



Effective Parenting Support Position Statement Indiana Association of School Psychologists

The Indiana Association of School Psychologists (IASP) recognizes the influence family involvement has on the development and success of children. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2014), parenting and discipline practices greatly impact the development of cognitive, academic, social-emotional, and behavioral skills. School performance in the areas of behavior, engagement, and achievement are also influenced by children's experiences in the home environments (Minke & Anderson, 2005). For these reasons, **IASP believes students greatly benefit from an educational framework that engages in collaborative efforts to increase family involvement and support families in using effective parenting and discipline strategies.** IASP and NASP (2014) recommend practices that promote positive parenting, such as parent education and training, behavior and social-emotional supports, and cognitive and academic supports.

Parenting Education and Training

Parents and caregivers report having limited knowledge of how to support child development and how to respond to everyday challenges that arise (Nemours Foundation, 2013). Parent education programs and parent management training are two ways to support families. Parent education programs tend to focus on general parenting issues that are common at various developmental levels whereas parent management training targets more specific concerns or behaviors that are significantly interfering with learning and development (NASP, 2014).

Behavioral and Social-Emotional Supports

Supports can be provided to families by teaching effective parenting strategies that target behavioral and social emotional development. NASP (2014) recommends a set of strategies that include observing, defining, and tracking the behavior of concern; shaping prosocial behaviors through clear behavioral expectations, positive attention to desired behavior, and rewards for appropriate behavior; managing consequences, using limit setting, and providing corrective feedback; and promoting generalization across settings.

Cognitive and Academic Supports

Since experiences in the home environment greatly influence children's academic and cognitive skills, **IASP believes it is important to support families in implementing practices that promote family engagement and healthy child development.** Dearing and Tang (2010) identified three important practices that support children's cognitive and academic development - (1) creating an environment that is conducive to learning, (2) engaging in learning activities with children, and (3) developing strong relationships and emotional support. Parents and caregivers can create an environment that encourages learning by providing access to a variety of learning materials that are appropriate for their developmental age (NASP, 2014). Engaging in learning activities through language interactions, shared book readings, and direct teaching have been known to increase language and achievement (Dearing & Tang, 2010). According to NASP (2014), self-regulation and internalizing the parents' goals and values are related to developing a high-quality relationship that involves parental responsiveness and affection. Dearing and Tang (2010) support establishing a strong bond with children by using an authoritative parenting style, which is characterized by warmth, consistency, high expectations, and structure.

Considerations

IASP recognizes that variations exist in families' cultures and beliefs about parenting and education. For this reason, it is necessary to understand and show sensitivity to family diversity and demonstrate flexibility when providing positive parenting support (NASP, 2014).

The Role of School Psychologists

IASP believes School Psychologists play an important role in providing appropriate support to families through consultation, education, and intervention assistance. According to NASP (2014), School Psychologists can support families by engaging in activities such as:

- providing handouts, e-mails, flyers, or websites with parenting strategies and information
- holding parent education sessions or support groups for families with special needs
- conducting needs assessments to determine family preferences and support needs
- collaborating with parents and teachers to link school curricula with home activities
- working with families to implement specific intervention programs and learn effective parenting strategies, and
- connecting families to community supports

Summary

IASP recognizes the importance of family impact on children's education. **IASP endorses practices that provide support to families in their efforts to be effective, positive parents.**

References

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