

Connecting homes and schools: A Photo Elicitation Study

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Abstract

Researchers have highlighted the importance of school readiness for low-income, African-American children who are disproportionately at risk for being unready for the transition to kindergarten. School readiness entails key reading, writing, and language skills that are associated with school success. However, preschools, elementary schools, and families frequently understand school readiness differently. Research further documents that children perform better in school when there is consistency in beliefs and practices between families and schools. Quality learning opportunities in the home and school promote school readiness and children fare better in kindergarten when collaborations are forged between the home and the school during the preschool process. A critical piece of this collaboration is understanding low-income, African-American parents' views of school readiness competencies and abilities and related parenting practices. To address this gap in the field, we used a resilience framework and photo elicitation interviews with low-income, African-American mothers of preschoolers. Mothers documented the various home-based activities they engaged in to promote their children's school readiness. Home-based activities focused on multiple literacy skills and included multiple family members. These findings suggest the ways that schools can partner with families that are culturally-sensitive and enhance the early educational success of children.