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PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT
OF ELEMENTARY AGED STUDENTS
WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Dedicated to my Aunt Stacy and to all of my students.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank my family for giving me a “lifeline” of support over the last five years. Thank you mom for never getting tired of my daily phone calls or if you did, for not saying so. I could not have made it through without your encouragement and belief in me that I could do it. Thank you dad for continuing to ask me, “Are you done yet?” It was the motivation I needed to finish this process and I am pleased to say, “I am done.” Thank you to my two brothers for your moral support. Thank you to my husband for playing the role of “Mr. Mom” when our son was only two weeks old and thereafter, when I had to go back to school. You were a huge help! Thank you to my sweet baby boy for reminding me of what is most important in life when things really got stressful. Thank you family and friends, I could not have done it without you all!

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore parent perceptions concerning their involvement in their children's education. The problem in this study was to better understand why some parents become involved, while others do not. Survey methodology was utilized to determine parent perceptions of (a) communication received from school personnel; (b) levels of parent and children's participation in home literacy activities; (c) levels of parent efficacy; and (d) parent viewpoints of their responsibilities in the home-school relationship.

Participants in this study consisted of 49 parents of elementary-aged children, diagnosed with specific learning disabilities, between the ages of 6 and 11 years old, enrolled in grades first through fifth, and receiving special education services. The study included six elementary schools in two school districts.

Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis were utilized. No correlations were found between parent perceptions of school communication and their levels of parent involvement or between the two variables, parent efficacy and parents' levels of involvement. When parent involvement sub-measures were examined separately, a correlation was found between parent efficacy and the sub-measure parent involvement at school. A strong, positive correlation was found between the two variables, parent literacy activities and at home child literacy activities. Parent reports of their responsibilities in their children's education and their perceptions of school communication were also described.

CHAPTER ONE

Statement of Problem

For some of us reading is part of our everyday routine. We read without even giving it a second thought. From our kitchens to our cars, we read everything from the cereal box in our pantries to the stop signs on the streets. We wake up in the morning and read the paper or search our computers for the latest news. We read while we wait and some of us cannot wait to read. From romance novels to research, reading is an essential part of our everyday lives. For the most part reading is an effortless source of entertainment that most of us tend to take for granted. More importantly, functional literacy is essential for our everyday economic survival. For children to develop functional literacy skills, specifically children with learning disabilities, parent involvement is important.

Literacy Statistics

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in the United States 40 to 44 million adults have reported they struggle to read. In this group, 41% to 44% reported they needed assistance with daily household tasks that required reading, such as paying bills and reading the newspaper for community events (NCES, 2003). Research indicates a strong correlation between individuals who have learning disabilities and their level of reading.

Six percent of the adults who struggle to read reported having a learning disability (NCES, 2003). Knowing the history of learning disabilities and the impact it can have on reading, it is easy to understand how it comprises their reading capacity.

Twenty-four to 38% of the adults identified with learning disabilities report having below basic reading skills compared their peers without learning disabilities. Below basic reading skills were defined as adults who were unable to complete a minimum number of simple literacy questions (NCES, 2003).

Approximately, 14,657,000 or 20% of the children in the United States live in poverty (Kids Count Data Center, 2009). According to the National Kids Count Program (2009), only 32% of 4th grades students scored at or above the proficient level in reading and 88% of 4th grade students with disabilities scored below proficient reading levels. The National Kids Count Program did not define the term proficient (2009). Reading is a factor that can determine the path to poverty or financial security.

Definition of Literacy

The information provided by the Educational Testing Service (2007) provides four frameworks to define literacy: (1) prose, (2) document, (3) quantitative, and (4) health skills. Prose literacy is used to answer questions and to learn how to do something through information found in newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, manuals or flyers. Document literacy is described as information you need or want to give someone else, such as filling out a job application or signing a permission slip for your child to go on a field trip. Quantitative literacy measures how well a person understands numbers found in ads, forms, flyers or articles; quantitative literacy, for example, is used to calculate a 15% tip at a restaurant or to add up how much you have saved at a grocery store by using coupons. Within the literacy framework, health skills measure how well a person understands the use of health related information to promote health or to prevent

disease (ETS, 2011). For the purposes of this study the words reading and literacy will be used interchangeably.

Literacy and Poverty

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2003), person employment status, earning power, and opportunity to choose the occupation they desire are all affected by their ability to achieve literacy. Adults with higher literacy levels are more likely to be employed full time while adults with lower literacy levels tend to experience more unemployment or working in part time positions. For example 35% of people with basic literacy skills are employed in service jobs.

In general, individuals with below basic literacy skills earn lower wages with an average salary of $16,000 per year. This figure can be compared to persons with proficient literacy skills who earn an average of $101,000 per year (NCES, 2003). Individuals considered having below basic literacy skills report their reading abilities limit their job opportunities. For parents with poor reading skills, being illiterate may lead to poverty and be a constant reminder of how poverty can impact a person's quality of everyday life. This quotation from a parent living in poverty candidly illustrates the devastating effects poverty can have on a family:

> If you have no money, it's very difficult to be, to do, to be together, to do fun things, to be at peace, to come home to a haven….Because if you have no money, the bills not paid, you not gonna rest when you get home. You might have a good family, you know, a good husband, whatever, whatever. But, you don't have money, all that can go down the drain, so….Money provides a way of release. You can go on a vacation, maybe

> once a year, whereas if you don't have the money, you won't be able to do that. You can-you can pay your bills. Whereas if you don't have money, you won't be able to do that. And when you can't do those things, you have this feeling of insecurity which floods over into other problems, emotionally. Anger, bitterness, and then it jumps off on the other family members and you got chaos (Park, Turnbull & Turnbull, 2002, p. 151).

Quality of Life

Turnbull and colleagues (2001) worked with 34 focus groups to develop a theoretical quality of life framework. Parents of children with disabilities, parents of non-disabled children, individuals with disabilities, service providers, administrators, and parents with limited English proficiency, were part of the focus groups. Park et al. (2002) focused on 5 of the 10 domains developed by Turnbull et al. (2001): (a) health, (b) productivity, (c) physical environments, (d) emotional well-being, and (e) family interaction. They defined the quality of life for families as (a) the capability of meeting the needs of family members, (b) the enjoyment in a family's life, and (c) the opportunities for family members to follow their dreams and to achieve important life goals. Park et al. (2002) determined the impact of poverty on a family's quality of life begins with the parent and then affects the whole family.

Health

The compromised health of a family living in poverty is often a consequence of limited access to health care. The health of poor families is often compromised by hunger and malnutrition during pregnancy. Pregnant women with limited access to health services generally lack prenatal care and are often malnourished, resulting in

premature babies, babies born with low birth weights, and babies born with birth defects. Babies born prematurely and with low birth weights are at risk for respiratory, neurological and cognitive problems such as cerebral palsy, seizure disorder, visual and motor coordination problems, intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (2003) reported children living in poverty were more likely to be uninsured making it even more difficult for families to afford health care provided by doctors and dentists or for health supplies, such as prescription drugs (Park et al., 2002). In the United States, 8.1 million children were uninsured in 2011 (National Kids Count Program, 2009).

The pattern of want continues for many, as impoverished children grow older. According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), in 2008, more than 49.1 million American families could not afford to buy food and one in four children struggled with hunger. Children who suffer from hunger are more likely to experience unwanted weight loss, fatigue, headaches, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and frequent colds (Park et al., 2002).

Productivity

When a family's health is compromised, so is the productivity of the family. Park et al. (2002) describe productivity as the family's ability to enjoy each other and spend time as a family. More specifically, productivity refers to (a) a child's cognitive development and schooling, and (b) the family's opportunities for leisure and recreational activities.

A child's early cognitive development and IQ are associated with early childhood experiences provided by the family (Bradley et al., 1994). Families living in poverty are

less likely to be able to afford quality childcare, to provide stimulating toys and books, or to have enough money for extracurricular activities, like music, that would enhance their children's cognitive ability (Posner & Vandell, 1999; Sherman, 1994). When families are struggling to pay for their next meal or concerned with providing a safe haven for their children, their priority is more about survival and less about language and academics (Smith, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997).

Families living in poverty have less opportunity to play together and/or exercise. They spend less time socializing with others. Poor families cannot afford to enroll their children in programs like Little League or to purchase uniforms associated with the sport. These extracurricular activities are too costly, for most impoverished families (Sherman, 1994).

Physical Environment

The home and neighborhood environment are physical environments that impact a family's quality of life. McLoyd and Wilson (1991) describe a basic condition for any family as having a home in which to live. Even if poor families have a house to call home, more often than not, the living conditions within their homes are unsafe and inadequate. Families living in poverty are more likely to experience nonworking water heaters, toilets, and plumbing. They are more than three times more likely to live in homes infested with insects and rodents, and three times more likely to have exposed wiring. Poor families are also more likely to live in older homes with lead paint and lead-soldered pipes, which results in higher levels of lead exposure (Crooks, 1995).

The neighborhood environment in which poor families live also affects the quality of family life. Poor families are more likely to live in inadequate and unsafe housing

conditions, located in neighborhoods with crime, violence, and drugs. According to Duncan (1994) teenagers who grew up in poor neighborhoods were more likely to have school attendance problems and to drop out than adolescents from affluent communities. In 2007, young adults living in families earning the lowest incomes had the highest dropout rate among 16 to 24 year olds at 16.7% compared to young adults from families with the highest incomes who had dropout rates at 2.7% (NCES, 2003).

Emotional Well-being

Poverty can profoundly impact a family members emotional well-being. A family's level of happiness, ability to adapt, identity, and amount of stress they internalize can be attributed to the effects of poverty, which directly influences stress levels. McLoyd (1990) stated that one major source of stress found in adults and children living in poverty were increased depression and mental health problems that were exacerbated by financial instability (e.g. being unable to pay bills, being evicted from their homes, losing their jobs, and moving their families from place to place).

Overwhelmed by the effects of poverty, poor parents are more likely to have negative interactions with their children (Park et al., 2002). These negative experiences lead to failures in establishing trust and building a sense of security for their children (Lempers, Clark-Lempers, & Simons, 1989; McLeod & Shanahan, 1993). Negative interactions tend to result in less sensitivity and more frequent use of aversive and coercive discipline methods (Elder, Nguyen, & Caspi, 1985). Poverty leads to poor environments and poor environments affect the entire family's productivity, emotional well-being and health (Park et al., 2002).

Disability

For families living in poverty who have a child with a disability, the effects of poverty can be even more daunting. Among children with disabilities, age 3 to 21, 28% are living in poverty (Fujiura & Yamaki, 2000). Families who live in poverty and have a child with a disability are more likely to experience higher levels of stress and require more coping skills to adapt to the demands of daily life (Scorgie, Wigosh, & McDonald, 1998).

Scorgie, Wilgosh, and McDonald (1998) evaluated 25 studies examining stress and coping in families with children with disabilities to find out how family variables affect stress and adaptability. They found families with higher incomes exhibited higher paternal and maternal satisfaction and had more opportunities to support each other, such as sharing in parental responsibilities. Yau and Li-Tsang (1999) also found families with higher incomes adapted easier to the daily demands of having a child with a disability. For families with a child with a disability, higher family incomes were also related to greater marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was associated with couples shared involvement with and support for their identified child. Yau and Li-Tsang (1999) also identified financial security as a factor in improving the adaptability of family members toward the child with a disability (Yau & Li-Tsang, 1999).

Li-Tsang, Yau and Yeun (2001) interviewed and analyzed characteristics of Asian parents who had children with developmental delays and were considered to have successful coping skills and positive attitudes. Ten parents were selected on criteria based on the most active and involved parents. The parents must have held positions in organizations advocating for services of children with disabilities. Parent interviews

were conducted by a health care professional with experience in working with families that had children with disabilities.

The results demonstrated attributes leading to successful coping mechanisms and positive attitudes of parents who had children with developmental delays. These included personal resources, positive family and marital relationships, and positive parent and child relationships. Families were generally self-confident, positive, outgoing and sociable. Parents also identified themselves as advocates for their children and were highly motivated to find resources to support their children's needs (Li-Tsang & Yuen, 2001).

Similar to previous reports **(**Nihira, Meyers, & Mink, 1980) research found parents who were secure and satisfied with their marital relationships were more apt to have positive attitudes towards their children with developmental delays. This observation is similar to the study by Frey, Fewell, and Vadasy (1989) who found a positive association between spousal relationships and the development of coping skills of parents who have children with disabilities.

In addressing parent attitudes and values, the subjects in a study by Li-Tsang, Yau, and Yuen (2001) demonstrated more positive attitudes towards life. The participants valued the present rather than feeling regret over the past or worrying about the future. The participants greatly valued education and believed it was their responsibility to also teach their children to value education. The parents were also willing to talk to other parents in support groups about their experiences and to offer advice if needed (Li-Tsang et. al., 2001). The differences between the Yau and Li-Tsang study (1999) and the Park et al. (2002) study were the participants. Participants in the

Yau and Li-Tsang study (1999) were regarded as educated and affluent families; whereas, participants in the Park et al. (2002) study were not.

Children from financially disadvantaged homes are more likely to begin school with lower levels of Standard English language skills than children from middle or higher-class families (Huston, 1994). For these children, the pattern for underachievement begins early and remains a struggle throughout their entire educational career. Poverty impacts the educational outcomes of most children, including those with disabilities. Illiteracy can lead to poverty and poverty impacts children's educational development. To break the cycle of poverty, learning to read is an important skill to develop (Eric, 2003)

Purpose of Study

One way to address early reading problems is to involve the parents in their children's literacy education. Research indicates a key component in assuring successful literacy outcomes for children is enhancing positive parent behaviors, such as providing literacy opportunities for their children (Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). It is important to note that one of the six principles outlined in Public Law [PL] 94-142, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1975, 1990, 2004), specifically addresses supporting parent and student participation.

> **Parent Involvement.** Refers to participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about learning and school activities; ensures that parents play an integral role in their child's learning, are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school, are full partners in

their child's education, are included in decision-making about their child's education (20 U.S. C.§ 7801).

Research supports that parent involvement appears to have a positive influence in decreasing drop out rates (Rumberger, 1995), retentions, and special education placements (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). If parents lack confidence in their ability to help their children with homework, struggle to read, or are unable to read, participating in children's literacy activities is a challenge. Whatever the reasons, these challenges may prevent parents from becoming involved in their children's development of the basic skills needed for later reading success.

The purpose of this research was to explore parent perceptions concerning their involvement in their children's education. It is possible that issues, such as parents not being able to read or work-related priorities in the home are two sources of explanation for parents who are less involved than other parents. It is necessary to find out whether parent perceptions about their involvement are important for understanding the behaviors of parents and whether or not their perceptions affect the level of involvement in their children's education.

Conceptual Framework

Parent involvement in their children's education and levels of self-efficacy are considered critical factors in successful school outcomes. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy associates children's academic achievement to their parents' sense of academic efficacy and the ambitions the parents have for their children (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). Based on Bandura's theory, parents believe their involvement in their children's education will positively affect the success of their

children's academic achievement. Parents who have a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to believe their involvement behaviors will result in positive outcomes for their children (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Lynch, 2002). When this occurs they are more likely to be involved in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie, 1992; Kay, Fitzgerald, Paradee, & Mellencamp, 1994).

Poverty, low parent levels of education and ethnicity are three risk factors to children's successful school outcomes. In the state of Oklahoma, 49% of children live in low-income families and 23% of children live in poor families. Children living in a family of four and with parent incomes below $44,000 are considered low-income (NCCP, 2009). Children living in a family of four with parent incomes at or below $22,050 for a family of four are poor (NCCP, 2009). Eighty-four percent of parents with children from low-income households have less than a high school education and 67% have graduated with a high school diploma. Thirty-seven percent of children from low-income households have parents that have some college or more. Seventy-four percent of of Hispanics, 71% of African Americans, 55% of Native Americans, 44% of Asians, and 40% of Caucasian families make-up the low-income population in the State of Oklahoma Forty-five percent of these children live in urban areas and 54% of low-income families live in rural settings (NCCP, 2009). Research suggest children from low-socioeconomic households have less exposure to books (Evans, 2004; Lee & Burkham, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) are less likely to be read to by their parents on a regular basis (Lee & Burkham, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), and have parents who are less likely to be involved in their education (Evans, 2004).

The study has been conducted to contribute vital information to school administrators, educators and parents. Once administrators understand parent perceptions of parent involvement, they may better align their school goals with parent interest. Parent involvement information communicated to teachers, will assist in their efforts to encourage parent involvement in their classroom and in the children's home. Informed parents may be more apt to make the decision to become involved in their children's education, if they are knowledgeable about the importance of parent involvement outcomes. If there is a relationship between parent beliefs and activities parents are involved in with their children, then teachers may not be effective in implementing change if the parent's beliefs are not considered (Lynch et. al, 2006).

Research Questions

The purpose for exploring parent perceptions is to better understand why some parents become involved in their children's education and while other parents do not. The research questions for this study are as follows:

(1) Is there a relationship between parent perceptions of school communications and the level of parent involvement in their children's education?

(2) What do parents report about their responsibilities that ensure children's school success?

(3) What is the nature of relationships between parent efficacy and parent levels of involvement?

(4) What do parents report about school communication in relation to parent involvement?

(5) Is there a relationship between parent involvement and at home literacy

activities?

Definition of Key Terms

People define words differently depending on where they live and in what field they work. More importantly, parents and educators define words differently, especially when it comes to the term parent involvement. Parents think of parent involvement in relation to their child in the overall community. For example, they may think of getting their child to school on time and how to keep their child safe. Teachers, on the other hand, think of parent involvement as how much time the parent spends at school (Anderson & Minke, 2007). For purposes of this paper, several terms are defined below.

Community involvement. Community involvement is defined by schools working collaboratively with the community to involve parents in community activities by coordinating resources and services for families and students (Epstein, 2004).

Home-based involvement. Parents' involvement at home refers to the extent to which parents monitor, participate, and are engaged in school-related activities with their children in the home environment (Epstein, 2002).

Literacy. Literacy in relation to parent involvement includes parents reading with their children, helping their children with reading/language arts homework, reviewing spelling and vocabulary words, and asking their child to read something he/she wrote.

Literacy beliefs. Parents' beliefs or perceptions of how children learn to read and write (Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, Shapiro, 2006).

Parent efficacy. Parental Efficacy is described as the extent to which parents feel their involvement will make a difference in their children's learning (Epstein & Sheldon, 2007).

Parent involvement. Parent involvement is defined as the extent to which parents monitor their children's progress at school and work with their children on school-related activities at home (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, Van Voorhis, 2002).

Parental role construction. Parental Role Construction refers to what parents believe their responsibilities and roles are in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; 1997; Walker et. al., 2005; Sheldon, 2002).

School-based involvement. School-based involvement is parent involvement that happens at school, such as volunteering in the classroom or attending parent-teacher conferences (Epstein et al., 2002).

School communication. School communication refers to how well the school communicates to the parents about their children's academic progress and encourages parent involvement (Epstein & Salinas, 1993).

This research study provides a review of current literature, which includes reasons reported by parents about becoming involved in their children's education. It addresses different types of parent involvement in which parents may participate and will discuss the relationship between parent involvement and student outcomes of both typically developed children and those with disabilities. The research process and purpose is explained and a detailed description of the instrument utilized for this study is provided. The final two chapters report the results of the study and summarize key findings.

CHAPTER TWO

Critical Review and Synthesis of Literature

Parent Involvement

It is clear that parent involvement in education is an important factor in student outcomes (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008). Involved parents are more likely to experience positive attitudes and behavior towards school and their children are more likely to demonstrate passing grades (NICHCY, 2011). Parents participating in their children's education is so important that the federal government passed two types of educational legislation, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), both specify parent involvement as an important component. Both IDEA and NCLB strongly encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

In 1975, Congress enacted IDEA [PL] 94-142 to provide a free and appropriate public education to all students with disabilities. Part B addresses students between the ages of 3 and 21 who have a disability. Part C includes any child under the age of 3 who (1) is at risk of developing a development delay and needs early intervention services and/or (2) a child that has a development delay in one or more of the areas of cognitive development, physical development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development.

The education of students with disabilities covered by IDEA is governed by six principles:

(1) Zero reject: a rule against excluding any student.

(2) Nondiscriminatory evaluation: a rule requiring schools to evaluate students fairly to determine if they have a disability and, if so, what kind and how extensive.

(3) Appropriate education: a rule requiring schools to provide individually tailored education for each student based on evaluation and augmented by related services and supplementary aids and services.

(4) Least Restrictive Environment: a rule requiring schools to educate students with disabilities with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate for the students with disabilities.

(5) Procedural due process: a rule providing safeguards for students against schools' actions, including a right to sue in court.

(6) Parental and student participation: a rule requiring schools to collaborate with parents and adolescent students in designing and carrying out special education programs (IDEA, 2004).

The sixth principle, parental and student participation, provides parents the right to participate in the decision making process of their children's education (NICHCY, 2009).

The following points summarize the parental rights of participation:

(1) Parents have the right to participate in meetings related to the evaluation, identification, and educational place of their child.

(2) Parents have the right to participate in meetings related to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to their child. (3)

> *Parents are entitled to be members of any group that decides whether their child is a "child with a disability" and meets eligibility criteria for special education and related services. And (4) parents are entitled to be members of the team that develops, reviews, and revises the individualized education program (IEP) for their child. If neither parent can attend the school must use methods to ensure their participation, including individual or conference calls (NICHCY, 2009).*

No Child Left Behind Act

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) created in 2001 sought improved educational outcomes for all children, both students with and without disabilities, it is also governed by six principles. The six principles include: (1) accountability for results, (2) school safety, (3) parental choice, (4) teacher quality, (5) scientifically based methods of teaching, and (6) local flexibility (NCLB, 2001).

NCLB suggests schools pay close attention to parental involvement. Schools that receive Title I funds are required to develop policies on partnerships with parents and to conduct meetings that encourage parent participation in their children's education. On top of the specific requirements for schools considered Title I, all schools are required to

> *(1) Provide professional development to educators to organize effective partnership programs. (2) Help parents understand state standards and assessments. (3) Provide materials to help parents assist their children's achievement at home. And (4) communicate using formats and languages that parents will understand (as cited in* Epstein, p. 14, 2004*).*

Both IDEA and NCLB encourage providing parents with the opportunity to become involved with their children's education. However, even with the opportunities provided, not all parents make the decision to become an active participant. Why do some parents become involved while others do not?

Theoretical Model of Parent Involvement

While many studies review the outcomes of parent involvement, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) proposed a parent involvement model to better understand why some parents become involved while others do not. This model considered the process of why parents become involved, the types of involvement parents participated in, and how their involvement influenced their children.

The model was constructed in five sequential levels. The first level considered basic reasons why parents make the decision to become involved. Level one included (a) parent's role construction or beliefs about their responsibility as a parent to become involved; (b) parent self-efficacy concerns how much a parent believes their involvement will improve the success of his or her child's educational outcomes; (c) parent perceptions of school invitations; and (d) parent perceptions of invitations from the child.

The second level of the model took into account what factors influence the parents' level of involvement once they have made the decision to become involved. For instance, time and energy, parent's skill level, and/or specific invitations from the school are all issues that might influence the level or type of parent involvement. The third level identified how parent involvement affects children's school outcomes through the use of modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. The fourth level, tempering/mediating variables, hypothesized a "good fit" between the parents use of developmentally

appropriate strategies, the parents' involvement actions and the school's expectations. Student outcomes comprised the fifth level (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

A second model by Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey (2005) revised the parent involvement process presented by the previous model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). As opposed to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995, 1997) the revised version was similar in that it basically incorporated the same constructs but the constructs were combined into two levels rather than five.

The first level of the second model (Walker et. al., 2005) of the parent involvement process included: (a) parents motivational beliefs, (b) parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others, and (c) parents' perceived life context. Parents' motivational beliefs consisted of two parts: parental role construction and parental self-efficacy. Parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others included parents' perceptions of general school invitations, child, and teacher invitations. The third component of the first level was parents' perceived life context, which was described as parent's self perception of their time and energy, and their skills and knowledge needed to help their children. The second level, parents' involvement forms, described two types of parent involvement that parents may participate: school-based behaviors and home-based behaviors.

Parents' Motivational Beliefs

Parent role construction. Parents build their role construction, in relation to education, based on the experiences of individuals they meet and groups in which they belong. Groups in which people belong are also known as social networks. Social networks are defined as a way to help people communicate their needs and a method of

providing information to different groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Over time, the people in the social networks begin to influence others in their group. These social influences become significant in the construction of what parents believe they should do for his or her child. For example, the more parents believed all parents should participate in their children's education, the more likely they were to be involved at home and school (Sheldon, 2002).

Sheldon (2002) examined parents' social networks and beliefs as predictors of parent involvement. Survey responses were collected from 195 mothers who had children enrolled in grades first through fifth from an urban and suburban elementary school. Through the use of multiple regression analysis, this study found the social groups or networks that parents' maintained influenced their beliefs and their beliefs supported their behaviors. For example, the more ties parents had with other parents at their children's school, the more likely they were to be involved at that school.

The size of the network and the availability of the network, also both predicted parent involvement levels. The greater number of parents that interacted with other parents that had children attending the same school increased levels of parent involvement in the school. However, levels of parent involvement in the home differed based on the number of individual the parents communicated about their children. The more parents communicated with others, such as relative and/or friends, the more involved parents were with their children at home. Overall, parents were more likely to be involved if they had access to and were involved in social networks. In addition, if parents believe others think parent involvement is important, they may feel a sense of social pressure to become involved (Sheldon, 2002).

In support of Sheldon's findings (2002) additional research suggests parents' beliefs influence their activity levels in their children's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, Shapiro, 2006). For example, Lynch and colleagues (2006) investigated whether or not there was a relationship between parents' literacy beliefs and their self-reported behaviors in helping their children learn to read and write. In the same study, Lynch et al. (2006) also explored whether or not the education level of the parent, played a role in what parents believed about literacy.

The sample in Lynch's study consisted of 35 parents of 3 and 4 year old children involved in preschool programs. The instrument, *Parents' Perceptions of Literacy Learning Interview Schedule*, (PPLIS; Anderson, 1992) was used to interview parents. A correlation design was used to find whether there was a relationship between parent literacy beliefs and their self-reported behaviors. Partial correlations were conducted to determine whether parent behaviors differentiated based on the age of their children. The differences in education levels of the parents were reviewed by the use of t-tests.

Results identified a significant relationship between parents' literacy beliefs and their level of encouragement for literacy. Parents with high literacy levels believed in emergent literacy perspectives, whereas, parents with low literacy levels preferred a more traditional style of learning. Thus, highly literate parents favored less structure and parents' with fewer literate skills, favored a more structured approach to learning through the use of didactic methods (Stipek, Milburn, Clements, & Daniels, 1992). The differences in parents favoring a more or less structured approach to literacy may have been due to the education level of the parents (Lynch et al., 2006).

Both past and current research (Fitzgerald, 1993; Lynch et al., 2006) continues to support the findings that parent education levels influence parent beliefs of how their children learn to read and write. Lynch et al., 2006 demonstrated the education level of the parent study had significant impacts on their beliefs. Parents with more education tended to believe in a more holistic approach, whereas parents with less education believed children learn to read and write by using a skills-based or traditional style. A holistic approach is a characteristic of less structure in literacy learning, whereas, a traditional approach is typical of a more structured approach to literacy. Parents who believed in a more holistic approach in the development of their children's early literacy skills believed reading to their children was important. They encouraged their children to discuss what had been read and thought it was important for children to see their parents reading and writing. They also thought the memorization of their children's favorite book was important in the development of early literacy skills (Lynch et al., 2006).

Parents who believed in a more skills based approach considered family literacy activities to include checking their children's understanding of the story by asking him or her questions at the end of the story, rather than during the story. They believed in teaching their child sight words, and the names of the letters of the alphabet should be taught first and then the sounds second. They also thought workbooks and basal readers were essential components in learning to read. The way parents believe their children should learn to read and write influenced the literacy activities they preferred for their children (Lynch et al., 2006).

While the Lynch et al. (2006) study reviewed the relationship between parent literacy beliefs and parent behaviors, the study by Baker and Scher (2002) addressed

parent beliefs and whether their beliefs impacted their children's motivation to read. This study investigated children's motivation to read in relation to parental beliefs and home literacy experiences. The survey, "Motivations for Reading Scale," (Baker & Scher, 2002) was administered to children to determine what motivated them to read. The researchers also interviewed parents regarding their beliefs about reading, the interest of their child in learning to read, and how often his or her child is exposed to printed materials.

Baker and Scher (2002) utilized a purposeful sample of 65 six-year-olds attending public schools from different socio-cultural backgrounds and their mothers for the 2002 study. The mothers participated in the portion of the study that examined motivation for reading in relation to parental beliefs and home literacy experiences. The interview questions for the parents used questions that focused on parent beliefs concerning why reading is important and how reading might affect their children in the future. The second set of questions dealt with parents' perceptions of their children's interest in reading.

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between parental beliefs and home reading experiences and child motivations to read (Baker & Scher, 2002). The study found there was a statistically significant positive correlation between parents who believed reading was an important source of pleasure and those children who were more motivated to read. Parents, who did not consider reading as a source of entertainment, were more apt to have children who were less motivated to read (Baker & Scher, 2002).

An earlier study by Baker, Scher, and Mackler (1997) also considered beliefs held by parents and how their beliefs affected their children's motivation to read. Methods were similar to the Baker and Scher (2002) study. It also examined the home literacy experiences of children. The participants in this study included two samples. The first sample included 41 preschool-aged children and their primary caregivers. A second group of participants were selected when the initial group entered first grade. The total sample consisted of about 68 families.

The research utilized a home ecological inventory measuring literacy-related activities and resources collected over a one year time period. The literacy related activities and resources were measured based on observations, diaries, interviews in both the home and school, structured interviews were utilized to obtain descriptions of parent and teacher perspectives regarding their values, beliefs, and behaviors of literacy. An evaluation of social interactive processes through which children learn literacy was based on observations of interactions with siblings, peers, parents, and teachers. Researchers also administered an evaluation of the children's early literacy skills (Baker, Scher & Mackler, 1997).

The hypothesis, specific experiences with print and parental beliefs uniquely predict motivation, was assessed through multiple regression procedures. A relationship was found between children's home literacy experiences and their motivation to read independently. Similar to the Baker and Sher (2002) findings, parents that viewed reading as a source of entertainment, were more likely to have children that were competent motivated readers. Also, the study found children from low-income families were less likely to view reading as a source of entertainment (Baker et al., 1997).

Baker and Scher (2002) had findings similar to those of a study by Yarosz and Barnett (2001). Results indicated that parents who believed reading was a pleasure had children who were more likely to have greater motivations to read. The previous studies have addressed parent beliefs and how their beliefs impacted their behaviors. The idea that parents believe it is their responsibility to participate in their children's education is one reason why parents make the decision to become involved (Hoover-Dempsey et. al., 1995; Hoover-Dempsey et. al., 2005). Others make the decision to participate because they are influenced and/or encouraged by others (Sheldon, 2002). Research suggests a parents' level of self-efficacy is yet another reason why parents decide to become involved in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Parental self-efficacy. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) explored the relationship between parents' self-efficacy and levels of involvement. Parental self-efficacy as described by Hoover and colleagues (1992) is based on the researcher's assumption that parents make choices to become involved with their children if they believe their involvement will result in positive outcomes. The sample participants selected for this study included parents of children in kindergarten through the fourth grade, who attended 1 of 4 elementary schools in a metropolitan public school district. Approximately, 399 parents participated in the study; the majority of the sample was married mothers who were employed outside of the home. Fifty teachers from the four schools also agreed to participate in the study.

The parents were given a Parent Questionnaire asking them to provide specific demographic information (employment status, level of education, family income, marital

status, age, and sex). The questionnaire also included items pertaining to various forms of parent involvement, for example, helping their children with homework (hours per week) and the amount of time a parent volunteered at school. The Parent Questionnaire consisted of a Likert-scale response items designed to measure parent self-efficacy. From the data collected and from previous and current literature, the researchers then developed a 12-item Parent Perceptions of Parent Efficacy Scale (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). Items in this scale focused on parents' perceptions of personal efficacy in relation to children's schooling, such as "I know how to help my child do well in school" and "If I try hard, I can get through to my child even when he/she has trouble understanding." Items in this scale also focused on parents' abilities to influence successful educational outcomes of their children's learning. The alpha reliability for this sample was .81. (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

The teacher questionnaire was similar to the parent questionnaire in that it also asked specific information about teachers and their classes (grade, enrollment, percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, total years taught, years at present school and highest degree earned). The researchers then developed a 7-item Teacher Perceptions of Parent Efficacy Scale. This scale included statements such as "My students parents help their children learn," and "My students' parents have little influence on their children's academic performance." The alpha reliability for this scale was .79 (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

A third 12-item questionnaire, Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Efficacy Scale (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987) was utilized. This scale included statements such as "I am successful with the students in my class" and "I feel that I am making a significant

educational difference in the lives of my students." The alpha reliability of this scale was .83 and judged as satisfactory (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

Results found a significant correlation between parent efficacy and three indicators of parent involvement. Parents with a high sense of self-efficacy were parents that demonstrated high levels of involvement in educational activities, spent more time volunteering in the classroom, and participated in fewer negative telephone calls from the teacher to the parent. Parent efficacy showed no relation to other demographics, such as gender, marital status, employment status, or family income.

A link between parent efficacy and parent education was also found. Parents with all levels of a college education had higher efficacy scores than did parents with a grade school education. Parents with a high school education had significantly lower efficacy scores than did parents with more than a bachelor's degree. Although parents with less education demonstrated a lower sense of self-efficacy, in this study results showed parents with lower levels of self-efficacy helped their children more on homework than did parents with a high sense of self-efficacy. The lower self-efficacy parents may have spent more time on homework because they were more determined to see their children succeed; they may have used homework strategies that were less efficient and took more time; or their children may have experienced greater school difficulty which takes longer to respond (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

Teacher perceptions of parents' and teacher efficacy were both associated with teacher reports of parent involvement in homework, educational activities, volunteering in the classroom, and participation of parents in teacher/conference meetings. Teacher efficacy was also related to teacher perceptions of parent efficacy. Teacher perceptions

of parent efficacy were significantly linked to students' who received free and reduced lunches (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

Anderson & Minke (2007) also examined the relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement. This study described the importance of parent involvement and how parents make the decision to become involved in their children's education. The research sought to determine why some parents become involved while others do not. The sample of participants consisted of parents of children between the grades of pre-K and fifth grade from three different urban elementary schools.

The study measured the parents' beliefs about the role they should play in their children's education by using an 18-item Likert-type scale developed by Sheldon (2000). The scale consisted of statements that began with "It is the parents' responsibility to," (e.g. help their child with homework or attend parent teacher conferences). An alpha of .90 was reported for the scale (Sheldon, 2000).

The study also measured parents' sense of self-efficacy by using a scale developed by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992). This scale is a 7-item Likert-type scale that emphasizes parents' perceived ability to influence the success of their children's education. Statements included, "I know how to help my child do well in school," and "I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn." Cronbach's alpha was .78 (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002).

The Family Resource Scale (FRS; Dunst & Leet, 1987) was used to measure parent resources regarding the time and energy parents have to be involved in their children's education. This scale consisted of 30 items, associated with parents 'time and energy (e.g., "time to get enough sleep/rest," and "time to be with children"). Reliability

for this instrument was reported at .95 (Dunst & Leet) and .85 (McGrath & Sullivan, 1999).

Eleven items were used to report parent perceptions of specific teacher invitations. Specific teacher invitations were divided into two categories: ongoing activities at school (e.g., helping with homework, helping at school) and limited school activities (e.g., attending a parent/teacher conference, back- to-school night). Ongoing activities included (e.g., "My child's teacher expected me or asked me to help my child with homework). Limited events included statements such as, "My child's teacher expected me to attend back to school night or an open house."

Parent involvement practices were other variables that were measured. Parent involvement measures at home and school were adapted from several preexisting scales including the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000), Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (1998), Epstein and Salinas (1993), and Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler et al. (2002).

Similar to Sheldon (2002), researchers found parents reported being more involved with their children at home than at school. School participation is more visible to teachers than parents participating with their children at home. Teachers may misjudge levels of parent involvement in children's learning at home. In contrast to Sheldon's findings (2002), the study found the parent's responsibility had no impact on parent behaviors at home or school. Similar results were found for parents' levels of self-efficacy. Parents' self-efficacy had no impact on their level of involvement at school, but directly impacted their level of involvement at home. Sheldon (2002) found parent self-

efficacy predicted parent involvement levels at home, but not at school. This research suggested motivating factors for parent involvement at home and school may vary.

The limitations to this study included parent self reports of their perceptions of their involvement levels. The study did not differentiate from parents that may have been already considered involved parents from parents that were not involved in their children's education. For parents to participate they had to be literate. The sample was ethnically diverse, the majority of respondents were African American; therefore the findings may not have generalized to other participants

The most significant findings had to do with the influence of specific teacher invitations and resources. Teacher invitations had the strongest relationship with parent involvement in schools and were likely to influence parent participation. The study results differed from those in prior research (Garcia et al., 2002; Green, et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2005; Heyman & Earle, 2000; Weis et al., 2003) which indicated that parent resources such as time, transportation and child-care, influence parent decisions to participate (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

General Invitations for Parental Involvement

Child invitations. Child invitations are described as a child's willingness to seek-out their parents for help. Kay, Fitzgerald, Paradee, and Mellencamp (1994) examined the parent perspectives on participating in their children's homework with parents of children with learning disabilities. Their study was conducted by using an ethnographic design. It explored the parents' perspectives on homework and their impact on students with disabilities and their families. It also examined changes needed in order

to improve communication between home and school that would help parents fulfill their roles in helping their child with their homework.

The participants of this study included parent liaisons, focus group parent participants, individually interviewed parents, and students with disabilities. Eleven parent liaisons were chosen by administrators and teachers based on their communicative skills to recruit other parents to attend focus groups. The focus groups consisted of six parents per grade across four rural communities. Eleven mothers and three fathers of children with disabilities in the fourth and eighth grades from the communities were interviewed. Of the 14 students whose parents participated in the interviews, 10 had learning disabilities, 3 had learning impairments, and 1 had an orthopedic impairment.

The sources used to collect data in this study included action research logs, focus groups, personal interviews and field notes. The data analysis included the researchers coding the transcripts information from the focus group meetings, personal interviews and the action research logs (Kay et al., 1994).

Kay and colleagues found five themes from the data. The first theme found parents believed they were not prepared to help their children with homework. The second theme discovered parents wanted more information regarding the expectations of their role as parents in helping their children with homework and wanted to know more about their children's teacher's expectations. The third theme found parents wanted the teachers to give homework that the children could do on their own. The fourth theme found parents enjoyed homework activities in which the entire family could participate. The fifth theme found parents wanted more communication between the teachers and wanted to be a part of their children's instructional team.

A qualitative study by Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Burrow (1995) examined parents' thinking in relation to helping their children with homework, but with parents of non-disabled children. The sample included 69 parents who had children in the first through fifth grade from two different elementary schools. Parents were interviewed about parent involvement in their children's schooling.

The interview questions focused on areas of parent involvement in their children's schooling (e.g., homework, parent-teacher conferences, children's academic and social progress). Questions related to homework included, "Do you usually spend any time, in an average week, helping your child with homework?" "If so, could you give us an estimate of how much time you spend?" "What kind of help do you generally give?"

Five themes emerged from the interview data. The first theme involved children characteristics. Parents reported being aware of the individuality of their children and the unique traits their children portrayed. Parents' understanding of their children, predicted the level and types of involvement in which they participated. For instance, a parent that was proud of his or her child described his child as smart. On the other hand, a parent who understands his child has a problem, in math for example, might describe his child as needing a little more help than others. In this study (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995) parent involvement in their children's homework was based on the characteristics and/or needs of their children.

The second theme found parents expected for their children to work independently. Parents reported the homework expectations for their children to work independently were complex. Some parents reported they encouraged and expected for their children to do their homework on their own. Others reported offering to help their

children dependent on their children's request. Parents also reported tensions in helping their children with homework. Parents described their expectations of their children to work independently and their children's request for help as a balance (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

The third theme concluded parents believed it was their responsibility to provide a structured environment to assist their children in completing homework assignments. Parents explained the amount of structure provided for their children to do homework was based on teacher expectations. Structure was described as rules the parents developed to govern their children's homework activities. For example, parents reported not allowing their children to watch television or to talk on the phone while completing their homework assignments (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

The fourth theme suggested that parents' believed homework was necessary in order for their children to be successful in school. Parents also believed they should play a part in helping their children with homework and accepted homework as the normal part of their daily routine. Though parents reported different strategies in helping their children, all agreed that homework was a parental duty that came with having a child (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

The fifth theme concluded parents' personal reflections on their children and themselves. Several of the parents were concerned with educational standards for their children's performance. Parents reported both feelings of frustration and satisfaction with balancing their perceptions of their children's abilities, with their own abilities and to the standards of others. The majority of parents reported uncertainties about their effectiveness in helping their children (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

Epstein (1986) also explained parents' perspectives on homework of non-disabled children. Her study reviewed teacher's roles and their practices involving the cooperation and/or separation of schools and families. This study is significant because it helps to clarify parent perspectives in relation to parent involvement and whether or not parents were being provided with opportunities to become involved. Epstein's study sampled 1,269 parents of students in 82 first, third and fifth grade classrooms. A questionnaire was administered to the parents measuring their attitudes toward the schools and teachers, their experiences with varying types of involvement and communication with the schools, and their reactions' to teacher programs and practice.

The study found parent attitudes towards teachers and the elementary schools were positive. The majority of the parents agreed teachers and school administrators managed the elementary schools their children attended efficiently. The majority of parents also agreed they felt comfortable at the school and their children's teachers had the same goals for their children the parents maintained. However, parents believed teachers could do more to include parents in their children's education. Parents also agreed teachers should involve parents in activities at home and that homework was beneficial to their children (Epstein, 1986).

In examining the experiences of parent involvement, parents agreed the most basic form of involvement included providing school supplies for their children. They agreed school-to-home communication was considered parent information and not necessarily a form of parent involvement. The parents also agreed assisting as helpers or aides in their children's classrooms were examples of parent involvement activities.

However, a majority of the sample did not participate in these types of school assistant activities (Epstein, 1986).

Previous studies conclude child invitations to parents were significant factors to parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Kay et al., 1994). When children ask parents for help with homework, parents agreed it is their duty, to assist them (Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Kay et al., 1994). Parents are more likely to become involved if they believe their children have expressed a need for their involvement and if they are having trouble in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992).

Teacher invitations. Teacher invitations have also been identified as motivators for parent involvement. Patrikakou and Weissberg (2000) investigated parent perceptions of teacher invitations and self-reported level of parent involvement at home and school. The study surveyed 246 parents located in a Mid-western city of children enrolled in 1 of 3 inner-city elementary schools.

Patrikakou and Weissberg (2000) reported findings congruent with Anderson and Minke (2007), suggesting parent perceptions of teacher invitations were influential in parents' participation in educational activities. Teacher invitations included assigning homework that involved parents' and encouraging parents to visit their children's classroom, attend parent/teacher conferences, and increase parent/teacher communication (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). Teachers who were perceived by parents as being welcoming and encouraging, were more likely to increase levels of parent involvement than teachers who did not exhibit these characteristics. Parent involvement levels increased when teachers consistently communicated with parents and provided essential learning activities for parents to participate in with their children

(Partikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Both child and teacher initiations appeared to be effective means for motivating parent involvement (Green et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2005).

Parent Perceptions of Life Context Variables

Though Sheldon (2002) concluded parent time and energy levels are often limiting factors parents face in becoming involved in their children's education, findings by Anderson and Minke did not concur. In agreement with Sheldon (2002), other researchers found that parents who perceive not having enough time due to inflexible work schedules and/or the resources to overcome these barriers tend to be less involved than others (Garcia et al., 2002; Green et al. 2007; Walker et al., 2005; Heyman & Earle, 2000; Weiss, 2003). Parents considered "less involved," especially in school related functions, included parents with less education, single parents (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000), parents with multiple children, and parents with extended family responsibilities (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005).

Like parent perceptions of teacher invitations, parents' perception of their knowledge and skill level can also impact the types of activities in which they choose to participate (Green et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2005). Parents are more apt to engage in activities when they believe they have the necessary skills and knowledge. When parents believe they do not have the skills sets to help their children, they are less likely to become involved. Research suggests when given the opportunity and with help from the teacher, regardless of the parents' educational background, parents generally want to help their children (Faires et al., 2000; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

Socioeconomic Status

Most parents want to help their children, but parents from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds also believe it is their responsibility to be involved in their children's education (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). Parents from low-income backgrounds value education as a path out of poverty (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992), but parent involvement may be somewhat challenging for low-income parents due to work obligations. Parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds consider work a barrier to parent involvement and suggest they do not have enough time to participate in educational activities with their children (Chavkin & Williams, 1989, 1990; Chin & Newman, 2002). It is common for both two parent and single parent households to experience the demands between work and family. In 2003, 61% of parents from two parent households were employed, 55% of single mother's were employed, and 83% of single fathers were employed. Twenty-seven percent of single mothers and 13% of single fathers lived in poverty (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003).

In two parent and single parent households, typically the mother is the person that bears the responsibility of balancing the demands of work and family (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Research suggests that mothers who work full time are less involved than unemployed mothers (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Muller, 1993). In a recent study by Weiss and colleagues (2003) results also indicated low-income mothers who worked or were in school full-time were less involved with their children.

The data from the Weiss et al. (2003) study was drawn from a longitudinal follow-up investigation to the experimental impact evaluation of the Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP), known as the School Transition Study (STS). The

CCDP was a federally funded early intervention program for low-income families and their children from birth to kindergarten. The ethnographic sample included mothers of 20 children.

The procedures used were face-to-face interviews in the homes of the mothers in the spring of the children's kindergarten year, one interview at the end of the children's first and second grade years, and one interview during the winter of the children's second grade year. The interviews included open-ended questions about the family's life, the school and community, family educational involvement, and the child. Observations of mothers' involvement opportunities in the home, school, and neighborhood were also recorded.

A mixed method approach was used for the analysis of the study. The relationship between the mothers' demographic and work/school statuses and the mothers' levels of school involvement were examined. The qualitative techniques used included the review of ethnographic field notes, written analytic memos, and coding interviews systematically (Weiss et al., 2003).

Weiss and colleagues (2003) found that low-income mothers, who worked or attended school part-time, participated more than other mothers, and mothers who worked and attended school full-time were less involved than other mothers. The qualitative results found low-income working mothers used four strategies to help their involvement in their children's education. The first strategy utilized was networking with friends and family for support, such as relying on others for help with transportation to the school and assistance with their children's homework. The second strategy was using the workplace as a home base to perform educational activities that would normally take

place in the home or school setting. The third strategy used was garnering resources through work, such as materials, instructional advice and social supports. The fourth strategy was conquering time and space challenges. Time and space challenges were described as scheduling conflicts and distance between the mothers' work and children's school (Weiss et al., 2003).

Unlike Anderson and Minke (2007) the qualitative reports from mother interviews found lack of time and other factors associated with full-time employment and school may influence parent involvement in their children's education. Mothers who work or are in school part-time may benefit from additional time that mothers who work or are in school full-time are not granted. Low-income mothers that are not in school or who are unemployed may more likely experience mental health issues associated with unemployment (Weiss et al., 2003). Mental health problems in relations to unemployment, such as symptoms of depression, can lead to poor parent-child relations (Conger et al., 2002; Dooley, Prause, & Ham-Rowbottom, 2000).

Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, and Ortiz (2008) also examined the relationship between parent involvement and the predictive power of socioeconomic status, parent depression and single-parent status. Participants included 163 parents from mostly low-income backgrounds who had preschool-aged children. Parents interested in participating in the study were invited to a meeting where they completed demographic forms, questionnaires, and an assessment regarding symptoms of depression.

Teachers completed a survey measuring parent levels of involvement through the use of the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (Reid, Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond, 2001). The survey included 10 items and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was

valued at .89. The children's pre-literacy development was measured using The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Dunn & Dunn, 1981). Parent depression was measured with the Brief Symptom Inventory, a self-report of psychological symptoms written at a sixth grade level.

Similar to prior research (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000), single parent families were less involved than two-parent households. Single parent families in part were also associated with low SES and low levels of parent involvement. Though no significance was found between symptoms of depression and parent involvement, similar to previous reports (Brown & Moran, 1997; Cairney, Boyle, Offord, & Racine, 2003) a relation was observed between single parent families and depression (Arnold et al., 2008).

Figure 1: Summary of Parent Involvement

Authors/ Design	Sample Size/Demographics	Methods of Data Collection & Analysis	Summary of Results
Epstein, J. (1986) Survey Research	1,269 Students in 82 first-third grade classrooms 82 teachers	Survey-Parent Involvement/ Teacher Questionnaire Descriptive Statistics Regression Analysis	Parent attitudes were positive. Teachers could do more to involve parents. Parents received few communications from teachers. Some parents participate, but most are not active. Most frequent requests to parents were by teachers considered leaders by principal. Parents with less education reported more frequent requests. Teachers use of learning activities at home increased participation and parent understanding of children's instructional program. Parents with children in lower elementary grades reported significantly more frequent teacher use of parent involvement. Parents of older children felt they did not have enough training to help their children. Parents reported the less teachers worked to involve parents the older the children got.
Kay et al. (1994) Qualitative Research	Rural parts of Vermont, Parents of 4th-8th grade students 3 fathers and 11 mothers of students with learning	Qualitative- Action Research Logs, Focus Groups, Personal Interviews, Coding	Theme 1: Parents felt inadequately equipped to help their children with homework. Theme 2: Parents wanted to understand the classroom teachers' expectations and approach to homework. Theme 3: Parents believed that homework should be tailored to the Individual, to respect child and

	disabilities were interviewed (10 students had learning disabilities, 3 had learning impairments, and 1 had an orthopedic impairment		family needs. Theme 4: Parents wanted their children to be given experiential, practical homework that promotes the development of skills. Theme 5: To support their children in doing homework, parents wanted a two-way communication system.
Hoover-Dempsey et al., (1995) Qualitative Research	69 parents of first through fifth grade students in two elementary school in a large metropolitan area	Qualitative- Parent Interviews Analysis-audiotaped interviews, transcribed verbatim, and checked for accuracy against original recording	Theme 1: Children's unique qualities Theme 2: Parent expectations for children's independent work Theme 3: Parents structure of homework activities. Theme 4: Parents' active involvement in children's homework. Theme 5: Parents' personal reflections on their children and themselves.
Patrikakou & Weissberg (2000) Survey Research	246 parents whose children attended 1 of 3 inner-city elementary schools in a Midwestern City. Two of the schools had 100% African American population and the third school was 96% Latino. Children were in	Parent Survey- Parent Involvement at Home scale-8 items, Cronbach's alpha was .77 Parent Involvement at school scale-6 items, Cronbach's alpha was .71. Parent Perceived Teacher Outreach-10 items, Cronbach's alpha was .87	Demographic Variables did not predict parent involvement at home. Ethnicity was significantly related to home involvement. Demographic variables did not predict parent involvement at school. Family structure for two parent households were more involved in school activities than families from single parent households. 59% of parents reported never volunteering in their children's classroom. 45% stated their children's teacher never encouraged them to participate at school.

	grades PreK through 3rd grade.	Descriptive Statistics Regression Analysis	36% of parents reported they had never participated in parent/teacher conferences. 32% had never asked their child's teacher how to help with homework. Most influential variable in predicting parent involvement was parent perceptions of teacher invitations.
Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001) Research/ Literature Review			Why do parents become involved in children's homework? • Parental Role Construction • Parent Sense of Efficacy • Parents' Perceptions of Invitations to Involvement What do parents do when they help with homework? • Provide Structure for homework • Interact with teacher about homework • Provide general oversight of the homework process • Respond to the student's homework performance How does parental involvement influence student outcomes? • Modeling • Reinforcement • Parental Instruction Student Achievement
Baker & Scher (2002) Mixed	Sixty-five 6 year olds (first graders) and their mothers	Mixed Methods Motivations for Reading Scale	Basic Skills books used more often by lower income children than middle-income children. Middle-income children were more likely to

Methods Research		Assessment-Cronbach's alpha=.86 Inventory of Children's Home Reading Activity Parent Interviews-Inter-rater Reliability=87% Child Interviews-Inter-rater Reliabiltiy=95% Correlation Analysis Regression Analysis	experience shared book reading with an adult. Ethnicity or income accounted for children's motivation to read. Parents' enjoyment of reading accounted for children's motivation to read. No differences were found between boys or girls motivations to read. Children's motivations did not differ across sociocultural groups. Children whose parents perceive that they are interested in learning to read and are involved are more likely to believe their children will be competent readers. Frequency of Storybook reading did not relate to children's motivation to read.
Sheldon, S. (2002) Survey Research	195 mothers of students in grades 1-5 in 2 elementary school (1 urban, 1 suburban)	Survey Measures: Role Construction-18 items, Cronbach's alpha reliability was .90 (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) Parent Efficacy-10 items, Cronbach's alpha reliability was .89 (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992) Parents perceptions of expectations, 6 items,	Child gender and grade level and parents education level did not predict parent involvement. Parental efficacy was related to parent involvement at home, and parent perceptions of others expectations were related to involvement at school. Parents with more social networks reported higher levels of involvement. Parents social ties with other parents at their children's school was a strong predictor of parent involvement at school. Parents with more access to social networks are more likely to be involved in their children's education.

		no reliability reported Parent Network, Other Adult Network, Parent involvement at home, 10 items, Cronbach's alpha reliability .84 (Ames et al., 1995) Involvement at school, 5 items, Cronbach's alpha reliability was .82 Multiple Regression Analysis Descriptive Statistics	
Epstein & Sheldon (2002) Quantitative Research	18 schools from states including Ohio, Maryland, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas and California. Elementary Schools (n=10), Middle or High Schools (n=8) Schools were located in inner city (n=7), urban (n=4), suburban (n=2), and rural (n=4). Schools ranged in size from	Variables: School Characteristics, School Practices, School Measures of Mathematics achievement Report Cards/Mathematic Achievement Tests Descriptive Analyses Correlations Alpha Reliability not reported.	Larger schools reported lower percentages of students at or above satisfactory proficiency levels. Students who received reduced or free lunches reported smaller numbers of students who were proficient in mathematics. Smaller portions of students earned A's and B's in low-income schools. Learning at home activities were related to improvements in students' performance on mathematics achievement tests.

	124 students to 1,280 students, 75% received Title I funding Data collected from students two for Grade 3, six for Grade 4, two for Grade 5, one for Grade 6, three for Grade 7, three for Grade 8, and one for Grade 9.		
Weiss et al. (2003) Mixed Methods Research	59 Mothers	Mixed Method Analyses Qualitative Analysis-59 Interviews with Mothers Quantitative-Demographic Characteristics of Mothers and their work/school statuses; Mother's work/school statuses and their levels of school involvement.	Mothers who worked or attended school full time were less involved in their children's schooling than other mothers. Mothers who worked or attended school part time were more involved than other mothers. Mothers described specific strategies for educational involvement. • Promoting a support network • Using the workplace as a home-base • Garnering resources through work • Conquering time and space challenges

Epstein & Sheldon (2005) Research Exploratory Study	18 schools-12 elementary schools (5 urban/7 urban) and 6 middle schools	Survey Variables: Attendance Family Involvement Use of Practices Helpfulness of practices Information to families Data Analysis- Demographics Characteristics of Schools Correlation Analysis	Description of Schools: 8% of students were chronically absent for more than 20 days. When schools focused on improving attendance, schools reported a .71% increase. Factors associated with changes in student attendance: Change in daily attendance was positively associated with rewarding students with improved attendance, connecting parents with school contact persons and making home visits. Schools with after-school programs on average had an increase in daily student attendance. Activities that affected rates of attendance only: Referrals of students to counselors or truant officers. Activities that affected rates of chronic absenteeism only: Home visits
Lynch et al., (2006) Quantitative Research	35 parents of preschool aged children (3 to 4 year olds), Urban area of Western Canada	Parent Survey-Parents' Perceptions of Literacy Learning Schedule (Anderson, 1995), 33 items, reliability alpha was .85 Partial Correlations T-tests	Parent Behaviors-Parents with more education had more holistic beliefs about how children learn to read and write.
Anderson & Minke (2007)	Parents of students attending 3	Parent Survey Measures:	Parents' role construction was positively related to their involvement behaviors.

Quantitative Research	elementary schools in a large urban school district in the Southwest.	Role Construction-18 items, standardized reliability alpha was .90 (Sheldon, 2002). Sense of Efficacy-7 items, Cronbach's alpha was= .7 (Hoover-Dempsey et. al. 2002). Resources-30 items, Family Resource Scale (Dunst & Leet, 1987), adequate reliabilities of .95 (Dunst & Leet, 1987) and.85 (McGrath & Sullivan, 1999) Specific Teacher Invitations-11 items, reliability not reported. Parent Involvement Practices-15 items, Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ: Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000) Early Child Longitudinal Study (1998), Epstein and Salinas (1993), and Hoover-Dempsey, et al. (2002). Reliability not reported. MANOVA, Path	The influence of parents' sense of efficacy was limited, affected only at home involvement. Efficacy was not related to parent involvement at school. Specific teacher invitations had a strong relationship with parens's involvement behaviors.

		Analysis	
Arnold et al. (2008) Quantitative Research	163 preschool aged children, mostly from low-income families, their parents and their teachers	Examined the relationship between parent involvement in preschool and children's pre-literacy skills. Examined socioeconomic status, parent depression, and single parent status as predictors of parent involvement. Children's literacy skills were assessed through standardized tests. Demographic information was gathered Parent Involvement-Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (Reid et al., 2001; Webster-Stratton, 1998; Webster-Stratton et al., 2001), 10 items, Cronbach's alpha was .89. Parent Depression-	Parent involvement was positively associated with children's literacy skills. Socioeconomic status was related to parent involvement. Single parent status was associated to less involvement. Depression scores were not related to parent involvement.

		Brief Symptom Inventory, internal consistency was .85 Intercorrelations-Parent Involvement, preliteracy development, and SES Multiple Regression Descriptive Statistics	
Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995) Model Development		Psychological Perspective	Model of Parent Involvement Parental Involvement Decisions • Parent's Role Construction • Parents' Sense of Efficacy • General Opportunities Parent's Choice of Involvement Forms • Parents' Skills and Knowledge • Demands on Time and Energy • Specific Invitations for Involvement Mechanisms through which Parent Involvement influences child/student outcomes • Modeling • Reinforcement • Instruction Tempering/Mediating Variables Parents use of strategies • Fit between parents involvement actions and school expectations Child/Student Outcomes • Skills and Knowledge

			• Personal Sense of Efficacy
Walker & Hoover-Dempsey (2001) Model Development		General Invitations: Child-64 parents of children in the 7th, 9th and 11th grades, 7 items, reliability was .75 887 parents of children k-6, 4 items, reliability was .37 495 parents of children in grades 1-6, 3 items, reliability was .78	
Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey (2005) Model Development		Parental Role Construction: Interview-20 parents of K-5 (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1996), reliability not reported. Interview-75 parents of elementary school students K-6 (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997) Inter-rater agreement was .83 Interview Questionnaire-50 parents of elementary aged students, 75 item scale with reliabilities	Review of Constructs

		(parent focused=.88, school focused=.55, partnership focused=.82 (Reed, et al. 2001). 23 item questionnaire, 887 parents of children in grades 1-6, Unpublished measure, 16 items, 50 parents of children in grades K-6 Role activity beliefs (10 items=.80; Valence toward school, 6 items=.85) Parental Self-Efficacy-800 parents of elementary and middle school students, 11-items, alpha reliability was.80. 7-item scale, 495 parents, alpha reliability was .78 General Invitations for School Involvement, 7 items, reliability was .75 (Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, 2001 Specific Invitations from child, 495 parents,	

		6 items, reliability was .70 Specific Invitations from Child's teacher, reliability was .81 Perceived Life Context, 6 items for parents time and energy, 495 parents, reliability was .84 Parents skills and knowledge, 495 parents, 9 items, reliability was .83 Parents Involvement Forms, 13 items, 889 parents, alpha reliability of .89	
Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler (2007) Model Development	853 parents of 1st through 6th grade students enrolled in an ethnically diverse and socioeconomically metropolitan area 2 samples	Measures Parental Role Activity, 7 items, reliability was .67, 10 items, reliability was .83 Parental Self Efficacy, 7 items, reliability was .78, five items, reliability was .80 Perceptions of General Invitations, 6 items, reliability was .88 and	Parental role activity beliefs, parental self -efficacy, specific child invitations, and parental perceptions of time and energy accounted for significant amounts of variance. Parental role activity beliefs, parental self-efficacy, specific teacher invitations, and parental reports of time and energy were significant predictors of school involvement. Parents of elementary school reported more home based involvement than parents of students in middle school. Home based involvement was higher than school

		.79 Perceptions of specific teacher invitations to involvement, 6 items, reliability was .81, 5 items, reliability was .67 Perceptions of Specific Invitations to involvement, 6 items, reliability was .70, 5 items, reliability was .64 Parent Perceptions of Life Context Variables Skills and Knowledge, 9 items, reliability was .83, 6 items, reliability was .82 Time and energy 8 items, reliability was .84, 5 items, reliability was .81 SES Outcome: Parental Involvement Practices 4 items, reliability .70, 5 items, reliability was .79 School Based Involvement, 6 items,	based involvement across all grades.

		reliability was .82, 5 items, reliability was .71 Multiple hierarchical regression t-tests	

Types of Involvement

While Hoover-Dempsy and Sandler (1995) focused on three main issues of parent involvement: (a) why parents become involved, (b) the types of involvement activities parents participate in, and (c) the positive outcomes of parent involvement, Epstein (1995) designed a framework of six types of parent involvement from the perspectives of the schools. Epstein's model includes: (a) parenting, (b) communication, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaboration with the community. Epstein's (1987) previous work originally recognized only four categories of parent involvement: (a) basic obligations, (b) school-to-home-communications, (c) parent involvement at school, and (d) parent involvement in learning activities at home. Epstein (1995, 2005) defined the six types of involvement in a comprehensive program of school, family, and community partner-ships. The types of involvement include the following:

(1) Type 1. Parenting: Helping all families establish supportive home environments for children

(2) Type 2. Communicating: Establishing two-way exchanges about school programs and children's progress

(3) Type 3. Volunteering: Recruiting and organizing parent help at school, home, or other locations

(4) Type 4. Learning at Home: Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related materials

(5) Type 5. Decision Making: Having parents from all backgrounds serve as representatives and leaders on school committees

(6) Type 6-Collaborating with Community: Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs (Epstein, 2005, p. 197).

The different types of parent involvement defined by Epstein (1995) provided schools with an outline to determine which types of involvement best fit the needs of their school. Epstein (1995) identified different activities for each type of involvement and school personnel decided which involvement opportunities would produce the best results. School personnel also made the decision on the implementation of parent partnerships and how to encourage parents to become involved (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

School personnel must consider ways to reach all families. For example, they must learn to communicate with families who may speak a language other than English or parents who cannot read. School partnership programs, intended to increase student achievement, may not be successful until school personnel figure out a way to reach the most difficult of families (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

School personnel must also consider that one type of involvement may not necessarily impact all areas of students' needs or interests. Research suggests subject areas such as mathematics and reading may produce better results with different types of involvement activities (Catsambis, 2002; Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Desimone, 1999; Lee, 1994; Simon, 2000). For example, Epstein and Sheldon (2005) examined the

relationship between specific family and community involvement activities and students achievement in mathematics.

The participants in the study included 18 schools from various states, ranging from elementary schools to high schools. The mathematics performance data of 18 students for 2 consecutive years was collected. School action team members were selected to report school and student characteristics, such as the student's grade and the location of the school. Respondents also reported practices maintained by the school, such as informing parents of students' progress and problems in mathematics. By using a Likert-type scale, ranging from (1) cannot do at this school, to (2) very helpful, the school action team members were asked to rate the effectiveness of 14 partnership practices that focused on mathematics. Data on mathematics proficiency tests were gathered for two consecutive years as well as information from student report cards.

The association of school characteristics and selected student outcomes were analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics. Results revealed the Type-4: Learning at Home involvement level consistently related to improvements in mathematics. This result further suggests the importance of parent partnerships with school personnel to increase parent involvement in the home (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

In a previous study by Epstein and Sheldon (2002) examining student absenteeism, specific types of parent involvement activities were also found relevant to increased student attendance. The data collected for this study was from schools that participated in the program, the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The participants in the study were part of 12 elementary schools, which included 5 rural and 7 urban schools.

Baseline surveys were mailed to participating schools asking questions regarding (a) goals for student attendance, (b) prior attendance rates, (c) and family-school involvement practices related to attendance. The family involvement practices included practices such as, rewarding students for improvement in attendance, calling home when students are absent, and visiting the homes of chronically absent students. The person at the school who coordinated the school, family, and community partnership efforts were asked to complete the survey. A midyear and end of the year survey was administered for activities implemented and changes in student attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

Results showed overall attendance rates improved with the implementation of family-school partnerships. An increase was also demonstrated for students labeled chronically absent. Family Involvement activities that improved attendance included: (a) conducting home visits, (b) rewarding students for improved attendance, (c) having a contact person at the school for parents to communicate, and (d) calling home when the student was absent. These activities were all found effective in increasing student attendance. Other involvement strategies found less effective included: (a) Workshops for parents, (b) referring students to a counselor, and (c) using truant officers (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). If school personnel are aware of what types of involvement work best for specific needs, educators will be able to make better choices on what types of involvement to participate and the best types of involvement to convince parents to participate (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

Parent Involvement and Student Outcomes

Parent involvement in early childhood. There is an extensive amount of research in the area of early childhood and parent involvement, especially in relation to a child's pre-literacy skills. Research identifies parents as the child's first and possibly the most important persons in teaching early literacy skills (Edwards, 2004; Morris, Taylor, Knight & Wassen, 1995; Morrow, 1993; Zeece, 2005). Before children even begin their formal education, research demonstrates children's early literacy experiences begin in the home (Dickinson & Smith, 1994).

Rodriguez et al. (2009) examined the home literacy experiences of children from low-income families during the first three years of life. The longitudinal study observed the language and cognitive abilities of 1,046 children at 14, 24, and 36 months of age in relation to their participation of at home literacy experiences. At home literacy experiences involved the children's frequency of participation in literacy activities, the quality of their mothers' engagements with their children, and the observation of age appropriate learning materials.

Assessments of the children's early literacy experiences were measured with the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment instrument (HOME; Caldwell & Bradley, 1984), maternal interviews, and coding of the mother and child playing together. Literacy activities were measured by the frequency in which the mothers engaged in literacy activities with their children: shared storybook reading, storytelling, and singing nursery rhymes. The quality of the mothers' engagement with their children was measured by coding the play sessions and by using the HOME scale. Interview observations and the use of the HOME scale were utilized in examining the provision of

learning materials, too. For example, the provision of learning materials included the number of books in the home, and/or the availability of toys (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

To assess the children's language and development, they were assessed at 14, 24, and 36 months of age using The Bayley Mental Cognitive Index (BSID-II; Bayley, 1993) and the MacArthur Communicative Development Inventories Short Form (CDI; Fenson et al., 2000). The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III, Dunn & Dunn, 1997) was used to assess the children's receptive vocabulary at 36 months.

The results concluded the three aspects of the literacy environment (literacy activities, maternal quality of engagement, and learning materials) were associated with child outcomes. Children with fewer literacy opportunities scored at a level that put them at risk for subsequent disabilities; whereas, children with more literacy experiences scored in ranges equal to or higher than the general population. The mother's age and education level were associated with the maternal quality of engagement. Younger mothers tended to demonstrate a lack of sensitivity and stimulation in comparison to older mothers. Mothers with more education used more sophisticated verbal skills and may have had more opportunities to provide literacy rich environments for their children (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Maternal employment and ethnicity also predicted literacy environment and child outcomes. Though past findings (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Muller, 1993; Weiss et al., 2003) show mothers who are employed full time were less involved with their children, Rodriguez and colleagues (2009) found the demonstrates a positive association between maternal employment and their children's outcomes. The financial benefits to working may allow mothers to provide the necessary educational materials to promote learning.

In terms of ethnicity, Caucasian mothers scored higher than African American or Hispanic mothers in literacy environment measures (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Parent involvement in the elementary grades. Senechal and LeFevre (2002) observed the relationship between early home literacy experiences and children's receptive language, emergent literacy skills, and reading achievement. The five-year longitudinal study included 168 middle and upper middle class children from two kindergarten classes and one first grade class. At the beginning of the study, the home literacy activities for all of the children were assessed. The kindergarten children's emergent literacy skills and receptive language skills were assessed in kindergarten and first grade. The students already in the first grade were assessed at the beginning of their first grade year.

The measures used to assess literacy experiences included parent reports of the frequency with which they exposed their children to storybooks and taught their children about reading and print. Parents were administered a questionnaire about home literacy experiences at the beginning of the study and were also asked to complete an assessment relating their own literacy knowledge to popular authors. At the end of first grade, the children were given a task to measure their print exposure by associating pictures with titles of children's books. The PPVT (Dunn & Dunn, 1981) and the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT; Psychological Corporation, 1989) were used to measure receptive language. The analytic intelligence of the children was measured by the use of the revised version of the Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (Weschler, 1989). Reading achievement was assessed at the end of both the

first and third grade year by using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (Level A & C, Form 3; MacGinitie & MacGinitie, 1992).

Descriptive statistics were used to measure the children's receptive language and emergent literacy skills. Correlations were used to measure home literacy and child literacy. Hierarchical Regression Analyses was used to measure receptive language, emergent literacy, phonological awareness, and overall reading achievement in the first and third grades. Results suggested home literacy experiences were related to children becoming fluent readers. However, different home literacy experiences were related to different types of literacy skills. For example, storybook reading was associated with receptive language, whereas, a child's interactions with print was related to the development of his or her emergent literacy skills (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002).

In a previous study by Evans, Shaw, and Bell (2000) similar results were found. The main goal of the study was to examine the relationship between the home literacy environment of 66 children and their language and literacy development. The socioeconomic status of the sample population varied, family incomes ranged from less than $16,000 to over $100,000 per year. The children were from both rural and urban neighborhoods, spanning a total of 23 different areas (Evans, et. al., 2000).

The instruments utilized consisted initially of a phone interview with the parents regarding the demographics and general information about their home environment. An at home visit followed four months later, with the researcher observing the parent reading to the child and a parent interview concerning literacy practices. The parents were then sent the children's book title checklist to complete at the end of their children's kindergarten year (Evans et al., 2000)

Individual assessments of the students were given approximately three times, once during the children's kindergarten year, and then during their first and second grade years. The kindergarten assessments included two cognitive, two language, and two letter tasks, along with the child interview covering home literacy experiences. The first and second grade assessments included tests over Word Attack, Word Recognition, Passage Comprehension and Spelling tests (Evans et al., 2000).

The analysis consisted of descriptive statistics for home and child variables. A correlation matrix was used to demonstrate a relationship between literacy practices and demographics, and between cognitive, language, and literacy variables. The relationship between early reading and language development and home literacy environments was analyzed by the use of a fixed-order hierarchical regression analysis.

The results of this study were similar to Senechal et al. (1998), storybook reading at home does not enhance the outcomes of a child's early literacy and oral language skills. However, parent participation in letter knowledge activities with their children at home positively influenced their children's knowledge of letters in kindergarten. In comparison, Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) also suggest specific literacy activities were associated with different experiences. For example, letter name and sound knowledge require activities focusing on letter sound information, while parents reading books to their children influence vocabulary development. In a prior study, Whitehurst et al. (1994) found that the frequency parents reported reading to their children influenced their children's vocabulary development (Evans et al., 2000).

Spanning across 25 countries, Park (2008) examined the influence of home literacy environments on the reading performance of children who had participated in the

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Approximately 98,190 fourth grade students participated in the comparative study. Early home literacy activities, parental attitudes toward reading, and the number of books in the home were observed as indicators of the home literacy environment.

The PIRLS included data collected through the use of a questionnaire on the student's family and school experiences; the family's socioeconomic status (SES), and literacy activities the parents participated in with their children. Other information included reading assessment data and a school questionnaire completed by administrators regarding school characteristics and instructional practices. The student's home literacy environment, reading achievement, socioeconomic background, and other family characteristics were measured using two methods of multivariate analysis: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and a multilevel model technique (Park, 2008).

Overall, the results showed that children's reading achievement was associated with early home literacy activities, parent attitudes toward reading, and the number of books in the home in almost all 25 countries. Though parents with less education had modest home environments, the results showed a significant proportion of parents participated in literacy activities with their child, had positive attitudes toward reading, and had a substantial number of books in their homes. The number of books in the home was positively correlated with the national average of reading scores, meaning that countries that support literacy environments produce students on average with better reading scores. Finally, results showed the economic development of the country affects the early literacy activities in which parents participate and their attitudes toward reading (Park, 2008).

Parent involvement in the secondary grades. Most of the research on parent involvement in relation to students' reading ability and literacy skills have been conducted on families who have preschool-aged children or children who are in kindergarten and/or the first grade. As students begin to transition from the primary grades to upper elementary and then to middle school, research indicates parents become less involved in their children's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1996). Teachers also report involving parents less (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). However, research suggest, parent involvement continues to be important for student outcomes, even at the secondary level.

Mo and Singh (2008) examined school engagement and performance of middle school age students in relation to parent involvement. The sample consisted of parents of seventh and eighth grade students. The study utilized Wave I data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). The Add Health is a nationally representative study that examines education and social behaviors of students between the seventh and twelfth grades. The data was analyzed by using structural equation modeling (SEM).

There were three items examined in this study: (a) school performance, (b) parents' relationship and involvement, and (c) students' school engagement. The students' academic performance was evaluated by the students' grades in the subject areas of mathematics, science, history and language arts. An overall average of subject grades was used to measure school performance. Parents' relationship and involvement consisted of three constructs: parental involvement in school, parent-child relationships, and parents' educational goals for their children. The students' school engagement was

measured by their emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine any differences in ethnicity and gender (Mo & Singh, 2008).

The study concluded parents' aspirations for their children were significant in relation to the students' cognitive and emotional engagement. Both parent involvement and the parents' relationship, and a students' engagement significantly impacted student outcomes. Involved parents sent a positive message to their children that academics are important. Students, who are more engaged in their schoolwork, are more likely to have higher levels of academic achievement (Mo & Singh, 2008).

Additional results found significant differences among ethnic groups in relation to school performance and school engagement. The participating ethnic groups consisted of White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian students. Asian students were found to be more engaged and outperformed students in the other three ethnic groups. In relation to gender, girls outperformed boys in school achievement. However, no difference was found in parent involvement in relation to ethnic groups and/or gender (Mo & Singh, 2008).

In a second study examining the relationship between parent involvement and student engagement, Simons-Morton and Crump (2003) found parent involvement essential in students transitioning from elementary school to middle school. Approximately 1,267 students from four middle schools enrolled in the sixth grade participated in this study. Students took part in completing two surveys, one at the beginning of the year (Time 1) and another at the end of the year (Time 2). Students enrolled in special education with reading difficulties were excluded from the study.

The survey consisted of 116 questions to assess student background, psychosocial, school, parent variables and involvement with problem behavior. The scale consisted of eight constructs: (a) school adjustment (b) school engagement, (c) parent involvement, (d) parental monitoring, (e) parental expectations, (f) school climate, (g) social competence, and (h) depression. The school adjustment scale included 11 items in relation to the student and how well they did in comparison to other students in areas, such as homework and making friends. The school engagement construct consisted of 3 items and included statements such as " I want to do well at this school, "I pay attention in class," and "I take school seriously." The parent involvement construct measured parental responsiveness and included 6 items examining how much parents know about their children. Parental monitoring included 4 items relating to parent demands, such as "My parents would find out if I misbehaved," or "My parents believe in having rules." Parental expectations included 6 items examining how upset parents would be by their children's behavior. School climate was measured by the response of 14 items, with statements such as " The teacher would help me if I had a problem," and "The rules are enforced fairly." Nine items asking respondents to rate their own abilities to solve problems measured social competence. Students were asked to complete a depressive symptoms subscale that included 6 items about their moods. Analysis of the data included correlations between variables evaluated at Time 1 and Time 2 surveys. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to control for the ethnicity of the groups (Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003).

The results found school adjustment for boys and African American students was lower than girls and Caucasian students at the time both of the surveys were

administered. Overall, parent involvement was positively associated with school adjustment, school climate, school engagement, and social competence. Students' had a better chance at adjusting to the transitions from elementary school to middle school if their parents were involved. Parent involvement was also a better predictor of a student's level of engagement than the variable, parent monitoring or a parents' expectation of their child (Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003).

Jeynes (2005) examined the relationship between parent involvement and the academic achievement of 12th grade, African American students. The study used sample participants who participated in the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) for the years 1990 and 1992. Overall, 18,726 students participated, of whom 2,260 were African American students. Self-report questionnaires were administered to the parents during the student 10th grade year and academics were measured during the students' 12th grade year. The dependent variables examined were academic achievement, gender, and socioeconomic status. The General Linear Model (GLM) regression and Logic regression were both utilized in the data analysis.

The results were similar to Simons-Morton and Crump (2003) that parent involvement is important in the academic achievement and/or outcomes of students. Students with highly involved parents scored higher in all subject areas, than students with less involved parents. The study also found a relationship between parent involvement and socioeconomic status and parents were more likely to be involved with their daughters than their sons.

Thus far, the research on parent involvement and student outcomes have included parents with children as young as 36 months to parents of students in high school. It is

evident that parent involvement is beneficial in successful student outcomes. Unfortunately, most of the sample populations observed have been conducted on parents of students in regular education classes. Far less research has been conducted on parent involvement and parents of children who may need their parents involved most of all, in order to achieve successful educational outcomes, children diagnosed with disabilities.

Parent Involvement for Children with Disabilities

The research that concerns the early literacy development of young typical children suggests children who experience literacy rich environments, tend to enjoy literacy related activities and tend to make smooth transitions to formal reading and writing. It is not so easy for children from families who live in poverty and for children who have been diagnosed with developmental delays or disabilities. Children with developmental delays or disabilities demonstrate greater risk for significant deficits in literacy (Goin, Nordquist, & Twardosz, 2004).

Goin et al. (2004) examined parents' perceptions of literacy, for children diagnosed with developmental delays. The researchers asked for examples and explanations for the parents' meaning of *literacy*, when discussing the activities they participated in with their children at home. The examples of literacy described were similar to the family literacy activities explained by Lynch et al. (2006). Literacy, to parents of children with developmental delays, included knowledge of letters and words, the identification of numbers, shapes, sounds, non-word signs or symbols, and communication. A difference between the two studies in the parents' description of literacy was the parents who had children with developmental delays described literacy activities, such as parent-child storybook reading as functions to transition between

activities, to calm the children down, as instructional opportunities, and/or as a therapeutic tool.

In a study conducted by Marvin and Mirenda (1993) a survey was administered to parents of children that were enrolled in Head Start programs, early intervention special education programs and to parents that had children without disabilities. The sample consisted of 291 participants overall; 95 children considered at risk, 168 children with special needs, and 28 typically developing children. A survey of 39 items relating to family demographics, child characteristics, and home practices associated with reading and writing activities was administered. The survey utilized a checklist and multiple-choice format so parents with limited writing skills could still participate. The survey validity was scored as high by two university professors who specialized in the area of reading.

Marvin and Mirenda (1993) found the home literacy environments for children without disabilities more supportive than the home literacy environments for children with disabilities. Though learning to read and write was deemed a priority for the parents' of the children in early intervention special education programs, overall, this group had the lowest expectations for their children's literacy development than any other group and provided fewer literacy opportunities to their children at home.

The finding conflicts with data reported by Goin et al. (2004) who found parents' viewed their children with developmental delays as capable individuals. They were optimistic about their children's future. In comparing the two studies, the sample participants in the Goin et al. (2004) study were all from white, middle-class homes, married to children's biological parent whose children were diagnosed with mild

disabilities. The sample participants from the Head Start and Special Education groups (Marvin & Mirenda, 1993) were diverse with some of the parents lacking high school diplomas; others were high school graduates, and most were either homemakers or employed in skilled or technical jobs (Marvin & Mirenda, 1993). Similar to the report by Goin et al. (2004), past studies have also indicated that parents of young children diagnosed with developmental delays who received services from birth to age three were found to be more optimistic of their children's future than those parents' who have preschool age or older children with disabilities (Todd, Shearn, Beyer, & Felce, 1993).

Though Marvin & Mirenda's (1993) study compared children with and without disabilities, it did not differentiate between parents' perceptions of literacy development for children with single or multiple disabilities. In a second study Marvin (1994) examined the home literacy experiences of 168 preschool aged children with single and multiple disabilities.

The instrument used was a seven page parent survey that took into account the at home literacy experiences of their child with a single or multiple disabilities. The survey was constructed after a questionnaire used by Light and Smith (1993) in examining the home literacy experiences of children with speech and physical impairments. The survey (Marvin, 1994) consisted of 39 questions in either a checklists or multiple-choice format. The survey included family demographics, questions regarding the child's abilities and disabilities, literacy experiences in the home, adult's participation in literacy activities, child behavior, and parent priorities/goals for their child. The completed surveys were separated to compare the two groups.

Results concluded preschool children with a single disability were similar to their peers with multiple disabilities; they too were at risk for difficulties in reading and writing for many of the same reasons. Parents for both groups reported communication skills and self-help skills as their number one priority, whereas, learning to read and write was selected by less than half of the participants in each group as a priority. This research complements earlier findings (Marvin & Mirenda, 1993); both groups had less supportive and stimulating home literacy environments than children without disabilities. The severity of children's disabilities influenced the parents' aspirations for their children's future and lessened their beliefs concerning literacy success (Marvin & Mirenda, 1994**).**

Craig (1994) administered a survey to parents who had children with visual impairments and children with both visual impairments and multiple disabilities. The study found children who had multiple disabilities were provided fewer literacy experiences. They also had fewer literacy-related materials in the home, and the children with multiple disabilities demonstrated lower levels of literacy than the students identified with visual impairments only. Fitzgerald, Roberts, Pierce, and Schuele (1995) observed home literacy practices of parents who had children with Down syndrome. They found the parents' provided the literacy materials, but rarely participated in literacy activities.

In a third study, Marvin and Wright (1997) compared the homes of preschool children with disabilities to the homes of preschool children without disabilities. The study observed three groups specifically, (a) children with speech and language

impairments, (b) children with disabilities other than speech and language impairments, and (c) typically developing children. Overall, the sample included 239 parents.

Results of the survey utilized (Marvin & Mirenda, 1993) that was describe earlier suggested children with disabilities were less likely to begin their early education with the literacy skills needed to become successful readers. Although the demographic variables were similar for all groups, more than half of the group of children with disabilities reported their current reading abilities as not able to read as opposed to more than half the typically developing children being able to recognize letters. One-fourth was able to read simple words.

Parent expectations and priorities for their children were also different between the groups. Parents of children with speech and language impairments chose communication as their number one goal for their children. Learning self-help skills was voted most important for parents of children with disabilities, other than speech and language impairments. The parents of children without disabilities selected making friends, increasing world knowledge, and learning to write as the most important goals or expectations they held for their children. Overall, parents predicted their children with disabilities would be able to read and write well enough to attend college. However, at age 21, 20% of the parents of children with disabilities and 12% of parents of children with speech and language impairments predicted their child's literacy level below what is required of a college student (Marvin & Wright, 1997). In comparison, only 2% of the parents of children without disabilities predicted such outcomes. Unlike earlier studies (Craig, 1994; Marvin & Mirenda, 1993) 70% of the participants of all three groups, with disabilities or not, reported their children had access to print materials. Like previous

studies (Craig, 1994) this result suggests the interactions and/or the disability of the children has more to do with their lack of literacy skills rather than the children's level of print exposure opportunities (Marvin & Wright, 1997).

In a more recent study, Peeters, Verhoeven, Balkom and Moor (2009) examined the home literacy environments of children with cerebral palsy (CP). The goal of the study was to identify differences, if any, between the home literacy environments of children with and without disabilities. The participants included 40 children diagnosed with cerebral palsy and 62 children without disabilities. The family demographics of the children were similar in socioeconomic status, age, and gender. The inclusion criteria for the students with CP included the children speaking the native language of Dutch, having intelligence levels within the range of a mild intellectual disability to average or above, having a normal range of hearing and vision, being five years of age at the beginning of the study, and being able to respond intentionally, either through speaking or means of alternative communication.

Parents were given five self-administered questionnaires based on the home literacy environment. The variables included child literacy interest, child activities and storybook reading, materials and parent activities for literacy development, parents' literacy materials and activities, and parents' expectations for their child's literacy development. The child variables included speech intelligibility, intelligence, fine motor function, and vocabulary. The children's speech intelligibility was assessed by the use of the standardized subtest of the Dutch Speech Language Impairment Screening test Verhoeven, 2006). Intelligence of the children were measured by the Raven Coloured Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1956) and fine motor function skills were assessed using

the Dutch version of the Manual Ability Classification System for the children with CP (Eliasson et al., 2006). The final assessment that measured vocabulary was a Dutch version of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III (Dunn & Dunn, 1997).

Factor analysis was used to analyze the parent questionnaires and descriptive statistics were used for both groups in comparing the children's speech intelligibility, intelligence, fine motor functioning and vocabulary. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to compare the differences in child variables and home literacy environments of the two groups. Four multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVAs) were also completed (Peeters et al., 2009).

Results suggest the children with CP reported spending more leisure time with their parents, such as playing outdoors or watching television, than did the group without disabilities. The group with CP also experienced fewer writing activities and were less interested in writing than their typical peers. This result may be due to issues with fine motor skills children with CP may experience. However, there were no differences in either groups interests in literacy materials and storybook reading.

The speech intelligibility and language for the comparison group did not relate to their home environments. For the group of children with CP the home literacy environment predicted their speech intelligibility scores. Children with CP who were more involved in at home literacy activities with their parents, such as storybook reading and/or word-related activities, were more likely to have higher scores in speech intelligibility. In addition, the parents of typically developing children often had higher expectations for their children's literacy achievement than parents of children diagnosed

with CP. Parents of children diagnosed with CP were not clear on what they expected from their children in the area of literacy (Peeters et al., 2009).

Though some parents provided literacy-rich environments to their young children with disabilities, others did not afford the same opportunities. Twenty-eight percent of families who had children with disabilities came from families considered poor and living in poverty (Fujiura &Yamaki, 2000). Children who live in poverty are at a disadvantage for successful academic outcomes and are more likely to drop out of high school (Mayer, 1997). The impact of poverty on children with disabilities is even more pronounced.

Family Characteristics

Families who live in poverty and have a child with a disability are more likely to experience higher levels of stress and require more coping mechanisms for adaptation to daily life. Scorgie, Wilgosh, and McDonald (1998) evaluated 25 studies examining stress and coping in families of children with disabilities to find out how family variables affect stress and adaptability. They found families with higher incomes exhibited higher paternal and maternal satisfaction and had more opportunities for support. Yau and Li-Tsang (1999) found families with higher incomes adapted easier to the daily demands of having a child with a disability. Higher family income was related to the marital satisfaction of fathers who had a child with developmental delays and positively influenced the activities the father participated in with his children (Park, Turnbull & Turnbull, 2002).

Measures of Family Composition

Stress. Mothers are typically the primary focus in studies measuring the amount of stress found in families that have children with disabilities. Information addressing the role of the fathers and the effects of having children with disabilities is limited. Honig & Keller (2004) measured the differences in maternal and paternal stress in families with school-aged children with disabilities by using the Parenting Stress Index (PSI; Abidin, 1995), the Family Environment Scale (FES; Moos & Moos, 1994), and the Family Support Scale (FSS; Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1988). This study examined the differences between mothers and fathers, and the mediating effects of family harmony and the use of social supports. The study found there were no significant differences between mothers and fathers in relation to stress.

Results from Honig and Keller (2004) were inconsistent with the findings of Margalit, Shulman, & Stuchiner (1989), where predictors of stress related to behavior of children with intellectual disabilities were significantly elevated. Fathers reported higher levels of stress in relationship the children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Mother's stress levels increased as a result of the children's external behaviors. Higher stress levels led to a decrease in personal growth for fathers and an increase in the level of family support for the mothers.

Emotional attachment. A difference for mothers and fathers in the area of emotional attachment to their children with disabilities was found. In establishing an emotional attachments fathers reported more difficulty than mothers. Since mothers are typically the primary care giver, mothers may have more opportunities to become emotionally attached. Accordingly, mothers were also found to be more accepting of

their children's physical, intellectual and emotional characteristics than fathers. The more difficult it was for the fathers to accept the children's differences, the more paternal stress increased and family harmony decreased. Increased stress levels for mothers were a result of the demands of child-care and the physical, emotional, and behavioral demands of the child (Honig & Keller, 2004).

Social support. Honig & Keller (2004) found socioeconomic factors to be significant and the primary difference between mothers and fathers. Mothers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and fathers who were more accepting of their children with a disability viewed social supports as helpful. Fathers who were less accepting of their children's disability and mothers who felt overwhelmed by the demands of caring for their children with disabilities were less apt to seek social supports (Honig & Keller, 2004).

Child-related stress. The Parenting Stress Index (PSI) (Abidin, 1990) was also used in a prior study (Boyce, 1991) to measure the stress of families related to child characteristics, family demographics and family processes. This study included several other measures: The Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE) (McCubbin, Patterson & Wison, 1983), The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III (Olson, Portner & Lavee, 1985), The Family Resource Scale (Dunst & Leet, 1985), The Family Support Scale (Dunst, Jenkins & Trivette, 1984), The Report of Child Health (Most, 1987), and the Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) (BDI: Newborg, Stock, Wnek, Guidubaldi & Svinicki, 1984). Two areas of parenting stress were examined: child related characteristics and parents attitudes towards parenting. Results of the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) indicated parents who have children with disabilities appear

to have more child-related stress compared to parents with children without disabilities (Boyce et al., 1991).

Factors associated with child-related stress included the functioning level of the children, their ability to communicate with others, and their children's ability to perform motor and cognitive functions. The children's ability level significantly influenced the mothers' reported perceptions of their children and the their satisfaction during parent-child interactions. Child-related stress was significantly affected by the age of the mothers and whether or not the mothers had other children with disabilities (Boyce et al., 1991). This was different from findings of previous research where the age of the mothers had no effect on child- related stress (Wilson & Renault, 1986).

Ethnicity. Boyce and colleagues (1991) found the mothers' ethnicity showed no relation to parent-related stress; more adults living in the home was a predictor of less parent-related stress; and the gender of the children had little influence on parent-related stress. The finding that the children's gender was related to stress appears to differentiate somewhat with the findings by Frey et al. (1999) who found having daughters with disabilities caused more parent-related stress than having a son with a disability.

Parent-related stress. In a second study conducted by Boyce, Innocenti, and Kwisun (1992), the Parenting Stress Index was used to measure the "normality" perspective of parent-related and child-related parenting stress. The participants in this study included 725 mothers who had a young child with a disability and 2,633 families that had typically developing children used as representatives of the normative sample. Two aspects of parenting stress were measured: stress caused from the parents'

perception of how the children effect the parent-child relationship and the affect of parenting children with disabilities in relation to the other aspects of the parents' lives.

Overall, findings (Boyce et al., 1992) were complementary to previous work by Boyce et al. (1991) who found parents who have children with disabilities report significantly more stress than parents who do not. In relation to the stress of parenting, no differences were found except for the parents who had 3-year olds with disabilities. These parents reported more stress than parents whose 3 year olds did not have disabilities. Overall, this research concluded parents who have a child with a disability were concerned more with child related factors than factors related to parenting. An additional finding suggests the stress of mothers who had children with and without disabilities were comparable.

Family cohesion. In another comparison study Clawson & Bigsby (1997) explored the needs of families of preschool aged children with disabilities by comparing their family processes, their parenting style, and their children's social and cognitive outcomes to families who had typically developing children. Forty-nine mothers and 31 fathers who had children between the ages of 24 and 56 months enrolled in a university-based all-inclusive preschool participated. Fifteen of the parents had children diagnosed with disabilities.

This study was different from previous studies in the instruments used to measure family characteristics. To assess family functioning, the Self-Report of Family Inventory was used. It is a Likert type scale with 36 items examining the individuals' perceptions of family style. The Raising Children Questionnaire, a 49-item Likert scale, was used to

examine parenting style and Your Child's Behavior scale was used to assess parents' views of their children's social abilities and their skills used in school.

The results of the study concluded parents with children with special needs compared to parents with typically developing children experienced lower levels of family satisfaction and closeness and experienced higher levels of authoritarian parenting styles. Previous findings by Frey et al. (1989) were comparable in that the stress of having a child with a disability could impact the closeness of the family as well as the satisfaction within the family. Other results showed that children with disabilities were perceived as less competent, both socially and academically, than their non-disabled peers.

Though families reported more stress, some described their experiences of having children with disabilities as joyful. They considered their children with disabilities as having a special need rather than problems. They also believed their lives had been enriched by having children with a disability and that they contributed positively to family cohesion and satisfaction rather than negatively as described previously (Li-Tsang, Kwai-Sang Yau, & Yuen, 2001; Turnbull, 1985; Turnbull et al., 1986a).

Coping mechanisms and positive attitudes. Li-Tsang et al. (2001) interviewed and analyzed characteristics of Asian parents who had children with developmental delays and were considered to have successful coping skills and positive attitudes. Ten parents were selected from five parent organizations in the community where they held positions as either chairman or executive committee members. Parent interviews were conducted by a health care professional who had experience in working with families that had children with disabilities.

The results revealed attributes that lead to successful coping mechanisms and positive attitudes of parents who have children with developmental delays. These included: personal resources, family and marital relationships, parent child relationships and attitudes and values. Personal resources were similar to the characteristics of families from western culture in that these families were generally self-confident, positive, out-going and sociable. They identified themselves as advocates for their children and were knowledgeable on where to find resources to support their children's needs (Li-Tsang et al., 2001).

Similar to previous reports (Nihira et al., 1980) this research found parents who were secure and satisfied with their marital relationships were more apt to have positive attitudes towards their children with developmental delays (Yau and Li-Tsang, 1999). This observation was akin to Frey and colleagues (1989) who found a positive association between spousal relationships and the development of coping skills of parents who have children with disabilities.

Although the severity of the child's disability is often associated with negative parent-child relationships, this study (Nihira et al., 1980) found there to be little correlation between the degree of disabilities and the level of acceptance from their parents. In a previous examination, (Frey et al., 1989) parent adjustment was negatively associated with the severity of the children's cognitive and communication problems.

In addressing parent attitudes and values, the subjects in Li-Tsang and colleagues (2001) demonstrated more positive attitudes towards life. They valued the present rather than feeling regret over the past or worrying about the future. Parents with positive attitudes believed they should teach their children rather than just take care of them and

greatly valued education. They also were willing to talk to other parents about their experiences and to offer advice if needed (Li-Tsang et al., 2001).

Though parents with a child with a disability in this study valued education, not all families are competent in creating learning opportunities for their children. Parents of children with disabilities may be so overwhelmed by their child's disability that focusing on their children's literacy needs may seem irrelevant (Erickson & Koppenhaver, 1995).

Summary

This literature review began by examining the literature describing factors that influence parent involvement in their children's education. Parental sense of responsibility and level of self-efficacy were considered as two characteristics that influenced parent decisions concerning educational involvement levels (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Walker et al., 2005). A child's invitation requesting parents' help (Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 1992; Hoover-Dempsey et al, 1995; Walker et al., 2005) and teacher invitations (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000) to parents were also significant factors found to be of influence in parental decisions to participate. Other influential variables considered were parent levels of education (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Lynch et al., 2006), family socioeconomic status and employment status (Rodriguez et al., 2009; Weiss et al., 2003) and levels of parental time and energy (Garcia et al., 2002; Green et al., 2007; Heyman & Earle, 2000; Walker et al., 2005; Weiss et al., 2003) for participation in educational activities in the home and at school.

Parent choices to participate and become involved in education received attention in the literature. Epstein (1995, 2005) described six types of parent involvement

activities including: (a) assisting parents with parenting skills, (b) communication, (c) volunteering at school (d) providing learning opportunities at home, (e) informed decision making, and (f) degrees of collaboration between families, schools and the community. Epstein and Sheldon (2005) emphasized the importance of prioritizing and selecting the most needed types of parent involvement.

The third portion of the literature review covered the relationship between parent involvement and student outcomes. It is clear that parent involvement is associated with student outcomes for both typically developing children and for families of children with disabilities. Though there is not a lot of research on parent involvement from parents of children with disabilities, the research available suggests there are differences in levels of parent involvement of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities report different learning goals and expectations for their children than a parent of a non-disabled child (Peeters et al., 2009). Parents of children with more severe disabilities are less concerned with literacy and are more interested in their children learning functional and communication skills (Marvin & Wright, 1994). In contrast, the goals and expectations of a parent with a nondisabled child are more likely to fit in the academic area of reading and writing.

The final section of the literature review is important in that it describes the characteristics of the majority of families who have a child with a disability. It provides information regarding the additional stress (Boyce et al., 1991; Boyce et al., 1992) parents of a child with a disability may possess and demonstrates why parent involvement, specifically in the area of literacy, may not be the parent's priority in his or her child's learning.

Throughout this literature review, the majority of research on parent involvement was obtained from survey data collected from parents with typically developing children. Only a few studies examined parent involvement from parents of children with disabilities. Most of the studies examining parent involvement of children with disabilities observed the home literacy environment during their children's early childhood or preschool aged years. Thus, it is important to better understand parent involvement of children with disabilities after they have begun their formal schooling and when there is more opportunity for parents to become involved at school and at home.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This research was designed to assess parents' perceived levels of involvement in the education of their children with mild to moderate disabilities. Survey methodology was utilized to determine parent perceptions of (a) communication received from school personnel; (b) levels of parent and children's participation in home literacy activities; (c) levels of parent efficacy; and (d) parent viewpoints of their responsibilities in the home-school relationship. The study included six elementary schools in two school districts (see Table 1).

The purpose of this research was to explore parent perceptions concerning their involvement in their children's education. According to Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, belief in ones abilities to succeed was related to higher levels of parent involvement in their children's education. Research suggests a parent's sense of self-efficacy is positively related to parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1992; Shumow & Lomaz, 2002; Walker et al., 2005). Parents are more likely to participate in activities with their children if they believe they have the skills and knowledge to help their children learn (Green et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2005).

Past studies examining parent involvement used survey methodology to describe levels of parent involvement (Delandes & Bertrand, 2005; Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Sheldon, 2002). The primary survey used in this study was a Likert-type survey known as the "Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades, " (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007). The present research used a modified version of the Sheldon and Epstein (2007) survey. Sheldon and

Epstein's (2007) survey was organized under the following headings: (a) school communication, (b) school climate, (c) parent involvement, (d) parent ideas, (e) connections with other parents, and (f) demographics. A second survey utilized for this study, the "Home Literacy Inventory," (Marvin & Ogden, 2005) was used partly to identify the types of at-home literacy activities parents' report participating in with their children. This questionnaire was originally developed for families to report at home literacy experiences of their young children with and without disabilities. The following research questions guide this study:

(1) Is there a relationship between parent perceptions of school communications and the level of parent involvement in their children's education?

(2) What do parents report about their responsibilities that ensure children's school success?

(3) What is the nature of relationships between parent efficacy and parent levels of involvement?

(4) What do parents report about school communication in relation to parent involvement?

(5) Is there a relationship between parent involvement and at home literacy activities?

Settings and Participants

Participants in this study consisted of 49 parents of elementary-aged children who have been diagnosed with a specific learning disability. The children were between the ages of 6 and 11 years old, enrolled in public school grades first through fifth, and were receiving special education services. The sample was selected based on administrative

cooperation in order to represent a rural school district and an urban school district. An urban and a rural school district were selected for comparative purposes and to diversify the sample. The rural school district was located in the Southwestern part of the state and the second site was located in a large urban area of central Oklahoma. The rural school district is approximately 100 miles from the urban school district. The Oklahoma State Department of Education's database was used to define the criteria determining school district's identification as rural and urban.

Rural school district. The rural school district's population was approximately 22,000 with an area population of 55,264. The racial mix of the population was as follows: 83% Caucasian, 3% African American, 5% Native American, less than 1% Asian, and 6% Hispanic. The educational achievement of residents in the rural area distributed as follows: 16% attended four years of high school but did not graduate with a diploma; 38% graduated with high school diplomas; 20% attended some college; and 12% attained a bachelors degree. The average annual income of rural residents was $33,560 per household. Employment opportunities in this community were predominantly (69%) non-professional positions and were considered "Blue Collar" jobs.

Urban school district. The urban school district included 18 elementary schools and approximately 9,500 elementary-aged students. Due to the larger population size of the school district only one elementary school was asked to participate. The number of students attending the participating school was approximately 650.

The urban school district was in the Northwestern sector of Oklahoma City, OK. The overall population for the county was 701,807. The county population consisted of 89% Caucasian, 3% African American, 4% Native American, 52% Asian, 2% Hispanic,

and less than 1% was listed as other **(**Oklahoma County.Org, 2009). At the time of this study, the median household income was $41,598. However, the demographic population for the sector of Oklahoma County, where the participating school was located, consists of 52% Caucasian, 29% African American, 12% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. The average annual salary per household for urban residents in this community was $35,073 (Zillow.com, 2011).

The researcher contacted the superintendent of the rural school district first and was directed to contact the special education coordinator. The principals and special education coordinators for the schools included in this study were then contacted. The purpose of the study and the study process and procedures were explained. The same process was followed for the urban school district, except the principal was spoken to first, rather than the superintendent of schools.

A combined total of 71 surveys were distributed to students. Thirty-seven were given to students in the rural district and 34 to students in the urban location. Six schools participated in the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument selected for this study was the "Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades," (Epstein & Sheldon, 2007). This survey was developed to (a) evaluate parents' beliefs about parental involvement; (b) measure the level of parental involvement in school activities; (c) gain information regarding the size of the parents' social network and exchanges within that network; (d) assess the parents' perceptions of the schools' efforts to inform and involve them in their children's education; (e) document parents' ideas regarding school climate; and (f) collect participants' demographic information. The survey included approximately 100 items. The survey employed a 4-point Likert type response scale and was written at a readability level to increase the likelihood that parents could comprehend the items. Sheldon and Epstein (2007) did not report the readability level or grade level that the survey was written.

Survey Description

Specific items of the survey by Epstein and Sheldon (2007) were based on relevance to the research questions for this study. The reliability of internal consistency for the scales used in the survey was measured by the use of Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The reliability for each measure was recorded, but a reliability alpha for the survey was not provided. Higher values indicate greater reliability and a minimum level of .7 were recommended (Nunnnally, 1978). The survey included a total of 106 close-ended questions and four open-ended questions (See Appendix D for Parent Survey).

School/Parent communication. The first set of questions invited parents to rate how well their children's teacher or someone at the school communicates and encourages

parent involvement. School communication refers to how well the school communicates to the parents about their child's academic progress (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). This section includes subscales measuring how well school personnel implement the following activities: (a) invites parents to be involved at school (b) communicates information about child's progress in school (c) encourages parent-child interactions on homework, and (d) connects with the community. There were 14 items in this measure. Statements began with, "My child's teacher or someone at the school," does this Well (1), OK (2), Poorly (3), or Never (4) response range to end the statements (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .89.

Invitations to school. Invitations to the parents from school personnel included 5 items: (a) asks me to volunteer at the school, (b) invites me to PTA/PTO meetings, (c) asks me to help with school fund raising, (d) includes parents on school committees, such as curriculum, budget, or improvement committees, and (e) invites me to a program at school. According to Epstein et al. (2002) and Epstein and Salinas (1993), the invitations to school scale had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of .84. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .83.

Communicates information about child's progress in school. Communicates information about child's progress in school included 5 items: (a) tells me how my child is doing in school, (b) tells me what skills my child needs to learn in math, (c) tells me what skills my child needs to learn in reading/language arts, (d) tells me what skills my child needs to learn in science, and (e) has a parent teacher conference with me. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this subscale was reported at .65. Two items from this subscale were deleted due to the irrelevance to the study. The two items deleted were:

(1) tells me what skills my child needs to learn in math, and (2) tells me what skills my child needs to learn in science. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .75.

Encourages parent-child interactions on homework. Encourages parent and child interactions on homework included 2 items: (a) Explains how to check my child's homework, and (b) assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class. Cronbach's Alpha value was reported at .65 (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .50.

Connect with the community. Connect with the community included 2 items: (a) provides information on community services I may want to use, and (b) provides information on community events I may want to attend. Cronbach's alpha value was reported at .74 (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .62.

School climate. The second set of survey questions measured school climate. School climate referred to how parents feel about their children's school. The measure school climate included 4 items: (a) This is a very good school, (b) I feel welcome at the school, (c) I get along well with my child's teacher, and (d) the teachers at this school care about my child. The school climate measure used a response range of Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (4). The Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported at .88 (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .83.

Parent involvement. The third set of survey items were designed to assess the types of involvement parents participate in: (a) school involvement, (b) home

involvement, (c) involvement in certain subject areas, and monitoring schoolwork (general involvement at home). The parent involvement measure was derived from a 17-item questionnaire assessing overall parent involvement. The statements began with, "How often do you do the following activities" and the statements ended with a response range of Everyday/Most days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in Awhile (3), or Never (4), (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .88.

Parent involvement at school. Survey questions measuring a parents' involvement in school-related activities asked parents to report how often they engaged in their children's activities at school. These items focused on Type 2 (Communicating) and Type 3 (Volunteering) activities. Epstein's (2004) Type 2-Communicating was defined as school personnel communicating with parents about their children's progress in varied, clear, and productive ways. Type 3-Volunteering was described as school personnel improving recruitment, training, activities and schedules to involve parents in volunteering and as audiences at the school (Epstein, 2004). Four items made up parent involvement at school and were prefaced with, "How often do you:" (a) Volunteer in the classroom or at the school, (b) visit your child's school, (c) talk to your child's teacher, and (d) go to a school event. The statement ended with a response range of Everyday/Most Days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in awhile (3), Never (4). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was valued at .76 for the parent involvement at school sub-measure (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .67.

Parent involvement at home. A parents' involvement at home referred to the extent a parent monitored and worked with his or her child on schoolwork at home (Epstein, 2007). At home involvement emphasized Type 4-Learning at home activities. Type 4-Learning at home activities were defined by Epstein (2004) as school personnel's encouragement of families to be involved with their children at home in learning activities, such as homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Ten items measured parent involvement at home and statements began with, "How often do you," (a) read with your child, (b) review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home, (c) help your child with math, (d) go over spelling or vocabulary with your child, (e) ask your child about what he/she is learning in math, (f) help your child with reading/language arts homework, (g) help your child prepare for math tests, (h) ask your child how well he/she is doing in school, (i) ask your child to read something he/she wrote, and (j) check to see if your child finished his/her homework? Parents were instructed to circle one answer to describe if this happens: Everyday or Most Days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in Awhile (3), or Never (4). Cronbach's alpha was valued at .89 for the parent involvement at home sub-measure (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). Three items were deleted based on relevance to the study: (a) help your child with math, (b) ask your child about what he/she is learning in math, and (c) help your child prepare for math tests. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .72.

Involvement in Reading/Language Arts. There were four items regarding parent involvement in helping their children at home in the subject area of reading/language arts. The four items included: (a) read with your child, (b) go over spelling or vocabulary with your child, (c) help your child with reading/language arts homework, and (d) ask your

child to read something he/she wrote. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported at .76 (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .71.

Monitoring schoolwork. Monitoring schoolwork was described as a parents' general involvement at home (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). This sub-measure included three items: (a) ask your child how well he or she is doing in school, (b) review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home, and (c) check to see if your child finished his/her homework. Cronbach's alpha was valued at .72 (Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Salinas, 1993). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .47.

Parental role construction. Parental role construction refers to parent beliefs about their responsibility or role in their children's education. The measure includes ten items measuring parent beliefs concerning their levels of involvement they should play in the education of their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; 1997; Walker et al., 2005; Sheldon, 2002). This measure began with the statement, "It is a parent's responsibility to" and included ten items: (a) Make sure that their child learns in school, (b) teach their child to value schoolwork, (c) show their child how to use things like a dictionary or encyclopedia, (d) contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise, (e) test their child on subjects taught in school, (f) keep track of their child's progress in school, (g) contact the teacher if they think their child is struggling in school, (h) show an interest in their child's schoolwork, (i) help their child understand homework, and (j) know if their child is having trouble in school. Measures of parental role construction used a response range of Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), and Strongly

Disagree (4). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .82 (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; 1997; Walker et al., 2005; Sheldon, 2002). One item was deleted from this measure: (a) test their child on subjects taught in school. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .82.

Parental efficacy. Parental efficacy is described by Sheldon & Epstein (2007) as the extent to which parents feel their involvement will make a positive difference in their children's learning. This measure included five items: (a) I know how to help my child do well in school, (b) I never know if I'm getting through to my child, (c) I know how to help my child make good grades in school, (d) I can motivate my child to do well in school, (e) I feel good about my efforts to help my child learn, (f) I don't know how to help my child on school work, (g) my efforts to help my child learn are successful, and (h) I make a difference in my child's school performance. The measure parental efficacy used response range of Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (4). Two of the items ("I make a difference in my child's school performance" and "I never know if I'm getting through to my child") were reverse-coded. Cronbach's Alpha value was .82 (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992; Sheldon, 2002; Walker et al., 2005). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .81.

P**arent literacy and child literacy.** This scale assessed how often parents participated in at-home literacy activities for both the parent and their children. The survey questions were selected from the "Home Literacy Inventory" developed from Marvin and Mirenda (Marvin, 1994; Marvin & Gaffney, 1999; Marvin & Mirenda, 1993;

Marvin & Ogden, 2001; Marvin & Wright, 1997) to examine the home literacy experiences of children age 3 to 6 with and without disabilities.

The survey required parents to report how often they used and their children used or read 15 items: (a) magazines, (b) novels and other books, (c) dictionary/encyclopedias, (d) newspapers, (e) phone books, (f) letters, (g) T.V./movie guides, (h) cookbooks/instruction guides, (i) photographs of family and friends, (j) comics, (k) picture or storybooks for children, (l) birthday or holiday cards, (m) food and product labels, and (n) computers.

The survey asked participants to report how often their children participated in the following activities: (a) read or looked at books by him/herself at home, (b) visited the library/bookmobile, (c) went to a bookstore, (d) selected videos for rental, (e) dialed a familiar number on the telephone, (f) read familiar brand names (Coca-Cola, Kraft, etc.), (g) used the computer for school-work, and (h) asked you to read a book, and do some writing, drawing, or "pretend" writing at home.

Parents were asked how often their children used and saw the parent use the following writing/drawing materials: (a) pencil/pen and paper, (b) crayons/marker, (c) paintbrushes/paints, (d) chalk, (e) computer, (f) typewritier, (g) calculator, (h) writing/drawing toys, (i) other writing tools. The measure used a response range of Everyday/Most Days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in awhile (3), and Never (4). Parents were also asked to report the number of children's books in the home.

This parent literacy and child literacy portion of the survey was developed to provide a more specific understanding of the types of at-home involvement activities parents reported participating in with their children. There was no total score or alpha

reliability reported for this survey (Marvin, 1994; Marvin & Gaffney, 1999; Marvin & Mirenda, 1993; Marvin & Ogden, 2001; Marvin & Ogden, 2002; Marvin & Wright, 1997). In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .88 for the parent involvement questions, including the at home literacy activities parents reported participating in with their children. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for child literacy activities was .89.

Open-ended questions. The final portion of the survey included four opened-ended questions. The researcher developed the open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were included to allow parents to elaborate on their feelings towards parent involvement. The questions relate to the parent's own past school experiences: (a) "How well did you do in school and what are some of the happiest memories about your school experiences?" (b) "What did you struggle with in school?" (c) "How important is your child's success in school?" and (d) "What are the benefits to your child staying in school?"

Figure 2

Summary of Variables Measured

Sample of Demographics	Parent Perceptions	Levels of Parent Involvement
Gender of Child	Parent Self-Efficacy	Parent Literacy
Age of Child	Parent Responsibilities	Child Literacy
Number of Family Members	School Communication	
Parents Education Level		
Relationship to the child		
Marital Status		
Employment Level		
Spouse's Employment Level		
Family Ethnicity		
Language Spoken in the Home		
Child Disability/No Disability		
Perceived Child's Achieved Level of Schooling		

Data Collection Procedures

When IRB approval was established, the researcher approached the principals of the schools and explained the purpose and the process of this research necessary to obtain volunteers for the study. Once the building administrators agreed to identify parents with children diagnosed with learning disabilities, the principals discussed the project with

their special education teachers. The special education teachers were provided a written script, which stated the purpose of the research and the data collection process.

The parents learned about the research project through their child's teachers. The special education teachers distributed data collection packets that included: (a) A letter explaining research purpose and process, (b) informed consent, (c) demographics form, and (d) a questionnaire, based on the Epstein and Sheldon (2007) and Marvin and Ogden (2005) surveys. Consenting participants were directed to reflect on their experiences and interactions with school personnel. Respondents were asked to select the answer that most accurately described their perceptions of school-based relationships and their levels of participation or involvement in school involvement and at home literacy activities.

Participants were given one week to complete the study. Teachers sent home the surveys with their students on a Monday and sent a reminder letter to parents on Thursday. Participants returned completed forms in sealed envelopes to teachers on Friday. Children received a $5.00 dollar gift certificate to McDonald's restaurant when their parents returned the completed survey. At the end of the week, the researcher collected response envelopes. Once the surveys were collected, they were coded and all confidential information was separated from the surveys before the analysis were conducted.

Data Analysis

Analysis of returned surveys used descriptive statistics and correlational analysis. This study utilized survey methodologies, consisting of paper and pencil questionnaires. The following materials were included in the Data Collection Packets: (a) demographics of participants, (b) survey, and (c) consent form. Through the use of a demographics form, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents. Child characteristics included: (a) gender of child, (b) age of child, (c) grade of child, and (d) whether their children had a disability. Parent and family characteristics included: (a) number of children in the family and ages, (b) parent's education level, (c) parent's relationship to the child, (d) marital status, (e) level of employment, (f) spouse's level of employment, (g) family ethnicity, (h) language spoken in the home, and (i) amount of schooling the parent thinks the child will complete.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. Independent t-tests were used to determine if there were any significant differences between the two school districts, and if so, the effect sizes of the t-test were also calculated. A correlational analysis was used to observe a relationship between the demographic variables and the variables, parent involvement and parent self-efficacy.

For research question one, "Is there a relationship between parent perceptions and the level of parent involvement in their children's education?", a correlation analysis was conducted by using Pearson correlation. Pearson correlation was used to determine if there was a relationship between the continuous variables, parent involvement and parent perceptions.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the mean, percent of strongly agreed responses, and the standard deviation for research question two: "What do parents report about their responsibilities that ensure children's school success?". The frequency of parent involvement activities was calculated for categorical variables.

A correlational analysis was used by utilizing Pearson correlation to determine if there was a relationship between the continuous variables, parent efficacy and parent involvement for research question three, "What is the nature of the relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement?". A correlation matrix was used to determine the relationship between the parent involvement sub-measures (teacher invitations, parent involvement at home, parent involvement at school, monitoring schoolwork, and parent involvement in reading/language arts) and levels of parent efficacy.

Descriptive statistics were used for research question four: "What do parents perceive about school communication in relation to parental involvement?" The mean, percent of strongly agreed responses, and standard deviation were reported. The relationship between the parent involvement sub-measure, teacher invitations, and the variable, school climate, were investigated through the use of correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to report strongly agreed responses of questions concerning school climate.

A correlational analysis was used for research question five, "Is there a relationship between parent involvement and at home literacy activities?". A Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between the parent literacy and child literacy variables. Descriptive statistics were also used to report parent reports of the number of books in the home.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Survey Response

Initially, 71 survey packets were sent to the two school districts; 37 went to the rural school and 34 for the urban setting. The researcher gave the schools one week to administer and collect the surveys. Teachers were instructed by their principals to send the surveys home on Monday. A reminder to non-responsive parents was sent on Thursday. The surveys were due on Friday by the end of the school day. Data consisted of 20 surveys returned from the urban school and 29 from the five elementary schools in the rural school district. A total of 49 surveys were returned and had an overall response rate of 69%.

Descriptive Statistics for Sample

The sample included parents of 30 males and 19 female students who participated in the study. Eighty-eight percent of the participants that completed the survey were mothers. The majority of students were enrolled in the second and fifth grades. The majority of the families had two adults living in the home and had three children. Thirty-nine percent of the parents attended some college and 51% believed their children would graduate with a college degree. English was described as the primary language spoken in the home. Forty-one percent of the parents were employed full-time, 12% part-time, and 47% of the participants reported being unemployed. Fifty-three percent of their spouses were employed full-time, 6% were employed part-time, and 16% were not employed. Twenty-five percent of the participants answered their spouse's employment as non-

applicable. Seventy-eight percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch programs (See Table 1).

Table 1

Characteristics of Parents

Parent Demographics	n	%
Child Characteristics		
Males	30	61
Females	19	39
Total	49	100
Age of Child (years)		
6	3	6
7	4	8
8	10	20
9	11	22
10	9	18
11	11	20
12	2	4
Total	49	100
Grade of Child		
First	4	8
Second	15	31
Third	7	14
Fourth	10	20
Fifth	12	25
Total	48	98
Missing	1	2
Total	49	100
Relationship to Child		
Mother	43	88
Father	4	8
Stepfather	1	2
Other	1	2
Total	49	100
Number of Children in the Home		
1	5	10
2	17	35
3	14	29
4	11	22
5	1	2
6	1	2
Total	49	100
Number of Adults in the Home		
1	12	25
2	34	69
3	2	4
4	1	2
Total	49	100

Parent Demographics	n	%
Parent Level of Education		
Some High School	5	10
Some College	11	22
Vocational/Technical	19	39
College Degree	7	14
Graduate Degree/Credits	5	10
Total	1	2
Missing	49	98
Total	1	2
	49	100
Parent Perceived Level of Child's Educational Attainment		
High School Diploma	9	18
Some College	6	12
Vocational/Technical	3	6
College Degree	25	51
Graduate Degree Credits	5	10
Total	48	98
Missing	1	2
Total	49	100
Ethnicity		
Black or African American	7	15
Biracial	7	14
Hispanic or Latino	4	8
Native American/Pacific Islander	1	2
White or Caucasian	27	55
Total	3	6
	49	100
Language Spoken in the Home		
English	49	100
Parent Employment Level		
Full Time	20	41
Part Time	6	12
Not Employed	23	47
Total	49	100
Spouse Employment Level		
Full Time	26	53
Part Time	3	6
Not Employed	8	16
NA	12	25
Total	49	100
Free and Reduced Lunches		
Yes	38	78
No	10	20
Blank	1	2
Total	49	100

Independent T-tests were used to compare the demographic data between the rural and urban school districts (See Appendix J). Ethnicity of the samples was the only significant demographic found between the two school districts. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the racial identities of the parents in the rural school district and those from the urban school district. There was a significant difference found in t scores between the rural (M = 5.34, SD = 1.370) and urban school districts, (M = 4.20, SD = .414); t (47) = -2.355, p = .025 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.145, 95% CI: -2.07 to -2.19) was small (eta squared = .021). The urban respondents were more diverse ethnically than the participants from the rural setting. The urban sample self-reported as 25% being African American or Black, and an additional 25% described their family ethnicity as Biracial. Five percent identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Forty percent considered themselves to be White or Caucasian. Five percent of the urban sample selected the 'other' category. The population from the rural sample reported: 7% African American or Black, 7% Biracial, 10% Hispanic, 3%, Native American/Pacific Islander, and 66% White. Seven percent of the rural sample characterized themselves as "other" (See table 2).

Table 2

Ethnicity of Family by Setting

Setting	*Ethnicity*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	Asian American	0	0
	Black or African Americar	5	25
	Biracial	5	25
	Hispanic or Latino	1	5
	Native American/Pacific Island	0	0
	White or Caucasian	8	40
	Other	1	5
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N=29*	Asian American	0	0
	Black or African American	2	7
	Biracial	2	7
	Hispanic or Latino	3	10
	Native American/Pacific Islander	1	4
	White or Caucasian	19	65
	Other	2	7
	Total	29	100

(See Appendix J for additional demographic comparisons between the 2 school districts)

Research Question One

Is there a relationship between parent perceptions of school communication and their involvement in schools?

Research question one asked whether or not there was a correlation between parent perceptions of school communication and their levels of involvement in their child's education. The relationship between parent perceptions of school communications (as measured by the Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement) and their self-reported levels of school and home literacy involvement (also measured by the Parent Survey and Community Involvement) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to

ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, r=-.023, n=49, p > .877, meaning parent perceptions of school communications were not significantly related to parent involvement levels in schools.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked what parents believe their responsibilities are in their children's education. Table (3) depicts what parents reported as their responsibilities in their children's education. The majority of parents, 92%, reported it is their responsibility to keep track of their children's progress in school (M=1.08, SD=. 277). Ninety-two percent of the parents strongly agreed that it is important to show interest in their children's schoolwork (M=1.12, SD= .484). Eighty six percent of subjects strongly agreed it was the parents' job to make sure their children learned in school (M=1.16, SD=. 426).

Table 3

Parent Reports of Responsibilities in their Children's Education: Percentage for "Strongly Agreed," Means and Standard Deviations (N=49)

My job as a parent is to…	M	%	SD
Make sure my child learns at school.	1.16	85.7	.426
Teach my child to value school.	1.16	87.8	.514
Show my child how to find definitions and information.	1.22	77.6	.422
Contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise.	1.16	85.7	.426
Help my child review for tests.	1.10	89.8	.306
Keep track of their child's progress in	1.08	91.8	.277
Show an interest in their child's schoolwork.	1.12	91.8	.484
Help my child understand homework.	1.10	89.8	.306
Know if my child is having trouble in school.	1.10	89.8	.306

Response range 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree)

Research Question Three

Research question three asked what is the relationship between parent efficacy and their levels of involvement in their children's education. The relationship between parent efficacy (as measured by the *Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement*) and parent levels of involvement in children's education (also measured by the *Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement*) was determined by using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was no significant correlation found between the two variables, parent efficacy and the parents' involvement levels, $r = .184$, $n=49$, $p > .206$.

When the parent involvement sub-measures were examined separately, a correlation was found between the variables parent efficacy and parent involvement at-

school. There was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, parent efficacy and the variable parent involvement at school, $r = .39$, $n = 49$, $p < .01$. Parents with greater efficacy were more likely to be involved at school than parents with less self-efficacy (See Table 4). Parent efficacy was also related to the school involvement activity, "go to a school event," $r = .411$, $n=49$, $p < .01$. Parents with a high sense of self-efficacy were more likely to go to a school event than parents with low self- efficacy.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-correlations: Parent Involvement Variables and Parent Efficacy (N=49)

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teacher Invitations	__	-.006	.159	-.105	.041	-.018
Parent Involvement At-Home		__	.441	.837	.960	.005
Parent Involvement at School			__	.522	.348	.392**
Monitoring Children's Work				__	.676	.109
Parent Involvement in Reading/Language Arts					__	-.047
Parent Efficacy						__
M	10.73	11.63	10.69	4.24	6.26	16.10
SD	4.45	3.43	2.35	1.15	2.33	3.64

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

Research Question Four

Research question four asked parents to report on how well their child's teacher or someone at the school communicated with them throughout the school year. Over 70% of parents reported their child's teacher or someone at the school helped them understand their child's stage of development (M=1.31, SD= .548) and communicated how their child was doing in school (M=1.29, SD= .540). Fifty percent reported their child's teacher or someone at the school explained how to help with the child with homework (M=1.67, SD= .899). Sixty-five percent of the parents reported the school

doing a good job at communicating by sending newsletters home with their child. Forty three percent of parents agreed that the school provided information on community events that the family might attend (See Table 5).

Table 5

Parent Reports of School-Parent Communication: Means, Percentages for "Well" responses, and Standard Deviations

My child's teacher or someone at the school does this….	Mean	%	SD
Helps me understand my child's stages of development.	1.31	74	.548
Tells me how my child is doing in school.	1.29	76	.540
Asks me to volunteer at school.	2.33	25	1.088
Explains how to help with my child's homework.	1.67	53	.899
Sends home news about things happening at school.	1.49	65	.794
Tells me what skills my child needs to learn in reading/language arts.	1.49	59	.649
Provides other sources of information that could be helpful.	1.76	49	.879
Invites me to PTA/PTO meetings.	2.22	41	1.246
Assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class.	1.61	49	.731
Invites me to a program at school.	1.69	55	.926
Asks me to help with fundraising.	2.20	39	1.207
Has a parent-teacher conference with me.	1.12	88	.331
Includes parents on school committees, such as curriculum, budget, or improvement committees.	2.53	31	1.290
Provides information on community Events that I may want my child to attend.	2.0	43	1.118

Response range 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree)

Research Question Five

How does parent literacy relate to child literacy? Research question five asked parents to report how often they participate in literacy activities and how often their children participate in at home literacy activities. The relationship between parent literacy activities (as measured by the *Home Literacy Inventory*) and at home child related literacy activities (also measured by the *Home Literacy Inventory*) were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables, parent literacy activities and at home child literacy activities, $r = .703$, $n = 49$, $p < .000$. Children who were more involved in home literacy activities had parents who reported participating more frequently in literacy activities. Parents also reported the number of books in their homes (See Table 6).

Table 6

Parents Report of Number of Books in the Home

Number of Books in the Home	n	%
1-5	1	2
10-20	12	25
20-30	11	22
30-40	6	12
50 or more	11	22
100 or more	7	14
Missing	1	2
Total	49	100

Open-Ended Questions

The first open-ended question asked participants, “How well did you do in school and what are some of the happiest memories about your school experiences?” The majority of parents reported doing well in school, meeting friends, and participating in extracurricular activities as their happiest memories.

The second open-ended question asked participants, “What did you struggle with in school?” The majority of parents reported academics, with the subject area of mathematics, as being the most difficult part of school. Other parents suggested peer pressure and social skills were the most difficult parts of school.

The third open-ended question asked parents, “How important is your child’s success in school?” The majority of parents replied with the response “very important” or “extremely important.”

The fourth open-ended questions asked parents, “What are the benefits to your child staying in school?” The majority of parents provided the answer, so their children could have a better career and a better life in the future.

Correlation of Demographic Variables

There were no significant correlations between the demographic variables and the parent involvement variable. There was a correlation between the demographic variable ethnicity and the parent self-efficacy variable. The relationship between the variable ethnicity and the variable parent self-efficacy was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .30$, $n = 49$, $p <. 05$. The other demographic variables were not significantly correlated with the variable parent self-efficacy.

School Climate and Teacher Invitations

The relationship between school climate and teacher invitations was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedacticity. There was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .37$, $n=49$, $p < .01$.

Table 7

Parent Reports of School Climate: Means, Percentages for "Strongly Agreed" Responses, and Standard Deviations

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's school and teachers?	Mean	%	SD
This is a very good school.	1.48	55	.62
I feel welcome at this school.	1.37	69	.60
I get along well with my child's teacher (s).	1.34	71	.63
The teachers at this school care about my child.	1.33	69	.56

Response range of Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (4)

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Fifty-one percent of parents in this study reported they believed their children's highest educational attainment would be attending college and graduating with a college degree. In a study by Marvin and Wright (1997) parents of children with disabilities predicted their children would be able to read and write well enough to attend college. At age 21, 20% of those parents of children with disabilities and 12% of parents of children with speech and language impairments predicted their child's literacy level below what is required of a college student. It is important for parents to understand their children's skill and ability level so they can help their children acquire the skills or resources necessary to achieve these goals.

The purpose of this research was to explore parent perceptions concerning their involvement in their children's education, specifically parents of elementary aged students with disabilities. Research indicates a key component in assuring successful academic outcomes for children is parent involvement (Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006; e.g., Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Parents who lack confidence in their literacy skills hesitate to help their children with their homework. Other parents may feel it is their responsibility to help their children, but may not have the skills. Others may have the skills, but not the time or energy to become involved with their children at school or in the home environment. Whatever the reason, these challenges may impede parents from becoming involved in their children's literacy development.

The purpose for exploring parent perceptions is to better understand why some parents are more involved in their children's education, while other parents are not. The research questions for this study are as follows:

(1) Is there a relationship between parent perceptions of school communications and the level of parent involvement in their children's education?

(2) What do parents report about their responsibilities that ensure children's school success?

(3) What is the nature of relationships between parent efficacy and parent levels of involvement?

(4) What do parents report about school communication in relation to parent involvement?

(5) Is there a relationship between parent involvement and at home literacy activities?

This research was designed to assess parent levels of involvement in their children's education. Survey methodology was utilized to determine parent perceptions of (a) communication received from school personnel; (b) levels of parent and child participation in home literacy acts; (c) levels of parent efficacy; and (d) parent responsibilities in the home-school relationship. The study included six elementary schools from two school districts, one urban elementary school and five elementary schools from the rural school district. The sample consisted of 49 parents of students with disabilities.

Parent Perceptions of School Communications

Different motivating factors may influence a parent's decision to participate in school and/or home activities (Sheldon, 2002). Research question one investigated whether there was a relationship between parent perceptions of school communication and parent levels of involvement in their children's education. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, $r=-.023$, $n=49$, $p > .877$. In this study, parent perceptions of school communication did not influence a parent's level of involvement. This may be a result of what parents reported about school communications. Parents reported the schools did a good job communicating about their children's progress, however, parents also reported limited teacher invitations to become involved at their children's school.

A positive correlation was found between teacher invitations and school climate. Seventy-one percent of parents reported getting along with their children's teacher. Sixty- nine percent of parents reported feeling welcome at the school and reported their children's teachers cared about their children. Though parents feel welcome at the school and provided positive reports about their children's school climate, results demonstrate parents are not being invited by teachers to participate in school activities. Until teachers do a better job at inviting parents to participate at school the less likely parents will become involved at school.

Epstein (1993, 2001) suggests there are several types of involvement activities and levels of parent participation. In the present study, 38% of parents reported their children's teacher asked them to help with school fundraising. Twenty-eight percent of the parents had been asked to sit on school committees, and only 24% of parents reported

their child's teacher asking them to volunteer at school. Respondents tended to be satisfied with the levels of communication they received from school personnel.

The results from the current study were similar to previous findings (Epstein, 1986) that parent perception of teacher communication was positive. Their median response indicated strong agreement. However, through the use of 14 parent interviews, Kay et al. (1994) concluded parents of children with learning disabilities were not as hopeful. Parents of children with learning disabilities preferred more communication from their children's teachers than was provided.

In the present study, over 70% of parents reported their child's teacher or someone at the school helped them understand their child's stage of development (M=1.31, SD= .548) and provided adequate communication communicated about this child's progress in school (M=1.29, SD= .540). More than half of the participants reported their teacher or someone at the school explained how to help with the child's homework (M=1.67, SD= .899). In addition, 65% of parents reported that their child's teacher or someone at the school does well by sending newsletters home with their child.

Epstein (1995, 2005) described collaborating with the community as one of the types of involvement parents may choose to participate. In this study, less than half of the parents agreed the school provided information on community events. If parents were interested in community involvement, it would be worthwhile for schools to consider partnering with the community agencies to increase parent involvement. Increased knowledge of community activities may expand parents of children with learning disabilities opportunities to meet supportive peers.

Parent Responsibility

Parents strongly agreed that it was their responsibility to be involved in their children's education. Similar to prior research findings (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005) the majority of parents in the present study reported it was their responsibility to keep track of their children's progress in school (M=1.08, SD=. 277) and to show interest in schoolwork (M=1.12, SD= .484). My research respondents agreed it was their responsibility to monitor their children's learning in school and to know if their children were experiencing difficulties. Eighty-eight percent of this sample reported it was their responsibility to teach their children the importance of school achievements. These findings differ from those of previous research (Kay et al., 1994). Kay and colleagues (1994) reported parents of children with learning disabilities, were unsure of their responsibilities and wanted to know more about what teachers expected from them. This study supports a strong positive relationship between parent responsibility and parent involvement. Data from Kay et al. (1994) were inconsistent with the findings from Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992), that parent responsibility is a key factor in parents becoming involved in their children's education.

Parent Self -Efficacy

The present study found no significant relationship between parent level of efficacy and their involvement levels, ($r = .184$, $n=49$, $p > .206$). This may reflect a lack of a representative sample of respondents or the limited number of parents surveyed. When examining the parent involvement sub-measures, parent involvement at school and parent involvement at home separately, parent self-efficacy was related to levels of parent involvement at school, $r = .39$, $n = 49$, $p < .01$. This finding is different from the results

of Anderson and Minke (2007) and findings by Sheldon (2002). Both studies (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Sheldon, 2002) found parent involvement at home were positively associated with parent self-efficacy and levels of parent involvement at school were not.

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977) suggested parents would be more involved if they believed they have the knowledge and skills to help their children. Parents' perception of their knowledge and skills may increase or limit their degrees of parent involvement (Green et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2005). Parents of non-disabled children may be more likely to believe their involvement will lead to successful outcomes, based on their own successful school experiences. Previous findings (Kay et al., 1994) indicated that some parents of children with disabilities felt they were not prepared to help their children with schoolwork. If the parent also has a disability, their levels of self-efficacy can reduce confidence or ability to make a difference in their children's education.

In this study, parent self-efficacy was related to the demographic variable, ethnicity, $r = .30$, $n=49$, $p < .05$. The families from ethnic backgrounds in this study were more likely to have increased levels of self-efficacy. Parent efficacy and parent levels of involvement at school were also positively associated. This finding is important, because 39% of the families in this study were from ethnic backgrounds. Often parents from low socioeconomic and diverse backgrounds are viewed as having the lowest levels of participation and less exposure to books in the home (Evans, 2004). In this study, 25% of the families reported having an average of 10 to 20 books in the home. Twenty-two percent of families reported having 20 to 30 books in the home and 22% reported having 50 or more books in the home. Ethnicity was also the only significant demographic

variable between the urban and the rural school district. There were no differences reported in levels of parent involvement between the two groups. This finding is similar to prior research by Mo and Singh (2008) that no differences were found in levels of parent involvement between ethnic groups and/or gender.

Parent Literacy and Child Literacy

How does parent literacy relate to child literacy? Data from the present study indicated a strong, positive correlation between the two variables. Parents reported their literacy activities and the provision of at home child literacy activities were significantly correlated, $r = .703$, $n=49$, $p < .000$. Children who were commonly involved in home literacy activities had parents who reported participating frequently in literacy activities. This finding was important because past research (Mo & Singh, 2008) suggested highly involved parents are more likely to have more engaged children which could lead to more positive academic outcomes. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of parents participating in home literacy activities with their children, so they may share the importance of parent involvement information to the parents.

Limitations to the Study

The survey data were based on the self-reports of parents about their literacy perceptions and behaviors. Parents may not respond truthfully about the levels of parent involvement at school or the literacy activities engaged in with their children at home. Another limitation to this study was that data sources lacked qualitative methods; no interviews or observations of the participants were conducted. The data collected cannot confirm the accuracy or validity of the survey results. No data were collected to document home/school social contexts, interactions, or communication patterns between

respondents, rich descriptions of child observations, or modeling of literacy learning were provided.

Prior research (Minke & Anderson, 2007) meant to determine levels of parent involvement and perceptions have primarily utilized written surveys. Surveys deter parents who are illiterate in English and limit participation in research. Parents who were already considered involved parents were the ones that likely participated in the study. Using teachers to administer surveys introduced a threat to internal validity. Clarity of communication or biased selection and teacher noncompliance to their principal's directions were not determined.

A larger more representative sample would have increased levels of generalization of the findings. The study was designed to gather information from approximately 50 to 100 or more participants. In order to increase the sample size the surveys needed to be sent to several school districts rather than from one rural district and one urban school district. A national study with larger numbers of participants and representation from suburban schools would have increased the statistical power of analyses. Statistically significant differences or relationships between more than two variables could have been established.

Implications for Policy and Practice

This study suggested overall parental satisfaction with communication they received from schools. It is important for administrators and educators to recognize areas of strength and to focus on areas that need improvement. Administrators are likely to achieve their objectives when school goals are aligned with parent interests and needs.

School communication is especially important for teachers to maintain and can increase parent participation in their classrooms. Research suggests teachers who communicate well with the parents of their students are more likely to have involved parents (Partikakou & Weissberg, 2000). The number of students with disabilities is much smaller than those in general education and federal legislation mandates higher levels of parent participation in special education processes. In order to achieve adequate parental input teacher communication is necessary. Since social networks may be smaller for families raising a child with disabilities, teacher communication may be the primary avenue of information concerning school and community opportunities.

The purpose of this research was to increase educator awareness and recognition of the relationship between parent involvement in literacy activities and child opportunities for literacy learning. Teachers must encourage the parents of their students to participate in at home literacy activities with their children, even as students grow older.

Research has suggested that parents of post-elementary school aged children tend to become less involved in their children's educational activities. It is important for teachers to continue to encourage parents to participate in literacy activities in the home, especially parents of students with disabilities, who need it the most. Parents enjoy activities they can participate in with their children (Kay et. al., 1994). If teachers are more aware of the types of activities that parents like to participate in, they could encourage at-home literacy activities the parent and child could do together. All routine domestic activities contain potential literacy opportunities. Shopping and running errands provide a myriad of reading activities. Requesting children's participation when

cooking, reading directions for product usages, planning for television schedules or accessing newspapers for information about family activities are all naturally occurring literacy opportunities. Teachers who encourage parents to embed incidental literacy learning into daily living tasks demonstrate awareness of the time demands on parents. Teachers who present literacy opportunities as an additional burden to parents reduce the likelihood that these activities will enhance the enjoyment of shared literacy. In order for children to have successful literacy outcomes, teachers need clearer understandings of the relationship between parent and child literacy.

Recommendations for Future Research

Parent involvement is a contributing factor to successful student outcomes**.** It is imperative to continue to examine why some parents participate in their children's education, while others do not, especially for parents of children with disabilities. Overall, there is an extensive amount of research on parent involvement concerning parents with typically developing children. However, the research on parent involvement and parents of children with disabilities is limited. Most of the research on parent involvement and parents of children with disabilities relate to home literacy environments of children who have yet to begin their formal schooling or are enrolled in the primary grades.

Research has also implied that parents of children with disabilities have more stress and require more coping mechanisms to adapt to the demands of daily life (Park et al., 2002). Parents, who are overwhelmed with having a child with a disability, may be less involved in academic achievements than other parents. Parents of children with disabilities may also be less likely to seek the needed social support than peers with

typical children (Honig & Keller, 2004). Though the extent of parents social networks were not examined in the current study, it would be worthwhile to examine the social networks of parents of children with disabilities. Research on social networks is needed in order to increase opportunities for support and parent resources to cope with the demands of having a child with a disability.

The population of students with disabilities is much smaller than that of typically developing students, therefore the parents' social network may also be smaller. Though results by Sheldon (2002) suggest the size of the network, does not necessarily have to be large, the more parents communicate with other parents of children with disabilities, the more likely they are to find families with similarities of their own. If parents were truly influenced by other parents, the examination of social networks would be necessary in the effort to explore parent involvement.

In this study, almost half of the parents reported that school communication did not include community involvement activities. Community involvement is important for all families, especially those who live in poverty and with children who are disabled (Posner & Vandell, 1999; Sherman, 1994). Among children with disabilities, age 3 to 21, 28% are living at poverty or below poverty levels (Fujiura & Yamaki, 2000). Research suggests families living in poverty spend less time socializing with others (Sherman, 1994) and impoverished neighborhoods provide less support then do affluent locations (Park et al., 2002). Results from this research suggest that schools should partner more effectively with their communities, and invite families to enriching events like free admission days at museums, festivals, and concerts.

Another area for future research is to examine parents who have disabilities with children who also have a disability. The current study did not seek information pertaining to parents with disabilities, only those that had children with disabilities. Parent efficacy was not related to parent involvement in this study, but has been in past research. Exploring characteristics of parents with disabilities including illiteracy would extend understanding of these types of relationships between self-efficacy and literacy outcomes of children with disabilities. Qualitative research suggests parents of children with disabilities may not express confidence in their abilities to assist their child with academics (Kay et al., 1994). If the parent also has a disability, they may have even less self-efficacy levels than typical parents of children with disabilities.

Though the current study provided information that could be useful to school administrators and educators, an additional qualitative portion to the study, might have given a more honest description of parent reports of the home-school relationship. Additional research with the same sample population might further explain the differences found between past studies and the present study. Observing and comparing reports of highly involved parents and those that are not may provide further explanations of parent involvement.

Concluding Statement

This study extends previous research of parent involvement by surveying parents of children with learning disabilities. Though no significance was found between parent involvement and parent perceptions of school communication or parent self efficacy, parent reports of school communication and parent responsibilities will help facilitate further research. The results of this study strengthened the association of parent literacy

with child literacy and the importance of continuing research in parent involvement. This examination of parents' backgrounds, beliefs, social networks, and interests in community involvement provided impetus for future research. The goal of this study was to help understand parent involvement in relationship to increasing more positive academic outcomes for children with learning disabilities.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION - IRB

IRB Number: 12227
Approval Date: December 02, 2010

December 03, 2010

Holly Rice
Educational Psychology
820 Van Fleet Oval, ECH 302
Norman, OK 73019

RE: The Effects of Parent Literacy Beliefs on Levels of Parent Involvement

Dear Ms. Rice:

Thank you for completing and returning the IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) for the above referenced study. You have indicated that the study is still active. I have reviewed and approved the Progress Report and determined that this study was appropriate for continuation.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described in:
Cont Review Form Dated: October 05, 2010
Other Dated: October 05, 2010 Summary of study results
Protocol Dated: October 05, 2010
Consent form - Subject Dated: December 01, 2010 Survey
Consent form - Subject Dated: December 01, 2010 Interview/Observation
Consent form - Subject Dated: December 01, 2010 Teacher

Please remember that any change in the protocol, consent document or other recruitment materials (advertisements, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to its incorporation into the study procedures. Submit a completed Protocol Modification form to the IRB office.

Approximately two months prior to the expiration date of this approval, you will be contacted by the IRB staff about procedures necessary to maintain this approval in an active status. Although every attempt will be made to notify you when a study is due for review, it is the responsibility of the investigator to assure that their studies receive review prior to expiration.

The approval of this study expires on December 01, 2011 and must be reviewed by the convened IRB prior to this time if you wish to remain in an active status. Federal regulations do not allow for extensions to be given on the expiration date.

If we can be of further assistance, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

E. Laurette Taylor

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title: The Effects of Parent Literacy Beliefs on Levels of Parent Involvement
Principal Investigator: Holly Rice
Department: Educational Psychology

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study which is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a parent of a child attending elementary school.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate why some parents become involved in their child's education while others do not.

Number of Participants

Approximately 100 people will take part in this study.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey and return it to me in the envelope provided. In a few weeks, you may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview and observation during a parent/teacher conference. Participation in any of these activities will be entirely voluntary on your part.

Length of Participation

Completion of the survey will require approximately 15-25 minutes of your time. If you are selected and agree to participate in the second portion of the study, you will need to allow approximately 45 – 60 minutes for the interview and 30 - 60 minutes for observation of one of your child's parent/teacher conferences.

This study has the following risks:

Your participation is voluntary and poses no perceivable physical or psychological danger to you. You are welcome to withdraw from the project, choose not to participate, or stop at any time with no threat of penalty. No foreseeable risks are associated with your involvement in this project.

Benefits of being in the study are

Your input will provide valuable insight into ways teachers can more effectively include you and other parents in their child's education.

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

There are organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis. This organization includes the OU Institutional Review Board.

Compensation

You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Waivers of Elements of Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. Your name will not be identified with any direct quotes. Please select one of the following options:

_____ I consent to being quoted directly.

_____ I do not consent to being quoted directly.

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No

Interview

I give permission to the researcher to contact me by phone to schedule an interview if I qualify for the interview portion of the study. ___ Yes ___ No

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at Holly Rice, M.Ed., 405-269-6279 or holly.rice@ou.edu or Dr. Joyce Brandes, 405-325-7936, jbrandes@ou.edu. Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Please sign and return one of these Informed Consent forms and keep the other for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent (Survey)

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study by completing the survey provided.

Signature Date

APPENDIX C

Demographics Form

Demographics Form

The following information will be separated from the survey and the answers you give on the survey.

Name (please print): _____

Phone: _____

Email:_____

Demographics Form

1. Is your child at this school a: _____ Girl _____ Boy

2. When was your child born: _____ Month _____Year

3. What grade is your child in? _____1st _____2nd _____3rd _____4th

4. What is your relationship with your child?

_____ Mother _____Grandmother

_____ Father _____ Grandfather

_____ Stepmother _____ Other (please describe) _____

_____ Stepfather

5. How many children do you have?_____

6. How many of these children have disabilities?_____

7. How much formal schooling do you have?

_____ Some High School _____Vocational School/Technical College

_____ High School Diploma _____ College Degree

_____ Some College _____ Graduate Degree or credits

8. How much schooling do you think your child will complete?

_____ Some High School _____Vocational School/Technical College

_____ High School Diploma _____ College Degree

_____ Some College _____ Graduate Degree or credits

9. How do you describe yourself?

_____ Asian-American _____ Hispanic or Latino(a)

_____ Black or African-American

_____ White or Caucasian _____ Other (please describe)

10. What language do you speak at home?

_____ English

_____ Spanish

_____ Hmong

_____ Other (please describe) _____

11. Marital Status

_____Married _____Divorced or separated _____Never married

12. Are you employed?

_____Full-time _____ Part-time _____Not Employed

13. If applicable, is your spouse or partner employed?

_____Full-time _____Part-time _____Not Employed

14. About how much money do you and your family have per year (check one)

___ Less than $10,000 ___$30,000-$40,000 ___$80,000-$100,000

___ $10,000-$20,000 ___$50,000-$60,000 ___$100,000 or more

___$20,000-$30,000 ___$60,000-$80,000 ___ I am not sure

APPENDIX D

Parent Survey

1.How well has your child's teacher or someone done the following THIS SCHOOL YEAR? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if the school does this: Well (1), OK (2), Poorly (3), or Never (4).

My child's teacher or someone at the school…	Does this…			
	Well	OK	Poorly	Never
a. Helps me understand my child's stage of development.	1	2	3	4
b. Tells me how my child is doing in school.	1	2	3	4
c. Asks me to volunteer at school.	1	2	3	4
d. Explains how to help with my child's homework.	1	2	3	4
e. Sends home new about things happening at school.	1	2	3	4
f. Tells me what skills my child needs to learn in reading/language arts.	1	2	3	4
g. Provides other sources of information or services that could be helpful.	1	2	3	4
h. Invites me to PTA/PTO meetings	1	2	3	4
i. Assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class.	1	2	3	4
j. Invites me to a program at school.	1	2	3	4
k. Asks me to help with fund raising.	1	2	3	4
l. Has a parent-teacher conference with me.	1	2	3	4
m. Includes parents on school committees, such as curriculum, budget, or improvement committees.	1	2	3	4
n. Provides information on community events that I may want to attend with my child.	1	2	3	4

2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's school and teachers? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), or Strongly Disagree (4).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. This is a very good school.	1	2	3	4
b. I feel welcome at this school.	1	2	3	4
c. I get along well with my child's teacher(s).	1	2	3	4
d. The teachers at this school care about my child.	1	2	3	4

3. How often do YOU do the following activities? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if this happens: Everyday or Most Days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in a While (3), or Never (4).

How often do you….	Everyday/ Most Days	Once a week	Once in a while	Never
a. Read with your child?	1	2	3	4
b. Volunteer in the classroom?	1	2	3	4
c. Talk with your child about school?	1	2	3	4
d. Visit your child's school?	1	2	3	4
e. Go over spelling or vocabulary with your child?	1	2	3	4
f. Talk to your child's teacher.	1	2	3	4
g. Help your child with reading and writing homework?	1	2	3	4
h. Ask your child how well he/she is doing in school?	1	2	3	4
i. Ask your child to read something he/she wrote?	1	2	3	4
j. Go to a school event?	1	2	3	4
k. Check to see if your child finished his/her homework?	1	2	3	4
l. Tell your child a story?	1	2	3	4

How often do you…	Everyday/ Most Days	Once a week	Once in a while	Never
m. Use or read the following:				
1) Magazines	1	2	3	4
2) Novels and other books	1	2	3	4
3) Dictionary/encyclopedias	1	2	3	4
4) Newspaper	1	2	3	4
5) Phone Book	1	2	3	4
6) Letters	1	2	3	4
7) T.V./Movie Guide	1	2	3	4
8) Cookbooks/instruction guides	1	2	3	4
9) Photographs of family/friends	1	2	3	4
10) Comics	1	2	3	4
11) Picture or storybooks for children	1	2	3	4
12) Notes/lists	1	2	3	4
13) Birthday or holiday cards	1	2	3	4
14) Food and product labels	1	2	3	4
15) Computers	1	2	3	4

4. How often does your child do the following activities? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if this happens: Everyday or Most Days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in a While (3), Never (4).

How often does your child…..	Everyday/ Most Days	Once a Week	Once in a While	Never
a. Read or look at books by him/herself at home?	1	2	3	4
b. Visit the library/book mobile?	1	2	3	4
c. Go to a bookstore?	1	2	3	4
d. Select videos for rental?	1	2	3	4
e. Dial a familiar number on the telephone?	1	2	3	4
f. Read familiar brand names (Coca-Cola, Kraft, etc.)?	1	2	3	4
g. Use the computer for school-work?	1	2	3	4
h. Ask you to read a book?	1	2	3	4
i. Do some writing, drawing, or "pretend" writing at home?	1	2	3	4

How often does your child.	Everyday/Most Days	Once a Week	Once in a While	Never
j. Use of read the following:				
1) Magazines	1	2	3	4
2) Novels and other books	1	2	3	4
3) Dictionaries/encyclopedias	1	2	3	4
4) Newspaper	1	2	3	4
5) Phone Book	1	2	3	4
6) Letters	1	2	3	4
7) T. V./Movie Guide	1	2	3	4
8) Cookbooks/Instruction guides	1	2	3	4
9) Photographs of family/friends	1	2	3	4
10) Comics	1	2	3	4
12) Picture or storybooks for children	1	2	3	4
13) Birthday or holiday cards	1	2	3	4
14) Food and product labels	1	2	3	4
15) Computers	1	2	3	4
k. Use the following wrtiting/drawing materials?				
1) Pencil/pen & paper	1	2	3	4
2) Crayons/Markers	1	2	3	4
3) Paintbrushes/Paints	1	2	3	4
4) Chalk	1	2	3	4
5) Computer	1	2	3	4
6) Typewriter	1	2	3	4
7) Calculator	1	2	3	4
8) Writing/Drawing Toys	1	2	3	4
9) Other Writing Tools	1	2	3	4
l. See you using the following writing				
1) Pencil/Pen & Paper	1	2	3	4
2) Crayons/Markers	1	2	3	4
3) Paintbrushes/Paints	1	2	3	4
4) Chalk	1	2	3	4
5) Computer	1	2	3	4
6) Typewriter	1	2	3	4
7) Calculator	1	2	3	4
8) Writing/drawing Tools	1	2	3	4
9) Other Writing Tools	1	2	3	4

The number of children's books in my home is around (Please check one)

___ 1-5 ___10-20 20-30 ___30-40 ___50 or more ___100 or more

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what parents should do? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), or Strongly Disagree (4)

My job as a parent is too…	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Make sure my child learns in school.	1	2	3	4
b. Teach my child to value school.	1	2	3	4
c. Show my child how to find definitions and information.	1	2	3	4
d. Contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise.	1	2	3	4
e. Help my child review for tests.	1	2	3	4
f. Keep track of my child's progress in school.	1	2	3	4
g. Show an interest in their child's schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
h. Help my child understand homework.	1	2	3	4
i. Know if my child is having trouble in school.	1	2	3	4

6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), Strongly Disagree (4).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. I know how to help my child do well in school.	1	2	3	4
b. I never know if I'm getting through to my child?	1	2	3	4
c. I know how to help my child make good grades in school.	1	2	3	4
d. I can motivate my child to do well in school.	1	2	3	4
e. I feel good about my efforts to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
f. I don't know how to help my child on schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
g. My efforts to help my child learn are successful.	1	2	3	4
h. I make a difference in my child's school performance.	1	2	3	4

Open-ended Questions

1. How well did you do in school and what are some of the happiest memories about your school experience?

2. What did you struggle with in school?

3. How important is your child's success in school?

4. What are the benefits to your child staying in school?

APPENDIX E

Parent Survey Permission Letter

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University 3003 North Charles Street Suite 200 Baltimore MD 21218
TEL: 410-516-8807 FAX: 410-516-8890 E-mail: jepstein @ csos.jhu.edu

3-20-08

To: Joyce A. Brandes

From: Joyce L. Epstein, Director and Principal Research Scientist
(Signature for email, **Joyce L. Epstein** 2-26-08)

Re: Permission to Use Surveys

This is to grant you permission to use surveys on parental involvement in your study. You may adapt the surveys as needed for your research questions.

All that we ask is that you include a reference to the original surveys in your dissertation references and resulting publications. The full reference is:

> Epstein, J. L. & Salinas, K. C. (1993). *School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries.* Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University.

For other information on how the surveys have been used and reported, see the readings in chapter 3 of my text:

> Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

Also on our website, www.partnershipschools.org, see the section Research and Evaluation, for up-to-date references, related research, and other information.

Best of luck with your study.

Appendix F

PI Script to Principal

Script
PI to Principal

You are being asked to assist with this research study which is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. Participants of the study include parents who have a child diagnosed with specific learning disabilities in the academic area of reading/language arts.

The title of this research project is "The Effects of Parent Literacy Beliefs on Levels of Parent Involvement."
The purpose of this study is to investigate why some parents of students diagnosed with specific learning disabilities become involved in their child's education while others do not.
Participants that agree to the study will be asked to complete a survey and return it to their child's teacher in an envelope provided by the PI. A few weeks later, parents may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview and observation during a parent/teacher conference. Participation in any of these activities is entirely voluntary.
Completion of the survey will require approximately 15-25 minutes of the parents time. If a parent is selected and agrees to participate in the second portion of the study, they will need to allow approximately 45 – 60 minutes for the interview and 30 – 60 minutes for observation of their child's parent/teacher conferences.

Participants will be made aware of the project by their child's teacher (script for teachers enclosed). The teachers will send home the research packets with the students. The packets will include a parent letter with contact information of the PI, two informed consent forms, a demographics form, a survey, and a return envelope. Parents who agree to participate will complete and return the signed consent form, demographics form, and survey in the return envelope, sealed, to their child's teacher. (15-25 minutes) Once the teacher receives the return envelop, sealed, the teacher will give the student a $5.00 gift certificate to a local food establishment, provided by the PI. When all the packets are returned to the teacher the PI will then collect the packets.

APPENDIX G

Principal Script to Teacher

Script
Principal to Teacher

You are being asked to assist with this research study which is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. Participants of the study include parents who have a child diagnosed with specific learning disabilities in the academic area of reading/language arts.

The title of this research project is "The Effects of Parent Literacy Beliefs on Levels of Parent Involvement."
The purpose of this study is to investigate why some parents of students diagnosed with specific learning disabilities become involved in their child's education while others do not.
Participants that agree to the study will be asked to complete a survey and return it to you, their child's teacher in an envelope provided by the PI. A few weeks later, parents may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview and observation during a parent/teacher conference. Participation in any of these activities is entirely voluntary. Completion of the survey will require approximately 15-25 minutes of the parents time. If a parent is selected and agrees to participate in the second portion of the study, they will need to allow approximately 45 – 60 minutes for the interview and 30 - 60 minutes for observation of their child's parent/teacher conferences.

As a teacher assisting in this research endeavor, you are responsible for sending the research packet home with the identified students. The packets will include a parent letter with contact information of the PI, two informed consent forms, a demographics form, a survey, and a return envelope. Parents who agree to participate will complete and return the signed consent form, demographics form, and survey. The parents will return the packet in a sealed envelope to you. Once you receive the returned envelope from the student, you will give the student a $5.00 gift certificate to a local food establishment, provided by the PI. When you have gathered all the packets from the students the PI will then collect them.

APPENDIX H

Parent Survey Letter

Parent Survey
of Family and Community Involvement
In the Elementary and Middle Grades

March 31, 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, I am conducting a research study to improve the ways that educators and families help each other support children's learning and success in school. Your ideas will be used to help educators learn more about parent perceptions addressing parent involvement and literacy.

I am asking the parent who is most involved with the school in your child's education to answer the questions in this survey. If you have more than one child at this school, answer the following questions about the child who brought the survey home or the oldest child who brought the survey home. Please note that this survey:

- Is voluntary. I hope that you answer every question, but you may skip any questions you feel are too personal.
- Is confidential. Please write your name only on the Informed Consent form and do not write your name anywhere on the survey.
- Has no wrong or right answers.
- Is not part of your child's school work.
- Will not influence your child's learning or grades in any way.

Once you have completed the survey, please return it sealed in this envelope by April 9th to your child's teacher. Please be sure to include the following items:

1. Signed Informed Consent form
2. Completed demographics form
3. Completed survey

Thank you very much for your participation! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone at 405-269-6279 and/or email at holly.rice@ou.edu.

Sincerely,
Holly Rice
Graduate Student, Researcher
University of Oklahoma

APPENDIX I

Reminder Letter to Parents

Reminder

Please remember to complete your parent survey by

Friday, March 5th

so your child may receive a

McDonald's Gift Certificate!

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX J

Demographics of Sample

Table of Sample Demographics

Table 8

Parental Relationship to Child by Setting

Setting	*Parent*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N =20)*	Mother	17	85
	Father	2	10
	Stepfather	1	5
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N =29)*	Mother	26	90
	Father	2	7
	Other	1	3
	Total	29	100

Table 9

Level of Parent Education by Setting

Setting	*Level of Education*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	Some high school	2	10
	High school diploma	3	15
	Some college	10	50
	Vocational technology	3	15
	College degree	1	5
	Graduate degree/credits	1	5
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	Some high school	3	10
	High school diploma	8	28
	Some college	9	31
	Vocational technology	4	14
	College degree	4	14
	Graduate degree/credits	0	0
	Total	28	97
	Missing	1	3
	Total	29	100

Table 10

Gender of Students by Setting

Setting	*Gender*	*n*	*%*
Urban (*N = 20)*	Male	12	60
	Female	8	40
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	Male	18	62
	Female	11	38
	Total	29	100

Table 11

Age of Students by Setting

Setting	*Age*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	6	1	5
	7	2	10
	8	4	20
	9	3	15
	10	7	35
	11	3	15
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	6	2	7
	7	2	7
	8	6	21
	9	8	27
	10	2	7
	11	7	24
	12	2	7
	Total	29	100

Table 12

Grade of Students by Setting

Setting	*Grade*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	First grade	1	5
	Second grade	4	20
	Third grade	3	15
	Fourth grade	8	40
	Fifth grade	3	15
	Total	19	95
	Missing	1	5
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	First grade	3	10
	Second grade	11	38
	Third grade	4	14
	Fourth grade	2	7
	Fifth grade	9	31
	Total	29	100

Table 13

Primary Language of Family by Setting

Setting	*Primary Language*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	English	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	English	29	100

Table 14

Level of Employment by Responding Parent by Setting

Setting	*Level of Employment*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	Full time	8	40
	Part time	3	15
	Unemployed	9	45
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	Full time	12	42
	Part time	3	10
	Unemployed	14	48
	Total	29	100

Table 15

Number of Adults in Home by Setting

Setting	*Adults in Home*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	1	9	45
	2	8	40
	3	2	10
	4	1	5
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	1	3	10
	2	26	90
	Total	29	100

Table 16

Number of Children in Home by Setting

Setting	*Number*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	1	2	10
	2	6	30
	3	7	35
	4	4	20
	5	1	5
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	1	3	10
	2	11	38
	3	7	24
	4	7	24
	6	1	4
	Total	29	100

Table 17

Level of Education Parents Anticipate Child Attaining

Setting	*Level Anticipated*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	Some high school	0	0
	High school diploma	1	5
	Some college	4	20
	Vocational technology	0	0
	College degree	12	60
	Graduate degree/credits	3	15
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	Some high school	8	28
	High school diploma	0	0
	Some college	2	7
	Vocational technology	3	10
	College degree	13	45
	Graduate degree/credits	2	7
	Total	28	97
	Missing	1	3
	Total	29	100

Table 18

Number of Children Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch by Setting

Setting	*Free or Reduced Lunch*	*n*	*%*
Urban *(N = 20)*	Receives lunch	17	85
	Does not receive lunch	3	15
	Total	20	100
Rural *(N = 29)*	Receives lunch	21	72
	Does not receive lunch	7	24
	No response	1	4
	Total	29	100