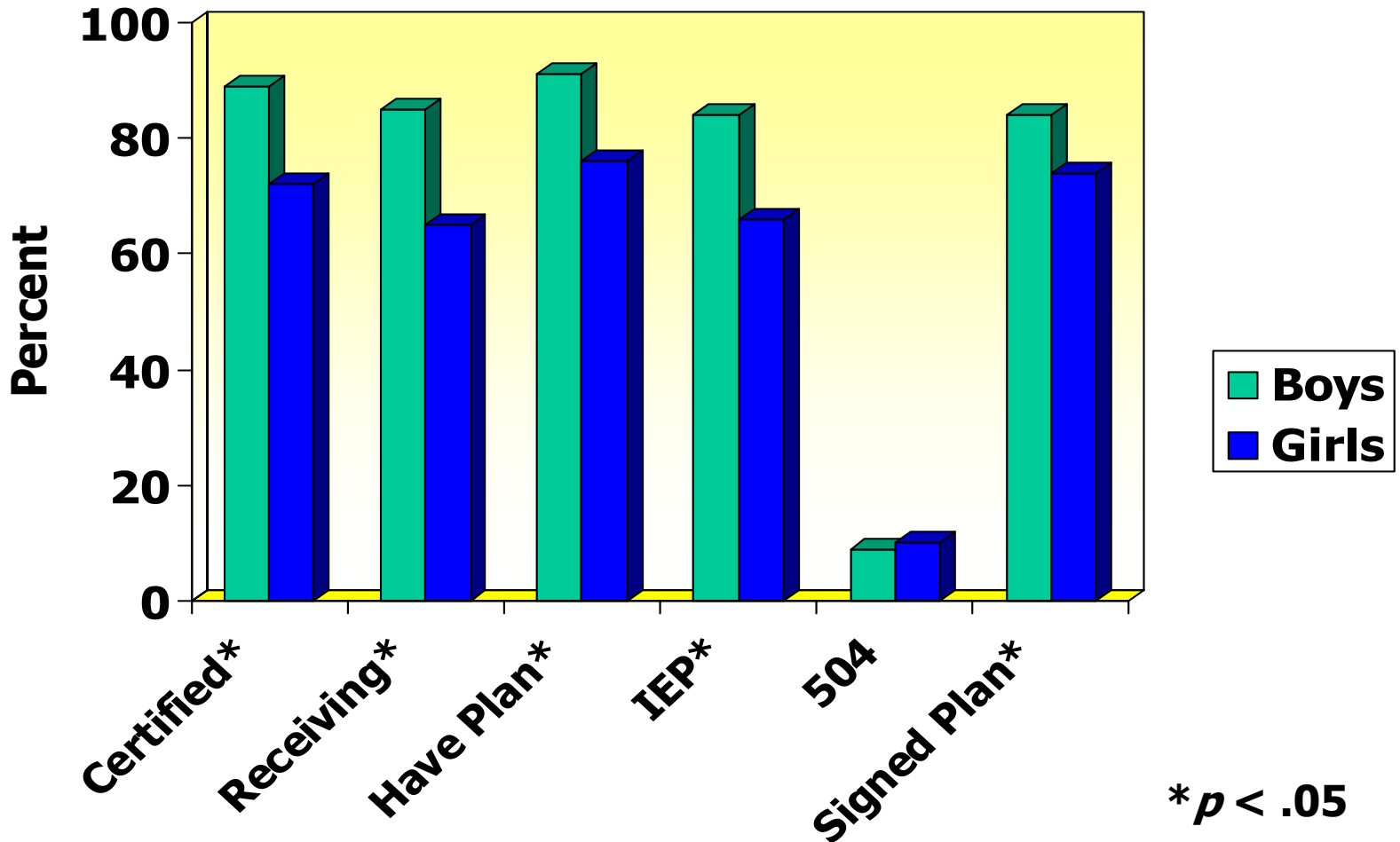
1. What types of educational planning were parents involved in?
2. Does participation vary by demographic or other characteristics?
3. How do parents rate their participation in educational planning? How do these ratings compare to what they have said about service/treatment planning?
4. What do parents have to say about their participation in educational planning?

Educational Plans

- 82.4% certified to receive special educational services
- 78.9% receiving special educational services
- 86.1% had an educational plan
 - 79.9% had an IEP
 - 8.9% had a 504 plan
 - 5% another type of plan
- 81.1% were asked to sign a written plan



Educational Plans: Parents of boys X girls



Differences: Boys vs. Girls

			χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Parent	Educational Level		13.56	2	.001
	Mean				
		Girls (N=83)	Boys (N=255)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Age	45.2	43.4	-2.10	.04
	Educational participation	2.9	2.8	-.484	NS
	Service/ participation	3.0	3.1	.119	NS
	Empowerment				
	• Family	3.9	3.9	-.415	NS
	• Services	4.1	4.2	.380	NS
	• Community	3.1	3.5	2.38	.018
Child	Age at onset	6.3	4.8	-3.21	.001
	Age at 1 st svcs.	7.6	6.2	-3.30	.001
	Severity	10.8	12.4	2.57	.011

Educational Planning: Individual Item Means

	Not at all 1	A little 2	Some 3	A lot 4
Were you included in planning?				★
Was your child included in planning?		★		
Were your ideas valued?			★	
Family values taken into account?			★	
A role for you in carrying out plan?			★	
Did plan fit your child's need?			★	
Agreed with plan?				★
Family needs taken into account?			★	
Able to influence planning?			★	
Staff listen to your ideas in review ? ⁺			★	
Staff made changes based on ideas in review? ⁺			★	

⁺ Items that asked about the review process

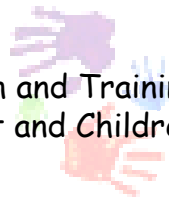
Family Participation Measure

- Were your ideas valued?
- Family values taken into account?
- Agreed with plan?
- Family needs taken into account?
- Able to influence planning?
- Staff listen to your ideas in review ?⁺
- Staff made changes based on ideas in review?⁺

⁺ Items that asked about the review process

Participation in Educational and Service/Treatment Planning

	Mean	SD	Range
Education	2.87	.86	1-4
Service/Treatment	3.06	.92	1-4

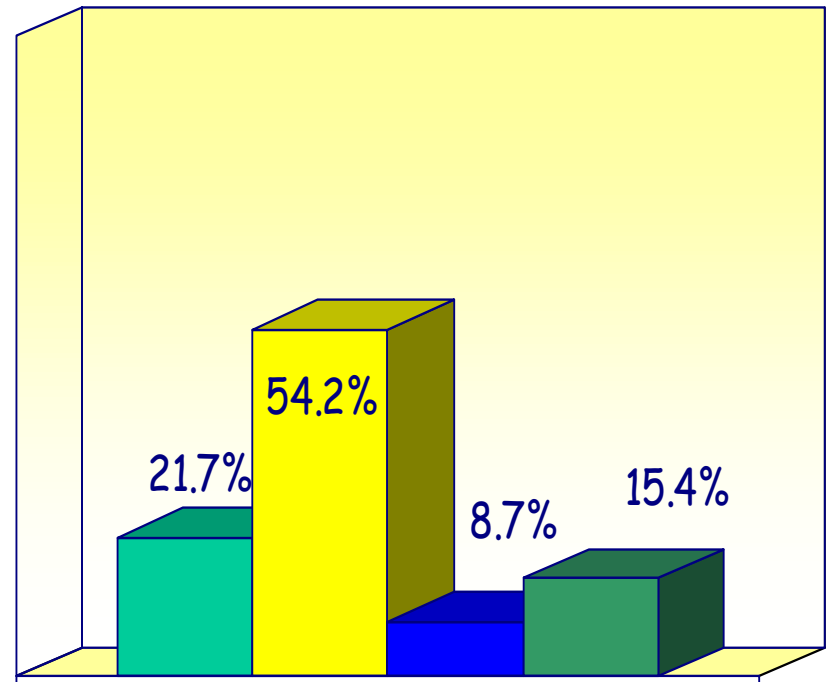


Participation in Educational Planning: Bivariate Analysis

- There were no significant differences educational ratings based on child's age, child's race, age of onset, age at 1st services, child severity, parent income, custody status.
- Older parents rated their participation in educational planning higher than younger parents ($r = .17$ $p < .01$).
- Caucasian parents rated their participation higher than non-Caucasian parents ($t = 2.50$, $p < .05$).
- Parents with some graduate level educational reported higher participation ratings than those with less education.

Life Goals

- What is the primary goal that you have for your child?
- How likely do you think it is that this goal will be reached?



Very Likely

Somewhat Likely

Not Likely

Dont' Know

Participation in Educational Planning: Bivariate Analysis (cont.)

- Parents who rated their participation high were more likely to think their child was “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to reach their goals than those parents who rated their participation lower ($F = 6.86, df = 2, p < .01$).
- Parents who rated themselves as more empowered also rated themselves as participating more in educational participation.
 - Family empowerment ($r = .38, p < .01$)
 - Child services empowerment ($r = .48, p < .01$)
 - Community empowerment ($r = .25, p < .01$)

General Positive Comments:

"Our school district has been very accommodating."

"We have been fortunate to have worked with two excellent school systems."

"We have been fortunate with the interaction with our local school."

"In my son's junior and senior years in high school I wrote his plan and it was truly individualized. It totally revolved around his music and creativity but I had educated myself and his teacher and the teacher trusted my competence."



Knowledge about Mental Health Issues

"High school, in particular, is not geared to children with ADHD. Some teachers are wonderful; most are cooperative, but often do not understand...."

"Teachers ... asked me what to do in that they had limited knowledge on how to educate my son. I listed accommodations that would help him. They agreed to do so, but did not carry them out. I ended up working with his teachers (sometimes weekly) so his needs could be accommodated."

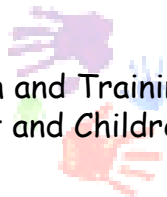


Knowledge about Mental Health Issues

"Because the school had little knowledge of Bipolar Disorder I ran the meetings, provided the resources, and wrote the accommodations list."

"It wasn't so much an unwillingness to go with our ideas as a lack of knowing how to implement what we wanted."

"Special ed. staff overall were very helpful, however despite trying to educate them some administrators weren't very flexible and could not understand her continued absences even after medications."



Implementation of Plans

"Planning goes fine. Implementation is another matter."

"IEPs were done, but not enforced."

"The plans are lofty and well-focused and would be great if they could be accomplished but the schools really don't have the resources they need and day-to-day routine loses sight of the goals."

Concern about Educational Lag

"Because things didn't work as planned the last school year, our child went backward rather than forward. We found it impossible to get things changed midyear."

"My child did not learn anything but he passed the 4th grade."

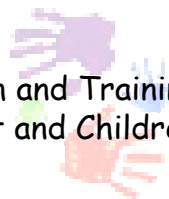


Participation as the Exception

“Because I had written a book about my son’s disability, and had run the state association I was treated with utmost respect and was very involved in all aspects of educational planning. I was very assertive.”

“I was a parent advocate during this period. My experience would have been less positive without advocacy training.”

“My son’s plan was semi-carried out only because of my experience as an advocate in the state.”



Participation as the Exception

"We have had a lot of involvement, but only because we have been diligent and unyielding in insisting that we be involved. The school district did not proactively offer this level of involvement."

"I was only involved in the planning because I chose to be active. I was invited to the IEP, but was not included in the planning unless I forced issues that were important to our child/family."

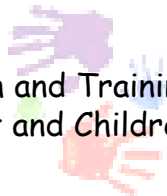
"I am an advocate here. I believe the schools treat us differently because of that."

Advice from Parents - For Other Parents

- Be diligent and unyielding in insisting on being involved in educational planning
- Advocate every day
- Stay in touch with teachers
- Be assertive
- Ask lots of questions
- Know the right questions to ask
- Know your rights and your child's rights
- Do not be intimidated by professionals

Advice From Parents - For Professionals

- Listen to parents
- Check with other service providers for accurate information
- Follow the Plan
- Educate parents on the educational jargon
- Learn more about specific diagnoses and mixed diagnoses
- Learn about rights and laws



Future Research

- Need more representative samples of families whose children receive mental health services;
- Need comparison of various approaches to defining and measuring educational participation;

Future Research

- Basic assumptions need to be tested, e.g., if parents are involved:
 - Planning will be more appropriate
 - Parents will be more invested
 - Outcomes for children (and families) will be improved;
- Continue to collect and analyze qualitative data. Parents' views and voices provide much needed perspective on IDEA implementation.

