

Helping Hands at Home: Positive effects of chores on students' success in social and academic life by promoting teacher-parent collaboration

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Abstract: Helping Hands at Home is a project that is focused on collaboration between parents and teachers in the field of children's chores, which has many benefits for pupils. Once children contribute to work in the house, they learn responsibility, develop empathy, time management and strength moral development. With the help of teachers, parents easily overcome the struggle of giving jobs to kids at home.

Through the project's activities we would like to conduct empirical research on the positive effects of chores on pupils' success in both social and academic life.

The main purpose of the project is to prepare the initial research, which will be held the basis for the main research of the dissertation, which is called Teacher Training and Parent-Teacher-Child Triad.

The paper was supported by the project *Children's Life and Teacher-Parent Collaboration* No. IGA_PdF_2024_021.

Keywords: chores, children, children's duty, parents and teachers, children's life, communication

1 Introduction

Several studies have shown that there are many benefits of chores for kids. According to Marty Rossmann's research, it demonstrates that early domestic chore involvement can benefit children in the long run. Parents can instill in their children a lifelong sense of competence, self-worth, responsibility, and self-reliance by getting them involved in duties. Rossmann examined the results for 84 young adults based on a thorough examination of their parents' communication style, their involvement in family work during three different life stages (ages three to four, nine to ten, and fifteen to sixteen),

and a quick phone interview conducted when they were in their mid-20s. Utilizing success indicators for individuals, such as finishing school, beginning a career path, IQ, maintaining relationships with friends and family, abstaining from drug use, and assessing a child's participation in household chores at all three earlier times.

2 Research topic background – inspiration for carrying out own research

2.1 Research abroad

Jolanta Barszcz-Skowronek from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin analyzed pictures which represent house chores illustrated by children aged 3-5 attended Kindergarten. This is a small part of a two-week project which is called "Conscious preschooler today – conscious citizen tomorrow" and kids were asked to draw their house chores as illustration. The findings from analyses indicate that tasks, even if limited to just one activity, are already undertaken by three-year-olds. In addition to simple cleaning tasks, children assist their parents by setting the table, taking care of pets, and looking after their siblings.

2.2 Research in Czech Republic

Through this project, our goal is not just to assign tasks to children but also to draw parents' attentions to the significance of chores for children in both academic and social aspects within the school context. Additionally, there are educators who have limited interaction with parents. Through the course of the project, teachers will develop a deeper comprehension of the significance of communication with parents.

Within this initiative, parents will seek assistance from schools in allocating tasks for their children to perform at home. This collaboration enhances communication between two significant adults in the lives of children.

3 Evaluation Surveys of the Project

3.1 Activities Conducted with Students Over One Month

3.1.a Preschool (Age 3) Students

Discussions were held about tasks that can be done at home, and examples were shown using pictures. Parents were kept in communication to identify the activities their children participated in at home. These activities were then discussed with the children for evaluation.

3.1.b Primary School Students

A daily schedule tracking system was implemented. However, teachers did not communicate with parents. Instead, tracking was conducted using paper forms, which students filled out at school daily. Parents were not contacted to verify the information provided by the students.

Through this process, we observed that some teachers deliberately avoided contacting parents, choosing to follow the project exclusively with the students. However, survey results contradicted this, as explained in the section where we evaluate survey outcomes.

3.1.c Middle School (1st Year) Students

A daily schedule tracking system was also implemented. Parents were only informed via email. Some students filled out the tracking forms online, while others collected paper forms from their teachers and tracked their activities themselves. However, many students either lost their forms or forgot to complete them. In some cases, teachers kept the forms themselves and had students had to fill them out in class.

3.2 Teacher and Parent Survey Evaluations

At the end of the project, surveys were conducted with teachers and parents involved. The surveys contained multiple-choice questions, and some notable results are as follows:

3.2.a Preschool

Teachers spoke with children daily about the tasks they completed at home. These discussions aim to inform children and encourage them to take responsibility at home. One parent commented:

"Since my child knows that the teacher will ask about it the next day, they now clean up their toys and put them in the toy basket after playing."

Assigning responsibilities at home significantly contributes to children's physical and mental development. However, many parents either do not realize this or avoid assigning responsibilities for various reasons. Even parents who want to give their children responsibilities may face challenges, the most common being the child's reluctance.

According to our survey, 67% of parents reported that their children complained about doing household chores. This is where our project plays a crucial role: it encourages teachers to support parents in assigning

responsibilities to their children. When teachers monitor children's household tasks, children feel more motivated, as they get to share their experiences with their teacher and classmates the next day.

When asked whether teacher-assigned household tasks encouraged children, 83% of parents found this approach beneficial.

3.2.b Primary School

In the survey given to parents, 92% stated that teacher-parent collaboration is essential in fostering children's sense of responsibility and discipline.

In a similar question posed to teachers, they were asked whether teacher-parent collaboration positively affects children's social and academic success. Half of the teachers strongly agreed, while the other half agreed.

3.2.c Middle School

At the middle school level, students were less motivated. Teachers informed parents about the project, but many parents remained unresponsive. Several factors might have contributed to this:

- Parents receive many school messages and may not pay attention to all of them.
- Parents may not have time to read the messages.
- Some parents may not consider the topic important.
- School emails may not be reaching parents.

Even if parents see the messages, they may not want their children involved in household chores.

According to the survey, only 16% of parents reported assigning household responsibilities to their children. Those who did not assign responsibilities gave various reasons, such as:

- They think that children already have too much schoolwork.
- They can complete household tasks more efficiently and quickly themselves.
- They believe their children are too young for responsibilities.
- Addressing these concerns:
 - Assigning household responsibilities can contribute to children's academic success.
 - Children learn by doing. Though they may struggle initially, they will improve over time and perform tasks more efficiently.

- If children are not accustomed to responsibilities from a young age, they may find it harder later in life. Therefore, introducing simple tasks early prepares them for greater responsibilities in the future.

These findings indicate that parents need pedagogical support in this area. This support could be provided through seminars or short training programs. Indeed, 84% of the parents surveyed stated that they would be willing to attend such a program.

Additionally, 50% of parents reported that they had never received any parenting advice from teachers. Teachers also emphasized the importance of effective communication with parents. However, 84% of teachers stated that they had never received training or certification related to parent communication. If schools or administrators were to organize training on this topic, 73% of teachers expressed willingness to participate.

In summary, both parents and teachers appear willing to engage in educational programs on this subject. The responsibility for organizing these initiatives falls on schools and government authorities.

4.2 Application outputs into educational reality

Education for parents and teachers

As mentioned earlier, some parents and educators may not fully comprehend the significance of household chores and collaborative efforts in achieving these objectives. Continuous training for educators is essential at all levels, enhancing not only their academic knowledge but also their social and communication skills with both parents and students. Teachers are not solely responsible for imparting academic knowledge; they also bear the responsibility of nurturing responsible citizens and future adults. To address these aspects, educators need to be educated about the importance of household chores through seminars and be encouraged to engage in effective communication and collaboration with parents.

In situations where teachers require continuous training, it is equally important for schools to provide education to parents on how to treat their children at home. Some parents may lack awareness of what is crucial for different age groups of children, and others might possess inaccurate information or be hesitant to assign tasks to their own kids. Furthermore, some parents may not fully grasp the significance of communication with schools.

Discussion

During the experimental phase of this project, there are numerous expectations from various stakeholders. Children are expected to undertake household chores, and some may exhibit reluctance. Parents, despite being able to perform certain tasks faster themselves, are required to provide instructions and often assist younger children. Occasionally, children may create messes, leading parents to perceive it as a waste of time. Teachers are anticipated to motivate and monitor students' progress in these daily activities, while for older students, managing points or bonus grades becomes an additional workload. Furthermore, attempting to communicate with some parents may prove challenging, as they may not respond to emails, answer phone calls, or attend parent meetings at schools.

Although these possible obstacles, it's worth doing this project. Mikalsen highlights that a common inquiry at their pediatric mental health clinic is, "How do I get my kid to do chores? Why does my kid never want to do them?" "She emphasizes that a key strategy to prevent conflicts over chores is to initiate the process early. Mikalsen advises parents to begin as early as 18 months and certainly by age two, noting that starting with a 16-year-old for the first time is likely to be less effective, as the battle is already challenging at that point". (Hurley, 2023)

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Abstrakt: Helping Hands at Home je projekt zaměřený na spolupráci mezi rodiči a učiteli v oblasti domácích povinností dětí, který má pro žáky mnoho výhod. Jakmile se děti zapojí do práce v domácnosti, naučí se zodpovědnosti, rozvíjejí empatii, time management a posilují morální vývoj. S pomocí učitelů rodiče snadno překonají potíže s přidělováním domácích povinností

dětem. Prostřednictvím aktivit projektu bychom rádi provedli empirický výzkum pozitivních účinků domácích prací na úspěch žáků v sociálním i akademickém životě. Hlavním cílem projektu je připravit počáteční výzkum, který bude základem pro hlavní výzkum disertační práce s názvem Vzdělávání učitelů a trojice rodič-učitel-dítě.

Práce byla podpořena projektem Život dětí a spolupráce učitelů a rodičů č. IGA_PdF_2024_021..

Klíčová slova: domácí práce, děti, povinnosti dětí, rodiče a učitelé, život dětí, komunikace

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