Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain parents’ perspectives on how to access early literacy for children zero to five years of age. It was believed that the exploration of this research problem was worthwhile as it could bring awareness about the importance of early learning for young children. The research question for this study was: what were parent’s perspectives on how to access programs and supports for early literacy for children 0-5? Purposeful sampling was used to recruit parents of children zero to five years of age. The researcher had gathered the information about the importance of early literacy. The data was collected through six one-on-one interviews with parents. The key findings that emerged through this research study about the importance of early literacy for children zero to five years of age, parental involvement in development of early literacy for children, services available in the community to promote early literacy and the last theme was the barriers to access and implement early literacy for children zero to five years of age.

Methodology

Research Design

Qualitative study, semi-structured interviews and narrative approach

Instrument

Twelve one-terminated interview questions

Procedure

The interviews were piloted with the peer in the class as well as with the students of a different section. The questions had been reviewed and approved by the supervisor and Sheridan Research Ethics Board Comity. The researcher had refined and made the corrections and had arranged the questions according to the recommendations and suggestions of the peers and the professor and the REB Comity. Participants were contacted in person and through text messages. Participants were provided with the information letter and consent form to read and sign and were collected before the interviews. Interviews were conducted upon availability of the participants.

Participants

The 6 participants were the parents of children 0-19 years of age and were recruited from Peel; Halton and York Region. The rationale for selecting parents in this study was because parental involvement is extremely important in children’s education and plays a huge role in early literacy. Parental engagement can promote high quality early learning experiences. The research has shown that families’ contributions to their children’s literacy development extend beyond their immediate impact upon specific, discrete early literacy outcomes. In fact, families and parental engagement towards children’s learning leave a significant impact for their development in all domains of life.

Literature Review

The importance of literacy is universal. It is not associated with a particular race, age, gender, cultural or a time period. The benefits and significance of literacy cannot be denied in any way. However, there can be a question for the importance and benefits of early literacy for children 0-5. The research indicates that “Early literacy and reading are associated with academic success and increased graduation rates which in turn are associated with better health outcomes. And children who do not acquire these skills before school entry, are at greater risk for poor school-related outcomes and poor health.” (Mayne, Pail, Morrow, Lima & Jimenez, 2018, p. 687). Exposing children towards learning at an early age has positive lifelong impacts on children’s overall wellbeing and developing domains including social, emotional, and academic achievement. “The children with the larger vocabulary at 2 years of age also demonstrated better comprehension at both grade three and grade five levels” (Ton, 2019, p. 521). Children, who join or attend early literacy programs before formal schooling, have a larger vocabulary and stronger comprehension skills in later school years (Ton, 2019). The other findings from the literature also highlight that early literacy is vital for building strong foundations for greater success in the later school years. “Top priority for early literacy education is that children develop a strong language and literacy foundation in the early years of schooling. Research has indicated that a relationship exists between early oral language and reading, writing, and thinking” (Curry, Reaves & McIntire, 2016, p. 69).

Research Questions

The purpose of conducting this research was to gain parents’ perspectives about multiple aspects of the importance of early literacy for children zero to five. It was believed that the exploration of this research problem was worthwhile as it could bring awareness about the importance of early learning for young children. The research question for this study was: what were parents’ perspectives on how to access programs and supports for early literacy for children 0-5? The sub-questions included what were the supports and the limitations that accessed early literacy for children zero to five? Why early literacy was important and how it was being promoted in the community for parents to access?