

Partners In Parenting Education Pilot Study Abstract

An evaluation of the pilot design for Partners In Parenting Education (PIPE) was done in 1991-92 conducted by Perry Butterfield, M.A.. A pre-post test design was used with 105 adolescent mothers who were in a High School PIPE program which used the child care center as a learning lab. The child care provider would demonstrate, facilitate and supervise experiential interactive sessions with parent and baby.

This study focused on the effectiveness of PIPE as a new model for enhancing parent-infant interactions which were positive and reciprocal, and for decreasing interactions which are punitive and demanding. Because PIPE teaches about communication, emotional development, relationship building, positive interaction and behavior regulation, it was predicted the mother would understand their infants' cues more accurately and thus increase their ability to manage behavior, to solve problems and to correctly discriminate emotional signals in others. In turn, these mothers would feel more competent as parents and more positive about their attachment to their infant.

Results of the evaluation revealed that these mothers showed significant changes in their ability to correctly define emotion in infant faces. After the PIPE program, parents saw more interest and joy in the I-FEEL pictures test while reporting less shame, disgust and passivity. On the Bates-Olsen maternal perception test post-test mothers more often reported perceiving their babies as interesting and fun, they felt their babies preferred them to others and they felt good about their parenting abilities.

Independent questionnaires from educators and childcare providers defined parents as becoming more confident, contented and interested. Attendance increased, particularly on parent-infant interaction days. Twenty-six percent of these mothers listed college as a goal, 22 percent more hoped to finish high school and had a plan in mind. Ninety-five percent of the seniors enrolled finished high school. Of concurrent interest, five mothers returned to their family of origin from estranged situations, and there were no repeat pregnancies in the sample.

These pilot study results suggest that PIPE can be an effective intervention for adolescent mothers.

EVALUATION RESULTS; PILOT STUDY 1991

(n.=105 moms, 9 high schools)

PIPE IS ABOUT THE NEXT GENERATION

(Parents are the most consistent and enduring influence on a child's life)

Hypotheses:

PIPE helps both mothers and baby.

- Re-parents the parents
- Establishes closer relationships between parent and baby
- Establishes better care-giving skills
- Establishes a habit pattern of good relationships from the beginning
- Establishes a "fresh start" attitude for parents

Results:

- PIPE moms attend class more often & finish school.
(attendance up; 96% seniors graduated)
- PIPE moms do not have a second child. (no repeat pregnancy in 12 mos.)
- PIPE moms report less worries. (reported "stressors" decreased by half)
- PIPE moms report their child as easy to care for. (Bates Olsen, + Questionnaire)
- PIPE moms have identified more financial and social support systems. (Q)
- PIPE moms are described by child-care providers as more interested in baby, better caregivers, more attentive, more positive. (faculty Q.)
- PIPE babies get better nutrition (childcare report of food provided)
- PIPE babies get better interaction. (Observed measures, Childcare Center)
- PIPE babies have more positive moms, less authoritarian structure. (Olsen Bates)

PIPE IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP:

(The first relationship is the model for all others. Maladaptive and adolescent parents have trouble with relationship.)

Hypotheses:

PIPE teaches and models, using baby as teacher:

- PIPE teaches moms why the first relationship is important.
- PIPE identifies in moms what skill they have to build a good relationship
- PIPE teaches and models skills for building relationships with baby and others.

Results:

- Babies are more modulated, calm, happier, and easier to care for. (observed measures, video tapes, reports from Teachers, Mothers and Childcare staff)

PIPE IS ABOUT COMMUNICATION:

(Communication skills are at the heart of relationships and confidence. They lead toward effectiveness and success in life.)

Hypotheses:

PIPE is a course in communication skills

- Includes learning about how babies communicate
- Skill building in small steps such as “listening”, defining needs, etc.
- Includes setting limits with firm, calm, consistent techniques
- Provides practice opportunities where Moms improve skills.

Results:

- Moms were more skilled in reading their babies cues and meeting their needs and they liked their babies. (Video tape analysis, Olsen Bates, parent report)

PIPE IS ABOUT ATTACHMENT:

(Poorly attached babies are disorganized, lack focus, and often hostile or withdrawn. They can show developmental delays and increased illness.)

Hypotheses:

PIPE promotes good attachment:

- By teaching interaction
- By demonstrating and supervising practice in good interactions
- By defining the positive good in both mother and baby which promotes pride and closeness in both.

Results:

- Moms are more responsive and skilled in meeting their babies’ needs and like their babies more (Olson Bates, video tape analysis and observer reports)

PIPE IS ABOUT EMPATHY:

(Empathy is related to moral development. Understanding how others feel leads to promoting humanity, rules of conduct and behavior.)

Hypotheses:

PIPE is a course in emotional development

- Moms learn why emotion sharing is important
- Moms learn how babies talk through emotions and what they mean.
- Moms learn why positive emotion sharing builds self esteem
- Moms learn how to use positive emotions to teach and limit their child.

Results:

Changes in emotionality of mother (observer report, parent report)

- PIPE mothers appeared more happy, more positive and more enthusiastic

Changes in ability to read emotions in others (I-FEEL Pictures evaluation)

- PIPE mothers changed from seeing shame, guilt, low interest in babies to seeing high interest, joy, contentment and low shame, guilt and sadness.