

The Exploratory Study on the Development of Parent Education Program for the Families with Early Teens

초기 청소년기 가족 부모교육 프로그램 개발을 위한 기초연구

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Abstract

초기 청소년기 자녀를 둔 부모는 사춘기에 대한 지식의 부족, 사춘기 자녀의 사고유형에 대한 이해부족, 그리고 세대차이로 인해 자녀양육에 상당한 문제를 지니고 있다. 본 연구는 부모-자녀간의 관계를 개선하고 그들의 건강한 성장과 발달을 돕기 위한 부모교육 프로그램을 개발하는 데 그 목적이 있다. 본 연구에서 개발한 "1315PEP" 프로그램의 구체적인 주제는 부모로서의 자신의 모습 바라보기, 자녀의 세계 이해하기, 인성유형 상호 이해하기, 자녀의 독립과 자율성 격려하기, 훈육기술 익히기, 그리고 문제해결하기 등이다.

주제어 : 사춘기, 부모교육 프로그램, 독립, 자율성, 분화

I. INTRODUCTION

Pubescence, which usually continues for two years, is the most remarkably increasing period of sexual difference in one's life ever since the early prenatal period(Jung, 1998a). Adolescents' rapid physical growth makes parental punishment or control difficult and their formative thoughts make some logical contradictions with rules or values that their parents suggest. Thus, parent-adolescent relationships experience some qualitative change (Chang, 2000). Their relationship requires some change as teens need

independence and autonomy from their parents. During the changing process, some conflicts between parents and teenagers can occur if the interaction can not go through smoothly. Furthermore, adolescence starts earlier and the growth rate of early teens becomes more higher than the past. Their behavior is somewhat unpredictable or unstable, and some may be entangled in peer subculture impulsively. In relation to it, the types and depths of juvenile delinquent are more serious. So, there are more concerns and attentions required especially on early teens

In our society, the level of tension between parents and children is more intense according to psychological and economical burdens on the educational issues such as entrance exams and too much educational fever at this period (Kim,

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1997; Lee, 1994). Besides, as our society moves towards the post-industrial society, the young generation go transition into more progressive and change-oriented disposition different from the adult generation(Korean Sociological Association, 1990), and the generational gap between them is so far widening. In this situation, because parents cannot give plausible knowledges, information and appropriate advices to adolescents in quite different environments from theirs, they experience an amount of confusion and difficulties about the child rearing.

In brief, parents with teenagers have considerable problems in parenting behaviors according to the conflicts due to the lack of knowledge about adolescence, the lack of understanding adolescent's thinking pattern, and generation gap (Bronfenbrenner, 1978).

Families with adolescents experience more higher levels of stress than other families with any life span(Choi, 1996). At this period, parents belong to middle age, and have difficulties of physical and mental adjustment. So, parent education programs must be developed to adapt themselves appropriately into their changes as well as to take parental roles effectively(Lee & Koh, 1999).

Thus, various alternatives to improve parent-adolescent relationships must be provided. Among the possible alternatives, including education and counseling, some educational program on the preventing dimension are generally useful with positive responses.

However, existing parent education programs are mostly imported abroad, and they are mostly focused on parents with toddlers or children(Yoo, 1996). That is, parent education programs for adolescents are relatively less developed, compared with their importance and necessity than others(Lee, & Koh, 1999). Noticeably, there are not sufficient for the parent training programs with early adolescents.

Our study is aimed to develop such a program to facilitate their development and growth, and to improve parent-child relationships. Ultimately, our study attempts to contribute to establish and strengthen healthy families.

II. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In our society, attentions to parent education have been increasing since 1980s. Reviewing the existing parent training program, P.E.T.(Parent Effectiveness Training) and A.P.T.(Active Parenting Today of Teens) are well known and prevalent in Korea. P.E.T was developed by Gordon (1962) and introduced in Korea by Korea Counselling Center(1986). A.P.T., which was developed by Popkin, was introduced in Korea by Korean Psychological Education Center(1995). In 1990s, Korean researchers have developed some parent education programs considering the characteristics of Korean families. These are common features of them : Their participants are mostly mothers, the contents consist of understanding the children's developmental traits, sexuality education, communication skills, and conflict resolution skills. Among them, "Parents Encouraging Children's Strength " by Korean Youth Counseling Institute(1996) stressed on empathetic understanding and respect. Song and Youn(1997) developed a model for the strengths of the relationship between parents and their children as well as the prevention of problems. Yoo and Hong(1998) added parents' self-control, and Kim(1997) paid more attention to parents with juvenile delinquents. Park and Lee(1998) developed school-based parent education program.

Generally, these contents and procedures are not enough for dealing with early teens who

have willingness to be independent but still dependent emotionally from their parents. Yoon and Kim's sexuality education program(2001) is the only one for early adolescents in Korea, but it is designed for teens, not for parents.

We take a positive view on the parent-child relationship as it is the major trend in family therapy since 1980s. We accept and reframe conflict positively. It also focuses on reinforcing one's strength, not eliminating one's weakness. We think early teens' impulsive tendency is somewhat normal and natural. We consider their resistance as a sign of independence and autonomy from their parents. Yet, for the importance of timing of mutual functioning, we must cope with early teens' emergent behaviors effectively. In conclusion, our program seem to be the first attempt to develop a parent education program helping parents with normal early teens.

III. DEMAND ANALYSIS

Prior to develop our program, we collected early teens' demands for parent education. It is well-known that perspective taking is a component of empathy that involves the tendency to put oneself in another person's place (Weiten & Lloyd, 1997). Subjective perception is usually different even between parent and children. Although parents say "I order you to do something for your life", children still think that parents do on their own way regardless of children's inner needs. Because any parent education is ultimately implemented for teens' well-being, we think that teens' perception is more important than their parents' and parent education program should be established based on teens' need and issues. Survey was conducted from 13th, Jan., to 17th, Jan, 2003 by self-report questionnaire. 50 boys and girls residing in

Mokpo City, Chonnam, responded in 10 items and their demographic characteristics are as follows (<Table 1>).

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of our participants (N, %)

variables	categories	frequencies
sex	boys	20(40.0)
	girls	30(60.0)
	total	50(100.0)
grade	1st	13(26.0)
	2nd	23(46.0)
	3rd	14(28.0)
	total	50(100.0)
age	13 years old	12(24.0)
	14 years old	24(48.0)
	15 years old	14(28.0)
	total	50(100.0)

The results of the survey are followed by <Table2>. That is, 80.0% responded the necessity of parent education, and girls perceived its importance more seriously than boys. They expected the effectiveness of parent education positively : "very helpful" was responded 36.0%, "somewhat helpful" was 64.0%. Then, contents of the parent education was asked to address. "Respect for children" was required as the most desirable theme (20.0%), and "communication skills"(18.0%), "children's independence"(14.0%), "refraining over-expectation"(12.0%), and "self reflection of parents"(12.0%) was also considered to be included. In relationship with parents, they answered "very good"(16.0%), "good"(22.0%), moderate(48.0%), "bad"(10.0%), and "very bad"(4.0%). Because questions about institution, materials, fee, and lecturer were poorly addressed, they were excluded in our analysis.

Table 2. Early teens' demand about parent education

items	total(N=50)	boys(N=20)	girls(N=30)
1. necessity of parent education			
1) yes	40(80.0)	14(70.0)	26(87.0)
2) no	10(20.0)	6(30.0)	4(13.0)
2. effectiveness of parent education			
1) very helpful	18(36.0)	8(40.0)	10(33.0)
2) somewhat helpful	32(64.0)	12(60.0)	20(67.0)
3) moderate	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
3. themes to be included in parent education			
1) communication skills	9(18.0)	2(10.0)	7(23.0)
2) children's independence	7(14.0)	4(20.0)	3(10.0)
3) refraining over-expectation	6(12.0)	4(20.0)	2(7.0)
4) respect for children	10(20.0)	6(30.0)	4(13.0)
5) understanding of pubescence	5(10.0)	2(10.0)	3(10.0)
6) self reflection of parents	6(12.0)	1(5.0)	5(17.0)
7) personality pattern	4(8.0)	0(0.0)	4(13.0)
8) sexuality education	3(6.0)	1(5.0)	2(7.0)
4. relationship with parents			
1) very good	8(16.0)	3(15.0)	5(17.0)
2) good	11(22.0)	5(25.0)	6(20.0)
3) moderate	24(48.0)	8(40.0)	16(53.0)
4) bad	5(10.0)	3(15.0)	2(6.0)
5) very bad	2(4.0)	1(5.0)	1(3.0)
5. "What do you think that your parents should be changed?"	understanding early teens' mind, treatment without discrimination, communicating more smoothly, talking with father, to stop nagging, to stop father's smoking and drinking		
6. "What do you want to your parents now?"	free time, more allowances, to reduce academic pressure		

We think that they have not yet made explicit opinions about administration of parent education.

Two additional questions were asked in open-ended format. "What do you think your parents should be changed?" was answered as follows: understanding early teens' mind, treatment without discrimination, communicating more smoothly, talking with father, to stop nagging, to stop father's smoking and drinking. "What do you want to your parents now?" was answered in terms of free time, more allowances, and to reduce academic pressure.

Summarizing these results, early teens were proved to be very positively aware of the necessity of parent education. They considered

themes, such as respect for children, communication skills, understanding children's need of independence, to be included. In that daily instrumental caring and rearing are little commented, we can conclude that expressive and empathetic interpersonal skills are to be learned through a parent education program to understand early teen' needs and issues as well as to help their development and growth.

IV. METHODS

1. Objectives and goals of our program

The objectives of our program is to make

growth of parents as well as their children by understanding of characteristics of early teens and encouraging them effectively. More detailed goals of our programs are as follows.

- 1) to be aware of the importance of healthy parents
- 2) to increase the understanding of early teens by acquiring knowledges about their developmental traits
- 3) to accept the differences each other and make harmony with them by identifying individual personality type
- 4) to help parents recover their own worth and empower themselves
- 5) to learn disciplinary skills about making early teens' independence and autonomy from their parents
- 6) to learn democratic conflict resolution methods

2. Contents of our program

We acknowledge two-way interaction between parent and children, yet, our program is more focused on making aware of the responsibility of mature parents on the early teens' growth and encouraging parents' differentiation of self prior to children's independence and autonomy.

Our program take some concepts from Dreikurs' democratic parent education theory (1958), and Bowen's differentiation of self theory(Kim, 2000), which are eclectically applied to Korean family culture. Based on Adler's individual psychology, Dreikurs focused on democratic parenting principles, such as understanding children's life styles, psychological goals, misbehaviors and desirable rearing skills. Especially he suggested the causes of children's misbehavior: attention-getting mechanism, demonstration of their own power, retaliation, doing inadequate behaviors, and making pathological reaction. And then he stressed on

democratic family atmosphere and encouraging children's opinion(Lee, et.al., 1999). Differentiation is the key term in Bowenian theory. It is the process of becoming emotionally independent. Differentiation involves the ability to express one's own opinions and feelings while at the same time listening to others and remaining emotionally connected(Young & Long, 1998). Bowen helped family members to raise the level of differentiation and experience their growth.

According to the results of our demand survey, we also included the contents of respect of children, empathetic communication skills, and understanding children's need of independence. Finally, our program "1315 PEP" (Parent Education Program for Parents with Early Teens aging 13-15) consists of 6 sessions. Major themes of each session is presented in <Table 3>.

3. Subjects and practice

Our program's subjects are parents who have adolescents aging 13-15. When the size of education groups is 10-15 persons, it seems appropriate, but, it can be flexible according to the given situation. They had better participate voluntarily.

Education type is mainly classified by lectures, group discussion and reports. As it is a type of adult education, group discussion is very desirable for parents to talk about child rearing experiences fully and finding out their own solutions each other. Our program takes totally 12 hours(2 hours/week) with 6 sessions in the school, community center or any other institutions available. More concrete contents per session are presented as below.

4. Evaluation

We will take both qualitative and quantitative

evaluation. Pre-test and post-test can be implemented at the first session and at the last session separately. Changes in self-differentiation will be examined by Je's(1989) questionnaire which is consisted of 36 items in Likert scales.

Effectiveness of democratic disciplinary skills may be examined by 4 items of Park and Lee's(1989) in Likert scales. Qualitative evaluation can be complementarily implemented in open questions about overall evaluation on the

Table 1. Major themes of our program

session	major themes
session 1	looking at self image as a parent
session 2	understanding early teen's world
session 3	accepting one's personality type each other
session 4	encouraging early teen's independence and autonomy
session 5	learning disciplinary skills
session 6	resolving conflicts with early teens

Session 1: Looking at self image as a parent

steps	contents
goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. making a rapport between a lecture and participants 2. explaining the overall process and contents about the program 3. evaluating self image as a parent
orientation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. introduction about the goals of the program and contents, and group rules 2. self disclosure-talking about family, motivation of participation, and expectation about the program 3. presentation the importance of parent education
lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The importance of healthy parental roles 2. The type of parental roles (dominant, permissive, neglecting, and democratic) 3. Factors influencing on parental roles (relationships with parents, spouse, children, and personality factors)
activities	<p>(thinking practice)</p> <p># "How are my children's thinking about me as parent?"</p> <p># Awareness of my feeling about it</p> <p>(diagnosis)</p> <p># Type assessment of parental roles</p> <p>(group discussion)</p> <p># Complaining of my children's attitude</p> <p># Stress and conflicts in child rearing</p> <p># Causes of failures in child rearing</p> <p># Brainstorming about healthy parental role types</p> <p>(practice)</p> <p># Role-playing about healthy parental roles</p> <p>(two persons per team)</p>
conclusion	<p># Summary about major concepts and their meanings (homework)</p> <p># Trying to communicate with children about topics "How do you feel about your parent?"</p> <p># Observing children's negative emotions (anger, delicate nerves, depression and so on)</p>

Session 2: Understanding early teen's world

steps	contents
goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding early adolescents' developmental traits (physical/sexual/emotional/social) 2. Understanding youth culture and breaking through negative beliefs about teens 3. Accepting and dealing with early adolescent's negative emotions(anger, fear and frustration)
lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early adolescents' developmental traits 2. Youth culture and our negative beliefs about adolescents 3. Unstable emotions in adolescence
activities	<p>(thinking practice) Reflecting my own adolescence</p> <p>(group discussion) # Change in my children's feature (personality, appearance stress, negative self-disclosure, resistance against parents and so on) # How much do we accept youth culture? (clothing, language, electronic games...)</p> <p>(practice) # Entering my children's mind / respect for my children (breaking up negative beliefs) # Taking empathetic communication skills</p>
conclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary about main concepts and their meanings 2. Filling out self-esteem questionnaire (for children/ for parents)

Session3 : Accepting one's personality each other

steps	contents
goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying the personality type of parents and children 2. Understanding and accepting one's differences
lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The influences of the personality and the temper on the parent-child relationship 2. MBTI personality type
activities	<p>(diagnosis) # MBTI personality type</p> <p>(group discussion) # Similarities and differences with my children # Incompatibilities with my children</p> <p>(practice) # Grouping among similar personality types and discussion</p>
conclusion	Summary about major concepts and their meanings

Session4 : Encouraging early teen's independence and autonomy

steps	contents
goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making psychological differentiation 2. Encouraging teen's individuality and independence
lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dysfunctional symbiosis with early teens 2. Skills to help early teens' psychological separation
activities	(diagnosis) # Psychological closeness test between parents and teens (Group discussion) # Recovering my own worth and empowering myself # Parental attachment and control (practice) # Skills to help early teens' independence and autonomy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ① open question vs. closed question ② vision-making vs. vision-cramming ③ over-involvement vs. under-involvement ④ self-teaching vs. regulating by others
conclusion	# Summary about main concepts and their meanings (homework) # Asking children to write a letter on the topic " Memories frustrated by my parents"

Session 5 : Learning disciplinary skills

steps	contents
goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of early teen's misbehavior and values 2. Understanding and accepting premature early teens 3. Learning disciplinary skills to improve self-esteem
lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parental disciplinary skills and self-esteem 2. Disciplinary methods to improve self-esteem
activities	(thinking practice) # Early teen's needs frustrated by his/her parents (reading children's letter) (group discussion) # Parental perfectionism (practice and role playing) # Disciplinary methods to improve self-esteem <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ① refer only to children's misbehavior ② find reasons to ascribed to children's misbehavior ③ suggest a new positive model ④ talk about past successful cases ⑤ modify negative beliefs about children's misbehavior
conclusion	Summary about major concepts and their meanings.

Session 6 : Resolving conflicts with early teens

steps	contents
goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making an empathy and understanding teens' place 2. Learning conflict solving methods to improve teens' self-esteem
lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflict resolution skills by parental role types 2. Self- esteem according to conflict resolution skills 3. Value contradiction and reconciliation with teens
activities	<p>(thinking exercise) # Cases difficult for solving the problem in the past</p> <p>(group discussion) # Generation gaps with my children and value contradiction # Conflict resolution skills with my children</p> <p>(practice) # Finding a win-win method in 5 situations (dating, peer relationship, school achievement, internet addiction, money management)</p>
conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Summary about main concepts and their meanings # Summary about overall learning contents # General evaluation about the program # Giving a certificate of the completion

program itself, changes in understanding of their children, and changes in problem solving skills.

Jung, 1998b).

The objectives of our program is to make growth of parents and adolescents both by understanding characteristics of early teens and encouraging them effectively. More detailed goals of our programs are to be aware of the importance of healthy parents, to increase the understanding of early teens, to accept the differences each other and make harmony with them by identifying individual personality type, to learn disciplinary skills making early teens' independence and autonomy from parents, and to learn democratic conflict resolution methods.

Our program tried the first attempt to develop a parent education program helping parents with early adolescents in Korea. It was focused on strengthening the healthy families by nurturing democratic parental roles of mature parents. It takes a positive view rather than pathological one for parent-child conflict and is placed an equal weight on the well-being of

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Adolescents are on the unique developmental stage quite different from adults. Therefore, there are some developmental tasks and issues only for teens(Korean Youth Counseling Institute, 1993). Rapid physical, mental, and emotional development of adolescence can be influential factors which make parents' control difficult. Teens sometimes challenge on parents' authority and parents are confronted on modification of parent-child relationships which have maintained until now(Yoo, et.al., 1990; Lee & Kim, 1989;

parents as well as children's. Especially, we think that it helps parents' psychological separation first, turning to children's independence and autonomy by encouraging parents to recover their own worth.

As our program's contents were drawn according to early teens' demand survey, the size of which was too small to be representative of total population, this study has some limitations for generalization of the results. Also, this study only present a parent education program model, there is a need to implement to verify its effectiveness. From now on, to facilitate this program, we would like to describe some suggestions.

First, to maximize the effectiveness of parent education, an integrative education program on which early adolescents may participate together must be developed.

Second, although most parenthood education programs are targeted to adult populations, it is important to give attention for teenage parents and for those who may become parents sometime in the future(Arcus, M.E., et. al., 1993). In addition to it, some support programs must be provided to improve the relationships between parents and teenage parents.

Third, as it is provided in other countries, mass mode of parent education program for parents with early teens should be utilized on TV or internet cyber site(eg., www.kyci.or.kr).

Finally, this program seems desirable to be taken as a routine program in each administrative agency such as the probation and parole office, and the juvenile protection education institution. In this case, home visitor programs that provide counseling and education will be more effective rather than center-based programs.

Key words : adolescence, parent education program, independence, autonomy, differentiation

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