Family support plays a critical role in students’ identities and career aspirations. The results of this study suggest that family STEM programs can positively influence the cultural capital, including science, social, familial, and aspirational capital, and family science habitats of the parent participants.

Future programs should:

- Help parents understand the wide variety of careers that are considered STEM
- Introduce families to community members who engage in STEM careers and hobbies who are representative of the participants
- Help parents understand the wide variety of home activities that are considered STEM
- Explicitly teach parents how to engage in effective questioning during science activities
- Build parent’s navigational capital such as offering college or other STEM programs
- Specifically address linguistic capital and the language of science which may be a barrier to participation in STEM

Sustained, engaging, family-based programs out-of-school, and potentially in schools, is one way to approach the need for more youth, particularly women and those from underserved groups, to pursue STEM careers.

Limitations

This study has a limited sample size and results should not be generalized beyond this sample. Additionally, the participants in this study were volunteers, and their science interests may not be representative of the larger populations.

References


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