Grandparents Raising Exceptional Children

Thesis Proposal
HNRS 3500
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Thesis

• There is a need for grandparents to be trained to use effective communication techniques developed and used by educators with exceptional children in their care.
Purpose

• To get research scholars to recognize the need for quantitative research on personal, family, and educational issues grandparents experience as caregivers of exceptional children

• Implications
Project Abstract

• Gain factual evidence through a cumulative survey
• Intent is to increase interest and focus on a research gap in communication studies and education
Statement of the Problem

• Interpersonal Communication
• Majority of Research: student–teacher interaction in educational settings
• Parent–child relationship
• traditional parent advocacy for exceptional children
• Minimal interest in communication studies and the education discipline evaluate grandparents serving as primary caregivers
Personal Passion

• Lacreshia Jones
• 15 year old sophomore at RHS
• Carol Phillips
• Special Education teacher for twenty two years
Rationale

• Differences from traditional parents
• Physical and mental changes
• Downing (1999)
• Pemberton & Rademacher (2004)
Review of Literature

- Janicki, McCallion, & Kolomer (2000)
- Minority community
- The two perspectives these grandparents have
Unique Population

- Importance of mental strength
- Lack of resources that are equipped to handle case by case assistance
Family Characteristics

- Fulfillment of joy
- Obstacle of physical exhaustion
- Lack of comprehension on how to adapt to their child-rearing behaviors to the needs of a child mental/physical challenges
Common Concerns

- What are the special daily requirements for a young child with a disorder like cerebral palsy or spinal bifida?
- How can a child with Down syndrome be helped to sit or crawl?
- What appropriate discipline techniques should grandparents use with the grandchild?
- Lack of sufficient support agency providers
How are these Grandparents Feeling?
School Issues

• Knowing their rights
• Understanding special education terminology
School Support that I Vision

- Workshop training sessions
- After school programs
- Expertise as educators & counselors
My research Team

• Landeia Phillips
• Dr. Rademacher
• Carol Phillips
• Denton area Special Education Coordinator
Sample

- 50 grandparents
- Survey with 30-40 questions pertaining to:
  - School’s efforts to partner with grandparents
  - Quality of services
  - Comprehension of school services & technology
  - Impact of special education services on family life
  - Availability of support agencies
  - Training programs
Ultimate Goal

• Explore solutions and find means to contribute knowledge and attention to the need for both qualitative and quantitative research to inform the field of education and communication studies on how educators and other professionals can better assist grandparents with their unique needs in raising their grandchild.
Conclusion & Implications for Research to Practice

- Grandparents who are primary caregivers are wonderful human beings
- Child’s happiness is dependent
- Limitation on research literature
- Research extension
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