

Supportive Preschool Services

Program Evaluation

Supportive Preschool Services

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Supportive Preschool Services

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Evaluating Supportive Services for Preschool Children & Parents

Describing the program

Overview of the program

Learning through play is a school that services children in 3K and pre-K and has been in the community for about 5 years. The school staff has noted that other services/programs are needed to provide additional support to some students who appear to have difficulties adjusting to the school setting. For this reason, the school is providing supportive preschool services geared towards providing services to students who are of preschool age 3-5 years old. The program will provide services to the students as well as the parents. The teachers and school social worker work together to identify the students, who they identified as needing further help due to some behavior issues such as not listening, hitting other students, or students whom the teachers know have some difficulties at home, such as parents separating, having new siblings, or unstable housing. The program will service 10 students per school semester and if ongoing services are needed then they would be resource out.

The program provides individual and group counseling to the students to address the behavior issues and teaching forms of self-regulation. The counseling is provided through play or art therapy depending on the student's level of understanding. Furthermore, the program provides services to the parents to better guide the students. As per the literature having the parent being involved with the children and helping them with skills such as self-regulation helps to improve engagement and academic success. Self-regulation refers to the capacity to guide one's own goal-directed activities over time and across changing circumstances, (Morawska, Dittman, & Rusby, 2019). As per, Morawska, Dittman, & Rusby, 2019, "The research we have

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reviewed suggest that multi-component interventions for preschool and early school-aged children that include parenting programs produce positive effects on self-regulation.

The program goal would be to improve the students learning experience by being able to adjust to the classroom setting and involving the parents in the children's learning experience. The program would serve to further strength the community as it provides an additional support for parents who might not know where to turn to for services, which then impacts the student academic progress.

Program setting & Location

The program would be run out of Learning through Play located at 535 Union Ave, Bronx NY 10455. The school would provide the space to allow the MSW Intern social worker to meet with the student and parents. Once a student is assigned to the social worker then the worker meets with the student once a week for about 45 minutes. The MSW Intern social worker is to work with the student by using various skills depending on the student need.

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Program Logic Model

Program Inputs (or Resources)	Program Activities (or Interventions)	Outputs (Direct Products from Activities)	Short-term Outcomes (or Goals)	Intermediate Outcomes (or Goals)	Long-Term Outcomes (or Goals)
<p>Resources: Teacher, family worker provide support with students and any parental barriers</p> <p>Staff: (2) social worker and MSW Intern</p> <p>Assistance from school and NYC ACS as needed</p>	<p>Meet with student weekly Provide 45 minutes of counseling Techniques play therapy</p> <p>Parent support group services are available for the parents</p>	<p>10 students, 45 minutes 1-2 times a week</p> <p>Meet with parents once a week individual/group</p> <p>parents would be taught developmentally appropriate techniques to help with their child's behavior</p>	<p>student will learn how to self-regulate when they are upset, learn other ways to deal with stress, anxiety</p> <p>Student learns self-soothing techniques to keep from having outbursts</p>	<p>Decrease in student hitting others, not listening, or throwing objects</p> <p>Students will use self-regulation techniques to decrease behaviors</p>	<p>Student will be able to regulate his/her behavior to reflect positive changes</p> <p>Student has a better behavior at home and school</p>

Program Goals & Objectives

The program goals and objectives are to be able to provide counseling/supportive services to students as needed or identified services that will be appropriate for the students. The goal is to be able to meet with the students and provide techniques and strategies to assist the student with dealing with behaviors that might be disruptive in class. If a student is having hard time knowing how to express when he is upset or when something is not working for them by teaching them ways to self-soothe this can help reduce the outburst in class. Another goal is to provide techniques and skills to the student's parents to assist them with improving their behavior at home, which would then assist with improvement at school. Studies have shown that parenting helps to regulate emotions and behaviors (Neppl, Jeon, Diggs, & Donnellan, 2020). Therefore, by providing the tools for parents to know how to talk to and support their child in the group would be beneficial to the child's academic learning as well as their behavior in class. The research discussed effortful control, which is defined as "the ability to inhibit a dominant response to perform subdominant response, to detect errors, and to engage in planning." (Neppl, Jeon, Diggs, & Donnellan, 2020). The research further showed that by working with the children 3 to 5 -year-old children if promoted effortful control in the children as they got older therefore showing greater school achievement. (Neppl, Jeon, Diggs, & Donnellan, 2020).

The overall goal is to have the student learn how to self-regulate so that it does not become disruptive.

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Program Consumers, Clients, & Patients Served

The target population for this program are the students whose age ranges from 3-5 years old. For most of these children this has been their first year in a school setting and this could be part of the difficulties when dealing with their behavior. Although the targeted population are the students, the parents will also benefit from the program as this is a support for them. At learning through Play, the students are mostly of different Hispanic background such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, and a large part of Central American, some African Americans, and only a handful of Caucasian students. According to the data obtained for the most part this area is a low-income area and as of 2018, it is the lowest when compared to the rest of the city. Overall, the percentage of residents who have difficulty paying their rent is 58%, compared to boroughwide and citywide rates of 58% to 51% respectively. According to the statistics this is a population at risk, “populations at risk are those groups in society most likely to experience and suffer the consequences of discrimination, economic hardship, and oppression. (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). That is why a program geared towards providing services to strengthen the student’s skills is important. As noted by the literature even if a family has economic hardships by being involved and obtaining skills, they can progress. The program is designed to assist community-based agencies by guiding and supporting them on working with students and their families.

Characteristics of Program Staff

Currently there are two social workers on staff. One social worker goes to the school once a month to follow-up with the teachers and discuss progress. The MSW Intern goes to the school twice a week to work with the assigned students outside the classroom. The social

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workers maintain contact with each other and discuss the student progress as well. Both social workers on staff are Spanish and English speaking to cater to the student population as most of the students are bilingual as well. Most of the student population are bilingual. The main concern is that a larger number of students need services but since there are only a limited number of social worker/MSW Intern available not all the students needed services can be seen, however the parents are provided with information regarding outside services. If the program has positive outcomes this can be used to be able to request more MSW Interns to be able to provide a larger number of students.

Program Cost and Funding

The cost is minimized as the MSW Intern is placed in the program by NYC ACS to assist with the counseling needs of the students and the other social worker is employed by another preventive agency and provides services to the school twice a month therefore the cost is not incur by the school. If the counseling program can show positive outcomes, then the school may be assigned other interns to assist with the overflow of student services.

Program Goals and Objectives

Program Goal 1. To decrease students' problematic behaviors that prevent them from attending the class.

Objective 1. Students will gain or improve knowledge in self-regulation and healthy coping skills via participation in play therapy

Objective 2. Parents will be able to apply techniques to address the student behavior

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Program Goal 2. To reduce the frequency of outbursts at home by parent support group services to parents

Objective 1. Parents will meet at least 5 times per semester for parenting support and education via the parent support group while they can meet with staff on a need basis.

Objective 2. Parents will gain knowledge in triggers of students' negative behaviors at home such as hitting or throwing objects and learn how to prevent and cope with negative behaviors in the parent support group.

Purpose of evaluation and stakeholder engagement

Purpose of Evaluation

This program would be evaluated using an outcome evaluation as the purpose of the evaluation is to determine if the services can help with the students' attendance and behavior in the classroom. The evaluation will further assist with noting if the services have helped the parents with working with their children's behavior at home. "These studies focus on assessing program goals and outcomes, the programs level of success, and its usefulness and failures." (Smith, 2010). The outcome evaluation would help to assess if there has been a decrease in the student disruptive behavior in class and if the parents have gained useful skills to assist with addressing the child's behavior at home. The program evaluation would measure the student's behavior in classroom by using different techniques such as self-soothing or redirecting. The benefits of the program are that it would allow for the students to progress and be able to build on their relationship with their peers as well as their parents. The program assists with getting the child adjusted to the school environment. The services will be implemented throughout the school year from September 2019 to June 2020. The MSW Intern social worker will obtain

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information regarding the student's progress weekly from the teacher/ family worker, as well as from the parents. The school has Pre-k and 3k, each grade has 10 classes, 15 students per class and two assigned teachers per classroom. The program identifies 10 students that would receive the services.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders in this program are the students, parents, teachers, social worker, Principal, and New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS). The students and parents would benefit from the program as it will improve the student's engagement and progress in school, and it would provide skills to the parents to help continue their children's improvement in school. The school staff such as the teachers, social workers, and Principal assist with identifying the students that need the assistance and would be better able to guide and continuing assessing the progress in the classroom. The outcome of the evaluation may impact ACS involvement in terms of how many MSW Interns they may place in the program. "Those in favor of formative evaluations are frequently those committed to furthering program development." (Smith. 2010.) The program implementation not only benefits the stakeholders but the community, as it increases positive interactions with the students, parental involvement, and builds a sense of community for all those impacted by the success.

Research Design

When evaluating this program, the research design to help assess the program is test and retest/pre-post design, as this will give us insight into whether the goals are being met such as the student attending class, student decrease/increase in behavior, and parents being able to address the concerns with a students' behavior at home. As per Smith (2010), "Test-retest means that the data are reliable if independent administrations of the same questions or data collection instrument produce the same results" (page 196), To determine the progress of the program we need to be able to measure if there has been changes in the student's behavior. When doing a survey it can be given to the parent and teacher in order to be able to measure if there has been any changes in how the parent deals with the child as well as if the teacher has noted behavioral changes in the classroom with the student. "The pre-post study adds another dimension and depth to the survey, as change can be studied. (Smith, 2010).

Threats to Internal Validity

When conducting research on programs the threats to internal validity, need to be considered as they may affect outcomes. Two internal validity threats are history and dropout. History may affect the results of a study as there may be other factors that may be impacting the student's behavior in the classroom. There may be changes in the student's family environment, which may be impacting his being able to focus in the classroom therefore the outcomes in how this student is impacted by the services may change. As noted by Smith, 2010, "Outside events, or factors outside the program, can contribute to program outcomes and change in program participants." Dropout can affect the study as some students may move during the school year therefore changing the outcomes in the study as only the ones left can be studied.

Data Collection Procedures

Data Collection Method 1.

The first data collection method is a survey. Since research design for this study is pre-post design, the same survey will be tested twice. This method has reliability as the survey has the same items and it is taken by the same participants as it was noted by Smith, 2010. The survey will be provided to the participants person to person. The surveys will be provided to the parents when they come to pick up the students and to the teachers in their classrooms. They would then be asked to resubmit them as soon as possible. The first test will be given two weeks into the program. The test will be given to the parents and the teachers to describe the student behavior as per their own observations at home and school. Then 3 months into the program the same survey will be given again to measure to see if any changes have occurred since the initial survey. The advantage of using this form of measurement as we would be able to obtain information from the classroom and home environment.

Data Collection Method 2.

Participant observation/progress notes can be used to collect information on a weekly basis. The social worker would be able to either observe the student behavior in the classroom based on their own observation or collect data from the teachers and parents regarding the student's improvement or lack thereof. This form of data collection is helpful as feedback can be provided on what techniques work, what is not working, what can be changed, or implemented to help with the student's behavior.

Data Collection Instrument (Measurement)

The type of scale that can be used is the Types of Aggressive Behavior, TOA, which is a scale that may be used to assess the frequency of aggressive behavior among preschool-aged children as noted by the teachers. (Kupersmidt, Bryant, & Willoughby, 2000). This scale is used by test and re-test and the reliability was rated to be a good measure. As per Smith (2010), in certain types of situations, reliability can be established through interrater or inter-observer reliability. (p. 197) The reliability for this scale may be accomplished as the student's behavior can be observed by the teacher and the parents. The scale consisted of 12 items, which correlates with ages of the students in the program.-

When trying to measure the program the methods that can be used is direct observable as the student behavior can be directly observed. The teacher would be able to provide feedback on the child's behavior in the classroom as it is observed such as did the child hit his peer because he became upset or was he able to self-regulate his behavior. Anger outburst is operationalized as the teacher and parents' observation at and at school. The measurement can provide indicators, such as doing their work and listening at home or in the classroom. Also, qualitative data will be collected via the following techniques: on-site observations and reviewing agency documents and clients' progress notes.

Sampling Plan

A sampling plan needs to be chosen, to select the participants to be able to evaluate the program. Smith (2010), "A sampling plan is a description of how program participants (or staff) are selected to be interviewed or sent a questionnaire, or to participate in a focus group about the group" (p. 289). The sample plan that may be applied to evaluate this program is the

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nonprobability sampling plan, availability. This plan would be an effective method for this program. As noted by the text, “The most general type of non-probability sample is convenience sample.” (Smith, 2010). This method helps obtain information regarding the effectiveness of the program from the participants. This method selects the most convenient elements in a small sample, it will select those students in need of services. (Moon, 2020). A sample of 10 parents would be selected from the program to be evaluated. The parents would be selected from the students who are involved in the program. This is known as a convenience sample, in which certain types of cases, in this program, a certain parent, would be selected. The participants are well known to the staff. (Smith, 2010).

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data

The qualitative method would be used for data collection would be in-depth interviews. To order to conduct the qualitative analysis part, the information would be collected using in-depth interviews completed with the parents and staff who are interacting with the students daily. This would be gathered by transcribing agency records and data coding. To obtain the information, the best methods to use are open-close questions to gather information as to whether the services are being effective. Qualitative data can be analyzed by opened-ended questions from survey, data from qualitative interviews, or process recordings. (Smith, 2010).

Quantitative Data

To analyze the quantitative data, the method used would be descriptive univariate analysis. In using this method, the data would be collected by noting the frequency of anger outbursts, which would be collected by the staff logs/agency records. Other information that

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could be collected via the agency records is the student's attendance and the attendance of parents in the group. This information would be depicted in a frequency graph, from which the mean would be able to be determined. Further data would be obtained via a paired sample T-test, which would be able to examine changes in means within in the same group. (Moon, 2020) As per Smith, (2010), a paired sample t-test looks at the pre-score of each group in relation to the posttest of each group. Paired sample t-test will be done by comparing the frequency of the children's disruptive behavior in the pretest and posttest and calculating the mean.

Findings and Implications

Overall, the goal of the evaluation program is to determine if the program will be successful in decreasing student behavior in the classroom, behavior at home by working with the parents, and improve school attendance. The program will select a group of students and their parents to engage in supportive services to address the concerns and provide skills and tools to the students for self-regulation and for parents to learn how to apply appropriate techniques to help with their children's behavior. The long-term goal is for the student to be able to regulate his/her behavior to reflect positive change. The program would be analyzed by using a sample plan to select participants to evaluate the program. Those selected will be tested by using a survey (pretest and posttest), observing the students, using agency records and obtaining data to measure if the program has been effective. If the findings are positive the program can be implemented regularly with the incoming students and social workers will continue to be assigned to the school so that the program may continue.

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