

HOW ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTS INVOLVED IN
THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, PREKINDERGARTEN
THROUGH SIXTH GRADE?

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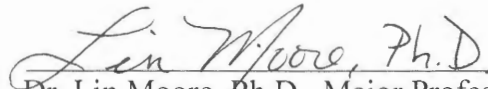
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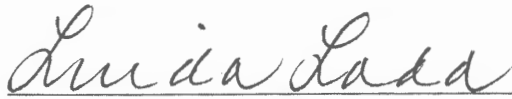
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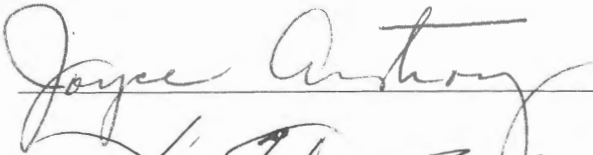
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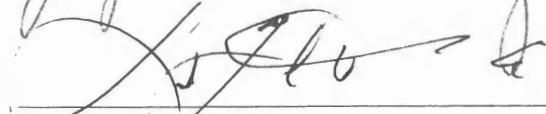
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Nedra Yvonne Washington entitled "How Are African American Parents Involved in Their Children's Education, Prekindergarten through Sixth Grade." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Child Development.


Dr. Lin Moore, Ph.D., Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:








Department Chair

Accepted:



Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

To my parents,

I am no better than what I come from.
It is because of you that I am who I am.

To my siblings,
It is because of family that I have succeeded.

To my friend Joyce Jones, I miss you and I love you.

To all my friends,
thank you.

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ABSTRACT

NEDRA YVONNE WASHINGTON

HOW ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTS INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH SIXTH GRADE?

DECEMBER, 2011

This study examined African American parents and primary caregivers and their involvement in their children's early childhood education. Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement and Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory were utilized as the theoretical frameworks. The Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement in School (PISC), the Parent Perception Teacher Outreach (PPTO), the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH) and three focus group sessions were employed to collect data. Questionnaires were collected from 122 parents of prekindergarten through sixth grade students from a church membership and the church's Summer Youth Program located in Dallas, Texas.

Findings indicated African American parents were involved in the education of their children pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. This study found the following: African American parents are involved in their children's early childhood education as measured by Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent

Involvement in School Scale (PISC), the Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parents Involvement at Home (PIH). Additionally, the findings support Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement. African American parents and primary caregivers of this study were participants in all six types of the parental involvement model which include (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, (6) and collaborating with community. Focus groups conversations support the statistical findings of this sample. Practices for parents, teachers, and future research are recommended.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When there is minimum parental involvement in the education and overall development of the child, parents can expect minimum academic achievement and delayed development of the child (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). It is important for parents to become involved in their children's education pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The evidence surrounding the benefits of parents being involved in their children's education is tremendous. Fan & Chen's (2001) findings indicated that parental involvement in their children's education positively affects their learning performance. According to Feinstein and Symons (1999) positive learning performance occurs in both primary and secondary settings. Melhuish and colleagues (2001) have also reported that parental involvement in the early year's leads to higher success academically, elevated cognitive competence, effective problem solving skills, the enjoyment of school, minimum absenteeism, and less behavioral problems at school. Although there are positive outcomes to children regarding parental involvement, parental involvement is a challenge that exists in many of the public schools throughout the United States (Fan & Chen, 2001).

The United States has cultivated into a multitude of ethnicities and cultures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The influx of different ethnicities and cultures into America has

altered the public schools practices, and parental involvement is a key area within the schools that have been affected by the growth (Fan & Chen, 2001). Language, religion, and culture contribute to the many challenges public school teachers and administrators face when fostering parental involvement (Fan & Chen, 2001). Despite these challenges, active participation of parents in the school, and in every aspect of the children's lives is crucial to the overall development of the children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) especially in the early years of education (Wade & Moore, 2000).

Parental involvement is an essential part of many Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs in an effort to support the overall development of the child (Yeh Ho, 2011). Yeh Ho asserts that the effort to support the development of the child is challenged by the growing number of racial diversity and ethnicity in ECE classrooms (2011). Parents from diverse racial/ethnic social classes utilize altering forms and degrees of parental involvement (2011). The result of versatile parental involvement on children outcomes is synthesized by race/ethnicity (2011). Yeh Ho also posits that in ECE classrooms, it is challenging to maintain momentous parental involvement for both the children and families due to race, ethnicity and linguistic backgrounds (2011).

Children do learn from their surroundings (Oswalt, 2008). In the process, children have the ability to assimilate and/or acculturate to their environment. This progression allows the children to merge their innate characteristics and unite all these qualities through maturation (Oswalt, 2008). Theoretically, Bowlby's Theory of

Attachment (1969), Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory (1990), and Vygotsky's Social Cultural Theory (1962, 1978) have one common denominator, the parents or caregivers of the children. Parents commence to teach, model, scaffold, and influence their children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development through constant assistance by involving themselves through daily interaction with their children (Vygotsky, 1978). The education of children is directed by two principal characters, the parents and the teachers. The welfare, nurturing, learning, educational assistance, and all other activities relative to the development of children is set into motion at home, thus creating parents as first teachers (Cordry & Wilson, 2004).

Parental involvement was defined by Lareau (1987) as an integration of home and school. Vandergrift and Greene (1992) suggested there are two key elements that foster the concept of parental involvement. The first is a level of commitment to parental support that includes encouraging the student, being sympathetic, providing reassurance, and understanding (Vandergrift & Greene, 1992). This example is illustrated best when looking at the continuous support imparted to children. Although he or she may not succeed at the level of the teacher's expectation, support is an alternative to becoming angry. The second component is a level of parental activity and engagement (i.e. noticeable, visible, observable, and measurable). These functions consist of activities such as parent conferences, school trips, assisting in classrooms, and actively communicating with teachers. As reported by Vandergrift and Green 1992, "the combination and level of commitment and active participation is what makes an involved

parent” (p. 57). Researchers are not in agreement when defining parental involvement and parental engagement.

The practice of parental involvement encourages parents to participate in every facet of the school, as well as attend to the learning of their children in the home (Epstein et al., 2002). However, for many African American parents, the perception of the school is not always a welcoming one (Moles, 1993). Research conducted in many urban schools found that African American parents were less involved than Euro American parents (Gardner & Miranda, 2001). Henderson and Berla (1994) challenged the definition of parental involvement, and McKay and colleagues (2003), stated parental involvement is “not adequately representing the involvement of parents of color in their children’s lives” (p. 108). Henderson and Berla analyzed thirty-five studies. The results of their work acknowledged that encouraging relationships connecting various forms of parental involvement in children’s education result in quantifiable benefits for the children, for their families, and for the schools (1994). Due to the challenges of many researchers regarding the definition of “parental involvement”, the definition was revised in 2002 from the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and is regarded as “the most significant federal education policy initiative in a generation.” (No Child Left Behind, 2004, para. 1).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a law designed to ensure that every child in America is capable of meeting the elevated learning standards of the state where he or

she lives (NCLB, 2004). According to NCLB, parental involvement is the focal point of Title I, Part A (2004). NCLB (2004) defines parental involvement as:

the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring the parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and that other activities are carried out, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA Parental Involvement [Section 9101(32), ESEA].

NCLB (2004) defines parents as "a natural parent, a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare" (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 9101(31).

The education of children requires assistance and involvement from the home, the school, and the community. Niemiec, Sikorski, and Walberg (1999) found the more the family and community are involved, the higher the students' achievement. "Parental involvement, in almost any form, produces measurable gains in student achievement" (Dixon, 1992, p.16). The actions of parental engagement with the student and the school are critical. The consistency of parental engagement produces outstanding rewards for all participants involved, the students, the teachers, and the parents.

Statement of the Problem

Many researchers have examined African American parental involvement and found these parents to be less involved in their children's schooling (Hill & Craft, 2003; Kohl et al., 2000; Moles, 1993; Reynolds et al., 1992). Levels of parental involvement vary among ethnic groups (Coleman, 1988; Yan, 1999). According to Yan (1999) a review of other parental involvement studies were based on Caucasian samplings and did not account for ethnic diversity. A review of literature by Hill and Craft revealed that studies investigating parental involvement in diverse populations have "confounded ethnicity with socioeconomic variables making it difficult to disentangle the influence of ethnicity from socioeconomic factors when drawing conclusions on research findings" (2003, p. 75). Parental involvement differs for many minority groups based on experiences at home, different parenting styles, and experiences within the school (Hill & Craft, 2003; Lareau, 1996; Ogbu, 1992; Steinberg et al., 1992; Yan, 1999). It is crucial for African American parents to become more involved in their children's academic success despite these differences because parental involvement fosters positive academic outcomes (Coleman, 1991; Comer and Haynes, 1991; Epstein, 1995; Lareau, 1989; Yan, 1999).

Purpose of the Study

Parental involvement has been identified as one of several factors that can promote students' academic success (Coleman, 1987; Epstein, 1990). Hill and Craft (2003); Kohl and colleagues (2000); Moles, (1993); Reynolds, and colleagues (1992)

concluded that African American parents are less involved in their children's schooling. The purpose of this study was to examine how African American parents are involved in their children's schooling, the areas of their involvement, the levels of their involvement, and the barriers that limit their involvement. This study utilizes the terms "parental involvement" and "parental engagement" interchangeably.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

- RQ1: How are African American parents involved in their children's education, pre-kindergarten through sixth grade?
- RQ2: What parental activities do African American parents find most effective?
- RQ3: What are the barriers that impede African American parental involvement in their children's early childhood education?
- RQ4: Are there differences in parental involvement by ages of parents, levels of income, levels of education, and family structures?

Definitions of Terms

Despite the fact that a review of literature provides no complete decisive definition for parental involvement, theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for this definition. Epstein's (1995) defines parental involvement as: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community (p. 141). Texas schools utilize the federal government's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) definition of parental involvement as

“participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities” and parent defined as “in addition to a natural parent, a legal guardian or other person standing in *loco parentis*, such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare” (NCLB, Section 9101 (31), ESEA).

Importance of the Study

Parental involvement is vital in improving children’s success academically, and in fulfilling their potential as children strive to become productive adults (Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler, 1995). Parental involvement has been assessed and evaluated across a multitude of disciplines; however, research has not fully captured the essence of the relationship between school and families (Kohel, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000). It is important to acknowledge the various definitions of parental involvement across research disciplines and into the homes of children. Multiple definitions have created much confusion to both parents and teachers. Jordan, Orozco, and Averett (2001) explain that the definitions across the research fields do not fully convey the multiplicity of relationships or the involvement methods because parents have had little or no voice in what constitutes effective parental involvement. The importance of this study lies in the perception of African American parents, their voices regarding parental involvement in their children’s education pre-kindergarten through sixth grade and any emerging evidence that will provide researchers, practitioners, teachers, and

school administrators with the necessary tools to promote positive, consistent partnerships with the parents for the benefit of their children.

Assumptions

The subsequent principal assumption was founded on current research and pertains to this study:

Participants in this study replied honorably and truthfully, and with unbiased viewpoints regarding the questionnaires.

Limitations

The following is a limitation of this study:

The participants were volunteers. The focus of this study is African American parents of children in grades pre-kindergarten to sixth grade in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan area which attend a predominately African American church.

Delimitations

A convenience sample was used rather than a random sample. Participants were members of a predominately African American church in the Southwest area of Dallas, Texas and the Summer Youth Program (SYP) offered by the church. The Summer Youth Program was composed of children whose parents were members of the church and children who were a part of the community (non-members of the church). All members were eligible to participate in the study; only parents/primary caregiver of children grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade data was utilize

Summary

Parental involvement is recognized as one of the major components that heighten the overall academic performance of children as well as fulfilling their potential to become productive adults (Darling & Westberg, 2004; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). However, research indicates that African American parents are less engaged in their children's education (Kohl et al., 2000; Moles, 1993; Reynolds, et al., 1992; Hill & Craft, 2003). This study examined (1) how African American parents are involved in their children's schooling, (2) the levels of their involvement, (3) the areas of their involvement, and (4) the barriers that limit their involvement.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Parental involvement is vital to the academic success and overall development of children (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). It is important that the home, school, and community collaborate together when identifying aspects of parental engagement as well as sharing applicable techniques, resources, and curriculums available to assist the children (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). The purpose of this study was to examine how African American parents were involved in their children's schooling, areas of engagement, levels of their involvement, and the barriers limiting their involvement.

Parental involvement in education has been studied for many years (Clark, 1983; Goodwin-Posnick, 2005; Grotz, 2011). Although there are differences among researchers, practitioners, federal and state government, teachers, and parents when defining parental involvement, research has provided evidence that parental involvement plays a vital part in the education of students and their success (Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Abrams & Gibbs, 2002). Parental involvement takes on many forms and varies from one degree to another. Attending open house, PTA meetings, assisting with homework and extracurricular activities are just a few examples of parental involvement (Epstein, 1995).

Parents care about their children and want their children to succeed (Yan, 1999). Most parents are zealous about acquiring information from the school and want to build a relationship between the home and the school (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Establishing partnerships with parents is important to teachers and administrators (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Expanding the role of parents through parental involvement allows teachers and administrators to include parents in the education process of their children; however, many teachers are uncertain about how to construct positive and prolific programs with the emphasis on African American parents (Yan, 1999).

Research has provided evidence of African American parents and their minimal engagement in their children's education. According to studies conducted by Abrams and Gibbs (2002) and Smith, Krohn, Chu, and Best (2005) regarding parental connections with schools, African American parents were perceived as more non-participatory than their White counterparts. Lareau, Horvat and McNamara (1999) found White, middle class families are more secure with school administrators and teachers due to social and cultural capital. The backgrounds of administrators and teachers connect to middle class white parents and allow them to "construct their relationships with the school with more comfort and trust" (Lareau & Horvat, 2001, p. 44). In contrast, studies conducted by Compton-Lilly (1996, 2000) and Purcell-Gates (1996) challenged the pessimistic representation of African American urban families' levels of parental involvement stating parents were involved in different ways. Research conducted by Troutman, Gallavan, and

Jones (2001) reported that African American parents want to be involved and value the educational process as well as the success of their children.

Theoretical Framework

The activities of parental involvement are the foundation for children to achieve throughout their lifespan. Whether children are developing through infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, parental involvement is one of the key elements for success. Theory is a viable resource to utilize when seeking diverse phenomenal occurrences. Researchers have access to many theoretical perspectives, and employ these perspectives based on the need to examine the research. For this study, the researcher utilized Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory (1998) and Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement (1997) to examine African American parental involvement in children's education pre-kindergarten through sixth grade.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory (1979) consists of five systems of layers. The first layer known as the microsystem consist of activities and interactions within the child's direct environment. Bronfenbrenner stated that we must first understand the development of children and the relationships that form within this layer (1979). Bronfenbrenner also posits these relationships are bidirectional (1979). Those in this layer have a direct influence on the child's total development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parents are a crucial part of this immediate setting, therefore, playing a vital role in shaping how their children perform (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).

The second layer, the mesosystem, is an extension that directly connects with the microsystem. This extension would include school, childcare, and the neighborhood. Family friends, peers, and extended family have a direct impact on children within this layer (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Peers can influence the social interaction of children within this system in addition to church influencing the religious beliefs of children. Teachers can have a direct affect by creating a positive environment in which to learn (1979). The environment of the neighborhood promotes the overall academic and social resources that influence the child's overall development (1979). For example, academic progress does not only take place in the school classroom, but is also promoted by the involvement of parents within the home and the community (Epstein & Sanders, 2002).

The third layer, the exosystem, is composed of social settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These settings range from employment organizations to fitness associations. Although children are not visibly present in these settings, they can affect their immediate surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). For example, if a parent loses their job, this could possibly have an effect on a child as the child contemplates if the family would have to move away, and in return the child loses their friends. This may cause major stress for the child and influences the behavior of the child. Parents who work multiple jobs may fail to see developmental changes occurring within their children. This may cause children to seek illicit advice from outside sources and may cause detrimental results. Living in a low income area with no extended social networking resources may cause children to seek ill-advised employment causing more harm than good. Social networks are vital to

the child, to the families, and the community (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). Parents who have no networking resources may lack the additional support needed to nurture a child. These examples provide evidence of how parents respond to the needs of children is crucial to the outcome of their performance at home, at school, and in the community (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

The fourth layer, the macrosystem, consists of customs, cultural values, laws, and other resources (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). An example within this system is the federal funding law for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Dillion, 2010). One of the modifications to this law would consist of changing “federal financing formulas so that a portion of the money is awarded based on academic progress, rather than by formulas that apportion money to districts according to their numbers of students, especially poor students” (Dillon, 2010, para. 4). In return, this would assist numerous school districts throughout the country financially if state officials accept the assistance. Accepting the help could mean less cuts in a county school district (exosystem), and minimal to no layoffs for educators (mesosystem).

Bronfenbrenner (1998) explains our environment is constantly changing and it is important to note that the timing of change can have an effect within each layer. Changes within families (birth of a new baby, microsystem), schools (teacher layoffs, mesosystem), employment downsizing and layoff of parents (ecosystem), and laws (No Child Left Behind, macrosystem), influence development (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). Bronfenbrenner referred to these changes within the temporal dimension of his model as

the chronosystem, chrono meaning “time” (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). These changes in life events occur when children begin to transition developmentally (Steinberg, 2005). As children begin maturation this creates the process of children altering their behavior and creating their own settings and experiences (Steinberg, 2005). Universally, all children experience transition cognitively, socially, and biologically (2005). These transitions convey change, and these changes alter the system (Bronfenbrenner, 1998) ultimately causing parents to reevaluate their original plans on what is best for the children.

The implementation of Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems Theory (1977) into parental involvement is best exemplified through the lens of the home and the school. When children begin school, the most important layers in the life of children begin to connect, the microsystem and mesosystem (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). The interactions of these layers foster and facilitate the learning process of children from both parents and teachers (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Parents are first teachers (Cordry and Wilson, 2004) and educators are integral participants throughout the child’s early school years and their influence is crucial during the developmental stages of the child (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Partnerships are formed to provide children with the best possible means to succeed academically. Patrikakou and Weissberg (2000) explain that these partnerships are not without movement within the each layer. Events can occur within higher systems (exosystem), such as a change in school policies or a recession (macrosystem) that can affect both home and school (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

While children are not directly included in these settings, decisions and events that occur could have an impact on the children (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

History of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in schools was launched in the 1940s and the early 1950s (Goodwin- Posnick, 2005). According to Goodwin- Posnick, Milbrey McLaughlin began the “idea of getting parents involved with parent-teacher conferences, homework monitoring, report card review and signings, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, fundraisers and "room mothers” (2005, para.10). In the 1960s, educators and policy makers initiated the “parental involvement” program as a means to develop deprived and below standard student achievement results (Goodwin- Posnick, 2005). As parental engagement became more of a concern in the 1980s with academic standards and standardized testing, parents became more involved with the day to day operations within the classroom (Goodwin- Posnick, 2005). Schools began to rely on parents in the 1990s because of budget cuts and limited resources (Goodwin- Posnick, 2005). Parents were utilized to help with fundraising or classroom enhancement in music or art (Goodwin- Posnick, 2005). Technology has created more *savoir-faire* parents, and the means of communicating and becoming engaged with schools is totally different than in the past. Because of the technological evolution, parents may choose to have information emailed instead of physically visiting and collaborating with teachers (Goodwin- Posnick, 2005). The preference for parents now is to send information online via email.

Defining Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an accumulation of diverse definitions from a multitude of research. These countless definitions make examining parental engagement more difficult. According to Reynolds (1996) parental involvement can be defined as any communication between a parent with the child or school which strengthens a child's growth. Feuerstein (2000) defined parent involvement as movement displaying a variety of behaviors, which includes conversing with children regarding school to attending parent-teacher conferences. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) defines parental involvement as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities" [Section 9101(32), ESEA]. This definition was provided in the Elementary Secondary Act (ESEA) guided by NCLB (2004). Epstein (1995) recapitulates the scope of family engagement by classifying a system that includes school-home communication, parental involvement within the school and in the community, providing children with home learning activities, and parents serving as decision-makers.

With No Child Left Behind (NCLB) defining and guiding parental involvement, local districts must adapt to these guidelines to receive Title 1 resources. To receive Title 1 resources, school districts must develop their parental involvement policy (Wright, 2009). While developing these policies and aligning themselves with the federal government, school districts must continue to build new relationships and re-build on

existing relationships with parents to develop and improve learning in the classroom (Wright, 2009). According to Brenchley (2011), “states are afforded relief from provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or No Child Left Behind (NCLB)” (para. 1). Brenchely (2011) maintains that in order for states to receive “relief”, the gap of achievement must close, states will be accountable, and students must be on the path to attend college. The federal government’s intent is to assist all school districts. Please note as of October 25, 2011, no official changes had been made.

Parental involvement is one of the key factors that contributes to the academic and overall development of the children, assist in bridging the gap between home and the school, and fosters new relationships between the home, school and community (Epstein, & Salinas, 2004). Parental engagement means different things to different people (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Diverse means of collecting data, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches have been utilized by researchers to provide findings that represent both teachers and parents. Such findings offer representation fairly and help to bridge the gaps that exist between parent and teacher perceptions (Wright, 2009). Wright states that more research is needed to compare opposing views of parent and teacher beliefs in order to focus on what is best for the children (2009).

African American Parental Involvement

For many ethnic groups, the level of parental involvement fluctuates (Coleman, 1988; Yan, 1999). Much of the past and present research conducted represented samples

of White American parental involvement participation (Yan, 1999). According to Hill and Craft, when examining parental involvement in multiple diverse populations, research has “confounded ethnicity with socioeconomic variables, making it difficult to disentangle the influence of ethnicity from socioeconomic factors when drawing conclusions on research finding” (2003, p. 75). Studies conducted by Hill and Craft (2003), Lareau (1996), Ogbu (1992) Steinberg and colleagues (1992), and Yan (1999) found experiences at home and parenting styles affect the level of minority parental involvement. The challenge with past research on African American parental involvement is the primary focus has been risk factors and not the manner these particular families foster parent involvement (Yan, 1999).

Much research has focused on low income urban areas of African American children. According to Trotman (2001) “the active participation of urban African American parents is essential in reversing the current disappointing school performance” (p. 282). Although these families may have lower levels of involvement than most, they still have the same high expectations for their children. Research examining high achieving African American students in low income homes revealed that parents of these students are connected and interact resulting in emotional support at home, engaging in meaningful discourse with their children, assisting with homework, and setting limits regarding behavior (Clark, 1983). Hill and Craft (2003) found parental engagement at school among African American parents improved the grades of their children in math. In particular, the volunteering of African American parents in the classroom and assisting

with needed materials immensely improved the children's academic proficiency resulting in improved math performances by African American children (Hill & Craft, 2003). However, findings reported from a Michigan study of fifth and six graders from 62 families indicated that parental involvement as a single variable was not related to student grades (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

Although much of the research focused on low income African American families and parental involvement, literature often overlooked the encounters of middle class African American parents and parental involvement with their children. While many African American families are migrating to more prosperous neighborhoods and higher ranked schools, the performance of these students and parental engagement is worth examining (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). Data reported that middle class African American students scored lower in reading, writing, and math in grades four, eight, and 12 than their White, Asian Americans, and Latino counterparts (Artiles & Zamora-Duran, 1997; Jenks & Phillips, 1998; NCES, 2003). The low performance of African American students has been attributed to many areas. According to Anyon (2005) one area that has been reported to affect the performance of African American students has been ascribed to living in low-income areas. Howard and Reynolds (2008) explained there are challenges present in middle class African American neighborhoods in the suburbs and the academic performance of African American students are not very different than those in the low income areas.

In low income areas, education, lack of time, single parent homes, and communication are many of the challenges regarding lack of parental engagement. Howard and Reynolds (2008) found through their qualitative study of 30 interviews and focus groups, that African American middle class families were two parent homes, some parents had the time to participate, were educated, and communicated well with teachers. However, the results indicated their challenges ranged from “not wanting to rock the boat” in suburban middle class schools, to not all parents having enough time because of work” (2008). Parents indicated that they believed things were going well once they moved out of the urban area. Parents measured what they believed was going well to where they once lived in the urban area (2008). Because parents had not received a phone call or a letter from the school from teachers, their belief was their children were doing well in school. Parents revealed that this was one of the reasons they did not get involved (2008). Parents also revealed that living in a suburban area did not mean they did not have to work. Parents stated they hear White parents discuss volunteering in the classroom and responded by answering “we have to work”. Parents expressed they may not volunteer, but they were involved in other ways (2008).

The findings from this study indicated suburban middle class African American parents encountered challenges just as urban low income African American parents encountered relative to parental engagement. Howard and Reynolds (2008) assert that the evidence provided indicates the manner in which parental involvement is conceptualized should be reconsidered. The authors also stated that parents were aware of the importance

of parental involvement and believed in the manner in which it should be provided (2008). The authors highlighted the issue of time, work, and a sense of belonging. The beliefs of some parents were based on the quality of the school; therefore their parental involvement is distant. Race and ethnicity was a key issue for some parents believed despite living in suburban areas they were not welcomed (Reynolds & Howard, 2008).

Contrary to those findings, research conducted by Sanders (1997) found that African American parental involvement fostering racial and ethnicity socializations promoted academic success. Findings reported from interview data of 28 African American urban eighth graders suggests that a number of African American students with a consciousness of racial judgment react to discrimination in behaviors that are more favorable rather than harmful to academic success (Sanders, 1977). Forty-two interviews of African American students in a predominately white school examined by Datnow and Cooper (1996) found utilizing formal and informal peer networks helped them to handle being in a predominately white school. Students stated having things in common attributed to their strong bond (Datnow & Cooper 1996).

Four constructs (e.g. parent-teen interaction, parent-school interaction, interactions with other parents, and family norms) and the social class theoretical perspective were used to investigate African American parental involvement conducted by (Yan, 1999). Yan found African American parents were equal or more engaged than White parents. Parental involvement for African American families varied based on

social class, education, and environment, however, the misconception that living in the suburbs and attending higher ranked schools will make life easier for African American children is still under investigation.

Parenting Styles

What affect does parenting style have on parental involvement? According to Park and Palardy (2003), “researchers have conceptualized parenting practices as parental involvement” (p. 97). The view of parental involvement as described by Park and Palardy is “encouraging actions”, and parenting style defined as “dynamics of parent-child interactions” (2003, p. 98). Though the two constructs are conceptualized differently, Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) reported the magnitude of parental involvement and parental style is highly correlated. The parenting style of mothers and fathers differ (Pleck, 2007). Pleck asserts since the personalities of mothers and fathers differ, the relationship within the family system between father/child and mother/child regarding parenting styles will differ as well.

Baumind’s parenting styles have been categorized into three constructs: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles (Baumind, 1966). Baumind asserts authoritarian parents are adamant about obedience from their children, drastically monitor behavior, and have rules that do not wavier. She states the opposite of authoritarian is permissive parents. Permissive parents allow a great deal freedom, are not demanding, and usually will conform to what the child wants with the exception of

putting the child at risk (1966). Authoritative parents are those who believe in enforcing rules, setting standards, and using certain verbal commands that warrant respect from children without infringing upon the child's autonomy and their ability to communicate with parents (1966).

Kim and Rohner (2002) and Darling (1999) reported that within all cultures, authoritative parenting style in conjunction with above normal parental requirements is one of the best and most reliable predictors of competency of children during the early childhood years through adolescence and results in academic success. Findings from a 1995 study conducted by Taylor, Hinton, and Wilson indicated that the connection between parental influences and academic outcomes relative to African American students found parental involvement and parenting styles (control and nurture) significantly influenced the academic outcomes.

Parenting styles and parental engagement vary between ethnicities. According to Dornbusch and colleagues (1987) the authoritative parenting style only had positive impacts on Hispanic and Caucasian children and their academic achievement, and authoritarian style had a negative impact on Caucasian and Asian children and their academic achievement. Caucasian children were also found to be negatively impacted by the permissive parenting style as well. Dornbusch and colleagues (1987) also found none of the three parenting styles had any effects on African American children and their academic achievement.

Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) examined parental involvement and parenting styles and how it affects academic achievement on four ethnic groups. Results indicated Caucasian and Hispanic children benefited more from authoritative parenting styles than African American and Asian children; however, the academic impact revealed Asian American children achieved higher academically, and African American children achievements were lower (Steinberg et al., 1992). An additional study was conducted examining the premise of academic outcomes of authoritarian parenting style was contingent upon the safety of the neighborhood (Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996). Authoritarian parenting style is used as a safety mechanism to shield children from harmful environmental influences, and leads to encouraging academic achievement of children (Baldwin, Baldwin, and Cole, 1990). The data did not support the premise of Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Steinberg, (1996) and the findings revealed authoritarian parenting style is effective among African American youth whether children lived in a prosperous or poor neighborhood as well as having a positive impact on their academic achievement. Additionally, the 1992 examination conducted by Steinberg and colleagues revealed ethnic differences relative to parental involvement at school with Caucasian and Hispanic students achieving higher grades due to parental involvement. However, Keith and colleagues (1993) found parental involvement comparable across ethnic groups.

Parents Assisting Their Children

Many African American parents are willing participants in assisting their children through the educational process (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Their belief is, “they should be involved, that their involvement will make a positive difference, and they perceive invitations to involvement” (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, p. 201). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler also found that despite their fears about personal inadequacies (for those parents who did not complete their high school education) African American parents attempted to assist in various ways. An invitation from teachers to assist their children has been found “positively associated with involvement decisions” (1995, 1997). This in turn, builds the self-efficacy of these parents, for their perception is they are looked upon as incapable of assisting with their children’s homework (Dauber & Epstein, 1991). Contrary to most findings, Eccles and Harold (1995) found that African American parents were concerned about their children’s academic achievements as well as their experiences and were willing participants in the education of their children. However, many do not possess the knowledge of how to become engaged at school or home (Chavkin, 1989, 1993).

The manner in which African American parents assist their children may somewhat differ from other parents. For example, these parents may not understand the assignment. However, the parents attempted to check the homework to assure it is complete. Dauber and Epstein (1991) noted that involvement included checking

homework to assure completion. Gardner and Miranda (2001) and Troutman (2001) also found that the success of African American children is one of the main priorities of African American parents. With parental engagement being a predictor of academic success by educators, African American parents were recognized for the achievement gap reduction associated with African American children (Bradley et al., 2005).

Izzo and colleagues (1999) conducted a longitudinal study and randomly followed New England students from 27 schools from kindergarten to third grade for three years. Parents involvement were rated by teachers each year utilizing (a) frequency of parent-teacher contacts each year, (b) constructive working relationships with parents (agree/disagree), (c) parent participation at school activities (yes/no), and parents' educational activities at home (yes/no). Findings indicated parental involvement at home and at school were connected to student success. However, findings also reported the involvement of parents at home remained stable, but, the involvement of parents at school became instable. Izzo and colleagues determined this helps to explain the why the activities at home have a better effect (1999).

Marcon examined 700 African American pre-school students in Washington, D.C. comparing parents who were highly involved with their children and parents who were less involved with their children (1999). Utilizing reports from teachers, grades and skill ratings were compared. Findings suggested that when comparing parents who were highly involved to parents with their children's education to those parents who were

medium to low involved in their children's education, highly involved parent's children had higher scores and grades than those parents children who were medium to low involved. Moreover, these findings were consistent across environments and income levels (1999).

Barriers of Parental Engagement

Many barriers can affect African American parental engagement. These include but are not limited to the structure of the family, the socioeconomic status of the parents, the level of education of the parents, race and ethnicity, and the treatment of parents by school administrators and teachers (Lippman, Burns, & McArthur 1996).

Socioeconomic Status/Family Structure

The decline of the traditional family (father, mother, and children) has decreased over the past two decades (Lippman, Burns, & McArthur 1996). According to Lippman, Burns, and McArthur, a number of households are headed by single parents, especially in the urban areas (1996). The increase of teen pregnancy, separations, and divorces has resulted in a trend of single parent homes. The traditional two-parent homes of children have vastly declined, and many school aged urban children are recipients of single parent, female headed households (1996). Additionally the Data Center reported 67% of African American children lived in single parent households (2009).

With the increase of this phenomenon, the belief of many teachers is that single parent of low income children do not value the education of their children (Davies, 1988). The picture painted of urban parents depicts them as complex, unconcerned, unreachable, and disengaged (Weitock, 1991). When unavailable to attend school conferences and other pertinent school activities, the misconception of many teachers is these parents do not care about the education of their children. Parents care about the education of their children. Flood, Lapp, Nagel, and Tinajero (1995) found many parents have to work; they must care of other infant children, or believe the responsibility belongs to the teachers. Additionally, mothers who are employed full-time were less involved which point towards the effect work can have on parental engagement.

Research conducted on children who grew up in low income neighborhoods, low income families, had minimal literacy skills, and these parents were to be less likely to be involved in school activities (Aikens & Barbarins, 2008). Findings also revealed that many parents could meet the fundamental needs of their children because of the time constraint; therefore they were less likely become engaged (Aikens & Barbarins, 2008). The required time needed from parents may be unavailable; therefore, many parents avoided contact with teachers (Drummond & Stipek, 2004).

Keith and Keith (1993) found most parents of all income and social levels are involved at home. The author's findings on more than 21,000 families from their NELS: 88 study indicated that households with higher income levels and social class tend to more actively involved in the school. The study also found differing tendencies when

comparing the levels of involvement and the backgrounds of parents. African American, Hispanics, and Native Americans (minority groups) were reported to be much more involved than those parents in more advantageous ethnic groups (1993).

Educational Levels of African American Parents

Seminal research conducted has provided evidence that the education of parents is one predictor of student achievement (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994; Haveman & Wolfe, 1995; Smith, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997). Although much of the literature has examined low income families, and utilized socio-economic variables to determine parental involvement (Mistry et al., 2002), the education of parents and how parents may assist their children in relatable areas remains minuscule in research literature. The level of education, the level of comfort, as well as the skills parents have acquired, must be taken into consideration when discussing the role of parents and the level of engagement at school (Decker, Gregg, & Decker, 1996).

A sample of several of low-income minority families were utilized by Halle, Kurtz-Costes, and Mahoney (1997) and found that mothers who had higher goals for their children in school also had a higher education than those mothers in this same low income sample. Additionally, these goals for their children transcended into the home environment thus creating an awareness of positive behaviors and performances in the home environment from both the mother and the children.

Findings from parents of medium to high income and educational levels believed and expected their children to perform and achieve successfully academically and the

results indicated the children were successful academically; however, the findings also indicated that low income and less educated parents expected their children to perform and achieve successfully and academically as well. The low income parent's children actual performances did not correlate with the beliefs of their parents (Alexander, Entwisle, & Bedinger, 1994). The authors proposed that the home environment is crucial when parents are establishing principles and opportunities for children. The beliefs and expectations should be truthful and achievable based on past and present indicators of children's achievement (Alexander, Entwisle, & Bedinger, 1994).

Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

Research on race and parental involvement largely has concentrated on the manner in which European American and African American families vary on parenting styles (e.g., authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive) and the manner in which these approaches effect child outcomes (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). The obstacles of race, ethnicity, and culture differences can infringe on parental involvement between schools and families. Cultural behavior is a key component of how parents choose to become engaged in schools. How schools choose to welcome the diverse cultures of families can determine the level of parental engagement (Pena, 2000).

Many parents are intimidated by teachers and school administrators which lead to the lack of parental involvement (Charvkin, 1989). Abrams and Gibbs (2002) reported public schools tend to alienate African American parents. Harry, Rueda, and Kalyanpuu (1999) and Samaras and Wilson (1999) found that when African American parents

questioned or confronted teachers or administrators in the school, they were often made to feel unwelcomed within the school which left the perception they are unwanted in the entire educational system. Some minority parents are silent and some minority parents are vocal. Many parents the fear if they are vocal, their children may have a more difficult time in the classroom (Pena, 2000).

Nzinga-Johnson, Baker, and Aupperlee (2009) reported ethnic and racial minority parents were less likely to be engaged in their children's school. Historically, the relationship between African American parents and the American educational system has been tainted. The interaction among many African American families and teachers is limited due to parents' perception of discrimination (Rowley, Helarie, & Banejee, 2009). The perception of discrimination among African American families in research can be viewed and better understood through the lens of ecology. Ecology explains the relationships and interactions within their own environment (Encarta Dictionary, 2009). This lens provides a more insightful understanding of their family process (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

For many African American parents, parental involvement is minimal due to negative encounters with teachers during their own childhood (Colbert, 1991). Colbert examined a sample of African American parents, and found some parents anticipated the treatment of their children to be negative due their own childhood experiences (1991). Racial discrimination with teachers during their childhood fostered preconceived ideas relative to teachers and how teachers may treat their children (1991). Many African

American parents were concerned that teachers will discriminate against their children because of race (1991). A study conducted with inner-city African American parents who were conscious of discrimination were found to be less involved in the school environment and more involved within the home environment (McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown, & Lynn, 2003). Some African American parents believe that race is a key component when offering their opinions, their suggestions, their perspective, and how they are valued (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). McKay and colleagues stated that the home environment allows African American parents to protect their children against racial discrimination treatment at school (2003).

Summary

This chapter highlights theoretical perspectives utilized for this study and presented a review of literature. Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement provided a framework of how parental involvement can be implemented in the lives of children in the home, in the school, and in the community. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems theory helped to explain how the different systems influence individuals directly or indirectly. The literature review assisted in explaining some of the momentous challenges that African American parents face regarding their participation in their children's early childhood education. The literature depicted the effects of different parenting styles on parental involvement, the negative impact of race, culture, and ethnicity, and barriers that may impede parental involvement such as work, family structure, income, and education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Past and present research studies have indicated that parental involvement can enhance, enrich, and expand children's school performances cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically (Darling & Westberg, 2004; Drummond, & Stipek, 2004; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Epstein, & Dauber, 1993; Epstein, 1990). However, research indicates that African American parents believe there are many barriers that limit their parental engagement in their children's school activities at home and school (Hill & Craft, 2003). Ascertaining the appropriate application practices to foster and facilitate parental involvement in the activities of their children at home and at school continues to be a challenge and requires further research by practitioners, scholars, teachers, and researchers (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Drummond, & Stipek, 2004). This study seeks to examine and describe (1) how African American parents are involved in their children's schooling, (2) the areas of involvement, (3) the levels of their involvement, and (4) the barriers that limit their involvement in their children's education pre-kindergarten through sixth grade.

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design, convenience sampling technique, and a mixed method approach to collect information on African American parental

involvement in the education of children. Participants consisted of parents of children from grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Questionnaires were used to collect data from parents regarding their involvement in their children's education on this research topic. Focus group interviews were also utilized to collect additional information from participants.

Population

Settings

According to the United States Census Bureau (USCB) (2010) Dallas, County has a population of 2.4 million people. As of 2011, the population growth has increased 10.54 percent since 2000 (Sperling Best Places, 2010). In 2010, the median home cost of Dallas County was \$127,300 and the median salary was \$47,155. Per student, Dallas County public schools spend approximately \$4509 per student (Sterling Best Places, 2010). The U. S. average expenditure is approximately \$5678 per student (2010). The ratio for students per teacher in Dallas County is 15.6 (2010).

Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church (AFMBC) is a predominately African American church located in Southwest area of Dallas, Texas. The members of this church reside in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. The church provides many programs such as tutoring, Summer Youth Programs, debutant recognition, and educational scholarships.

Sample

The study encompassed parents and primary caregivers of children at the Antioch Fellowship Membership Baptist Church (AFMBC) and their Summer Youth Program (SYP). Parents and primary caregivers were invited to respond to the questionnaire with the emphasis on parents and primary caregivers of children in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The church was selected as a research site based on the diversity of income levels, educational levels, ages, and family structure of parents. Among the church membership is the researcher.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study was administered according to the guidelines set forth by the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board (IRB). An application was submitted and approved for research to begin by the IRB (Appendix A). Protection of the participants' human rights is crucial when conducting research. Ethical issues were addressed in the approved application. The researcher reduced the harm to participants by meticulously preserving confidentiality throughout the process of this study. The collection of data and data analyses were safeguarded by methodically coding names of participants, and only the researcher, the researcher's advisor, and the researcher's assistants could retrieve the data.

All participants were volunteers. Participants were informed verbally and via the consent form there was no penalty for withdrawing from the study. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the study and the possible potential risks throughout the

duration of the study via consent forms, conversations with the researcher, and during focus group sessions. Participants were given consent forms (Appendix C) to read and sign before completing the questionnaires and before participating in the focus group sessions.

Instrumentation

Parent and School Survey (PASS)

The purpose of this instrument is to quickly and accurately measure different areas of parental involvement as the instrument was created based on Epstein's (1997) six-construct framework (Ringenberg et al., 2005). The constructs consist of (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with community. According to Ringenberg and colleagues (2005) four items are devoted to each construct (Ringenberg, Funk, Mullen, Wilford, & Krame, 2005). The instrument was administered to a convenience sample of 40 parents to refine the items and confirm clarity of the wording. Minor changes promoted consistent interpretation of the items.

Twenty four items necessitate a response based on a 5-point Likert scale: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) partially agree/partially disagree, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. Reliability for the total scale was not reported by the authors (Ringenberg et al., 2005).

Parental Involvement Questionnaires: Parent Involvement at Home, Parent Involvement in School Scale, and Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach

A set of three questionnaires related to parental involvement were developed at the University of Chicago in collaboration with the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success by Patrikakou and Weissberg (2000). The instruments were administered to parents of predominantly African American and Hispanic children in mid-western inner-city schools to determine parents' practices and beliefs. In addition, the instruments were used to evaluate a School-Family Partnerships project located in Chicago and Washington, DC (Patrikakou, Weissberg, Armstrong, & Rubenstein, 2000).

Parent Involvement at Home (PIH). The instrument measures various parent practices that contribute to the enhancement of academic and social development, such as making sure child has a quiet place to do homework and checking child's homework. There are eight questions included in this questionnaire. This questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale: (1) less than a day, (2) 1 day, (3) 2-4 days, and (4) 4-7 days. The authors reported a Chronbach's alpha of 0.77 for the PIH scale (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

Parent Involvement in School (PISC). The *PISC* measures ways in which parents are involved in their children's education at school (e.g., picking up child's report card) and in voluntary activities (e.g., volunteering in child's classroom). There are six items included in this instrument. This questionnaire uses a 3-point Likert scale: (1) never, (2) 1-2 times, and (3) several. Reliability for the scale was reported as 0.71 (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO). The *PPTO* measures the parents' perceptions of various teacher outreach behaviors and practices that encourage and reinforce parent involvement (e.g., does your child's teacher share information with you in a positive way?) and the level of information the teacher relays to parents (e.g., does the teacher tell you specific ways that you could help your child do better?). Ten items were included with this instrument using a 3-point Likert scale: (1) never, (2) sometimes, and (3) usually. A Chronbach's alpha value of 0.87 was reported for reliability of the scale (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

Data Collection

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed during the Antioch Church Summer Youth Program (SYP) and during Sunday morning worship service at the Antioch Church. Of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 141 were completed and returned. The return rate from total distribution was 47%. Of the 141 completed and returned, only 122 met the criteria of parents and primary caregivers of children in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade and were utilized for analyses of data. The collection of data was conducted between June and July 2011.

Questionnaire Data

Permission from the Senior Pastor of Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas was been obtained via email followed by a letter of approval. After granting permission, the Senior Pastor initiated contact with the Associate Pastor of Education to discuss the process of the sample selection. A meeting was held with the

Associate Pastor and his administrative assistant to finalize recruitment and data collection procedures.

Packages were assembled by the researcher and contained consent forms (Appendix A), recruitment flyer (Appendix B), referral list (Appendix C), an envelope, and questionnaires (Appendix D). The flyer invited parents from both the church membership and the Summer Youth Program (SYP) who had children in early childhood education to volunteer to complete the questionnaire and to participate in one of the three focus group sessions. The researcher distributed the packages Monday through Friday in the early morning at the Summer Youth Program (SYP) to volunteering parents when they brought their children to the facility and in the evening when parent retrieved their children. Parents and primary caregivers brought their questionnaires back to the researcher each day with consent forms sealed in the envelope and the questionnaires in the package.

For two weeks, the researcher was provided with a table in the atrium of the church to distribute flyers and questionnaires during the eight and ten o'clock morning worship services. Consent forms were sealed and returned the following Sunday along with the questionnaires in the package to the researcher. Although the researcher only had two weeks in the atrium, participants sought out the researcher after worship services to return completed questionnaires and consent forms.

Focus Group Data

During the month of June and July, the researcher distributed flyers in the church, emailed potential volunteers, and spoke with prospective participants asking for their participation in one of three focus group sessions. Prospective participants were provided with flyers with the date and time of each focus group session. The researcher continuously recruited for participants, and a total of 22 participants notified the researcher they would volunteer to participate in a focus group session, and provided her with the date that each would attend. Additionally, all participants of the focus group sessions were also questionnaire participants.

The three focus group sessions were held for three consecutive weeks in the month of July, 2011 in a designated room assigned by the Associate Pastor of the church. Each session began at 6:00 p.m. after the conclusion of the daily activities for the Summer Youth Program (SYP). Volunteering participants were from both SYP and the church membership. Some children of the volunteering participants sat in on the session and were quiet.

Participants of each focus group session were asked to respond to the same three open ended questions relative to parental involvement in their children's education. Each session was video-taped, and the researcher thoroughly explained the purpose of video-taping prior to each session. The researcher also informed parents at each session that if at any time they were uncomfortable with answering any of the questions, they were free to discontinue their participation with no penalty.

Data Analyses

Data from questionnaires were utilized for quantitative analyses. The questionnaires were coded and analyzed by employing the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 19.0 for Windows*. Frequencies and percentages were utilized to report demographic information. Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) were used with the Parents and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement in School (PISC), the Parent Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH), and the PASS subscales. Statistically significant differences were considered at the 0.05 level.

Trustworthiness

The video-taping of the focus groups were transcribed by researcher. The research assistant viewed the video-taping and examined transcription for accuracy and lucidity. The researcher and research assistant coded separately from the flip chart notes and the focus group sessions. Common codes were detected by the researcher and the research assistant. Coding was utilized for a detailed analysis and sorted into groupings. The final coding was employed to generate categories and was verified by the research assistant to confirm the categories. Categories were generated using the following procedure: understanding the data, establishing important codes, recognizing categories, assessing and evaluating the categories, and creating the reports (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine African American parental involvement in their children's early childhood education. This chapter outlined the approach and explained the questionnaire items and focus groups sessions that support this study. The description of the research design, research site, and sampling were also provided. Additionally, ethical research procedures were discussed regarding confidentiality, consent forms, and the protection of human participants. Results of the data collection are reported in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter describes the findings for this dissertation research study. The emphases were on conveying both quantitative and qualitative outcomes of how African American parents are involved in their children's education, prekindergarten through sixth grade. Quantitative results were summarized using descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative findings were categorized. The statistical results and the focus group categories connected to the purpose of this study.

Survey Results

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed among the church population of Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church (AFMBC) and the parents of children enrolled in the Summer Youth Program (SYP) conducted at the church. A total of 141 questionnaires were completed by volunteering participants, representing a 47% return rate. The major foci for the study were parents and primary caregivers of children attending pre-kindergarten classes through sixth grade. The total number of participants with children in the target range of grades was 122 (86.5%) of the 141 questionnaires returned. The additional 19 questionnaires were completed by parents with children in seventh grade or higher. These were not utilized for the dissertation study.

The questionnaires elicited demographic information from parents and primary caregivers of children in primary, elementary and middle schools. Participants responded to the following instruments: the Parent and School Survey (PASS) (Ringenberg et. al., 2005), the Parent Involvement at School Scale (PISC) (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000), the Parent Perceived Teacher Outreach Scale (PPTO) (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000), and the Parent Involvement at Home Scale (PIH) (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

Participants' Demographic Information

Demographic data were based on 14 questionnaire items. Descriptive statistical data are displayed in charts, tables, and figures to interpret results from 122 participants.

Ages of participants. The participants were asked to select their own age and the age of their spouse from one of the five categories shown in Table 1. The ages of parents or primary caregivers ranged from less than 25 to more than 46 years. The majority of both mothers and fathers were between the ages of 36-45. Data for age were missing in four questionnaires submitted by mothers.

Table 1

Ages of Participants

	Mothers ($n = 118$)		Fathers ($n = 78$)	
Ages	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
18-25 years	1	0.8	2	2.6
25-36 years	25	21.2	9	11.5
36-45 years	78	66.1	49	62.8
46 and older	11	9.0	17	21.8

Marital status and family structures. Participants ($n = 122$) were asked to provide their marital status and identify the family structure. Marital status consisted of the following categories: single, married, divorced, widowed, separated, and other. Married was the most frequent status reported by participants. Single (never married) was the next most frequent category reported by participants, followed by Divorced. Fewer participants reported marital status as Separated or Widowed. The percentages for the participants are displayed in Figure 1.

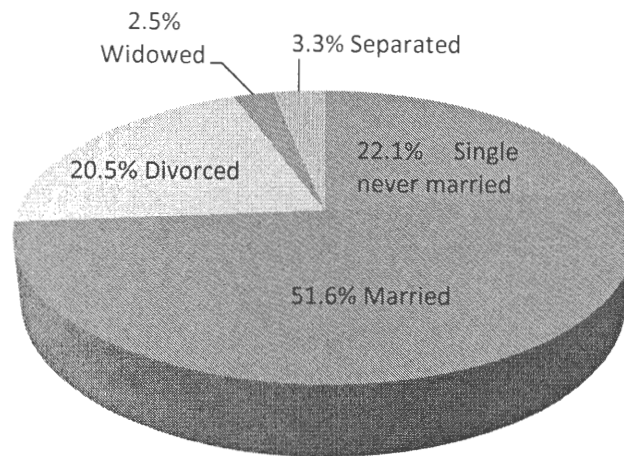


Figure 1. Marital statuses.

Family structure was coded into five categories: Single Household, Dual Household, Single with Extended Family, Dual with Extended Family, and Other Household. Dual Household family structures were reported by the majority of the participants at 51.7%, with the participants of Single Household family structures comprising 40% (Table 2).

For data analyses, family structure categories were combined (Figure 2). Single Household and Single with Extended Family represented one group (52%) and Dual Household plus Dual with Extended Family represented a second group (67%). The Other Household was not specified so it was omitted from the groupings.

Table 2

Family Structures

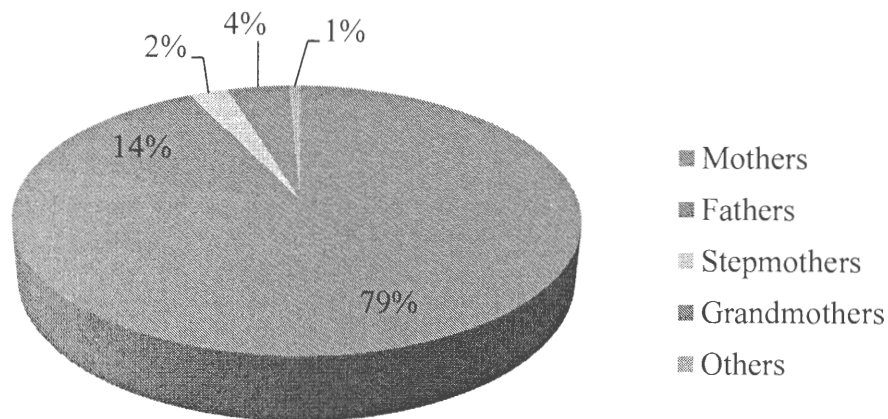
Types of Family Structures ($n = 120$)	f	%
Single Household	48	40.0
Dual Household	62	51.7
Single Extended Family	4	3.3
Dual Extended Family	5	4.2
Other	1	0.8



Figure 2. Combined family structures.

Relationship to child. Participants were asked to provide information concerning their relationship to the target child that would be represented in the questionnaires.

Figure 3 indicates that the majority of respondents were mothers. One participant did not report her or his relationship to the child.



*Figure 3.*Relationship to child.

Education of participants. Participants were asked to provide information concerning their education levels and those of their spouses. The highest level of educational achievement was selected based on categories that ranged from elementary school to a doctorate. The range for mothers' education was elementary school to masters' degree, while the range for fathers' education began with 12th grade and concluded with a doctoral degree. A bachelor's degree was the most frequent level reported for mothers at 34.2% and for fathers at 37.4% (Table 3). There were four participants who identified themselves as primary caregivers. Two primary caregivers held Bachelor's degrees, one had completed one or more years of college, and one reported "some college."

Table 3

Education Levels of Mothers and Fathers

Mothers (<i>n</i> = 117)			Fathers (<i>n</i> = 73)		
Education Levels	<i>f</i>	%	Education Levels	<i>f</i>	%
Elementary school	2	1.6	Elementary school	0	0.0
9th through 11th grade	1	0.9	9th through 11th grade	0	0.0
12th no diploma	0	0.0	12th no diploma	1	1.4
Graduated High School	5	4.3	Graduated High School	5	6.8
GED	3	2.6	GED	3	4.1
Some college	5	4.3	Some college	3	4.1
1 or more years of college (no degree)	21	17.9	1 or more years of college (no degree)	9	12.3
No degree	0	0.0	No degree	16	21.9
Associate Degree	11	9.4	Associate Degree	7	9.6
Bachelors' Degree	40	32.8	Bachelors' Degree	20	27.4
Masters' Degree	29	23.8	Masters' Degree +	12	16.5

For further analysis, the education levels were collapsed into two categories: Associates' degree or less, and Bachelor's degree or higher. Education levels for mothers included 48 (41%) with less education and 69 (59%) with more education. Education levels reported for fathers included 41 (56.2%) with less education and 32 (43.8%) with

more education. The following figures show the relative percentages for the combined education categories.

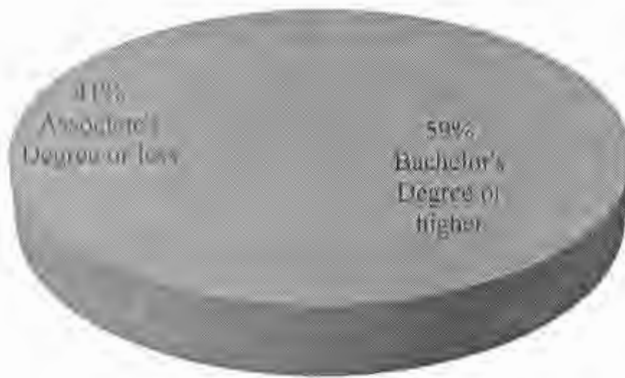


Figure 4. Combined education for mothers

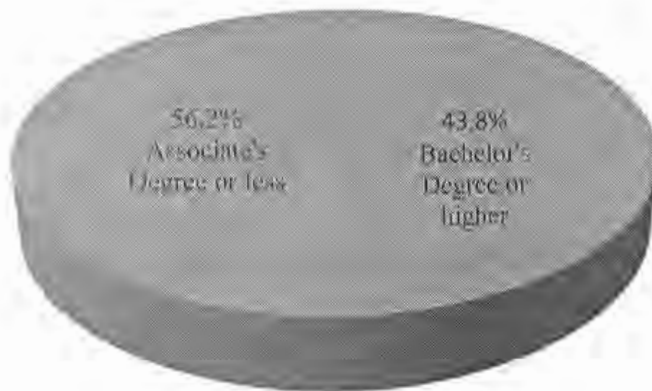


Figure 5. Combined education for fathers

Participants' employment. The levels of employment for participants were categorized based on Hourly Wages, Employed Salaried, Self-employed, Looking for

Work, Student, and Retired. Over one-half of the mothers were Employed Salaried (56.6 %), and one-third of the fathers were Employed Salaried (34.4%)(Table 4). Hourly Wages was the second highest category for both mothers (31%), and fathers (32.9%). The four respondents who were primary caregivers reported employment status as Hourly Wages (1), Employed Salaried (1), Looking for Work (1), and Retired (1).

Table 4

Employment Levels of Mothers and Fathers

	Mothers (<i>n</i> = 117)		Fathers (<i>n</i> = 73)	
Employment Levels	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Hourly Wages	36	31.0	25	32.9
Employed Salaried	68	58.6	42	55.3
Self-employed	5	4.3	8	10.5
Looking for Work	6	5.2	1	1.3
Student	1	0.9	0	0.0

Household incomes. Participants were asked to indicate their levels of household income. Participants chose from 11 categories ranging from less than \$10,000 to \$130,000 or more. The most frequently reported household income was the range of \$40,000 to \$49,000 at 12% (Table 5). The next most frequent categories were \$60,000 to \$69,999 (11%), \$70,000 to \$79,000 (11%), and \$90,000 to \$110,000 (11%). The least frequent category was less than \$10,000 (0.9%).

Table 5

Levels of Household Incomes

Income Levels ($n=117$)	f	%
Less than \$10,000	6	5.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999	8	0.9
\$20,000 to \$29,999	5	4.3
\$30,000 to \$39,999	11	9.4
\$40,000 to \$49,999	14	12.0
\$50,000 to \$59,999	12	10.3
\$60,000 to \$69,999	13	11.1
\$70,000 to \$79,999	13	11.0
\$80,000 to \$89,999	7	6.0
\$90,000 to \$110,000	13	11.0
\$111,000 to 130,000	10	8.5
\$111,000 to 130,000	12	10.3

For further analysis, the household income levels were collapsed into two categories: “\$60,000 or more” and “less than \$60,000”. The percentages are displayed in Figure 6.

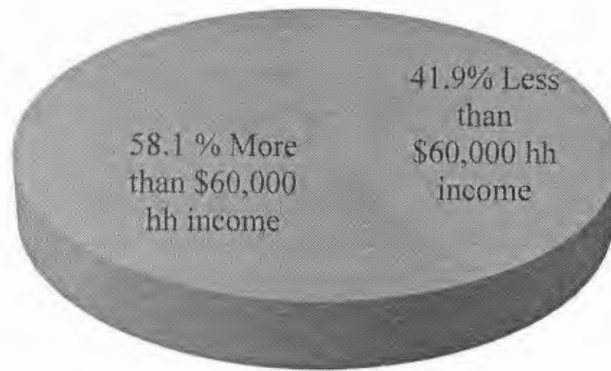


Figure 6. Combined levels of household income.

Residential locations. Participants ($n = 120$) were asked to indicate their residential locations. Four categories were described for residential location: City, Suburban, Urban, and Rural. The Suburban location was the most frequent response at 60.8%, City was reported at 31.7%, Urban was reported at 6.7%, and the least frequent response to residential living was Rural (0.8%).

Ethnicities. Four categories were utilized for participants ($n = 121$) to report their ethnicities: African American, Hispanic, Bi-racial, and Other. The participants were primarily African Americans at 98.4%, with Hispanic reported at 0.8% and Bi-racial reported at 0.8%.

Total numbers of children. Participants were asked to report the total number of children in their household and the total number of children in school. Household classifications for the number of children were labeled None, One Child, Two Children,

and Three or More Children. The most frequent response was Two Children at 44.3% followed by One Child at 36.9% (Table 6).

Table 6

Numbers of Children in Household

Household Children ($n = 122$)	f	%
None	5	4.1
One Child	45	36.9
Two Children	54	44.3
Three or More Children	18	14.8

School age children were grouped according to “None at Different grades,” “Two Children at Different Grades”, and “Three or More Children at Different Grades.” “None at Different grades” was most frequently reported at 45.1% and” Two at Different Grades” at 43.4% followed (Table 7).

Table 7

Numbers of Children in School

School Children ($n = 122$)	f	%
None	2	1.6
One Child	55	45.1
Two Children	51	41.8
Three or More Children	14	11.5

Children's Grade Levels. Participants were asked to identify the different grade levels of their children ($n = 122$). Three groupings of different grades were provided: None at Different Grades, Two Children at Different Grades, and Three or More Children at Different Grades. "None at Different Grades" at 45.1% was the most frequent response, "Two Children at Different Grades" followed at 43.4% and "Three or More Children at Different Grades" at 11.5% was the less frequent response.

Grade levels of target children. Grades levels for target children were categorized from pre-kindergarten through 6th grade. Fourth grade was reported most frequently at 19% by participants and pre-kindergarten was the least reported grade level at 4.2%

Table 8

Grade Levels of Children in School

Grade levels ($n = 119$)	f	%
Pre-K	5	4.2
Kindergarten	6	5.0
First Grade	10	8.4
Second Grade	20	16.8
Third Grade	16	13.4
Fourth Grade	23	19.3
Fifth Grade	19	16.0
Sixth Grade	20	16.8

Genders of children. Participants ($n = 119$) were asked to indicate the gender of the target child utilized to complete the questionnaire. More participants reported Girls at 52.1%, while participants reported Boys at 47.9%. Participants of three questionnaires did not identify the genders of their children.



Figure 7. Genders of target children

Types of schools. Parents were asked to identify the type of school their child attended. Types of schools included Public, Charter, Private, Home School, Church Affiliated, and Pre-school Programs as applicable choices. Parents reported 54.1% for Public Schools, 32% for Charter Schools, 8.2% for Private Schools, 3.3% for Church Affiliated Schools, 0.8 % for Home Schools and 0.8% for Preschool Programs. One participant did not report the school type for her or his child.

Research Question One

The first research question asked, “How are African American parents involved in their children’s education, prekindergarten through sixth grade?” The questionnaire responses from the four instruments as well as comments from focus group sessions were used to answer this question

Questionnaires

Parent and School Survey (PASS). The Parent and School Survey (PASS) (Rigenberg, et al., 2005) consisted of 24 items designed to measure parental involvement in their children's education. Participants were asked to respond to each item with the following options: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Partially Agree/Partially Disagree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). An additional six items identified issues that make involvement difficult for parents. The possible responses were: A lot (1), Some (2), and Not an Issue (3).

For scoring purposes, items 6, 8, 16, 17, 18, and 20 were recoded so that a higher score indicated more positive parental involvement (Appendix G). A total scale mean score was calculated by adding the ratings for the 24 items and dividing by 24 to represent the 1-5 range. Subscales were created based on the recommendations of the PASS authors (Rigenberg, et al., 2005). Groupings of four items represented the types of parental involvement described in Epstein's framework (Epstein, 1997). Subscale mean scores were calculated by adding the ratings for each set of items and dividing by four. This allowed comparisons by types of parental involvement. Reliability for the sample data was determined using inter-item correlations. The 24 PASS items produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84. When the five additional items identifying barriers were included, the calculated alpha value was 0.83. Item number 30 "Other" was removed from the reliability calculations because only 16 participants responded.

Table 9 displays the participants' responses for the 24 PASS items. The items are listed in order from highest to lowest scores. All 122 parents reported that they felt comfortable visiting their child's school. Parents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they complimented their child for doing well in school (95.9%). Attending school board meetings was reported as the lowest level of parental involvement.

Table 9

Frequencies and Percentages for PASS Items

Items	<i>n</i>	Strongly Agree/Agree		Partially Agree/Partially Disagree		Disagree/Strongly Disagree	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school.	122	122	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterward.	122	119	97.5	2	1.6	1	0.8
There are many children's books in our house.	122	119	97.5	1	0.8	2	1.6
I frequently explain difficult ideas to my child when she/he doesn't understand.	122	117	96.0	2	1.6	3	2.4
Every time my child does something well at school I compliment him/her.	120	115	95.9	3	2.5	2	1.3
In the past 12 months I have attended activities at my child's school several times.	122	115	94.3	4	3.3	3	2.4

Table 9 continued

	Strongly Agree/Agree			Partially Agree/Partially Disagree		Disagree/Strongly Disagree	
	<i>n</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I always know how well my child is doing in school.	121	114	94.2	3	2.5	4	3.4
I have visited my child's classroom several times in the past year.	122	109	89.3	9	7.4	4	3.3
Reading books is a regular activity in our home.	122	101	82.7	18	14.8	3	2.4
My child's schoolwork is always displayed in our home.	121	96	79.3	15	12.4	10	8.3
I have made suggestions to my child's teachers about how to help my child learn.	122	88	72.2	18	14.8	16	12.9
I talk with other parents frequently about educational issues.	122	84	68.8	25	20.5	13	10.6
My child attends community programs regularly.	121	84	69.4	16	13.2	21	17.4
I know about many programs for youth in my community.	122	76	62.3	25	20.5	21	17.2
In the past 12 months I volunteered at my child's school at least 3 times.	120	66	55.0	18	15.0	36	30.0
I know the laws governing schools well.	122	56	45.9	40	32.8	26	21.3
I read to my child every day.	121	48	39.7	47	38.8	26	21.5
In the past 12 months I attended several school board meetings.	122	17	13.9	26	21.3	79	64.7

Table 9 Continued

Items	Strongly Agree			Partially Agree		Disagree	
	<i>n</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
If my child was having trouble in school I would not know how to get extra help for him / her.	122	20	16.4	3	2.5	99	81.2
I don't understand the assignments my child brings home.	122	9	7.4	11	9.0	102	83.6
I am confused about my legal rights as a parent of a student.	121	3	2.5	11	9.1	107	88.4
Talking with my child's principal makes me un comfortable.	121	5	4.2	1	0.8	115	95.0
My child misses school several days each semester.	122	5	4.1	2	1.6	115	94.2
Talking with my child's current teacher makes me somewhat un comfortable.	122	0	0.0	5	4.1	117	95.9

The means and standard deviations for the subscale mean scores and the total mean scores are displayed in Table 10 and exhibited in Figure 8.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations of PASS Subscale Scores and Total Scale Score

PASS Subscales and Total Scale Score	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Parenting	122	4.58	0.43
Communicating	120	4.67	0.46
Volunteering	120	4.35	0.59
Learning at Home	119	4.15	0.52
Decision Making	121	3.52	0.67
Collaborating with Community	121	3.32	0.72
Total Scale	114	4.09	0.39

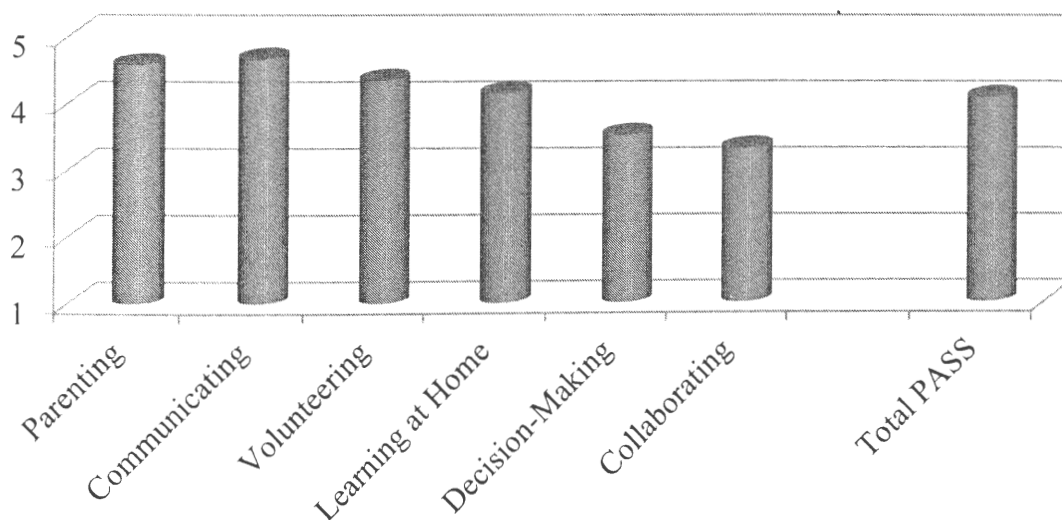


Figure 8. Pass subscale scores and total scale score

Parents Involvement in School Scale (PISC). The Parents Involvement in School Scale (PISC) measured diverse ways that parents were involved in their children's education at school, specific activities, and routines that transpired during the academic

calendar year (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Activities such as picking up the child's report card and volunteering in the classroom are summarized in Table 12. The most frequent responses were "called or went to see the teacher" at 78.7%, "I went to parent-teacher conferences" (74.2%), and "I asked my teacher how I can help my child with school work 70%. "I visited my child's classroom" was the least frequent response at 0.8%. Although participants were not asked, many provided an explanation regarding question 6, "I pick up my child's report card." Many participants wrote on the questionnaire that reports cards are often sent home with the child.

Table 11

Parent Involvement at School Scale (PISC)

Items	<i>n</i>	Several Times		1-2 Times		Never	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Called or went to see my child's teacher.	122	96	78.7	21	17.2	5	4.1
I went to parent-teacher conferences.	120	89	74.2	25	20.8	6	5.0
I asked the teacher how I can help my child with school work.	120	84	70.0	28	23.3	8	6.6
I visited my child's classroom.	118	82	69.5	35	29.7	1	0.8
I picked up my child's report.	120	68	56.7	22	18.0	30	25.0
I volunteered to help in my child's classroom.	117	38	32.5	47	40.2	32	27.4

Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO). The Parents Perceived Teacher

Outreach (PPTO) included ten elements that quantified parents' perceptions of multiple teacher outreach behaviors and practices (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Parents were

asked to report in what manner and how often teachers reached out to children's parents. Responses were categorized as Never, Sometimes, and Usually in Table 13. Participants' responses were very positive regarding parents' perceptions of outreach by teachers. Ninety-three percent of participants stated that teachers usually made them feel comfortable when they meet, 86.8% said the teacher would let them know when their child was having problems, and 84.3% responded that teachers usually share information in a positive way and it was easy to talk or meet with the teacher.

Table 12
Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO)

Items	<i>n</i>	Usually		Sometimes		Never	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Does the teacher make you feel comfortable when you meet?	121	113	93.4	7	5.8	1	0.8
Does the teacher let you know when your child is having trouble at school?	121	105	86.8	12	9.9	4	3.3
Does your child teacher share information with you in a positive way?	121	102	84.3	17	14.0	2	1.7
Is it easy to talk to or meet with your child's teacher?	121	102	84.3	18	14.9	1	0.8
Does the teacher answer your questions in a helpful way?	121	99	81.8	21	17.4	1	0.8
Does the teacher let you know when your child is having trouble at school?	121	97	80.2	20	16.5	4	3.3

Table 12 Continued

Items	Usually			Sometimes		Never	
	<i>n</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Does the teacher encourage you to come to school to visit or help?	120	84	70.0	25	20.8	11	9.2
Does the teacher tell you specific ways that you could help your child do better?	121	81	66.9	33	27.3	7	5.8
Do the teacher's suggestions work in helping your child?	117	77	65.8	36	30.8	4	3.4
Does the teacher greet you in the morning when you take your child to school?	116	71	61.2	21	18.1	24	20.7

Parent Involvement at Home (PIH). Eight items were included in the Parent Involvement at Home (Patrikakou&Weissberg, 2000) questionnaire that examined multiple parent practices which provided assistance to the children socially and academically. Parents were asked to describe how many days during an average week certain behaviors occurred (Patrikakou&Weissberg, 2000). Replies from participants indicated that parents were very involved with their children at home. Eighty-four percent of participants stated that they checked their child's homework on school nights 5-7 days a week, 81.7% made sure that their child had a quiet place to do homework 5-7 days a week, and 75.2% responded that they helped their child with their homework 5-7 days a week. Fifteen percent of parents specified that they read to their child less than one day a week, and 13.4 % stated that less than one day a week they arranged for their child to play with other children of his or her age. The responses are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13

Parent Involvement at Home (PIH)

Items	<i>n</i>	5-7 days		2-4 days		1 day		Less than 1 day	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I check that my child's homework is done on school nights.	120	101	84.2	16	13.3	1	0.8	2	1.7
I make sure that my child has a quiet place to do homework.	120	98	81.7	19	15.8	0	0.0	3	2.5
I help my child with homework.	121	91	75.2	25	20.7	3	2.5	2	1.7
I talk to my child about what he or she is learning at school.	121	79	65.3	40	33.1	2	1.7	0	0.0
I talk to my child about getting along with his or her friends.	120	77	64.2	27	22.5	14	11.7	2	1.7
I have my child in bed by 9:00 p.m.	121	68	56.2	43	35.5	2	1.7	8	6.6
I arrange for my child to play with other children of his or her age.	119	55	46.2	39	32.8	9	7.6	16	13.4
I read with my child.	120	29	24.2	52	43.3	21	17.5	18	15.0

Focus Group Results

The focus group results were collected from a total of 22 participants. These twenty-two participants completed the questionnaires regarding their parental engagement in their children's education and also volunteered to participate in one of three focus groups. Participants were either members of Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church (AFMBC) and/or were parents of children who participated in the Summer Youth Program (SYP) conducted at the church from June 2011 to August 2011 in Dallas, Texas. The three focus group sessions were held at AFMBC in a designated classroom over a period of three weeks during the month of July 2011. The duration for each group session was as follows: Group One, 22 minutes; Group Two, 45 minutes; and Group Three, 42 minutes.

Description of focus group participants. Focus Group One consisted of six participants, all women (five mothers and one grandmother). The second group involved seven participants, five women (all mothers), and two men (both fathers). The third group contained nine participants, five women, (three mothers, one grandmother, and one great aunt) and four men (three fathers, and one primary caregiver). According to the participants within the focus group sessions, occupations included principals, teachers, nurses, college instructors, entrepreneurs and skilled laborer workers. All participants were African American.

Focus group sessions. Participants in each focus group session were asked three questions regarding parental engagement in their children's education. The questions were:

1. How would you define parental involvement?
2. Tell me about ways you are involved with your child's at home, at school, and in the community.
3. What do you know that benefits your child the most?

After analyzing the data, the three questions revealed four major categories relating to parents and their engagement in the children's education: (1) describing and defining parental involvement as being involved, (2) home, school, and community involvement activities, (3) knowing what their children are doing and their associates, and (4) knowing God.

Describing and defining parental involvement as being involved. Three focus groups described and defined parental involvement in familiar terms. Participants responses were related in many areas such as total involvement developmentally, involvement in the classroom, and involvement at home. The following are statements from the participants.

Focus Group One

Female 4: To me parent involvement is being totally involved in your child's life. It means you are there for them mentally, physically, and spiritually. You are concerned about their mental, physical, educational development. You make sure they have physical activities. I do not leave their education up to the school. I am actively involved in their education.

I work with her at home. I give her information in addition to what they're being taught at school. I keep her involved in social activities so that she understands that community services is important which is why she got in Girl Scout and sports and physical activity as well.

Focus Group Two

Male 1: The way I define parental involvement is just being involved in every aspect of your child's life, not only with education but in the life lessons that I have learned in life. If your child is learning to ride a bike and you are pushing them after while, they understand how it works and as a result, that's a life lesson, that's parental involvement but parental involvement also to me is allowing your child to learn some things that you can't teach them it means that sometimes, they learn from other kids.

Focus Group Three

Male 5: Well, I would define parent involvement as being involved in every aspect of your kids life socially, in homes, in the community, in their church life and from education stand point just knowing everything about the curriculum they are taking if the curriculum is actually an arithmetic curriculum or it's just a systematic curriculum where it states a certain purpose the State requirements but it doesn't erase them. So I just think you have to be involved in every aspect of your kids' life.

Home, school, and community activities and involvement. Participants discussed the different areas of parental involvement associated with the education of their children. Participants revealed the following information.

Focus Group One

Female 4: At home, I'm working with my daughter who's 11. I'm teaching her how to cook. I try to make sure she knows how to keep her body clean. I tell her she only has one body, take care of it. You know, take good care of your body. Look to yourself how to dress. Just pay attention to these things so that she develops into a woman. I'll teach her how to be a homemaker. She knows how to fry chicken and cornbread. I got [Indiscernible] now. And [Laughs] I teach her how to wash and fold clothes. Teach her how to hospital corners on the covers. She don't want to do that. I also talk to her. You know I tell her that she's going to be a mother, a wife one day. And it's important for her to develop for herself as

well as for the people who's going to intentionally be in her life. She's going to have to build her own family one day. So I plant the seeds in her.

Focus Group Two

Female 1: At school, I am like a volunteer as they say and I do work a full time job but I am constantly at school, I have two children they are twins, in two different classes and so pretty much everybody at the school knows me. I am a volunteer – like I said I volunteer a lot [Inaudible] you don't happen if I have read into the kids or if I am kicking paper work or whatever, definitely with the homework I'm near, I don't understand, I maybe a really little gather and they have to explain homework because I don't know some of this homework nowadays. We need to help so, I am there for that at home, and we definitely help homework.

Knowing what their children are doing and knowing who they are with.

Many participants believed it was just as important to know what their children were doing in and out of the home. The responses revealed that these participants wanted to know who their children were associating with outside of the home, at school and in the surrounding community.

Focus Group Two

Female 2: Being involved in different activities at church and outside activities, doing homework, following up on homework, talking to your children, keep an open communication you know, find out who their friends are. Sometime and maybe, I know some people might have rules against going into their room and snooping but I was a snooping parent so and I snoop in diaries and to find out what was going on and sometimes, I was able to bring up conversation not revealing that I had snooped to open a dialog.

Female 4: I agree with everything that has been said thus far, I am an investigative parent, snoopy or whatever you want to call it as well. I read letters, I go through the phones, I meet the parents of the friends, I also follow up with the teachers to see exactly where my children are and if they are not on], what can be done to get them there and I also make it

known that I don't believe in or appeal myself to them and I don't expect the teacher to do that because they know better so the same way they act at home when they are with me, I expect them that – to give their teacher that same respect.

Focus Group Three

Female 4: I also agree but one of the things you can go a little step further you also could, you also have to be involved with their children in the community for where you live because you have to know where they are going and the surroundings in the community because this is just as important as the school; all these to other stuff because the community is very important. So you got to know where your child is; you got to know who all the surroundings. So I will agree with even what they sent but I have to put that in there because I've got to know what the children are in the community and whose house they're going to, that's very important.

Male 4: Yes like she said I'm with her on that you need to know who they hang with you know what kind of company that they are keeping. So you can actually tell when they hang around the wrong individual, they buy language to change and you all, you can pick up on it and you can go okay what's really happening and then you can cut it off right there at the bottom. Well we parents but we like curb finders in case of bouncing off the road and the curb keeps you on the road. So I would like to say I'm with her I'm just taking back up to what she said.

Knowing God. Many of the participants believed that having faith in God enabled them to handle the everyday situations with their children and the daily functions of life. Some of the comments are listed below.

Focus Group One

Female 2: Um, the first thing is I know God and I think that if you know Christ then you know who the head of your life and your family is then that trickles down my – It's God first. My husband is the head of the house as we say but we follow those – we try to follow the structure, not that it's perfect but if you do that then you can train your children well. You know what your roles are in their development as parents. You

know, if you know what your role is as a wife and a lover then you should know what your role is as a parent. And that training has trickled down. So I think just having a Christian foundation sets everything else into motion for me.

Female 5: I would say my relationship with God because that is the basis of everything, everything that I am and everything that I know. And then when I have that and I can pass it on to them, they pretty much see how I handle things, and see who I go to when I'm in trouble and what I need and when I just – praise it and they do the things that, that I do. So just knowing that when they go to because – just a firm example, their grandfather passed like about three months now and I was concerned about you know, when I told them and I was talking to them, I was like, well how are you all doing and how was everything and I checked on you know, the next day. And my youngest son who's eight now, he was like, "Well, I'm just glad that papa is not suffering anymore and he's in a better place." And see when he said that, I had a certain peace that came over me because I know you were okay and it was only because of the relationship that you're going to be okay.

Research Question Two

The second research question asked, "What parental activities do African American parents find most effective?" The comments made by parents in the focus group sessions were used to answer this question.

Participants contributed the following statements.

Focus Group Three

Female 3: At home, basically I um, I make sure of their wellbeing. I'm a single parent and I teach my daughter the things that she should know as a young woman growing up. And even with my son, I know I can't teach them how to be a man but I do – he will be a good head of the household to put it that way, when he grows up.

Focus Group One

Female 3: Being involved in different activities at church and outside activities, doing homework, following up on homework, talking to your children, keep an open communication you know, find out who their friends are.

Female 4: At home, I'm working with my daughter who's 11. I'm teaching her how to cook. I try to make sure she knows how to keep her body clean. I tell her she only has one body, take care of it. You know, take good care of your body. Look to yourself how to dress. Just pay attention to these things so that she develops into a woman.

Research Question Three

The third research question asked, "What are the barriers that impede African American parental involvement in their children's education?" PASS questions 25-29 asked participants to respond to types of difficulties that limited their involvement in the children's education. Participants were also asked to specify "Other" barriers that interfered with participation in question 30.

Work Schedules was a barrier for 70.5% of the parents, while Lack of Time was reported by 63.6%. Transportation was "not an issue" at 91.8%, followed by concerns for Small Children at 84.4% (Table 14). Those parents who had "Other" challenges listed the following: programs were at night and many parents worked nights, some parents traveled with their jobs, some parents had multiple children in early childhood grades and could not attend two programs on the same day because of the scheduled times, and they were simply tired after working all day.

Table 14

Difficulties/Barriers for Parents

	Not an issue		Some		A lot	
Barriers (<i>n</i> = 122)	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Transportation	112	91.8	7	5.7	3	2.5
Small Children	103	84.4	13	10.7	6	4.9
Time of Programs	65	53.3	50	41.0	7	5.7
Lack of Time	44	36.4	58	47.9	19	15.7
Work Schedule	36	29.5	59	48.4	27	22.1
Other	9	56.3	6	4.9	1	0.8

Research Question Four

The fourth research question asked, “Are there differences in parental involvement by ages of parents, levels of income, levels of education, and family structures?” Parental involvement was measured using the Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement Scale (PISC), the Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH). The demographic variables were used to group the participants when comparing mean scores of the parental involvement instruments.

PASS Subscale Scores

The Parent and School Survey (PASS) produced six subscales: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community. Pearson product-moment correlations were first calculated to determine relationships among the subscale scores. The correlations coefficients and significance levels are displayed in the following table.

Table 15

Correlations of PASS Subscale Scores

	Parenting (<i>n</i> = 122)	Comm (<i>n</i> = 120)	Volun (<i>n</i> = 120)	Home (<i>n</i> = 119)	Decision (<i>n</i> = 121)	Collab (<i>n</i> = 121)
Parenting	1	0.47***	0.32***	0.36***	0.34***	0.31**
Comm		1	0.49***	0.50***	0.34***	0.23*
Volun			1	0.43***	0.45***	0.27**
Home				1	0.46***	0.25**
Decision					1	0.43***
Collab						1

p* < 0.05, *p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001

The multiple correlations among the PASS subscales required a multivariate approach to analyses. The set of subscales were subjected to MANOVA tests to compare groups by fathers' ages, mothers' ages, income levels, fathers' education, mothers' education, and

family structures. No significant differences were found these demographic variables, with the exception of mothers' ages.

The overall MANOVA for mothers' ages produced a Wilks' lambda value of 0.20 ($F = 1.9, p = 0.03, d = 0.10$) comparing the groups of 18-35 years, 36-45 years, and 46 years and older. Follow-up ANOVAs were significant only for the subscale Collaborating with the Community. Post-hoc tests revealed that the youngest group scores were significantly lower than the middle group and the oldest group. Higher scores indicated more positive support for collaborating with the community.

Table 16

Collaborating Subscale Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA by Mothers' Ages

Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
18-36 years	23	2.82	0.60	6.81	0.01	0.11
36-45 years	75	3.39	0.70			
46+ years	13	3.40	0.62			

PASS, PISC, PPTO, and PIH Scores

Total scale mean scores for the Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement Scale (PISC), the Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH) were calculated by adding the items scores and dividing by the number of items in each instrument. The sample means and standard deviations are displayed in Table 17.

Table 17

PISC, PPTO, PIH Total Scale Means and Standard Deviations

Instrument	<i>n</i>	Ranges	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
PASS	114	1 to 5	4.09	0.39
PISC	110	1 to 3	2.52	0.40
PPTO	113	1 to 3	2.74	0.37
PIH	117	1 to 4	3.47	0.40

Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to determine relationships among the instruments. Significant correlations were found for each pair of scores, as displayed in Table 18. A multivariate approach was therefore required to make comparisons based on the demographic variables.

Table 18

PASS, PISC, PPTO, and PIH Correlations

	PASS (<i>n</i> = 114)	PISC (<i>n</i> = 110)	PPTO (<i>n</i> = 103)	PIH (<i>n</i> = 106)
PASS	1	0.50***	0.36***	0.46***
PISC		1	0.41***	0.32**
PPTO			1	0.36***
PIH				1

p* < 0.01, *p* < 0.001

MANOVAs were calculated to compare groups by fathers' ages, mothers' ages, income levels, fathers' education, mothers' education, and family structures. Only one of the demographic variables produced a significant difference among groups when the set of scale scores were compared. For fathers' ages, the MANOVA produced a Wilks' lambda value of 0.70 ($F = 2.56, p = 0.01, d = 0.16$). The follow-up ANOVAs resulted in a significant difference among fathers' age groups only on the PASS mean scores. Post-hoc tests indicated that the youngest age group differed significantly from the oldest age group of fathers, with the older fathers reporting more positive support for parental involvement. The means and standard deviations are displayed Table 19.

Table 19

PASS Total Scale Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA by Fathers' Ages

Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
18-36 years	10	3.80	0.36	6.25	.01	0.18
36-45 years	38	4.10	0.33			
46+ years	14	4.31	0.36			

Summary

This chapter conveyed the findings of how African Americans parents were involved in their children's education, what parental activities African American parents found most effective, what barriers impeded African American parents' involvement in their children's education, and what differences were evident in parental involvement by

ages of parents, levels of income, levels of education, and family structures. Data were collected from 122 parents and primary caregivers who volunteered to answer the questionnaires, and 22 parents and primary caregivers who volunteered to participate in one of three focus group sessions. Results were provided in tables and figures.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study examined how African American parents were involved in their children's education, prekindergarten through sixth grade. The purpose of this study was to explore the different areas of parental involvement, the levels of engagement, the barriers that impede their involvement, and the activities they found most effective relative to their children. This chapter contains a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings which represent the research questions. Moreover, conclusions were extracted from the findings and limitations were described. To conclude, recommendations are offered with various approaches of improving parental engagement.

Summary of the Study

This study explored how African American parents were involved in their children's education. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory and Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement were used as the frameworks for this study. One hundred and twenty-two participants completed questionnaires and 22 participants volunteered for the focus group sessions. The Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement in School Survey (PISC), the Parent Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH) were utilized to collect quantitative data. Qualitative data were obtained through focus group sessions as further explanations of the findings

Overview of Findings

This section reviews the findings centered on the information accrued from the quantitative and qualitative data. Key findings were produced from the questionnaire data and extended throughout the focus group sessions. The four research questions are discussed in this section of findings.

Research Question One and Research Question Two

RQ 1: How are African American parents involved in their children's education, prekindergarten through sixth grade?

RQ 2: What parental activities do African American parents find most effective?

The findings of how African American parents are involved in their children's education and what parental activities African American parents find most effective were reported as a result of the collection of data from the Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement in School (PISC), Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH), and the focus group sessions.

Parenting. Epstein's framework describes six types of parental involvement. The first of these, "Parenting," encourages parents to provide a home environment to support children as students (Epstein, 1997). The findings of this study disclosed that parents reported high levels relating to parenting roles. The Parent and School Survey (PASS) results indicated that parents displayed schoolwork in the home, parents had children's books in the home, and reading was a regular activity in the home. Parent Involvement at Home (PIH) responses revealed that parents read with their child two to four days a week

and helped with homework five to seven days a week. Parents specifically agreed with the strategies of providing a home environment that supported their children as students at all grade levels. Parent Involvement at School (PISC) results revealed that parents communicated with teachers often and attended parent-teacher conferences frequently. These results indicated that parents valued the communication with teachers and maintained consistent contact.

Parents in the focus group sessions reported that they were involved with their children in the home, in the school and in the community. One parent stated that parental involvement was being “totally involved in your child’s life. I do not leave their education up to the school. I am actively involved in their education. I work with her at home. I keep her involved in social activities”. Another stated, “I’m teaching her how to cook, I make sure she keeps her body clean”. One other responded, “At school, I am like a volunteer as they say and I do work a full time job but I am constantly at school.” In addition, parents identified numerous children’s activities which included football, basketball, soccer, girl scouts, boy scouts, community, and church activities.

Based on the results from the PASS, PIH, and PISC, how African American parents were involved in their children’s education included the following: (a) assisting their children with homework, (b) providing a quiet work area, (c) reading with their children, (d) talking with their children and (e) maintaining consistent contact with teachers. Additionally, focus group discourse disclosed that parents discussed the importance of hygiene with their children, the manner in which they dressed, and the art

of preparing a meal. Moreover, parents reported that they were active in extracurricular activities with their children outside of school and in the community.

Communicating. Type two of Epstein's framework defines "Communicating" as "...the effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications." On the Parent Involvement Scale (PISC), parents reported that they called or went to see their child's teacher several times, visited their child's classroom several times, and attended parent conferences several times. On the Parent and School Survey (PASS), parents reported that they felt comfortable visiting their child's school, visited their child's classroom several times a year, and knew how well their child was doing in school. The Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO) reported that parents overall had positive relationships with their children's teachers.

Parents indicated in this study they visited the school often, communicated with teachers on a regular basis, and knew the progress of their children. Parents also reported they had positive relationships with the teachers and teachers provided information on a regular basis. These results provide evidence that parents were monitoring their children's progress, and were interacting and communicating with the teachers (Epstein, 1997). The results from the PISC, the PASS, and the PPTO support Epstein's framework type two "communicating" and also provide multiple areas of African American parents' involvement in their children's education in this study.

Volunteering. "Volunteering" is Epstein's third type of parental involvement. Epstein described volunteering as identifying the many skills, talents, and occupations of

parents and utilizing those skills in the classroom, the school, and in the community (1997). Parents on the Parent and School Survey (PASS) reported that they agreed that in the past 12 months parents volunteered at their child's school at least three times. Responses from the Parent Involvement at School (PISC) questionnaire revealed that parents volunteered several times to help in classrooms. "I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school" was reported as 100% agreement by parents on the PASS questionnaire.

The focus group sessions also provided evidence of parents volunteering. Parents stated, "At school, I am like an volunteer as they say and I do work a full time job but I am constantly at school, I have two children they are twins, in two different classes and so pretty much everybody at the school knows me. I am a volunteer – like I said I volunteer a lot". Another stated:

At school, I am room dad. Yeah, I am volunteer dad. I'm the dad that goes to the school, taking pizzas on Wednesdays or Thursdays. I'm that dad. I'm the dad that walks and the kids in every class know me because they know that not only am I my daughter's dad but if they need me, I'm there – I can be there for them as well.

Learning at Home. Type four of Epstein's framework "learning at home" was defined as "...provides information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum related activities" (Epstein, 1997). Findings reported parents checked their child's homework to make sure it was done "five to seven days a week" as reported by the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH) questionnaire. In

addition, parents reported that they had their children in bed by 9:00 p.m. and parents helped children with their homework.

The results in this study of “learning at home” is another strong indicator of the involvement of parents in this sample. The focus group sessions revealed that parents and primary caregivers were very active in the overall development of their children. One parent stated, “I teach my daughter the things that she should know as a young woman growing up.” Another commented, “I tell her she is going to be a mother, a wife one day. And it is important for her to develop for herself as well as for the people who’s going to

Decision-Making. Epstein’s fifth type of parental involvement, “decision-making”, describes the inclusion of parents in school decisions and developing parents as leaders and representatives (1997). Results from the PASS revealed that 13.9% of the parents agreed that they had attended a school board meeting in the previous 12 months. This area of participation by parents in this study was low when comparing involvement in the previous four types.

Parents in the focus groups did not discuss any decision making regarding policies, elective officials, or joining the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) regarding their school. However, parents reported on the PASS that they were knowledgeable of school policies and laws.

Collaborating with Community. Epstein’s final type of parental involvement, “collaborating with community”, focuses on “...identifying resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and

development” (Epstein, 1997). In responses to the Parent and School Survey, parents reported that their children attended community programs and they talked frequently with other parents about educational issues.

Parents in the focus groups explained that many of their children were involved in sports, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and church activities. Parents did not discuss extracurricular activities associated with the school systems. All children’s sports were organized through community leagues and not their schools.

Research Question Three

RQ 3. What are the barriers that impede African American parental involvement in their children’s education, prekindergarten through sixth grade?

Research question three sought to examine the barriers that impeded African American parental involvement in their children’s education. PASS questions 25-29 addressed some challenges that could limit parental involvement. Parents and primary caregivers in this study indicated that Transportation and Small Children were not issues of concern. Instead, Work Schedule and Lack of Time presented difficulties for participants.

Research Question Four

RQ 4. Are there differences in parental involvement by ages of parents, levels of income, levels of education, and family structures?

Examining parental involvement by the ages, the levels of income, levels of education, and the family structure of participants was the final research question. The

Parent and School Survey (PASS) subscales were correlated so the subscales were analyzed as a set of variables. Multivariate analyses of variance tests determined whether there were significant differences when the parents were grouped by the demographic variables. No significant differences were found, with the exception of Mothers' Ages. The mothers in the age groups from 36 to 45 years and 46 years and older reported significantly higher subscale scores for Collaborating than mothers in the younger age group (18 to 36 years).

The total scale mean scores for the Parent and School Survey (PASS), The Parent Involvement in School (PISC), the Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parent Involvement at Home (PIH) were significantly correlated. Multivariate analyses of variance tests compared mean scores for the set of instruments by the demographic variables. The statistical tests were not significant with the exception of fathers' ages. The oldest group of fathers (46 years and older) reported significantly higher scores on the PASS than the youngest fathers (18-36 years).

Discussion

Findings Supported in the Literature

Yan (1999) reported that most parents want their children to succeed. Abrams and Gibbs, (2002) and Troutman, Gallavan, and Jones (2001) reported that African American parents value the education and the success of their children. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) found that African American parents are willing participants in assisting their children through the educational process and these parents assist in various

ways. The findings in this study support all of the above research regarding the involvement of African American parents in their children's education. African American parents participated and were engaged in the following: (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with community. These six frameworks of parental involvement is one of the most frequently employed constructs in school created by Epstein (1997) and utilized throughout the United States to measure parental involvement in elementary and secondary education schools.

Findings Contradictory to the Literature

Findings reported by Charvkin (1989), Kalyapuu (1999), Samaras and Wilson (1999), Abrams and Gibbs (2002) found African American parents were intimidated, alienated, and made to feel uncomfortable while visiting teachers at their children's school. Research also indicated that African American parents were made to feel unwelcomed when addressing issues with teachers (Harry, Rueda, & Kalyanpuu, 1999; Samaras & Wilson, 1999). The findings in this study challenge those findings. Parents reported that they communicate with teachers regularly, were comfortable visiting the school often, and were informed on the progress and behavior of their children regularly.

Ethnic and minority parents were often viewed as less engaged in their children's school (Nzinga-Johnson, Baker, & Aupperlee, 2009) and, many African American parents were found to be uninvolved in the school and more involved in the home (McKay, et al., 2003). Parents in this study utilized various approaches and were highly

engaged in the education of their children. Parents volunteered at school, provided quiet working places in the home, read with their children, attended extra- curricular activities, discussed biological development, and discussed becoming parents someday. Parents in this study were just as involved in the schools as they were in the home. Perhaps being more involved at home permits parents to discuss matters they believe are more relevant to their culture and believe that more personal conversations should be discussed within the home.

Interpretations of the Findings

The sample for the current study was recruited from a church setting in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area. Ninety-eight percent of the participants were African American. The majority of the parents were between 25 and 45 years of age. Dual family households and dual families with extended family members comprised 67% of the sample. Most of the parents had attended college, with 59% of the mothers attaining a bachelor's or master's degree and 32% of the fathers with bachelor's degree or higher. The most frequent reported household income level was \$40,000 to \$49,999. However, 58.1% of the sample reported incomes higher than \$60,000. Residential locations included 60.8% Suburban and 31.7% City. Only 6.7% of the parents identified their residential locations as Urban. Parents reported that 54.1% of the children attended public schools, 32% attended charter schools, and 11.5% were enrolled in private or church affiliated schools.

The sample represented in this study differs from those reported in previous research studies that may have concentrated on low-income urban neighborhoods (Aikens & Barbarins, 2008). The findings provide a fresh vision of African American families raising children in a large metropolitan area.

Conclusion

This study found the following: African American parents were highly involved in their children's education as measured by the Parent and School Survey (PASS), the Parent Involvement in School Scale (PISC), the Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO), and the Parents Involvement at Home (PIH). African American parents and primary caregivers of this study met all six types of parental involvement model which include (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, (6) and collaborating with community. The results were derived from questionnaires which provided quantitative data, and from focus group sessions that provided further explanations through the voices of parents.

Limitations

This study provided data concerning African American parents and primary caregivers' parental involvement in their children's education, pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The following are limitations of the study:

1. The sample was drawn from one selected church population.
2. The findings cannot be generalized to all African American parents.

Recommendations

The findings in this study revealed several implications for parents and teachers and their involvement with one another in the home, in the school, and in the community.

Recommendations for Teachers

The findings in this study challenge some of the research that African American parents are unable to meet the fundamental needs of their children (Aikens & Barbarins, 2008), are intimidated by teachers and administrators (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002), and do not have the time to participate in school activities (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). Parents in this study responded that teachers made them feel comfortable, teachers were easy to communicate with, teachers would notify the parents if the child was having problems, and teachers encouraged parents to visit in classrooms. Receiving support from parents can assist teachers in fostering and facilitating the academic success of the children. For successful practices, teachers should:

- (1) Continue outreach. Utilize various methods. Initiate new ideas; reach out to extended family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles).
- (2) Make parents feel welcome. A pleasant atmosphere is an advantage and usually results in volunteers.
- (3) Communicate frequently and positively. There are numerous methods of contacting parents, such as texting, emailing, school websites, and the telephone. Good communication usually produces results.
- (4) Focus on children's positive behaviors and academic successes. Allow

parents to become a part of the planning process for their child's achievement in the classroom. Share the load. Many parents want to be included and recognize when their children are successful.

- (5) Acknowledge the efforts of parents in the home and the community. Many parents help their children with homework. Inform parents when there is a change in their child's grade because of their help. Support parents' community participation by acknowledging their efforts. Everyone wants to be recognized for their efforts.
- (6) Children are the connecting link. Children need to see the parents and teachers working together. Children can encourage parents to attend school functions. When teachers are excited, the children get excited. When the children get excited, parents get involved.
- (7) Become acquainted, develop relationships, and be sensitive to the comfort levels of parents. Becoming knowledgeable of different cultures will help teachers better understand how they can help the children and the parents.
- (8) Be aware of barriers and challenges to involvement for parents. Many parents work multiple jobs, many employers will not allow parents to take time off, and some parents may travel professionally. Communicate with these parents and create a plan that will work for both the parents and the teachers.

Recommendations for Parents

Parents are the principle influences in the early childhood years. It is important for parents to assist and become involved in the education of their children. The following are recommendations for parents:

- (1) Contact the parental engagement liaison in your school district. Ask what you can do to become more proactive in the education of your children.
 - (2) Join the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and develop partnerships.
 - (3) Attend school board meetings. It is an opportunity to meet the board members, to keep abreast of critical decisions regarding the education of your children, and to allow your voice to be heard.
 - (4) Know the education standards and laws governing your state. It is not always the teacher's decision what is taught in the classroom.
 - (5) Respect the teachers. Teachers care for your children in their classrooms.
- Positive feedback to assist teachers will be an asset to your child's overall developmental process.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research regarding African American families should include recruiting participants beyond the school setting to include churches, community centers, sororities and fraternities, and multiple places of employment.

Children's perspectives should be explored to determine the perceived impacts of parental involvement at home, at school, and in the community. Feedback from teachers would provide additional evidence of successful parental involvement practices.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378 FAX 940-898-4416
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

June 13, 2011

Ms. Nedra Y. Washington
2679 Deephill Circle
Dallas, TX 75233

Dear Ms. Washington:

Re: How Are African American Parents Involved in Their Children's Early Childhood Education?
(Protocol #: 16694)

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp and a copy of the annual/final report are enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. The signed consent forms and final report must be filed with the Institutional Review Board at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from June 13, 2011. Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review to the IRB using the Modification Request Form. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any unanticipated incidents. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathy DeOrnellas, Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

enc.

cc. Dr. Larry LeFlore, Department of Family Sciences
Dr. Lin Moore, Department of Family Sciences
Graduate School

APPENDIX B
Permission to Use Tools

Permission to use instrument

>>> nedra washington <nikkiwash@sbcglobal.net> 1/4/2011 12:14 PM >>>

Hello Dr. Ringenberg,

My name is Nedra Washington, and I am a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. I am in the Family Science Department and my area of concentration is Child Development. I am writing to ask for permission from you and your colleagues to use the PASS instrument for my study/dissertation.

My study/dissertation will use a mix method approach and seeks to examine the levels of African American Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education (where are they?) as well as give a voice to these parents regarding how they define parental involvement, are they welcomed at their child's school, and how do they define barriers that minimize their involvement, etc. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you in advance for the opportunity utilize the instrument.

Nedra Y. Washington, BBA, MBA, ABD

Re: Permission to Use PASS

Tuesday, January 4, 2011 12:57 PM

From:

"Matthew Ringenberg" <Matthew.Ringenberg@valpo.edu>

To:

"nedra washington" <nikkiwash@sbcglobal.net>

Hello Nedra

You are very welcome to use the instrument. The only thing, if I might ask, is inform me when you are done. I'd be interested in the results. Best wishes in your research. It sounds like a very valuable topic.

Matt

Permission to use instruments

From: nedra washington [mailto:nikkiwash@sbcglobal.net]

Sent: Tue 1/4/2011 1:04 PM

To: Patrikakou, Eva

Subject: Permission to Use PIH, PISC, PPTO

Hello Dr. Patrikakou,

My name is Nedra Washington, and I am a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University, in Denton, TX. My area of concentration is Child Development. I am writing to ask permission from you and your colleague, Dr, Weissberg, to use the following instruments, Parent Involvement at Home (PIH), Parent Involvement at School (PISC), and Parent Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO).

My study/dissertation will use a mix method approach and seeks to examine the levels of African American Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education (where are they?) as well as give a voice to these parents regarding how they define parental involvement, are they welcomed at their child's school, and how do they define barriers that minimize their involvement, etc.? I look forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you in advance for the opportunity utilize the instrument.

Nedra Y. Washington, BBA, MBA, ABD

RE: Permission to Use PIH, PISC, PPTO

Thursday, January 6, 2011 7:55 AM

From:

"Patrikakou, Eva" <epatrika@depaul.edu>

To:

"nedra washington" <nikkiwash@sbcglobal.net>

Hi Nedra,

You may use the three instruments to which you are referring. Please note that you can find related psychometric properties in the following article which should also for citation purposes.

Patrikakou, E.N. & Weissberg, R.P. (2000). Parents' perceptions of teacher outreach and parent involvement in children's education. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 20, 103-119.

Good luck in your study. I would appreciate a copy of your finalized paper.

Best wishes!

E.P.

Eva Patrikakou, Ph.D.

Chair, Department of Counseling and Special Education

APPENDIX C

Consent to Participate in Research

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Investigator: Nedra Y. Washington 817/991/2086

Advisor: Lin Moore, Ph.D.940/898/2210

Explanation and Purpose of Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Ms. Washington's dissertation at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of this research is to determine how African American parents are involved in the child's early childhood education. In this particular study we will examine the levels of involvement and engagement in their child's early childhood education, barriers that limit their involvement in their child's early childhood education, and areas of involvement and engagement in their child's early childhood education.

Research Procedures

For this study, the investigator will conduct focus group sessions for parents of children. The focus group sessions will be conducted at the church. You will be videotaped during the focus group session and notes will be taken for your viewing to assure accuracy of your feedback. The purpose of the videotaping is to provide a transcript of the information discussed in the focus group sessions and assure the accuracy of the reporting of that information. Participants may ask questions at any time. Your maximum total time of commitment in this study is 45 minutes.

Potential Risks

The loss of time participating in a focus group session. The researcher will minimize the time required for each session and complete each session in 45 minutes. The loss of confidentiality. To reduce this risk, the videotapes will be secured in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. Only the research team will have access to the information. Participants will receive an email from the associate pastor, but will not be required to respond by email. The recruitment flyer is the only file that will email to potential participants. This will help to minimize "a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email downloading, and internet transactions". The possibility of minor emotional discomfort. Participants have been provided with a list of counseling services should they experience emotional discomfort. The possibility of fatigue while participating in the focus group session. The participants may stop at any time answering questions during the focus group session. The loss of anonymity. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed because others in the room during the focus group can see them and know they are part of the study and can hear what they say.

The researcher will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You

should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide the medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this research study is completely voluntarily, and you may discontinue your participation in the study at any time without penalty. It is anticipated that the results from this study will be published in the researcher's dissertation as well as in other research publication. The only direct benefit of this study to you is that the completion of the study, a summary of the results will be mailed to you upon request.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study, you may ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

Signature of Participate

Date

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, please provide an address to which the summary should be sent.

Reference

Texas Woman's University IRB (2011).

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Investigator: Nedra Y. Washington 817/991/2086

Advisor: Lin Moore, Ph.D. 940/898/2210

Explanation and Purpose of Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Ms. Washington's dissertation at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of this research is to examine parental involvement and engagement among African American parents in the child's early childhood education. In this particular study, the researcher will examine how African American parents are involved in their child's early childhood education, the levels of involvement and engagement in their child's early childhood education, the areas of involvement in their child's early childhood education, and barriers that limit their involvement and engagement in their child's early childhood education.

Research Procedures

It is with respect and admiration that I invite you to volunteer and participate in this study. Parents who agree to participate in this study will be provided with a packet. The packet will contain consent forms, questionnaires, an envelope, and a recruitment flyer. The questionnaires are entitled, *Parent and School Survey (PASS)*, *Parent Involvement at Home (PIH)*, *Parent Involvement at School (PISC)*, and *Parent Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO)*. The questionnaires will contain directions on how to provide responses to the questions asked.

Through the church, packets will be available at the information desk of the church and the Summer Youth Program (SYP). Parents who agree to participate are asked to sign the consent form below and return it to the researcher sealed in an envelope provided before completing the questionnaires. Parents are then asked to complete the questionnaires. Once the questionnaires are completed, parents are asked to enclose the questionnaires back into the packet, seal the packet, and return the packet it to the researcher.

Potential Risks

The loss of time answering the questionnaire. Questionnaires should only take 20 minutes. The loss of confidentiality. To reduce this risk, questionnaires will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. Only the research team will have access to the information. (2) Participants will receive an email from the associate pastor, but will not be required to respond by email. The recruitment flyer is the only file that will be emailed to potential participants. This will help to minimize "a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions". The possibility of minor emotional discomfort. Participants have been provided with a list of counseling services should they experience emotional discomfort.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide the medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this research study is completely voluntarily, and you may discontinue your participation in the study at any time without penalty. It is anticipated that the results of this study will be published in the researcher's dissertation as well as in other research publication. The only direct benefit of this study to you is that upon completion of the study, a summary of the results will be mailed or emailed to you upon request.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions concerning this research study you may ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu You will be given a copy of a consent form to keep.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Email _____

Reference

Texas Woman's University IRB (2011)

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Flyer

**Department of Family Sciences/ Child Development and Early Childhood Education
Texas Woman's University**

***PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT***

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study of
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR CHILD.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to:

- (1) Sign a consent form to participate
- (2) Complete anonymous questionnaires regarding parental involvement and engagement with your child in the school, in the home, and in the community.
- (3) Participate in a focus group session discussing parental involvement and engagement.

Your participation would involve completing questionnaires which would take approximately 20 minutes,
and/or

Your participation would involve *1 of 3* sessions, each of which is approximately 45 minutes. The sessions will take place at the church. Packets will be available at the information desk of the church and at each focus group sessions.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive refreshments during the focus group sessions and results from this study.

Questionnaire Dates: June 19 - July 19, 2011

Focus Group Dates: July 7th, 14th, & 21st

Focus Group Times: 6:00 p. m.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study,
please contact:

Nedra Y. Washington @ nikkiwash@twu.edu or 817.991.2086 or

Lin Moore, PH.D @ lmoore@twu.edu or 940.898.2210

Family Sciences Department/Child Development and Early Childhood Education

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, Texas Woman's University.

APPENDIX E

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Certification

NEDRA Y. WASHINGTON

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Nedra Washington** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 01/29/2009

Certification Number: 167570

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Terri Ford successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 02/18/2010

Certification Number: 378486

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRES

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the total number of children in your household? Please check in one of the boxes the below.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more				
2. What is the total number of children in your household in school? Please check in one of the boxes the below.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (no kids in school) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more				
3. What is the total number of children at different grade levels in your household? Please check in one of the boxes to the right.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 children at different grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> 2 children at different grade levels <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more children at different grade levels				
4. What is the number of children in the household in school by gender?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Girls</th> <th>Boys</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Girls	Boys	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Girls	Boys				
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>				
5. How many children are in early childhood years? (Early childhood years pre-k through sixth grade) Please check in one of the boxes to the right.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (no children in early childhood years) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more				
6. Only one child can be used to complete this questionnaire. To the right, please indicate the grade of the child you will use to complete this questionnaire?	<input type="text"/>				
7. What is the gender of the child you are completing the questionnaire on? Please check in one of the boxes to the right.	<input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl				
8. What is your relationship to the child you are completing the questionnaire on? Please check in one of the boxes to the right.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Stepmother <input type="checkbox"/> Stepfather <input type="checkbox"/> Grandmother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandfather <input type="checkbox"/> Foster parent <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) <input type="text"/>				

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

<p>9. Is your child enrolled in... Please check in one of the boxes to the right.</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Charter School <input type="checkbox"/> Private School <input type="checkbox"/> Home Schooling <input type="checkbox"/> Church Affiliated School <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start (federally funded) <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool Program Head Start Charity Child Group <input type="checkbox"/> United Way <input type="checkbox"/> Mi Escuelita <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> </p>																								
<p>10. Which of the following best describes the area where you live? Please check in one the boxes the right.</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural </p>																								
<p>11. Ages of parents/primary caregivers in your household? Please check all that apply in one the boxes to the right.</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Mother</th> <th></th> <th>Father</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Under 25</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 26-35</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 36-45</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 46-55</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Please specify below</td> </tr> <tr> <td><div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px;"></div></td> <td></td> <td><div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px;"></div></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Mother		Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 25		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-35		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 36-45		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-55		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		<input type="checkbox"/>	Please specify below			<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px;"></div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px;"></div>
Mother		Father																							
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Please specify below																									
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px;"></div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px;"></div>																							

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

12. What is your marital status? Please check in one of the boxes to the right.	<input type="checkbox"/> Single (never married)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Married
	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

13. Is your household single or dual parent household? Please check in one of the boxes to the right.	<input type="checkbox"/> Single
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dual
	<input type="checkbox"/> Single with extended family
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dual with extended family

14. What are the highest levels of education completed in your household? Please check mother, father or primary caregiver for all that applies to your household.			
	Mother	Father	Primary Caregiver
Elementary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 th -10 th 11 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 th grade no diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduated High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some College	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 or more years of college, no degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.A. – A.S.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor's Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. A.-B.S.-B.B. A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master's Degree M.A.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. S.- M.B. A.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PHD, EDD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

15. Employment Status: Are you currently... Please check your status and below, the status of your household, and check one of the boxes to the right.

	Mother	Father	Primary Caregiver
Hourly wages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employed-salaried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homemaker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired			

16. What is the total household income? Please check one the boxes to the right..

- ☐ Less than \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to 49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to 59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 to 69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to 79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to 89,999
- ☐ \$90,000 to 110,000
- ☐ \$111,000 to 130,000
- ☐ \$130,000 or more

17. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Other (please specify below)

- ☐ Bi-racial (please specify)

Parent and School Survey (PASS)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree Partially Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	My child's schoolwork is always displayed in our home (e.g. hang papers on the refrigerator).	1	2	3	4	5
3.	If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterward.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I frequently explain difficult ideas to my child when she/he doesn't understand.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Every time my child does something well at school I compliment him / her.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Talking with my child's principal makes me <u>un</u> comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I always know how well my child is doing in school.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I am confused about my legal rights as a parent of a student.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I read to my child every day.	1	2	3	4	5

10.	I talk with other parents frequently about educational issues.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	My child attends community programs (e.g. YMCA, park/rec, community theatre) regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I have visited my child's classroom several times in the past year.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I have made suggestions to my child's teachers about how to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	There are many children's books in our house.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	In the past 12 months I have attended activities at my child's school several times (e.g. fun nights performances, awards nights).	1	2	3	4	5
16.	My child misses school several days each semester.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Talking with my child's current teacher makes me somewhat uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I don't understand the assignments my child brings home.	1	2	3	4	5

19.	Reading books is a regular activity in our home.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	If my child was having trouble in school I would not know how to get extra help for him / her.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I know the laws governing schools well.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	In the past 12 months I attended several school board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	In the past 12 months I volunteered at my child's school at least 3 times.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I know about many programs for youth in my community.	1	2	3	4	5

How difficult do the following issues make involvement with your child's school?

		A lot	Some	Not an Issue
25.	Lack of Time	1	2	3
26.	Time of Programs	1	2	3
27.	Small Children	1	2	3
28.	Transportation	1	2	3
29.	Work Schedule	1	2	3
30.	Other (Specify _____)	1	2	3

Parent Involvement Scale (PISC)

	Items	Never	1-2 Times	Several Times
1.	Called or went to see my child's teacher.			
2	I asked the teacher how I can help my child with school work.			
3.	I visited my child's classroom.			
4.	I volunteered to help in my child's classroom.			
5.	I went to parent-teacher conferences.			
6.	I picked up my child's report card.			

Parents Perceived Teacher Outreach (PPTO)

	Items	Never	Sometimes	Usually
1.	Does your child's teacher share information with you in a positive way?			
2.	Does the teacher answer your questions in a helpful way?			
3.	Does the teacher try to make you feel comfortable when you meet?			
4.	Does the teacher greet you in the morning when you take your child to school?			
5.	Is it easy to talk to or meet with your child's teacher?			
6.	Does the teacher encourage you to come to school to visit or help?			
7.	Does the teacher let you know when your child is having trouble at school?			
8.	Does the teacher let you know when your child is doing something well at school?			
9.	Does the teacher tell you specific ways that you could help your child do better?			
10.	Do the teacher's suggestions work in helping your child?			

Parent Involvement at Home (PIH)

	Items	Less than 1 day	1 day	2-4 days	5-7 days
1.	I talk to my child about what he or she is learning at school.				
2.	I read with my child.				
3.	I help my child with homework.				
4.	I have my child in bed by 9:00 pm.				
5.	I check that my child's homework is done on school nights.				
6.	I make sure that my child has a quiet place to do homework.				
7.	I talk to my child about getting along with his or her friends.				
8.	I arrange for my child to play with other children of his or her age.				

APPENDIX G

Parent and School Survey (PASS) According to Epstein's Constructs

PASS Items and their Correspondence to Epstein's Constructs

Epstein Construct	Item #	Items
1. Parenting	4.	I frequently explain difficult ideas to my child when she/he doesn't understand.
	14.	There are many children's books in our house.
	16.	My child misses school several days each semester.
	19.	Reading books is a regular activity in our home.
2. Communicating	3.	If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterward.
	6.	Talking with my child's principal makes me uncomfortable.
	7.	I always know how well my child is doing in school.
	17.	Talking with my child's current teacher makes me somewhat uncomfortable.
3. Volunteering	1.	I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school.
	12.	I have visited my child's classroom several times in the past year.
	15.	In the past 12 months I have attended activities at my child's school several times (e.g. fun nights performances, awards nights).
	23.	In the past 12 months I volunteered at my child's school at least 3 times.
4. Learning at home.	2.	My child's schoolwork is always displayed in our home (e.g. hang papers on the refrigerator).
	5.	I compliment my child for doing well in school.
	9.	I read to my child every day.
	18.	I don't understand the assignments my child brings home.
5. Decision-Making	8.	I am confused about my legal rights as a parent of a student.
	13.	I have made suggestions to my child's teachers about how to help my child learn.
	21.	I know the laws governing schools well.
	22.	In the past 12 months I attended several school board meetings.
6. Collaborating w/ Community	10.	I talk with other parents frequently about educational issues.
	11.	My child attends community programs (e.g. YMCA, park/rec, community theatre) regularly.
	20.	If my child was having trouble in school I would not know how to get extra help for him / her.
	24.	I know about many programs for youth in my community.

APPENDIX H
Referral List

Nedra Y. Washington

Referral List

Dallas Counseling & Wellness Center	972-385-7447
Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church Counseling Services	972- 228-2420
Child & Family Guidance Center	214- 351-3490