FATHER-TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN TWO DIFFERENT CONTEXTS: TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES

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Previous research from Turkey and the United States suggested a similar trend in the changing role of fathers in the family and children’s lives. Berger (2004) confirmed that in the late 20th century the concept of the “dominant father” figure began to diminish and the idea that “fathers are also important to child development” started to gain momentum in the U.S. Similarly, Balcı (2007) stated that the concept of fatherhood in Turkey is changing from “authority figures and disciplining individuals” to “more active-caring fathers.” Some current research also reveals that fathers’ active participation in early childhood education has clear benefits to children’s educational lives (Turbiville & Marquis, 2001). However, research on father involvement in early childhood education, and research on early childhood education teachers’ relationships with fathers, is scarce. The aim of the present paper is to investigate the effects of the changing role of fathers in two different contexts: Turkey and the United States. The main focus of the paper is to consider how a similar trend of changing roles for fathers influences different enactments of teacher-father partnerships in the two contexts in terms of the characteristics of teacher-father interaction as well as the relationship between the child’s gender and fathers’ involvement in the preschool. In this exploratory study, the research sample will be selected by the purposive sampling method (that is, 30 fathers of preschool children in preschools in each country will be invited to participate) and the methodological framework will be a quantitative one. A total 60 fathers of preschool children from Turkey and the United States will be invited to answer the “Inventory of Father Involvement” instrument developed by Kim (2008). Teachers of target fathers’ children will be invited to complete “Family Involvement Logs” developed by Rimm-Kaufman & Zhang (2005) to record frequency and characteristics of father-school communication during one month. Turkish translations of the instruments developed by the researcher will be checked for accuracy and meaningfulness by inviting other fluently bilingual scholars to perform back translations. A pilot study incorporating a small number of participants from each country will be completed for the instrument and the logs prior to data collection with the larger group of 60 fathers. The data collection and analysis, as well as writing about the research findings, will be completed by the end of May, 2011. Implications for teachers and parents, as well as recommendations for future research, will be discussed.
References:


