PARENTING AND CHILD LEARNING: THE ROLE OF PARENTAL BELIEFS

Parent Education In-Service
Kimberly Kopko & Marianella Casasola
(and Ana Canas)
12 September 2019
Structure

1. Overview of project and research to-date
2. Interactive: Respond to our survey!
3. Next steps
WHAT ASSURANCE DO I HAVE THAT YOUR PARENTING ISN'T SCREWING ME UP?
Goal: Parental Beliefs of the role of play in child learning

SES Background

Child Cognitive Skills

Education
Project Goals

1. Document parental beliefs about early childhood learning and examine whether beliefs vary with parent education and socio-economic status (SES)

2. Test whether parental beliefs shape their choice of play materials in the home (e.g., the percentage of electronic toys, traditional toys, books) and the educational value placed on these toys
Project Goals

3. Examine which toys parents believe support their child's learning and how parents view electronic toys versus traditional toys.

4. Observe parent-child play interactions during a laboratory visit and test the relation among parent-child interactions, parental beliefs about child learning, and parental educational ranking of traditional versus electronic toys.
Parental Beliefs Survey

- Distributed via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to determine information we were seeking for Goals 1-3
  - Pilot tested and revised

- \( N = 339 \) caregivers of children 2 to 5 years of age
  - 51% male children and 49% female children
  - Most caregivers identified as Caucasian
  - 60% were 25 to 34 years of age
Caregiver Educational Background

- High School/ Tech
- Some College/Assoc.
- College Degree
- Graduate Degree
Overview of Survey

• Parents were asked about how important it was that their child engaged in specific activities
  – Parental Views
• They were asked about how frequently their child engaged in particular activities
• And how often they engaged with their child in those activities
Parental Views

- Parents who rated allowing their child time to play as important as rated as important
  - Play with a parent, puzzles, blocks, readings, arts and crafts, outdoor play, unguided play, and play with other children
  - Rated use of tablets, video watching as significantly unimportant
Take the Survey!

- Use your clicker to select an option
  - A = Agree
  - B = Neutral
  - C = Disagree
  - D = Not Sure
This toy would promote learning (  

A = Agree  
B = Neutral  
C = Disagree  
D = Not Sure
This toy would promote learning ( )

A = Agree
B = Neutral
C = Disagree
D = Not Sure
Average Caregiver Agreement

Caregiver Education Background

- Electronic toy promotes learning
- Purchase electronic toy
- Blocks promote learning
- Purchase blocks

Error bars: +/- 1 SE
A ( )  

B ( )  

Which toy might be better for developing language skills?
Caregiver Choice for Promoting Language Skills

Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caregiver Education</th>
<th>Electronic Toy</th>
<th>Building Blocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School to Some College</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or Graduate Degree</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which toy might be better for promoting pretend or imaginary play?

A ( )

B ( )
Caregiver Toy Choice for Promoting Imagination or Pretend Play

- **Electronic Toy**
- **Building Blocks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caregiver Education</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School to Some College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or Graduate Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Electronic Toy
- Building Blocks
Overview of Findings

• Clear distinction between play and school readiness
Next Steps

• Develop a Toy Inventory based on the survey results
  – However, the results prompted us to conduct additional research to further distinguish the differences in how parental beliefs inform toy selections based on whether parents view play as creative and imaginative time or time to prepare for school

• CCE Summer Intern conducted in-person surveys and interviews with parents in NYC
Research Overview

- Distributing the toy portion of survey in Denmark to compare how electronic versus traditional toys relate to play and the idea of creativity versus school readiness in Denmark
- Recruiting approximately 20 families to observe parent-child play interactions during a laboratory visit
Next Steps

• Videotape parent-child play session in the laboratory
• Allow child to select toy(s) and observe parents’ reactions
  – Do they facilitate play with toy the child selected?
  – Do they try to steer the child to a different toy?
  – Do they engage at all?
• Survey and interview with parents following lab session
• Code videos

Questions?

Thank you!