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An approach towards promoting Iranian caregivers' knowledge on early childhood development

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Introduction: According to the WHO, parents need to be informed about Early Childhood Development (ECD). Different methods of parents' education include group-based, face-to-face, book, booklet, web-based, technology-based and mobile learning using laptops, tablets and cell phones. Paying attention to caregivers' attitudes is the first step to their education. The objectives of this study were to determine parental education requirements and the best approach towards promoting caregivers' knowledge about ECD, from the perspective of the Iranian main child caregivers.

Methods: A qualitative approach with directional content analysis method was used. Participants were selected through purposive sampling. Thirty-one child-caregivers participated in 5 individual interviews and 5 focus group discussions (FGDs). Participants were parents and grandparents that had less than the 36-month child (grandchild) and kindergarten staffs. Four criteria namely: validity, transferability, reliability and verifiability were used to validate data.

Results: According to the perspective of participants, two main themes were requirements for parent education (educators, educational content, time, place) and approach to educate child caregivers (mobile learning, group and face-to-face education, electronic learning, media, physical resources), totally 98 sub-themes. Finally, the best approach to educate child caregivers was a multi-model approach includes group or face-to-face education with mobile learning.

Discussion: Participants suggested a multi-model approach based on traditional and modern technological methods, especially mobile learning (smartphone). They believed that the educational approach should be flexible and selectable, so caregivers can choose an appropriate individual method.

Conclusion: It seems that the multi-model approach is appropriate to promote Iranian parent or caregivers' knowledge.

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