

# Effect of Computerized Teaching Programme on Knowledge Regarding Personal Safety Among Latchkey Children in Selected Schools at Kozhikode

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to assess the effect of computerized teaching programme on knowledge regarding personal safety among latchkey children in selected schools at Kozhikode. The major objectives of the study were to assess the effect of computerized teaching programme on knowledge regarding personal safety among latchkey children in selected schools at Calicut and to find out the association between the level of knowledge of latchkey children regarding personal safety and selected demographic variables. The research design adopted for the study was one group pre-test post-test design with a sample size of 100 latchkey children. The tool used were screening tool to identify the latchkey children and knowledge questionnaire on personal safety. The knowledge questionnaire consisted of two sections namely Baseline proforma and structured knowledge questionnaire on personal safety. A multi stage sampling technique was adopted to select the samples. Lottery method was used to select the schools from Kozhikode corporation and a simple random sampling was done to select the subjects. A semi- structured questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge regarding personal safety among selected latchkey children, followed by a planned teaching programme in which all the students who met the inclusion criteria and who were willing were included. The post- test was conducted after one week, only for the selected subjects. A phone log depicting the numbers of father, mother, neighbour, fire safety, ambulance, police and child helpline number were handed over to the participants. Analysis in terms of the objectives of the study were done using descriptive and inferential statistics, which showed that computerized teaching programme was effective in improving the knowledge of latchkey children regarding personal safety. Analysis also showed a significant association between the age, class of studying and knowledge regarding personal safety among latchkey children.

**Keywords:** Effect, computerized teaching programme, knowledge, latchkey children, personal safety.

## Introduction

“The best thing we can do for the children is to allow them to do things for themselves, allow them to be strong, allow them to experience life on their own terms, allow them to take the subway”- William Robert As civilization develops, economic demands, financial pressure and social developments transform the family lifestyle into a society which results in the need for parents to work until late at night. Consequently,

the traditional ways of living have been affected adversely. Children growing up in these changing situations are forced to spend their afternoons after school alone without adult supervision. This state of affairs have huge implications for the upbringing of these children. Children who are regularly left without adult supervision during a significant portion of the day, referred to as 'latchkey children', are a growing social phenomenon.

The term 'latchkey' is used to describe unsupervised children who take care of themselves or spend the after school hours without adult supervision. The term refers to the latchkey of a door to a house. The key is often strung around the child's neck or left hidden under a mat at the rear door to the property. The phenomenon of 'latchkey' children originated in the West, during World War II. Powers & Anderson, the two researchers added that, the term 'latchkey' came in to wide spread use during the war to describe the children left without adult supervision before and after school hours. The term seems to first appear in Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio programme called discussion club, (how war affects Canadian children in 1942), due to the phenomenon of children being left home alone during world war. It also described how young children taking care of themselves after school while dad fought in the war and mom went off to work. The anxiety over latchkey kids really exploded in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The issue of 'latchkey' children became very prominent in 1943. The plight of 'door key' or 'latchkey' children was a central theme of the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators.

In South Africa the situation of latchkey children in rural areas is not so critical due to the availability of extended families. The presence of non-parental adults, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives reduced the number of unsupervised children in rural areas. In urban areas the problem of latchkey children is more serious because of fewer adults or friends who could serve as caregivers to latchkey children. There is an increased need for parents to work long hours to maintain a reasonable lifestyle and to be able to provide for themselves.<sup>5</sup> Employment tend to be the primary means of survival for most families; therefore it is seen as a priority for a parent or both parents to work. Conger and Galambos found that, latchkey children are more at risk of experiencing the negative effects of being in self-care than supervised children.

National wide statistics indicate a significant increase in the number of children who are not supervised after school. According to Berk, self-care children are those children who look after themselves while their parents are at work.

The main reason for the rising prevalence of latchkey children is the increase in dual income and single parent families. Economic and social pressures are forcing parents into the workplace at a time when children appear to need adult guidance and supervision. Higher divorce rates and more job opportunities for women left a report of three million children within the age group of six to thirteen years fending for themselves after school in 1982. The kids were often recognized by the house key they wore on a string around their necks.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. Determine the effect of computerized teaching programme on knowledge regarding personal safety among latchkey children in selected schools at Calicut
2. Find out the association between the level of knowledge of latchkey children regarding personal safety and selected demographic variables

## Hypotheses

H1 : There is significant difference between mean pre-test and post-test knowledge scores of latchkey children regarding personal safety at 0.05 level of significance

H2 : There is significant association between pre-test knowledge scores of latchkey children regarding personal safety and selected demographic variables at 0.05 level of significance

## Review of literature

A longitudinal study conducted among 674 Mexican-origin children residing in the United States examined the prospective effect of unsupervised self-care on conduct problems, and the moderating roles of hostile aggression and gender. Results showed that unsupervised self-care was related to increased over time in conduct problems such as lying, stealing, and bullying. However, unsupervised self-care only led to conduct problems for boys and for children with an aggressive temperament. The main and interactive effects held for both mother-reported and observational-rated was hostile aggression.

A study conducted among 2352 ninth grade students identified, independent contributions of the setting and the intensity of after-school self-care to the cigarette smoking behaviours. The finding of the study indicated that, a non-permissive parenting style, family rule-setting about cigarettes may reduce the likelihood of cigarette smoking among latchkey and non-latchkey adolescents alike. However, latchkey youth were not any more sensitive to these aspects of parenting than other adolescents.

A longitudinal study of variations in amounts of non-parental care across infancy, preschool, early elementary school, and early adolescence were examined in a longitudinal sample (N = 438). Result showed that there was relevance for three general issues in research on children's non-parental care. First, high amounts of non-parental care in infancy and preschool previously have been linked with children's adjustment problems. On the other hand, self-care in the early elementary grades were associated with later adjustment problems, independently of children's unsupervised involvement with peers in early adolescence. Second, the amount of non-parental care children experienced in any particular developmental period was largely independent of the amount of non-parental care experienced in earlier or later periods. Third, family background characteristics and family and peer relationship characteristics appeared to play a far greater role in children behavioural adaptation than do children with non-parental care experiences.

## Materials and methods

A quantitative quasi experimental one group pre-test post-test design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted among 100 latchkey children at Vidya Kendra and JDT Islam English medium school. Random sampling technique was used. Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical committee of Baby Memorial Hospital, Kozhikode. An intense search of related literature and extensive consultation with experts in the field of Child Health Nursing helps to develop an appropriate tool. Items of the tool were collected, scrutinized selected and checked for any overlaps. Cross checking was done and modifications were made in consultation with experts. The tool used for the study were a structured questionnaire. Reliability of the tool was assessed by means of test-retest method and the value obtained after the calculation of Cronbach's alpha was found to be  $r = 0.97$ .

Subjects were provided with informed consent which was to be given to their parents to ensure their willingness and an assent was also given to the subjects after explaining the study in detail. The confidentiality of the study was ensured throughout. The data were collected from 04/01/2019 to 03/02/20

019.

**Result**

study it was found that majority of the subjects (77%) were in the age group of 11 – 13 years, 56% were females, majority 54% of subjects were coming under the religion of Islam, a greater number (36%) of subjects were studying in the class of 6<sup>th</sup> standard, majority (53%) of the subjects reached home during the time of 3.30pm -4.30pm, almost equal number of adult members (35%and 34%) reached home during 5.30-7.30pm, 40% subjects felt sad while their parents were away, and a greater number of subjects (90%) stayed home alone for 1-3 hours per week.

These finding were supported by another study conducted in United states, aimed to measure how many children are in self-care by surveying parents about their children after school care. Here researcher estimated that, overall 12 percent of children between the ages of five and twelve years old care for themselves at least one afternoon per week. And the study showed that approximately 33 percent of the third grade children, 44 percent of the fourth grade children and slightly more than half of the fifth grade children spent some part of the after school hours in self- care. Self-care is one type of arrangement that fills in part of that time for the many families struggling to maintain supervision of their children during the after school hours.

In the present study a very less percent (4%) of subjects stayed alone at home for more than six hours. According to census data in 2011, over 4 million children were left without supervision for more than six hours every week on average

In the present study, majority (56%) of the subjects were females. In contrary to the finding, a study done to examine the prevalence and correlation of former latchkey status among 188 students showed that, twenty five percent of the male and fourteen percent of the female participants were identified as former latchkey children.

**Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects based on knowledge scores on personal safety, before and after computerized teaching programme**

(n=100)

Level of knowledge	Range	Pre test		Post test	
		F	%	F	%
Poor	0-6	14	17	0	0
Average	7-10	67	63	0	0
Good	11-15	19	20	6	6
Very good	16-22	0	0	94	94

**Mean, standard deviation, ‘p’ value and ‘t’ value of the knowledge scores of subjects regarding personal safety among latchkey children**

(n=100)

Knowledge score	Mean	SD	‘t’ value	df	p-value	Significance
Pre-test	2.03	0.611	-32.501	99	0.000	Significant
Post-test	3.94	0.239				

\*Level of significance at 0.05 level

**Association between the knowledge score of subjects with their age, gender, religion and class of studying.**

(n= 100)

Variables	Chi- square	p- value	df	Significance
Age	20.412	0.000	2	Significant
Gender	0.106	0.948	2	Not significant
Religion	13.167	0.010	4	Not significant
Class of studying	39.899	0.000	10	Significant

**Association between the knowledge score of subjects with their time the child reached home after school, time that an adult member in the family reached at home after their job, feeling of the subjects when parents are away and hours to stay alone at home**

(n = 100)

Variables	Chi- square	p- value	df	Significance
Time the child reached home after school	9.299	0.157	6	Not significant
Time that an adult member in the family reached home after job	3.638	0.726	6	Not significant
Feeling of the subjects when parents are away	8.136	0.616	10	Not significant
Hours to stay alone at home	5.977	0.201	4	Not significant

Result shows that there is significant improvement in knowledge of latchkey children after the computerized teaching programme. And there is significant association between the age, class of studying and knowledge regarding personal safety among latchkey children

**Discussion**

In the present study it was found that majority of the subjects (77%) were in the age group of 11 – 13 years, 56% were females, majority 54% of subjects were coming under the religion of Islam, a greater number (36%) of subjects were studying in the class of 6<sup>th</sup> standard, majority (53%) of the subjects reached home during the time of 3.30pm -4.30pm, almost equal number of adult members (35%and 34%) reached home during 5.30-7.30pm, 40% subjects felt sad while their parents were away, and a greater number of subjects (90%) stayed home alone for 1-3 hours per week.

**Conclusion**

The findings of the research study showed that the computerized teaching programme was effective in improving the knowledge regarding personal safety among latchkey children studying in selected schools at Kozhikode. And here is significant association between knowledge of subjects regarding personal safety with age and class of studying.

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