

Kansas State University Libraries

New Prairie Press

Adult Education Research Conference

2017 Conference Proceedings (Norman, OK)

How can parent education be used as a resource to improve and promote healthy relationships with children?

Brittany J. Riggins

north carolina agricultural and technical state university, bjriggin@aggies.ncat.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc>



Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Administration Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](#)

Recommended Citation

Riggins, Brittany J. (2017). "How can parent education be used as a resource to improve and promote healthy relationships with children?," *Adult Education Research Conference*. <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2017/roundtables/7>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Adult Education Research Conference by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.

How Can Parent Education be used a Resource to Improve and Promote Healthy Relationships with Children?

Brittany Riggins

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Very often as a teacher working with students and parents in a low-income community and schools, I witness strained relationships between parents and children. Students complain about the lack of love, care, and concern they have received from parents. Parents complain about the absence of respect, violent and disruptive behavior their children show for their elders, authority and themselves. This became a major concern when I spoke with a few of my African American male students who have been arrested, suspended from school, inducted into gangs, and/or have failed required courses to graduate from high school. The female students also contribute to my concern because they are often times very hostile, promiscuous, and also lack respect for their parents and authority. From my observations I realized that if parents used education as a resource to educate themselves on how to communicate and use the knowledge acquired through parenting courses maybe relationships with their children would be less strained.

One of my male students told me that no one had his back. I proceeded to tell him your mom and dad have your back. As our conversation continued he held true to the fact that no one not even his parents had his back. Another student of mine bragged about how his mom sent him to live in Charlotte with his dad because of his bad behavior. Throughout his stay with his dad they have become physically violent with each other. Both of these conversations were disheartening and troubled me.

I proposed to students some of the theories and concepts studied in adult education like transformative learning, social cognitive theory, and/or self-directed learning. Using these theories I challenged them to think about how their parents were raised and experiences they might have had growing up with their own parents and in other relationships. The students still expressed ill thoughts.

Then I realized that my perception of my parents were different than theirs because of my environment, culture, and parents background. Culture, class, and levels of education play a major role in parenting and relationships. I grew up with both parents and although they were divorced I felt love and nurtured from both parents. My experiences and love for my parents contributed to the disheartened feeling I had when speaking with students.

Researchers have studied relationships between parents and their children and the contributing factors that lead to unhealthy relationships. Poverty, financial stability, child characteristics, and social support are a few of the contributors that influence these relationships. These relationships are a major concern because they often times influence how well children perform and behave in school. Because maternal teaching is linked with school readiness, it is not surprising that gaps in school readiness exist between economic classes of children and between black and white children (Britto & Gunn & Griffin, 2006). Parent education classes could be a resource to close the gap in school readiness for minority children and build better relationships with children.

In these classes parents would benefit from learning how to effectively communicate. Communication can also connect with their job skills and job stability. Financial stability could

be taught and used in conjunction with outside sources like financial institutions and personal bankers. The classes would pave the way for healthy and happy living conditions that influence child behavior and education. Teaching adults how to help children is effective across social class (Heymann & Earle, 2000). Thus, parent education classes will contribute to the growth and wealth of minority families socially, economically, and educationally.