

The Effects of Pre-Parent Education on High School Students' Attitudes Toward and Knowledge of Child Rearing

Agnes Sinniger Kuhn

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of pre-parent education upon adolescents' attitudes toward and knowledge of child rearing. The design was a pre-posttest experiment with random assignment of 101 high school subjects by sex and race to experimental and waiting list control groups during a one semester pre-parent education class combining didactic instruction and supervised interaction with preschool children.

Analysis of demographic data showed the treatment groups to be proportional on sex, race, and age. The mean age of male students in this study was greater than that of females. Separate analyses of variance of Bavolek's Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory pretest total and constructs (Inappropriate Expectations, Lack of Empathy, Belief in Punishment, Role Reversal) showed no significant mean differences between the treatment groups at the beginning of the experiment.

At the end of the experiment, separate analyses of covariance of the AAPI posttest and pretest constructs and total adjusted means showed gains significant at the .05 level for the experimental group (participants in a semester pre-parent education class).

Separate analyses of covariance of the Knowledge of Child Rearing Test total and four scales (Prenatal, Age Norms, Child Development Concepts, Discipline) constructed for the study and the AAPI pretest total showed the differences in the adjusted means between the treatment groups to be significant at the .05 level for the KCRT Total and Scale 4 (Discipline) in favor of the experimental group. There was a significant, positive correlation between the KCRT and the AAPI. The internal posttest in this study was .92, and for the KCRT and the AAPI. The internal consistency coefficient (alpha) for the AAPI posttest in this study was .92, and for the KCRT total, .89.

Separate analyses of variance showed AAPI pretest mean differences significant at the .05 level between male and female subjects, black and non-black subjects, but not between younger and older age groups. Male and black students showed less positive attitudes toward child rearing than female or non-black students.

The findings from this study offer evidence for the hypothesis that participation in pre-parent education at the high school level has a positive effect on adolescents' attitudes toward parenting and knowledge of child rearing.