

Predictors of Foster Parents' Home-based Academic Involvement with their Foster Youth

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Abstract

Parental involvement in children's education has been linked with children's academic success; however, little is known about the academic involvement of foster parents with their foster youth or their understanding of their roles and responsibilities related to education. The primary purpose of this study was to explore associations between and among factors that have been relevant in the general literature around academic success and foster parents' academic involvement. This study explores the relationship between these factors of parental self-efficacy, knowledge and skills, time and energy, and the foster child's invitation, and home-based academic involvement practices of foster parents. A secondary goal was to examine foster parents' understanding of their educational roles and responsibilities related to education, as well as the areas of confusion regarding those roles. A self-reported, online questionnaire was provided to 140 current or past foster parents of middle and high school aged foster youth. Ordinal regression analyses were conducted to examine the associations between the foster parents' self-efficacy, knowledge and skills, time and energy, the foster child's invitation, and the foster parents' home-based academic involvement practices. In addition, descriptive and bivariate analyses tested for associations between the motivators of

home-based involvement and the foster parents' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Results demonstrated that foster parents' self-efficacy, perception of their knowledge and skills, and the receipt of invitations from their foster child for assistance, were predictive of their level of home-based academic involvement. However, time and energy were not associated with involvement. Results also showed that foster parents generally lacked clarity on who had the authority to initially access services or execute those services. Even for common services such as time management and study skills approximately half of the foster parents thought it was their responsibility and the other half thought it was professional staff. Findings are discussed in the context of study limitations and implications for practice and research.

*Keywords:* foster children, parenting, home environment, parental educational involvement