



# Appendix: Looking Back—A Brief History and Key Studies, 1974–95

## A Brief History of the Research, 1974–95

With the exception of a few seminal studies, this review of the research covers only the last few years, from 1995 to 2002. To understand more fully what the new studies have to tell us, we need to understand the 30-year base on which they build. As in many fields, much groundbreaking work was done in the early phases. In general, these studies fell into three groups:

### 1. Studies that evaluate the effects of programs and other interventions

- Early childhood and preschool programs that give low-income families information and skills to work with their children at home and collaborate with teachers at school
- Programs to help elementary, and sometimes middle, schools to work more closely with families in improving achievement
- Programs based in schools or the community to give students additional academic support and to assist their families with social services

### 2. Studies that look at the ways families are involved with their children's learning

- The relationship between family background (family income, education, occupation ethnicity, and culture) and student achievement
- The differences between how families of lower- and higher-performing children are engaged in their learning
- The ways parents are involved at home (monitoring homework and time use, talking about school, and planning for the future) and at school (attending events, meeting with teachers, and volunteering) and their effects on student performance

### 3. Studies that look at how families and schools interact

- Class and cultural mismatch, and what happens when student and family behavior does not fit the culture of the school
- Studies of high-performing schools and how they engage families
- Studies of effective practice to engage families of diverse backgrounds in improving achievement

## Key Questions

One way to look at the earlier research is to consider the questions it was trying to answer. Going back to the 1960s War on Poverty, Edward Zigler and other founders of Head Start asked about the damaging effects of poverty on young children.

### **Question 1. Could a preschool program designed to enrich early education and engage families in learning help poor children to overcome the disadvantages of poverty?**

This triggered a wave of studies on Head Start and the development of related programs for young children and families. Some, like High Scope, are based at program sites; others, such as Family As Teachers, reach families through home visits. Several studies document lasting effects for children who have taken part in these programs.

- Urie Brofenbrenner's review (1974) found that home-visiting programs that teach mothers to use learning materials had effects that last well into elementary school. This approach was more effective than preschool programs with low parent involvement.
- Schweinhart and Weikart (1992) studied the Perry Preschool Program, which includes parent education and outreach. Compared with a control group, the preschool graduates at age 19 were far more likely to have graduated from high school and be employed.
- Irving Lazar's study of Head Start graduates (1978) also found positive effects through high school. The effects were strongest for students who had attended programs with high parent involvement.

Would this approach work in elementary school as well? After reviewing findings on Head Start, Ira Gordon and others wondered if the concept could be carried into elementary school. Out of this question came the Follow Through program, another federal effort to improve school success for low-income children. Gordon (1979) divided parent involvement into three models:

- Parent Impact Model: The influence of parents and the home on a child's learning
- School Impact Model: Direct parent involvement in the school, from volunteering to serving on governing councils
- Community Impact Model: Parent involvement in all possible ways, from teacher at home to active member of the local community

Gordon concluded that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the parent involvement is—in all roles rather than focused on one or two—the more effective it is likely to be. He found that the effects are evident not only in children's achievement, but also in the quality of schools that serve the community. This framework has influenced much of the thinking about programs to engage families in improving student achievement, such as James Comer's School Development Program (Comer and Haynes, 1992).

Many studies of parent education and other programs to engage families during the elementary school years found positive results. Joyce Epstein's many studies on teacher

practices to involve families in homework show positive results (Epstein 1991; Dauber and Epstein, 1993). Hazel Leler's review (1987) of 48 studies on programs to engage families found that "the fuller the participation of parents, the more effective the results" on student achievement (p. 173).

The landmark study of James Coleman and his colleagues, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966), gathered a huge amount of data on schools and student achievement, by race and family background, including income and education level. Researchers mined this data base for years. One key finding was that family background, not school, seemed to have the greater effect on student achievement. This prompted another important question:

**Question 2. Do public schools actually realize their goal to equalize opportunity for students from all racial and economic backgrounds? Or do they maintain the inequalities in society? In other words, does family background determine achievement, or can schools make a difference?**

This question triggered another group of studies that addressed how far family socioeconomic status (SES) determines student performance. SES represents a cluster of factors, such as mother's education, family income, and father's occupation. If we look just at SES and achievement, we see a strong connection. Children's grades, test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance increase with each level of education that their mothers have completed.

The real question is why? The answer seems to be that in better-educated and wealthier families, children get more opportunities to learn and parents are more involved in their learning. Eva Eagle's study (1989) looked at whether family practices, not income and education, predict achievement. Using data from a large national study, she found that high school students from families with higher SES are more likely to graduate and attend college. When she looked at higher-achieving students from all SES levels, however, she found that their parents did the same things: They talked to the teachers, helped students plan for further education, and monitored their school work.

Reginald Clark's classic study, *Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail* (1983), and his later research on family time use, confirm these findings. Comparing practices in families with high-achieving students with those in low-achieving families, Clark found clear differences. His findings, and additional research by Herbert Walberg, Benjamin Bloom, Lawrence Steinberg, Catherine Snow, and many others, describe activities in families where children are doing well in school:

- Establishing a daily family routine.
- Monitoring out-of-school activities.
- Showing the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work.
- Expressing high expectations for their children's achievement.
- Encouraging children's progress in school.
- Reading, writing, and having discussions among family members.

Thomas Kellaghan and his colleagues, in their book *Home Environment and School Learning* (1993), concluded:

The socioeconomic level or cultural background of a home need not determine how well a child does at school. Parents from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with different levels of education, income, or occupational status can and do provide stimulating home environments that support and encourage their children's learning. It is what parents do in the home rather than their status that is important. (p. 145)

Despite this knowledge, however, children from poor families still tend to fall behind in school. Even low-income students whose families provide a strong home learning base do not do as well in school, on the average, as middle-class students. This prompted another key question:

**Question 3. Is there a class and cultural mismatch between schools and low-income, culturally diverse families? Could this create barriers to constructive family engagement with schools around children's learning?**

During the 1980s, James Coleman developed the concept of social capital to explain the importance of social relationships to the health of society. In contrast to financial capital (money and assets) or human capital (a person's intellectual skills), social capital is the value created by social skills and connections. In their study of public and private high schools (1987), Coleman and Hoffer found that low-income students in Catholic schools performed a grade level higher than comparable public school students. The authors speculate the reason lies in the relationship between families and schools. Public schools see themselves as an instrument of society, intended to free children from the constraints of their family background. In Catholic schools, however, parents and educators create a functional community around shared values.

Annette Lareau has also examined how differences in social capital influence how parents relate to school and support their children's learning. In a 1987 study comparing schools serving middle-class and working-class white families, she found striking contrasts. Middle-class parents are more comfortable dealing with teachers, use the same words, and share the same manners. They also have the time, money, and resources to be active at school. Working-class parents had to struggle to get transportation and childcare, and their encounters with teachers were strained and awkward. A more recent Lareau study of how schools relate to white and African-American families is included in this review.

Baker and Stevenson (1986) compared how middle- and working-class mothers handled their eighth graders' transition to high school. In the complex U.S. education system, they noted, the way that families manage their children's schooling can have a major impact on achievement. All the mothers were actively involved, but the strategies they used were different. In general, middle-class mothers:

- Knew more about their children's progress in school.
- Had more contact with the school and teachers.
- Steered their children toward higher-level courses.

In a study of South Asian families, Mitrsoomwang and Hawley (1993) found that, contrary to stereotype, not all Asian children did well in school. The families needed to provide these key supports for their children before they performed well:

- Hold strong, consistent values about the importance of education.
- Be willing to help children with schoolwork and be in contact with the school.
- Be able to help children with schoolwork and communicate effectively with teachers and administrators.

James Comer and others pressed the question further. What could schools do about this problem? How can public education add value, so that children who are at risk of falling behind get what they need to forge ahead?

**Question 4. What would it take to raise the achievement of low-income children and children of diverse backgrounds to the levels we expect for white middle-class children? Should engaging their families be part of a concerted strategy to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap?**

Susan Swap (1993) developed a helpful, four-part typology of home-school relationships, based on Joyce Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence. (Epstein's spheres are family, school, and community. Ideally, the three should overlap around a child to provide balanced support.) The types are based on the school's stance toward families:

1. **Protective model:** school enforces strict separation between parents and educators.
2. **Transmission model:** school sends home one-way communications.
3. **Curriculum enrichment model:** parents contribute their knowledge and skills to the school.
4. **Partnership model:** teachers and family members work together to help all children learn.

Swap's research and other studies she reviewed confirm that the partnership approach yields the greatest return. Unlike the curriculum enrichment strategy, where they are confined to certain settings, parents are involved in all aspects of school life. They volunteer in the classroom, tutor students, serve on school councils, and make connections with community groups.

James Comer's School Development Program is a good example of the partnership model. Developed by Comer, a psychologist, and his colleagues at the Yale Child Study Center, the approach was pioneered in New Haven. Parents sit on the school management team and help develop a total school plan for improvement. They also sit on all committees and develop close working relationship with teachers. "Children learn from people they bond to," is Comer's guiding principle.

In his article "Educating Poor Minority Children," Comer (1988) says: "The failure to bridge the social and cultural gap between home and school may lie at the root of the poor academic performance of many of these (poor, minority) children" (p. 3). If the key to raising achievement is to promote children's psychological development, and

encourage bonding to the school, the school must promote positive relations between families and staff. Comer's research on the New Haven Schools where SDP began and on other schools that have fully adopted the program showed steady gain compared with other schools in the districts (Comer, 1988; Comer and Haynes, 1992).

In a provocative review, Jim Cummins (1986) proposed a framework for changing the relationship between families and schools so that all children would have a better chance to succeed. Citing research by John Ogbu, he points out that minority groups with low status tend to perform below standard. This is because they have taken to heart the inferiority that others assign to them. For example, the Burakumin people in Japan do as poorly in school there as low-income African Americans do in the United States. Yet when they attend school in the United States, they excel as often as other Asians.

The central principle of Cummins's framework is that students from "dominated" groups can do well in school if they are empowered, rather than disabled, by their relationships with educators. According to Cummins, schools that empower students of color do these things:

- The students' language and culture are incorporated into the school program.
- Family and community participation is an essential part of children's education.
- Children are motivated to use language actively and to gain knowledge for their own use, not because others tell them to do it.
- Educators are advocates for students, rather than label them as having problems.

Given the importance of engaging families in the design and development of programs to improve their children's achievement, Don Davies, Joyce Epstein, and other researchers looked at how to make this happen.

**Question 5. How can connections be strengthened among schools, families, and community institutions to support children as they proceed from infancy through high school?**

From 1990 through 1996, the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, a consortium of several universities and the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) funded by the federal Office of Educational Research and Improvement, addressed this question. Center studies were grounded in the ideas of shared responsibility and partnership. The center, which ceased operations in 1996, was co-directed by Joyce Epstein and Don Davies.

Most of the studies took a developmental approach, seeking to learn how practices change for:

- children at different ages, grades, and various levels of maturity.
- parents at various points in the life course.
- educators at different school and grade levels.
- community leaders at different points in their institution's histories.

The center also looked at how practices can be responsive and appropriate for children, families, schools, and communities with different histories, strengths, and needs. Joyce Epstein's six-part typology provided an important tool for analysis in many of the 35 studies and projects by about 30 researchers. These studies are available through Epstein's current Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. The Web site is [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/listsab.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/listsab.htm).

Key topics for study included:

- Family support: parent and family centers in schools, integrated services, and family literacy
- Early childhood: the role of nurturing adults in the development of young children, and common roadblocks for young children to later academic success
- Relationships with diverse communities: the influence of different ethnic and cultural family backgrounds in children's development and learning
- Community support systems: connections with families of infants and toddlers, coaching as an alternative to mentoring in the community, and natural support systems in low-income communities
- Family and school communications: family practices that contribute to school success, parent-teacher action research to foster school change, and developing parent involvement in high schools
- Staff development: the education and training of professionals and others who develop and conduct programs of partnership

In their study of teacher-family communication, Carol Ames and her colleagues (1993) looked at parent evaluations of the teacher, their sense of comfort with the school, and their reported level of involvement in their children's learning. All were higher when parents received frequent and effective communications. The study evaluated communication by 35 teachers with a control group for comparison, using careful statistical analysis.

Lorri Connors (1993) evaluated a Maryland family literacy program to help both parents and children improve literacy skills. She found that both the children and participating adults improved their math and reading skills. Preschool children improved their scores on all of the literacy tests given, particularly letter identification. Parents changed their home environments to support their children's education. They also held higher expectations for their children's educational achievement. Parents who attended the most sessions had the greatest gain in skills.

Connors and Epstein did pioneering research on parent involvement in high schools. Their report (1994) of a large-scale survey in Maryland concludes:

1. There is a shared vision of partnership, and urban, suburban, and rural high schools are remarkably similar in their goals for partnership.
2. Families need and want better information about high schools and about their teens' programs.

3. Schools should provide activities in the middle grades to prepare students and their families for the transition to high school.
4. Students need and want to be part of the partnership.
5. Some students and families are particularly isolated from their schools and communities and disconnected from each other.
6. High schools can develop and implement more comprehensive programs to inform and involve families across the grades.

IRE conducted a five-year parent-teacher action research project in eight schools in five states (Palanki et al., 1995). The report concludes that by using parent-teacher action research, these schools developed strong parent-teacher communication and collaborations in:

- educational planning and assessment for students,
- schoolwide educational decision making, and
- curriculum development and assessment.

Although it is often a difficult and slow process, parent-teacher action research can be an effective tool for school and community renewal. It is also a way to make school reform more responsive to the needs of children and families.

### Major Findings

The themes that emerged from these flagship studies were highlighted in the Henderson and Berla review, *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement* (1994).

- **The family makes critical contributions to student achievement, from early childhood through high school.** Efforts to improve children's performance in school are much more effective if they encompass their families. Regardless of income level or education background, all families can—and often do—support their children's success.
- **When parents are involved both at home and at school, children do better in school, and they stay in school longer.** Teachers have higher expectations of students whose parents are involved at school. And when parents are involved at school, they tend to become more active in the community and continue their own education.
- **When parents are involved at school, the school as a whole gets better.** Large-scale studies of schools in similar neighborhoods found that schools that are more open to families and the community have higher average achievement.
- **Children do best when parents can play a variety of parts in children's learning.** These should range from helping at home and volunteering at school, to working with the school to help their children succeed and making key decisions about the school program.
- **The more the relationship between families and the school is a real partnership, the higher the student achievement.** Studies that relate levels of parent involvement to improvements in student achievement find that the more parents are involved, the



better students do. When families are engaged, rather than labeled as problems, schools can be transformed from places where only certain students prosper to ones where all children do well.

- **Families, schools, and community groups all contribute to student achievement. The best results come when all three work together.** As Clark points out, a key difference between high- and low-achieving children is how they spend their time outside school. Community groups offer important resources for students and families, and schools can provide a critical link.

## **Brief Summaries of Key Studies, 1974–95**

### **Ames, Carol, with M. Khoju and T. Watkins (1993)**

“The Effects of School-to-Home-to-School Communication on Children’s Motivation and Learning” in *Parent Involvement: The Relationship between School-to-Home Communication and Parents’ Perceptions and Beliefs*  
Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children’s Learning

This study looked at parent evaluations of the teacher, their sense of comfort with the school, and their reported level of involvement in their children’s learning. All were higher when parents received frequent and effective communications. The study evaluated communication by 35 teachers with a control group for comparison, using careful statistical analysis.

### **Baker, David P., and David L. Stevenson (1986) EJ340568**

Mothers’ Strategies for Children’s School Achievement: Managing the Transition to High School  
*Sociology of Education*, 59, 1986, 156–166

In this study of 41 families with eighth graders, the authors explore the relationship between family socioeconomic status (SES) and children’s academic achievement by examining actions parents take to manage their child’s school career. Although both low- and high-SES parents are aware of useful strategies, high-SES parents are more likely to take active steps to assure their children will enroll in postsecondary education.

### **Bronfenbrenner, Urie (1974) ED093501**

*A Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of Preschool Programs, Vol. II: Is Early Intervention Effective?*  
Office of Child Development, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

This paper analyzes several studies of different educational intervention programs for disadvantaged preschool children. It found that children attending early educational intervention programs show higher and more-lasting gains if their mothers are actively involved in their learning.

### **Clark, Reginald M. (1983)**

*Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail*  
Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press

This is an intensely focused study of 10 poor black families and their high school children. The author found that a family’s overall cultural style—not marital status, educational level, income, or social surroundings—determines whether children are prepared for competent performance at school.

**Coleman, James S., and Thomas Hoffer (1987)**

*Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities*  
New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

In this continuation of their 1982 study, the authors find that students in private and Catholic high schools perform better than students from comparable backgrounds in public schools. They speculate that the critical difference lies in the relationship of schools to the communities they serve.

**Comer, James P. (1988)**

Educating Poor Minority Children  
*Scientific American*, 259(5), 42–48, November 1988

This article describes a long-term program to transform two chronically low-achieving inner-city New Haven elementary schools, partly by including massive parent involvement. The schools achieved dramatic, lasting gains in student academic success.

**Comer, James P., and Norris M. Haynes (1992)**

*Summary of School Development Program Effects*  
New Haven, CT: Yale Child Study Center

This paper summarizes evaluation findings on the School Development Program (SDP) developed by Comer. At three sites, Benton Harbor, MI, Prince George's County, MD, and New Haven, CT, researchers found that, compared with control groups, students in the predominantly low-income SDP elementary and middle schools improved in four areas. These were academic performance in reading and math, behavior and adjustment to school, self-concept, and positive ratings of classroom climate.

**Connors, Lorri J. (1993)**

*Project Self-Help: A Family Focus on Literacy*  
Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning

This is an evaluation of a Maryland family literacy program to help both parents and children improve literacy skills. The author found that both the children and participating adults improved their math and reading skills.

**Cummins, Jim (1986) EJ330827**

Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention  
*Harvard Educational Review*, 56(1), February 1986

Citing programs that have been successful in promoting achievement of minority group students, the author proposes a theoretical framework for changing the relationship between educators and students. The framework includes substantial family and community participation.

**Dauber, Susan, and Joyce Epstein (1993)**

Parent Attitudes and Practices of Involvement in Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools  
In Chavkin, Nancy Feyl, ed., *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society*, Chapter 2, 53–71  
Albany, NY: State University of New York Press

This is a report on a survey of 2,317 inner-city elementary and middle school parents. The authors found that the level of parent involvement is directly linked to the specific practices that schools and teachers use to encourage involvement at school and to guide parents in how to help their children at home. The authors also assert that parents who are more involved tend to have children who perform better in school.

**Eagle, Eva (1989) ED307332**

*Socioeconomic Status, Family Structure, and Parental Involvement: The Correlates of Achievement*

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, March 27–31, 1989

This study assesses the varying effects of SES, parent attention, mother’s working patterns, and family structure on high school student achievement. Although parent education level and income are associated with higher achievement, when SES is controlled, only parent involvement during high school had a significant positive impact.

**Epstein, Joyce L. (1991)**

Effects on Student Achievement of Teachers’ Practices of Parental Involvement  
*Advances in Reading/Language Research*, 5, 261–276  
Greenwich, CT: JAI Press

This study looks at student achievement in the classrooms of 14 elementary school teachers who used varying techniques to involve parents in learning activities at home. The author found a positive and significant effect on student reading achievement.

**Epstein, Joyce L., and Lorri J. Connors (1994)**

*Trust Fund: School, Family, and Community Partnerships in High Schools*  
Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, and Schools & Children’s Learning

This report of a large-scale survey of Maryland high schools found that urban, suburban, and rural high schools have remarkably similar goals for partnership. The authors also found that families want and need more information and activities to prepare students for the transition to high school.

**Gordon, Ira (1979)**

The Effects of Parent Involvement on Schooling  
In Brandt, Ronald S., ed., *Partners: Parents and Schools*  
Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

This review of pertinent research indicates that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the parent involvement, the more effective it is likely to be, not just on children's achievement but on the quality of schools as institutions serving the community.

**Guinagh, Barry, and Ira Gordon (1976) ED135469**

*School Performance as a Function of Early Stimulation*

Florida University at Gainesville, Institute for Development of Human Resources

This is a long-term study of an early childhood parent-education project training low-income mothers to use learning materials at home. The program produced significant advances in reading and math tests when the children entered school. These advantages were maintained into the fourth grade.

**Henderson, Anne T., and Nancy Berla (1994)**

*A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement*

Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education

This is a review of 64 studies on parent involvement and student achievement. Taken together, the studies strongly suggest that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, their children do better in school. When parents are involved at school, their children go farther in school, and the schools they go to become better. Programs to improve achievement are more likely to have positive results if they engage families.

**Kellaghan, Thomas, Kathryn Sloane, Benjamin Alvarez, and Benjamin S. Bloom (1993)**

*The Home Environment & School Learning: Promoting Parental Involvement in the Education of Children*

San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

This book reviews a large body of research and finds that the home environment is a powerful factor in determining the academic success of students—their level of achievement, their interest in learning, and the years of schooling they will complete. The authors also outline a program parents can use at home to support their children's scholastic development.

**Lareau, Annette (1987) EJ353123**

Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital  
*Sociology of Education*, 60, April 1987, 73–85

This study compares family-school relationships in a middle-class versus a working-class elementary school. It finds that the differences in the way parents respond to teacher requests and interact with the school may explain the lower achievement, aspirations, and life prospects of working-class children.

**Lazar, Irving, and Richard B. Darlington (1978) ED175523**

*Lasting Effects after Preschool*

Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, Cornell University

This is a long-term study of 11 early-childhood projects involving parents. It shows that participating children performed better in school and had significantly fewer assignments to special-education classes or grade retentions than control-group children for many years after they completed the projects.

**Leler, Hazel (1987)**

Parent Education and Involvement in Relation to the Schools and to Parents of School-Aged Children

In Haskins and Adams, eds., *Parent Education and Public Policy*

Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Co.

This is an extensive and rigorous review of 48 studies of educational programs with parent involvement. It finds that the fuller the participation of parents, the more effective the results.

**Mitsomwang, Supravadee, and Willis Hawley (1993)**

*Cultural 'Adaptation' and the Effects of Family Values and Behaviors on the Academic Achievement and Persistence of Indochinese Students*

Washington, DC: Final Report to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education, Grant No. R 117E 00045

This study examines the experiences and attitudes of Indochinese families in Nashville, TN. The researchers found that strong family values and behaviors related to education, not just cultural and religious beliefs, had a positive influence on their high school students' performance at school.

**Palanki, Ameetha, and Patricia Burch, with Don Davies (1995)**

*In Our Hands: A Multi-Site Parent-Teacher Action Research Project*

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning

This is a report on a parent-teacher action research project in eight sites. It found that all sites developed strong parent-teacher communication and collaborations. The authors concluded that parent-teacher action research can be an effective tool for school and community renewal.

**Phillips, Susan D, Michael C. Smith, and John F. Witted (1985)**

*Parents and Schools: Staff Report to the Study Commission on the Quality of Education in the Metropolitan Milwaukee Schools*

Milwaukee, WI

This is a study of 22 school districts in the metropolitan Milwaukee area. It finds that parent involvement is associated with higher school performance regardless of the income level of families served or the grade level or location of the school.

**Schweinhart, Lawrence J., and David P. Weikart (1992)**

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, Similar Studies, and Their Implications for Public Policy in the U.S.

In Stegelin, Dolores A., ed., *Early Childhood Education: Policy Issues for the 1990's*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation

This paper reviews studies of high-quality preschool programs that work with families, and finds significant social, academic, and economic benefits over the long term for students. The authors estimate that a national investment in quality childcare programs for all children would yield a net return of \$31.6 billion each year, from reduced costs for social services and criminal justice, and from increases in productivity and tax revenues.

**Snow, Catherine E., Wendy S. Barnes, Jean Chandler, Irene F. Goodman, and Lowry Hemphill (1991)**

*Unfulfilled Expectations: Home and School Influences on Literacy*  
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

This book describes a study of home and school influences on literacy achievement among children from low-income families. It found that the single variable most positively connected to all literacy skills was formal parent-school involvement.

**Swap, Susan McAllister (1993)**

*Developing Home-School Partnerships: From Concepts to Practice*  
New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University

In this book, the author describes four models of home-school relationships. Swap makes a persuasive case for the partnership model, based on a literature review, some exploratory data, and extensive observations. She also provides helpful examples and suggestions for putting the model into practice.

**Walberg, Herbert J. (1984)**

“Families as Partners in Educational Productivity”  
*Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1984, 397–400

In this article summarizing findings from over 2,500 studies on learning, Walberg concludes that an academically stimulating home environment is one of eight chief determinants of learning. From 29 recent studies he concludes that the home learning environment has an effect on achievement that is three times as large as family SES.

**White, Karl R., Matthew J. Taylor, and Vanessa D. Moss (1992)**

Does Research Support Claims About the Benefits of Involving Parents in Early Intervention Programs?

*Review of Educational Research*, 62(1), Spring 1992, 91–125

This is an analysis of 193 studies of programs for disadvantaged and handicapped children whose parents were trained to teach their preschoolers developmental skills. The authors suggest that because so few studies were well designed, the evidence that such involvement benefits the children is not convincing.





## About the Authors and Publisher

**Anne T. Henderson** Anne has been a consultant on education policy since 1977, the year her daughter was born. Until 1994, she worked with the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE), a nonprofit organization dedicated to putting the public back in public schools. In its 20 years, NCCE published a virtual library of materials for parents and citizens, several of which Anne wrote or co-authored. These include the first three reports in the *Evidence* series, as well as *Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide for Working with Parents*, and *The Middle School Years*. With the Center for Law and Education, Anne co-authored the booklets *Parents Are Powerful*, *Urgent Message for Parents*, and *Urgent Message: Families Crucial to School Reform* (with Anne Lewis). Her publications are available at [www.cleweb.org](http://www.cleweb.org).

Anne has also managed several national projects, represented the interests of public school families with federal policymakers, and worked on national studies. She is now affiliated with the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University and consults to foundations, national organizations, and parent and citizen groups around the country. She is also a founder of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

**Karen L. Mapp** Karen is president of the Institute for Responsive Education in Boston. She is also a visiting professor of education at Northeastern University. In 1997, she joined IRE to direct the Boston Community Partners for Student Success. This initiative focused on developing activities and programs to let parents know about the new Boston learning standards. She became president of IRE in 1998. Karen has an EdD and an MA in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and an MA in counselor education from Southern Connecticut State University.

In 1997, Karen was awarded a Spencer Fellowship for her research on how and why families are involved in their children's education. She is the author of "Making the Connection between Families and Schools," published by the *Harvard Education Letter* (1997). She serves on the National Center for Community Education (NCCE) training task force for the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. Karen is also a member of the Steering Committee for the Coalition for Community Schools, the board of directors of Parents for Public Schools, Inc., and the Steering Committee for the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.

**Southwest Educational Development Laboratory** SEDL is a private nonprofit education research and development corporation based in Austin, Texas. SEDL exists to challenge, support, and enrich educational systems in providing quality education for all learners, enabling them to lead productive and fulfilling lives in an ever-changing, increasingly connected world. The corporation holds the contract for one of the 10 regional educational laboratories in the United States funded by the U.S. Department of Education. SEDL's regional educational laboratory serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

In December 2000, SEDL and its partner, the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas, created the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools as a result of a contract award from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The Center serves as a national resource to schools, community groups, research organizations, policymakers, and families. The Center creates bridges between research and practice—linking people with research-based information and resources they can use to effectively connect schools, families, and communities.