

2020 FALL TERM

**MOTHER
MEETINGS
and
FATHER
MEETINGS**

Report Summary

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1. Introduction

1.1. What is the Background of the Implementation?

Although developmental opportunities are of vital importance for households in need, available data show that developmental opportunities in such households are low in proportion to the household's income level and especially the educational status of the mother (Development Analytics, 2017);

- Seventy-one percent of children under the age of five have fewer than three children's books or picture books in their homes.
- Sixty-eight percent of children with three or more children's books live in households with the highest wealth level, while 6% are in the lowest wealth level.
- The percentage of children playing with two or more types of toys increases together with the education level of the mother. Forty percent of children whose mothers did not attend school or did not complete primary school have less than two types of toys.

Reasons such as the pandemic, the increase in poverty and the social gap, children's exposure to even more violence and abuse while being forced to stay at home, the rise in child labor and children losing access to school, early childhood care and education services poses the risk of intensifying the existing inequalities in both our country and the rest of the world.

Compared to adults, children are among the groups that are significantly affected by adverse social occurrences such as pandemics and natural disasters, as they lack experience and skills in accessing resources through which they can meet their own developmental, social-emotional, spiritual, and behavioral needs

independently (Schonfeld and Demaria, 2015). During the pandemic, it has become difficult to follow a balanced and sustainable approach for both parents and their children.

The results of the studies conducted in this respect point out the need for intervention programs to eliminate the possible and existing negative psychosocial effects of the pandemic, support the well-being of all individuals in the household and especially creating a supportive environment for children with structured and systematic approaches.

1.2. Preparation Process for Mother Meetings and Father Meetings

AÇEV entered the process of reorganizing its efforts to support children growing up in unfavorable conditions, which are a part of its founding purpose, based on both the general characteristics of households in need and the possible effects of the pandemic. Work began on a model that can support the well-being of all individuals. For this purpose, an implementation model was designed to support the developmental needs of children, the parenting knowledge, attitudes of mothers and fathers, and the interaction between spouses through collaboration of education department experts, consultants, administrators, and members of the Executive Board.

While it was decided for the meetings to be carried out by educators who successfully completed the educator training of the Mother Support Program and the Father Support Program and carried out the implementations in the field, various meetings were also held with the volunteer educators to obtain their opinions on the implementation.

Due to the scarcity of types and numbers of toys in the children's homes and the fact that children had to stay away from school during the pandemic, it was decided for the implementations to involve materials that contribute

to supporting the different areas of development for children as well as stationery.

Eight sessions were created using the contents of the Mother Support Program and Father Support Program to support the parenting knowledge and attitudes of the mothers and fathers. Care was taken to ensure that the sessions consisted of basic attitude and communication sessions that would support parent-child interaction, as well as sessions that included developmental areas to support developmental needs. Furthermore, children's activities were also added so that parents could spend quality time with the child and support children's various developmental areas.

With the addition of two sessions for introduction and warm-up at the beginning of the implementation, it was decided that the total number of sessions would be ten weeks and that video meetings would last for an average of fifty minutes for each meeting.

Participant information and observation forms, online evaluation questionnaires, pre- and post-test applications, and observations of AÇEV center experts were used to monitor the implementation process and the results it created for the participants. Implementations of 2020 fall started at the beginning of November, and 2021 spring implementations started at the beginning of March.

1.3. How are Mother Meetings and Father Meetings Implemented?

The second was the box containing eight packages, called "My Home Play Box", which included weekly materials that were sent to the households of the parents attending the meetings to support the development, learning, and well-being of the child. A weekly 1 GB internet package was also provided free of charge to the participants throughout the meetings.

In the WhatsApp groups involving the mothers/fathers, educators made reminders for the parents to use the "My Home Play Box" materials, read the weekly information text, and perform the special children's activities for each week. They also created a suitable environment in which participants could share their experiences. In the weekly online video meetings, experiences were shared over the contents of the week in question and the topic of the week was discussed over the informative texts.

1.3.1. My Home Play Box Contents

Box contents were created separately for the age groups of 3-6 and 7-11. The box for the age group of 7-11 and the relevant implementations were only available for Father Meetings. Since it was aimed for the participants to carry out activities with only the related content every week, "My Home Play Box", which would be sent to households, was designed to include eight separate packages with special content for each week. Information cards indicating the purpose of use, usage instructions, and supported development areas for the play materials, books and parent interaction materials were also included.

1.3.2. Introduction to the New Implementation for Educators and Field Consultants

A comprehensive educator guide was prepared on how the implementations would be implemented by educators. The "My Home Play Box" package was also sent to the educators and field consultants so that they could see the contents in advance and work on these. Meetings involving detailed descriptions of the implementations and sample video sharing sessions were held with the educators and field consultants who would implement the Mother Meetings and Father Meetings. The aim of this implementation was for the educators to gain experience in areas such as keeping the flow while transferring information



and encouraging the participants to share their experiences and use the weekly materials correctly.

1.3.3. Cooperation with Institutions

To implement the Mother Meetings and Father Meetings, meetings involving explanation of the implementations and the intended target population criteria were held with institutions (municipalities, non-governmental organizations, district governorates, schools, etc.). Lists were created according to AÇEV's target population criteria. Candidate participants in the lists from institutions were called by field managers and educators and invited to the introductory meeting if they met the target population criteria.

1.3.4. Flow of Implementation

WhatsApp groups consisting a maximum of 14 people were formed with the candidate participants who met the conditions and stated that they wanted to participate. Online meetings were planned according to the appropriate days and hours for the participants and the educator. The application forms containing the information of the participants who made a final decision to participate after the Introductory Meeting were filled out online by the participants.

The first two Mother Meetings and Father Meetings were intended to introduce people to each other and ensure adaptation of the participants. With the finalization of the participant lists after the two meetings, the "My Home Play Box" package was sent to the households. After the "My Home Play Box" package was delivered to the households, the implementation continued with eight online video meetings held over the contents of the package.

While not mandatory, there was also a Closing Meeting in which the changes created by the implementation process in the participants were discussed and farewell messages were exchanged. Thus, the groups were completed through ten online video meetings, with two held at the beginning and eight held over the package.

1.3.5. Monitoring and Observation Processes for the Groups

For Mother Meetings, the attendance of the participants was monitored up on a weekly basis by the educators and the field managers. For Father Meetings, the monitoring process started with the monitoring form received at the end of the term and continued on a weekly basis in the spring term. For the participants who could not attend, either make-up meetings of a supportive nature were

held or the participants were contacted and informed individually.

The observation processes for Mother Meetings and Father Meetings involved observation forms mostly focusing on the flow of weekly video meetings. After observation, the field consultants gave feedback via the observation forms.

Since Mother Meetings and Father Meetings were implemented for the first time in the field and consisted online implementations, experience-sharing meetings were held during the implementation period to support the educators throughout the implementations and to ensure that they learn from each other's experiences.

2. Method

2.1. Purpose of Evaluation

Mother Meeting and Father Meeting implementations were developed rapidly under the conditions brought on by the pandemic and implemented for the first time in the fall of 2020 to support the development of children in target populations, which could not be met face-to-face. The aims of this study, in which the implementation of Mother/Father Meetings was evaluated, can be listed as follows:

- **Objective 1.** To examine the demographic characteristics of the participants in terms of the prioritized target population criteria.

Hypothesis 1. The number of participants meeting the prioritized target population criteria will increase.

- **Objective 2.** To analyze the continuity of attendance by participants.

Hypothesis 1. The average attendance of participants will be above seven sessions.

- **Objective 3.** To analyze the distribution of points in the observation forms and to evaluate the comments of the observers.

Hypothesis 1. Observations that score below 70% in the observation scores will be below 15%.

- **Objective 4.** To understand educators' process evaluations.
- **Objective 5.** To examine the behavioral changes reported by the participants as a result of the program.

Hypothesis 1. The frequency of positive parenting behaviors reported by the participants will increase from the beginning to the end of the implementation

Hypothesis 2. From the beginning to the end of the implementation, fathers' reported level of participation in the housework will increase.

Hypothesis 3. Gender attitudes reported by fathers throughout the implementation will be more egalitarian.

- **Objective 6.** To examine how often participants used the delivered materials.

Hypothesis 1. From the beginning to the end of the implementation, the participants will report that they used the materials more often with their children.

- **Objective 7.** To understand in which aspects and to what extent the participants think they benefit from the implementations.

2.2. Data Collection Tools and Methods

The objectives of the process evaluation study and the hypotheses created for these objectives were examined through

the information obtained by seven different tools. These are as follows:

2.2.1. Application and Participant Information Form

The information collected with the form included names and surnames of the participants, type of implementation they participated in, age group of the child for whom the participants would attend the meeting, year of birth, contact information, educational status of participants and their spouses, employment status, monthly income in the household, number of children, and birth dates and sexes of the children.

2.2.2. Observation Form

The observation form was created to evaluate the educator's implementations in a standard way, determine any areas that may be improved, define the relevant action plans and monitor the implementations.

2.2.3. Experience-Sharing Meetings with Educators

These were formed to support educators throughout the implementation, enable educators to learn from each other's experiences to reveal challenging areas and overcome these, and provide information to those educators who had not yet started the implementation. Suggestions from educators and field consultants were collected.

2.2.4. Pre- and Post-Test Phone Questionnaire for Participants

Interviews were planned to take 20 minutes. The questionnaire developed for interviews was started with informing the participants and obtaining their permission. The participants were asked questions regarding the following about themselves and their families,

- (a) demographic information,
- (b) a supportive environment at home for the child,
- (c) materials that are present or absent at home and their frequency of use,
- (d) parenting behaviors,
- (e) attitudes towards gender equality,
- (f) participation in household chores; and
- (g) evaluation of the implementations at the end of implementation.

Pre-tests were completed with 363 participants in total. One hundred sixty of these participants were mothers and 203 were fathers. In the post-tests, the same participants were called; 66% of them were reached and the post-tests were completed with 238 people in total. Of the 238 participants, 118 were mothers and 120 were fathers.

Sixty-eight percent of those participating in the Father Meeting pre-test process consisted parents to children in the age group of 3-6 while 32% consisted parents to children in the age group of 7-11. In the post-test process, 67% of Father Meetings were held with parents to children in the age group of 3-6 while 33% were held with parents to children in the age group of 7-11.

Sixty-four percent of the mothers attending the Mother Meetings were at an education level of middle school and below while 59% of the fathers attending the Father Meetings were at an education level of high school and below. Ninety-two percent of mothers attending the Mother Meetings and 58% of fathers attending the Father Meetings had a monthly average income below 4,000 TL.

2.2.5. Online End of Implementation Questionnaires for Participants and Educators

At the end of the term, an online questionnaire was shared to understand in which areas the participants benefited from the program, how supportive they found the materials, and what their satisfaction levels and opinions were.

The online questionnaire conducted with the participants involved 253 mothers and 303 fathers who gave at least one evaluation response. Approximately 80% attended seven or more sessions. Furthermore, 71% of the fathers were participants for the age group of 3-6.

In addition, a similar online questionnaire was performed to get the opinions of educators about the implementation process. With the questionnaire, the educators were asked to evaluate the program, the effectiveness of the interactions within the implementation, the materials included in the implementations, the weekly information notes, the online tools over which the implementation took place, their ability to use technological tools, the observation process, and the experience-sharing meetings. In addition, suggestions for improving the implementation were also received.

The questionnaire was answered by 43 Mother Meeting educators and 29 Father Meeting educators. The rate of educators who completed implementations with more than one group was 14% in Mother Meetings and 19% in Father Meetings. Responses were usually collected from educators who completed implementation with a group.

2.2.6. Evaluations of the Headquarters Team

The evaluations of AÇEV department experts were also qualitatively reflected in the report. These experiences were obtained from the interaction environments listed below.

- Supervision visits within the scope of implementations,
- Closing Meeting visits during which participants shared their views on the implementation,
- WhatsApp groups established for educators to communicate,
- Scheduled phone calls with educators,
- AÇEV consultants' impressions and notes about observation visits.

These experiences were evaluated together by AÇEV consultants and relevant AÇEV headquarters team staff, and then notes were collected regarding the suggestions and ongoing implementations. Observations regarding the spring term were also included in the report to expand the suggestions.

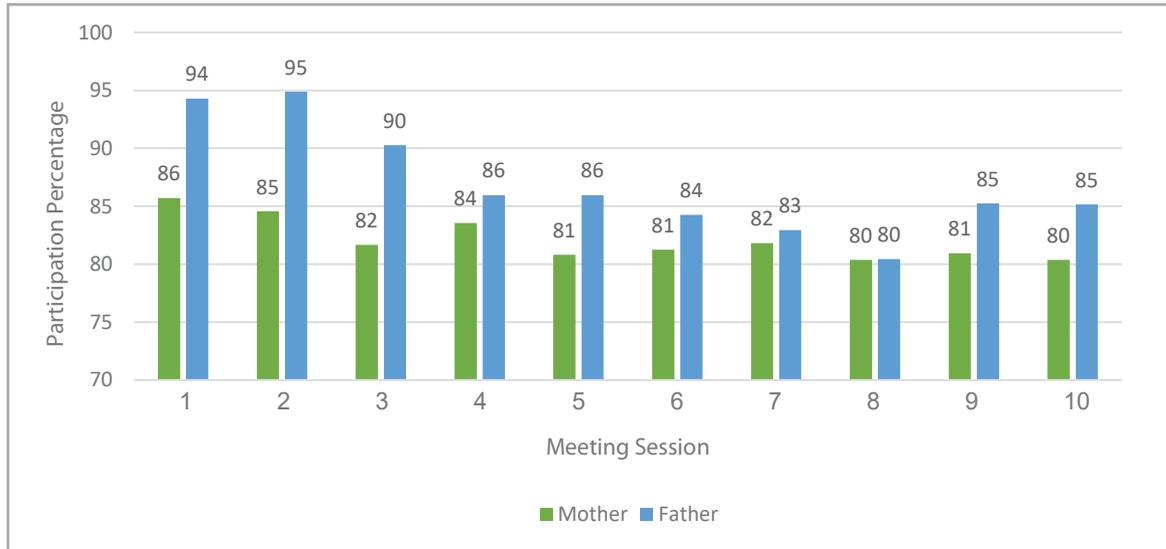
3. Results

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of Implementation Participants

Six hundred ninety-three of 723 (96%) mothers who applied for Mother Meetings and 997 of 1273 (78%) fathers who applied for Father Meetings completed the implementation. Fifty-five groups in Mother Meetings and 99 groups in Father Meetings were completed.

Very few participants either applied but did not start, or could not continue because the group was closed due to the low number of participants. It was observed that the participants in the Mother Meetings were unable to attend implementations due to health problems and having patients requiring their care, while in the Father's Meetings the participants left the implementations early due to variable and long working hours, and exposure to disease during the pandemic. While 22 participants (3%) left the Mother Meetings, 248 participants (20%) left the Father Meetings.

Figure 1. Participation percentage by session



In the spring term of 2020, 19% of the mothers were within the prioritized target population as secondary school graduates at most while 50% of the fathers were within the prioritized target population as high school graduates at most. In the 2020 fall term, these ratios increased to 65% for mothers and 70% for fathers.

Twenty-two percent of the mothers in the spring 2020 term had an average monthly income of less than 3000 TL. In the 2020 fall term, 56% had a monthly average income below 2500 TL. In terms of income level, it is seen that 61% of Father Meeting participants had a monthly average income under 4000 TL. In the spring 2020 term, this ratio was only 32%.

3.2. Process Evaluation

3.2.1 Monitoring the Attendance of Participants

The average number of attended sessions out of 10 was 8.4 for mothers and 8.7 for fathers. Given the second purpose of the evaluation, this reveals that the participants attended the sessions at a high rate (See [Figure 1. Participation percentage by session](#)).

3.2.2. Evaluation of Observations

Observations were carried out by Field Consultants, Field Managers, and department experts who had completed the “Field Consultant Training” conducted by AÇEV.

Two hundred sixty-six observations in total were made with 94 at the Mother Meetings and 172 at the Father Meetings.

Observations took place mostly in the first, second and eighth sessions. It is seen that the observation scores were generally high, with observations below 70 points making up 7.5% of the whole.

In the observations for the Mother Meeting and Father Meeting groups, the most frequent positive feedback by the field consultants was given in regard to communication with participants (use of a positive language, a warm greeting, addressing the participants by their names, answering their questions and supporting them in using the application materials) during the implementations.

The area that was most often communicated in group observations and where feedback was given to educators for improvement, on the other hand, is time management.

3.2.3. Process Evaluations of Educators

Data were collected from two sources for the process evaluations. The first of these sources was the quantitative and qualitative data from the online questionnaire filled out by educators at the end of the term, and the second consisted the experience-sharing meetings with the educators.

3.2.3.1. Educators' Evaluation of the Packages

It was determined that the ready-to-use developmental materials and books in the package were effective in immediate interaction between the parents and the child. In addition, it was seen that the packages encouraged both the child and the parent to continue the implementation sessions.

The comprehensibility of contents of the weekly information notes by the participants was generally evaluated as “quite appropriate” (71%) and “completely appropriate” (13%).

In consideration of the frequency with which the participants read the weekly information notes (1-Never read the notes, 5- Always read the notes) before the meetings, it was reported that the Mother Meeting participants ($M = 3.6$) read the notes more frequently than the Father Meeting participants did ($M = 3.1$).

The vast majority of the educators answered with either “very satisfied” (49%) or “completely satisfied” (44%) when asked about the contents of the educator package and to what extent the content of the curriculum met their needs in terms of being able to conduct the implementations

3.2.3.2. Educators' Evaluation of the Implementation Process

Interaction is established as one of the most important components of remote

education. When the educators were asked to rank interactions, “educator-participant interaction was found to be the most intense” while “participant-participant interaction was found to be the least intense”. It can be said that this was due to the constraints related to the use of methods that would enable participants to interact with each other in online environments.

Eighty-six percent of the educators stated that the experience-sharing meetings met their needs. These meetings were effective in reducing the anxiety experienced by some educators and helped the educators who did not open a group to see themselves as more competent to open a group.

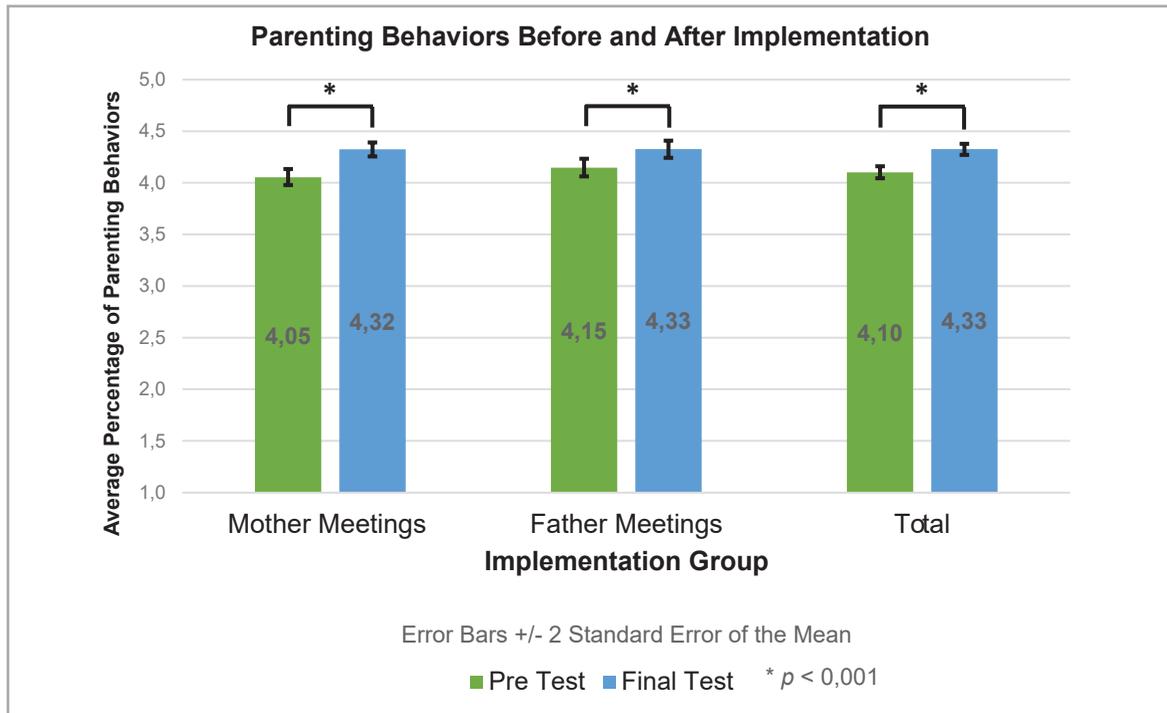
One of the points emphasized by educators as a strength of the application was the ability to reach people who could not be reached in face-to-face implementations.

3.3. Result Evaluation

3.3.1. Reported Parenting Behaviors

The participants were asked to report how often they performed the parenting behaviors that support the child’s development over 27 statements, and the analysis included answers from 118 mothers and 120 fathers. An average of the frequencies in all questions was calculated. Since the pre- and post-tests were applied to a paired sample (repeated measurements), the results were evaluated with 2(pre, post) × 2(mother, father) mixed ANOVA. An increase was observed in the parenting behavior scores in the post-test compared to the pre-test (See [Figure 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Parenting Scores of Phone Questionnaire Participants](#)). The impact level of this difference was determined to be of “high” on the statistical scale (Richardson, 2011). It was observed that the increase in the parenting behavior score of the mothers was higher than that of the fathers. However, this is a rather low-impact difference.

Figure 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Parenting Scores of Phone Questionnaire Participants



The five statements with the highest increase were as follows:

- I consistently apply the rules I establish for my child (Positive Behavior Development)
- I give my child responsibility for daily chores at home (Teaching Responsibility to the Child)
- I provide opportunities for my child to do activities that will improve their manual skills (by providing materials such as scissors, paper, pencils, paint, play dough, beads, etc.) (Physical Activities)
- I explain to my child the effects of their behavior on me (Listening to the Child - Self-Expression)
- I read books to my child (Language Development and Cognitive Development)

Considering the fifth objective of the evaluation, the first hypothesis was

supported in terms of an increase in reported parenting behaviors that support children’s development. For fathers, however, the second hypothesis related to higher participation in housework and the third hypothesis related to being more egalitarian about gender roles were not supported. This might be because meeting contents primarily focus on parenting attitudes and behaviors that support children’s development.

3.3.2. Evaluation of My Home Play Box Materials

In analysis of the results for the pre- and post-tests, it was seen that the materials that the participants had the least frequently were abacus (52%), wooden play blocks (40%), and play dough (30%). When the questionnaire participants were asked whether they used these materials with their children, an increase was observed in the use of pencil sharpener, crayons and abacus by mothers and abacus by fathers.

Educators stated that a positive change was created in supporting the children’s

development and communication with the children through parents' application of the activities and developmental materials together with their children. The educators listed children's books, children's activities, and wooden play blocks as materials that met the parents' need the most, and wooden play blocks, children's books and play dough stood out as the most preferred materials in supporting the development of children.

3.3.3. Perceived Impact Assessments

In examination of the aspects in which the participants benefited the most from meetings, the most common three answers were about improvement in their relationship with their children, increase in their self-confidence as parents and a rise in the time they spent with their children (See [Figure 3. Participants' Evaluation of the Program in Terms of Benefit](#)).

In the post-tests carried out by phone, participants stated that the content of the meetings was appropriate to support their children (92%), they learned things they could apply to support their children's development (92%), the materials sent home contributed in supporting their children's development (92%) and they found the meetings generally successful (95%). Most of the educators evaluated the implementations as effective (57%) or very effective (32%).

When asked for their opinions on continuing the implementation after the pandemic, 88% of the Mother Meeting educators and 83% of the Father Meeting educators replied with "Somewhat agree", "Agree" or "Strongly agree".

3.3.4. Participant Support and Comments

Upon being asked the question "To what extent would you recommend these Meetings to the mothers/fathers around you?" the participants were asked to reply with a range of options varying between "0 - I would not recommend them at all"

and "10 - I would definitely recommend them". Concerning the Net Promoter Score calculated via this question, those who rated between zero and six are defined as detractors, while those who rated seven and eight are defined as passive, and those who rated nine and ten are defined as promoters. The Net Promoter Score was calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. Net Promoter Score was observed as 91% for mothers and 87% for fathers. These scores indicate that the participants were very satisfied with the implementations and they were highly likely to recommend the implementations to those around them.

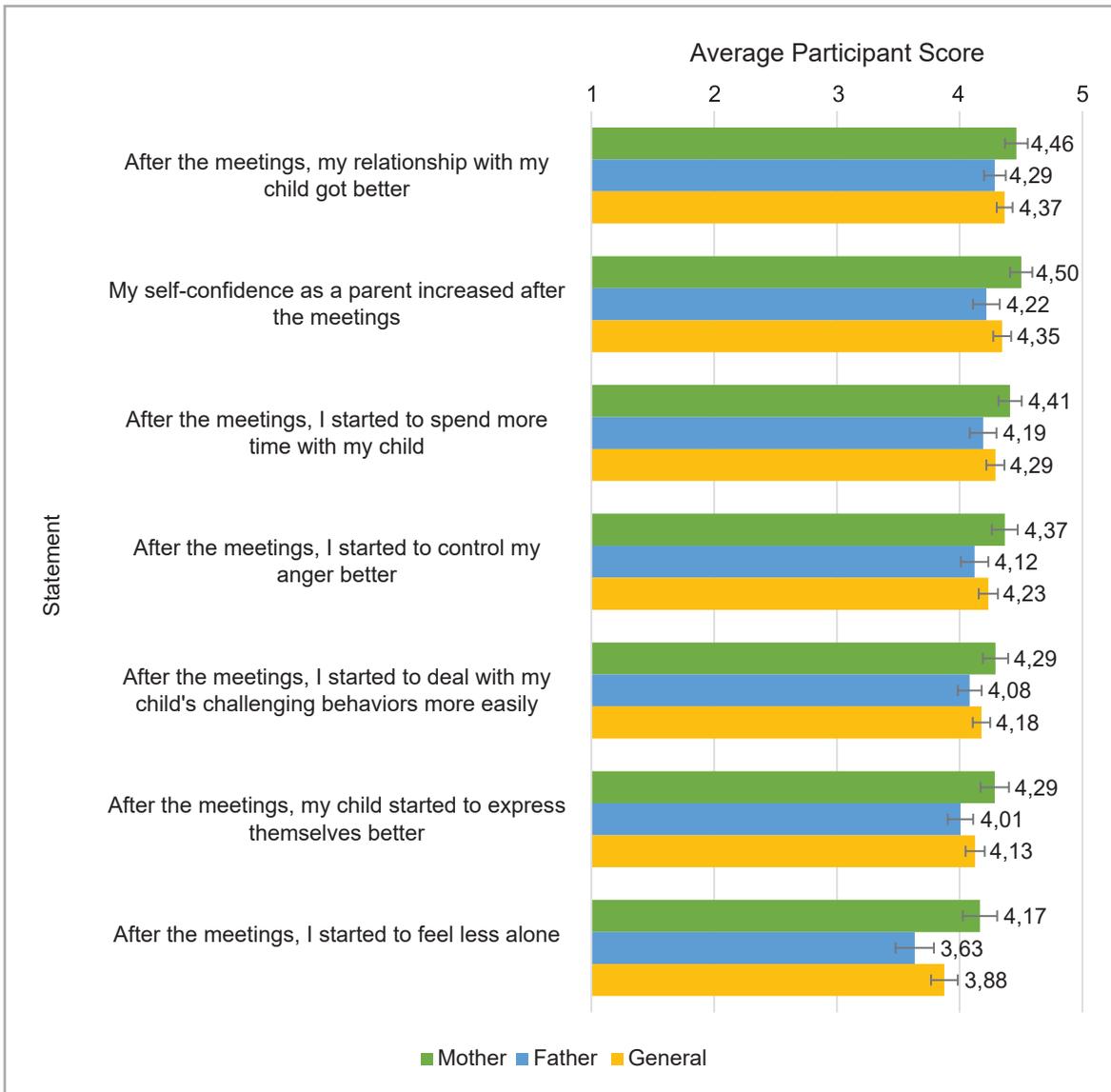
As a result of the two open-ended questions asked to obtain the opinions of the participants at the end of the implementation, it was observed that the participants made positive comments about the implementation in general (describing it as good, useful, efficient, etc., 15%), their approach towards children changed, they started to see children as individuals and tried to understand their children's needs more (12%), and their knowledge and awareness in various fields increased (12%).

4. Discussion

4.1. Assessment of results

An evaluation of the implementation process revealed that compared to the previous term, the level at which the implementations reached participants with lower education and income was higher. Educators generally adhered to the content and implementation plan in both Mother Meetings (89%) and Father Meetings (92%). Educators contributed to the improvement of the process with the feedback they provided throughout the implementation. While the interaction between participants and educators was high, the interaction among participants appeared low. Participants, educators

Figure 3. Participants' Evaluation of the Program in Terms of Benefit



and the headquarters team stated that the materials in “My Home Play Box” were found useful in supporting the development of children.

The results of the implementation were evaluated through the information received from the participants, educators and the headquarters team. Participants were generally very satisfied with the implementations and they were highly likely to recommend these to their friends. Participants of the Mother Meetings and Father Meetings stated that, after the meetings, they communicated

with their children by spending more quality time together, felt less lonely upon meeting with other parents on a weekly basis, and started to control their anger better.

The improvement experienced in the psychological well-being of the participants along with the meetings was also an important point in terms of providing a non-violent home environment supporting the development of children.

This indicates that Mother/Father Meetings, which were implemented by means of materials sent to homes and remote support for correct parenting attitudes and behaviors during the process brought on by the pandemic, may be an important intervention strategy that can make up for the lack of stimuli that children need even more during this period.

4.2. Limitations

It was not possible to conduct face-to-face evaluations with participants or educators. No data on how the implementation outcomes were reflected on children could be collected from the children themselves as the ultimate beneficiaries. Data collected from participants are based solely on participants' own statements. It may be possible that the answers were given to please in accordance with social desirability. It is very important to note that the results were obtained only under pandemic conditions in the current study, and that these specific conditions should be taken into consideration.

4.3. Suggestions

In both the long term and the short term, it is recommended that some changes and enhancements be made to continue the implementations. Recommendations related to the three main areas in question are given below.

1. Continuing to implement the current Mother Meeting and Father Meeting implementations in September-December 2021 as well and suggestions regarding the measures that can be taken for this period

Considering the conditions of the pandemic, it has been suggested for the implementation and the "My Home Play Box" implementations to be continued with some arrangements in the period of September-December 2021. These arrangements include the following:

- Arranging use of internet packages according to the current needs of the participants
- Revision of the educators' guide to highlight key considerations
- Examining the questions and options in the observation form and performing the changes that meet the requirements.
- Conduct work for improvement to influence fathers' participation in housework and attitudes in terms of gender equality during Father Meetings.
- Creating a plan to determine the frequency at which the shared supportive contents (YouTube videos, social media messages and language activities, etc.) would be delivered to the participants.

2. Experiences that can be transferred from the current Mother Meeting and Father Meeting implementations when face-to-face implementation is started

It was found that play materials, books and children's activities in particular were helpful in ensuring mothers and fathers to interact with their children more quickly and creating an environment for parents to spend quality time with their children. It is thought that play materials that can be added to support interaction for the household can increase the impact in face-to-face implementations. This issue will be evaluated in long-term planning.

3. Recommendations for a model in which both face-to-face and remote education can be applied simultaneously in the long term

The remote education method has shown that populations with limited access (families with children in need of special care, fathers working in shifts or traveling for business, participants in

regions where we do not have volunteer educators) can also participate in the implementations. It is important to make the necessary operational planning in order for remote and face-to-face implementations to be performed at the same time.

4.4. Conclusion

The information gathered from the participants, educators, field consultants and the headquarters team for evaluation of the Mother Meetings and Father Meetings, which were developed and started to be implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, has shown that the meetings increased parenting behaviors that support development of children and that both the meetings and “My Home Play Box” were helpful to households for purposes of parent-child interaction. Considering the pandemic, the high ratio of participation in the program and the high ratio of access to the target population are quite remarkable. In light of the information obtained from this data, it is suggested for the application to be continued with improvements in the future. Other suggested roadmaps involve for the materials sent to the households at the beginning of the meeting to be also used when face-to-face education activities are started, and for the remote education model to be applied when target populations cannot be reached, are unable to participate in face-to-face education, or under various natural disaster situations.

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