

The concept of parent involvement. Some theoretical and empirical considerations

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This paper focuses on some conceptual and methodological problems inherent in many empirical studies on parental involvement. On the basis of twelve selected studies in which quantitative measures for parent involvement have been used, we discuss the reasons for the diversity of empirical outcomes, partly due to the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the concept, but also due to the variety of operationalizations as well as methods that have been applied to assess parents' levels of involvement. In particular, empirical evidence of involvement obtained with questionnaires should be considered as doubtful because of the biases in ratings, whereas the use of multiple informants, as suggested in the literature, does not seem satisfactory to overcome this problem. We suggest the use more qualitative methods for measuring parent involvement, for example by interviewing parents in depth about their own accounts for their behaviours. This seems also the best guarantee to detect the more hidden features of their involvement in their children's education.

The emergence of the concept of parental involvement in educational research

Although not a commonly used term in those days, the origins of the significance of parental involvement stems most certainly from the (language) compensation programs implemented in the 1960's and 1970's in the US and Europe (see Brooks-Gun, Berlin, and Fuligni, 2000 for an overview). These programs aimed among other things to encourage the active engagement of mainly low SES and so-called ethnic minority parents to prepare their children for a more successful school career and to prevent educational delays on the part of their so-called children at risk (White, Taylor, and Moss, 1992; Shuk, 1993; Blok and Leseman, 1996).

In this way federal and governmental policies artificially tried to create parental attitudes and behaviours which seemed to spontaneously occur in white middle-class families and which guarantee to a certain extent the school success of their sons and daughters. Especially lower class families – parents and their children – seemed to suffer from the gap between family and school cultures which only could be overcome by activating the involvement of parents with their children's schooling.

The need for connectedness, even complementarity, for families and schools gained popularity, considering the increase in the number of programs in the US and Europe to improve parent involvement.

It is true, policy makers and educators tend to present parental involvement as a panacea that will be helpful to overcome nearly all educational inequalities traditionally attributed to social class differences. John Wherry, president of The Parent Institute in Fairfax Station, Virginia, presented in a newsletter of his institute (August, 2004) the benefits of parental involvement as it were a soap commercial: students from families with above-median parental involvement showed success rates 30% higher than those from families with below-median parental involvement; reading scores grew at a rate of 50% higher than in schools where teachers reported low levels of parent commitment; students with involved parents earn higher grades, pass their classes, earn credits, show good behavior, etcetera. Although those slogans seem right in essence, representing research based findings, one is likely to forget what exactly is meant by the term, or concept, or construct 'parental involvement'.

Like many other concepts in the social sciences, parental involvement is a value loaded term. It is quite remarkable that among the vast amount of literature about parental involvement, only a few texts reflect on its origin, nature, and connotations (e.g., Desimone, 1999; Lareau, 1992; Lightfoot, 2004; Ravn, 2005; Weiniger and Lareau, 2003). Lareau, for example, focusing on parent-teacher conferences, illustrates in a striking way how schools privilege certain types of (middle class) family culture and discourse, leading to the construction of an 'ideal type' of parental involvement, which almost by definition exclude other, mainly lower class parents, who are missing – to state it in terms of Coleman and Bourdieu respectively - the

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required social and cultural capital to comply with educators' vision of the ideal parent role.

In addition, Desimone (1999) defines parent involvement as a set of group-specific actions, beliefs, and attitudes that serve as an operational factor in defining categorical differences among children (and their parents) from different racial-ethnic and economic backgrounds.

To summarize the vision of most critics, much of the literature about parental involvement is not about parent involvement as such, but about parents who are not involved yet, or who are not involved in the right way, but can get really well involved if they accommodate to the invitations to involvement from school and its members (c.f., Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Unnecessary to state that this must happen on exclusively school-defined terms. Most striking is the ideological perspective in the parental involvement programs, in particular in the family literacy programs on what is lacking and missing in children's families.

According to Lightfoot (2004, p. 100) such programs (for an overview, see Fan and Chen, 2001) 'are generally structured around the assumption that there is one best, or one so-called *normal* path for child development and that some group of so-called *experts*, such as educational psychologists or program instructors, know better than participating parents how to make children following this path'. Notwithstanding pleas to respect parents' home cultures and habits (c.f., Baker, Kessler-Sklar, Piotrkowski, and Parker, 1999), many authors nevertheless ignore the ways in which parents may express their spontaneous involvement with their children's schooling.

Types of involvement described by Lopez (2001) for example, with which parents try to instill on their children the value of education by exposing them to the tough and hardly prospective labour in the fields, usually fall outside the scope of school and teachers, although the effects of such forms of engagement are not necessarily of less value than those of the more recognized forms.

A close look at empirical studies on parental involvement yields a similar picture. Ten years ago, Georgiou (1997) pointed at some problems in the empirical literature which should be tackled. One has to do with the concept's complexity and the confusion that has been created among the professionals in the area because of the absence of a clear definition (see also Fantuzzo, Davis, and Ginsberg, 1995; Vincent and Tomlinson, 1997). He suggests that 'obviously, one needs to know exactly what something *is* before one can say what it can do' (Georgiou, 1997, p. 193). Now, ten years later, this situation still seems to persist.

In spite of its conceptual and definitory vagueness, according to Fantuzzo, Davis, and Ginsberg (1995) the term parental involvement

refers to a variety of parental behaviours that directly or indirectly influence children's cognitive development and school achievement. Illustrative examples of these parents' behaviours, presented in the empirical literature, are: attending parent-teacher conferences; being a member of a PTA, volunteering in school, helping in the classroom, helping with homework, discussing school activities with the child, monitoring child's school progress, encouraging and rewarding good grades, reading to/with the child, modeling reading behaviour, taking the child to the library, contacting the school in case of problems, monitoring the child's out-of-school activities, and talking regularly with the child.

Apparently, parental involvement refers to parent behaviours related to the child's school or schooling that can be observed as manifestations of their commitment to their child's educational affairs. This means that a parent who shows these behaviours in a larger extent, can be regarded as higher involved than a parent who shows these behaviours in a lesser degree.

Apart from these school- or schooling-related behaviours, some authors suggest that other behaviours, that are not directly related to school or schooling, should also be incorporated in the conceptualization of the construct of parental involvement. Among them are: limit TV watching time (Georgiou, 1997; Baker et al., 1999; Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996), following a specific set of rules to discipline the child (Mcwayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, and Sekino, 2004), being home when the child returns from school (Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996), limiting the amount of time for going out with friends (Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996), watching the child in sports (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling, 1992), and taking the child to cultural events (Baker et al., 1999). Although not identical with parental involvement, Steinberg, et al. (1992) associate more general parenting behaviours (i.e. authoritative parenting) with the highly involved parent.

Making it more complex, apart from observable behaviours, parent involvement has also been conceived as a set of parental beliefs, attitudes and values, varying from simply knowing where the child is (Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994), and knowing the child's friends (Georgiou, 1997) to parents' enthusiasm (Zellman and Waterman, 1998), parents' beliefs that they should take an active role in their children's education (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris, 1997), educate their children to good citizenship (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003), have high aspirations for their children (Astone and McLanahan, 1991; Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996), and have a positive sense of efficacy for helping the child learn, besides their (adequate) perception of invitations to involvement from the school, teacher and the

children themselves (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

When we consider several definitions of parental involvement, it becomes clear that parental involvement, as it finds its roots in the history of the debate on educational inequalities, mainly pertains to model-behaviours of typical white middle-class parents, that have proved to effectively contribute to children's school outcomes and well-being by showing these types of behaviours.

A recent review of the impact of parental involvement on pupil achievement (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003) shows research on parent involvement to yield quite diverse, even contradicting, results. One main reason for the diversity of results of studies on (effects of) parent involvement is the complexity of the concept of parent involvement. Apart from the complexity of the concept, a variety of research methods has been used to assess levels of parent involvement. Below we will address the variety of operationalizations of parent involvement as well as methods that have been applied to assess parents' levels of involvement.

Measuring parental involvement

Since the early nineties, quantitative empirical studies have been performed to assess the level of parents' involvement. In the empirical literature on parental involvement, there seems a lack of consistency about the operationalization and measurement of parents' involvement. A lot of questionnaires are available to assess levels of involvement, and most studies present their own self-constructed parent involvement questionnaire. Below, we will provide a short review of some measures that have been developed in this field.

For this review we have selected twelve studies in which quantitative measures for parent involvement have been used. With this review we do not claim to provide a full review, but we focus on examples of quantitative empirical studies in this field. The list of reviewed empirical studies is provided in Appendix A. Questions we wanted to answer with this review were: what types of involvement have been measured, in what form, and how have validity problems been addressed?

Content and format of parent involvement questionnaires

Previously it has been stated that the scope of parent involvement can vary from a narrow perspective, defining parent involvement as parent involvement activities at school, to a broad perspective, also including parenting behaviours at home and parents' attitudes towards their child's school(ing).

The *content* of parent involvement questionnaires of the selected twelve studies show some similarities and dissimilarities. All studies include measures on concrete parent involvement behaviours, referring to the involvement at school (e.g. attending parent teacher conferences) as well as parents' home involvement (e.g. helping the child with his or her homework). One study measured exclusively school-based involvement activities (Brody and Flor, 1998). Other studies involved both types of involvement behaviours. Examples of school-based involvement activities are contacting the child's teacher, serving committees, helping in the classroom and volunteering to help in field trips. The scope of home-based involvement activities differs between studies. Some studies focus on parents' activities to reinforce children's cognitive development, such as helping with homework, reading with the child, and visits to a library, whereas other studies refer to more general parenting activities, such as monitoring children's activities, varying from t.v. watching to going out and the selection of friends. The length of the questionnaires varies from five items (Steinberg et al., 1992) to over one hundred items (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 2005).

As the majority of questionnaires addresses concrete parent behaviours, the questionnaire items have usually been formulated in terms of behaviour, such as 'I help my child with homework' or 'I attend parent-teacher conferences'. Ratings of the level of involvement behaviours usually are asked to be provided in terms of frequencies, ranging from 'no', 'never' or 'ever' on the negative side to 'yes', 'ever', 'usually', 'very often', 'regularly', or 'always' on the positive side of the response scale. Apparently, to 'ever' engage in activities can be seen as referring to low levels of involvement (Bauch and Goldring, 1995) as well as to high levels of involvement (Brody and Flor, 1998).

The number of points on the frequency rating scales ranges from two (never - ever, see Brody and Flor, 1998) to seven (Reid, Webster-Stratton, and Beauchaine, 2001). Some formats involve concrete numbers of activities. Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), for example, have asked parents: 'Since your 8th grader's school opened last fall, how many times have you contacted the school about your 8th grader's academic performance?' Answers could be given on a scale ranging from 'none' to 'more than four times'.

Besides concrete parent behaviours, some questionnaires involve attitudinal aspects of involvement. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005), for instance, asked parents to identify whether they saw it as their responsibility to show selected concrete behaviours (for example: 'I believe it is my responsibility to help my child with homework').

Also, evaluative judgements about the quality of contact between parents and teachers have been asked to be rated on a scale ranging from 'disagree very strongly' to 'agree very strongly' (Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, and Fendrich, 1999; Hoover Dempsey and Sandler, 2005). Apparently, the frequency of behaviours as well as positive attitudes and evaluations have been measured as indicators of the level of parents' involvement. Scores on questionnaires have not been simply merged to one indicator of parent involvement, but most studies report on the multidimensional nature of parent involvement, indicating that distinct scales should be constructed.

Dimensionality and reliability of parent involvement questionnaires

Although dimensions of parent involvement have been distinguished in the literature (see for example Epstein and Sanders, 2000) not confirmatory, but exploratory factor analyses have been reported in most studies trying to identify one or more dimensions of parent involvement. When factor analyses have been reported, it seems that at least the following three dimensions are recurring throughout the selected studies: 1) contact with the school, 2) learning at home, and 3) participation at school.

Dependent from the number of questionnaire items and the broadness of the operationalization of the concept, other dimensions seem to result from factor analyses, such as the quality of parent-teacher interactions, the extent to which parents are informed about school matters, more general parenting styles (such as encouragement, control, or pressuring), extracurricular involvement, or conditions that inhibit involvement (such as time restraints or role beliefs).

Reported reliability estimates of scales that have been constructed usually seem satisfactory for measuring parent involvement aspects in a consistent way. Therefore, we may conclude that existing questionnaires enable the measurement of parent involvement as a multidimensional construct.

Interpretations of scores on parent involvement questionnaires

Most of the selected studies report mean scores on scales that have been constructed to measure dimensions of parental involvement. Mean scores can be interpreted in terms of levels of involvement in general or in terms of distinct aspects, such as the frequency of contact that parents have with their child's school. High scores on items referring to the frequency of contact with the school can thus be interpreted as 'parents report to have frequent contact with their child's school', or 'parents are highly involved', with the later being reported frequently. Bakker, Denessen, and Brus-Laeven

(2007), for example, reported mean scores on five distinct dimensions of parent involvement in the following way: 'As can be seen, the mean scores for almost all of the items were above the scale midpoint of 3, which means that the level of parental involvement was generally rated either moderately high or high' (Bakker et al., 2007, p.179).

A similar presentation of descriptive statistics has been provided by Izzo et al. (1999, p.825): 'Table I presents the frequencies of each parent-involvement item for Year 1. Parent involvement was moderately high, with teachers reporting having at least two contacts with 96% of parents'.

When involvement measures seem to correlate positively with child-level outcomes, the interpretation seems quite easy; children from high involved parents show higher school performance than children from low involved parents. However, when the correlation appears to be negative, like, for instance, was the case in studies of Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) and Bakker et al. (2007), the interpretation becomes more difficult. A lot of studies show negative correlations between the frequency of parent-school contacts and children's school performance (for example, Sui Chu and Willms, 1996, Georgiou, 1997, Bakker et al., 2007). The interpretation of this relationship is *not* being formulated as follows: 'children from high involved parents show lower school performance than children from low involved parents'.

Apparently, researchers are reluctant to draw this kind of conclusions. Rather, interpretations are being made, that are not the result of empirical analyses, but the result of normative interpretation of correlations. Negative relations between involvement indicators and child performance are interpreted as follows: 'school communication has small negative effects, indicating that children whose parents communicated more with the schools had lower achievement scores. This effect probably stems from parents communicating more with schools when their children were at risk academically' (Sui Chu and Willms, 1996, p. 136). Another example is Bauch and Goldring's (1995) interpretation of less helping with homework from parents that score high on school participation as indicator of involvement.

They suggested the children of these parents to either have less homework or they need less monitoring or help from parents with their homework. Such interpretations of correlations suggest that parent involvement may be affected by student performance, instead of student performance being affected by parent involvement. Georgiou (1997) suggested that the interpretation of a negative relation between helping with homework and student performance can be given in two directions: 'There seems to be an inverse relationship between a student's school achievement and the amount of help he or she

gets at home from his or her parents. The issue, then, is what does happen first? Low-achieving children get more parental assistance at home because they need it, or over-protecting parents turn their children into irresponsible and therefore underachieving students?' (Georgiou, 1997, p. 198-200).

The later interpretation has not been put forward frequently in the literature, although empirical evidence for the first interpretation is lacking.

It seems to be relevant in the interpretation of empirical relations to be specific about the indicator of parents' involvement that is studied and not to generalize to a global concept of 'parent involvement' too easily. Also, empirical evidence should be provided from a more neutral point of view and researchers might need to take a greater distance to account for results in a non normative way.

Validity problems concerning parents' self reports

Although empirical evidence has been provided for the construct validity and reliability of measures of parental involvement, the validity of measures can be questioned, especially with regard to systematic bias of results of ratings of items of questionnaires by parents themselves. When assessing parents' level of involvement, most researchers have used self-report questionnaires to identify parents' involvement attitudes and behaviours. In most of these questionnaires parent involvement behaviours are measured by asking parents the frequency of behaviours including parent-school contacts, and talking with the child about school matters.

Morsbach and Prinz (2006) have recently discussed the quality of self reports of parenting. They distinguished several validity problems when using parent self reports. When posing questions about involvement behaviours, like 'How frequently do you attend school meeting/evenings?' (to be answered at a five point scale, ranging from 'never' to 'very often', derived from Bauch and Coldring, 1995), researchers hope that parents undertake the following activities (Schwarz and Oyserman, 2001):

1. understand the question
2. identify the behaviour of interest
3. retrieve relevant instances of the behaviour from memory
4. correctly identify the relevant time period
5. search this reference period to retrieve all relevant instances of the behaviour
6. correctly date the recalled instances to determine whether they fall within the reference period
7. correctly add up all instances of the behaviour to arrive at a frequency report

8. map this frequency onto the response alternatives provided by the researcher
9. candidly provide the result of their recall effort

Schwarz and Oyserman (2001) point at the results of cognitive research that suggest that respondents are rarely able to live up to the researchers' hopes. Especially the frequency of behaviours seems poorly represented in the memory and individual instances seem difficult to retrieve. Also, the response formats, provided by the researchers suggest estimation strategies that reinforce the biased character of the responses obtained.

Other validity problems lie in the specificity of the behaviour at stake and the use of vague quantifications in frequency rating scales. Schwarz and Oyserman (2001) extensively discuss these problems. According to Morsbach and Prinz (2006), the lack of a gold standard to which self reports can be compared is one difficulty when evaluating the validity of self reports.

The use of multiple informants

Morsbach and Prinz (2006) propose strategies to improve the validity of parents' self reports. One proposed strategy is the use of multiple informants or methods to measure the same construct. The use of multiple informants can contribute to triangulation of assessments of parental involvement. Also, they suggest that parents tend to report more accurately when they know that other informants will also provide information about their involvement. Only few studies use multiple informants as a validating tool for measuring parental involvement (see, for example, Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994). When used, the discrepancies between informants often have not been discussed in terms of validity, but in terms of stereotyped judgements, especially when teacher ratings are involved (see for example, Bakker, Denessen, and Brus-Laeven, 2007).

It seems quite difficult to disentangle low correlation coefficients between measures from multiple informants in terms of validity or prejudiced perceptions. More empirical evidence is needed to enable conclusions on scores of multiple informants. Bakker et al. (2007), for example, show correlations among distinct aspects of parent involvement to be at a higher level for teacher ratings than for parent ratings of parents' involvement. They suggest that these higher inter-correlations for teacher ratings of parents' involvement may suggest that teachers indeed have stereotyped images of parents' involvement behaviours. Moreover, in the study of Bakker et al. (2007) teachers rated aspects of parents' involvement behaviour that are hardly visible to them, especially behaviours that pertain to home involvement behaviours, such as discussing school matters with the child, helping with homework, or monitoring television watching. A study on teachers' knowledge about

these parent involvement behaviours (Baker et al., 1999) confirmed that teachers have little knowledge about these parents' behaviours.

These findings also suggest that teacher judgments of parents' involvement behaviours may be biased through prejudiced perceptions of childrens' socio-economic background.

Besides the use of teacher ratings as a means to collect information on parents' involvement behaviours, also information from the children can be obtained. In their study on parent involvement, Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992), have assessed parents' level of involvement by asking over 10 000 adolescents about the frequency with which their parents were involved in their high school education in five respects: helping with homework when asked, attending school programs, watching the student in sport or other extra-curricular activities, helping the student select courses, and knowing how the student is doing in school (Steinberg et al., 1992). Answers could be provided on a three-point scale (never, sometimes, and usually). The answers to these five involvement categories could be taken together to form a reliable composite index of involvement (Cronbach's alpha = .74).

Steinberg et al. (1992) justified the use of adolescents' reports of their parents' involvement basically on three grounds: 1) parent self reports tend to exaggerate their levels of involvement and therefore have been criticised as being unreliable (see also Schwarz and Oyserman, 2001; Morsbach and Prinz, 2006); 2) adolescents are able to act as knowledgeable informants on parental behaviours; and 3) according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological process model (Bronfenbrenner, 1975), children's perceptions of their parents' involvement are as important influences on their development as are parents' actual behaviour.

Grolnick and Slowiaczek, who studied children's as well as teachers' ratings of parents' level of involvement, reported ambiguous findings concerning the use of multiple informants. At some level, ratings of children and teachers converged to one overall parent behaviour factor, suggesting that the use of multiple informants contributes to valid and reliable measures of parent involvement. On the other hand, Grolnick and Slowiaczek found a correlation coefficient of .05 for children's ratings and teachers' ratings of parent behaviour (i.e. teacher-rated parent-school interaction and child-rated parent involvement). They attribute this low correlation to the fact that teachers and children may have differential access to parents' behaviour. They also mention that general feelings toward the parents may colour raters' perceptions, which could endanger measurement validity.

Another strategy mentioned by Morsbach and Prinz is to use systematic observation of involvement behaviours. In the

field of parental involvement, observation studies are rare, which can be mainly contributed to the general nature of the construct. It seems very difficult to observe parents' involvement. An exception can be made for parenting behaviours that relate to parents' involvement, like the way parents interact with their child or the way they read with their child (e.g. De Jong and Leseman, 2001).

Conclusions and implications for research on parent involvement

In this paper, we have reviewed the use of the concept of parental involvement in empirical educational research. From our analysis and review of selected studies on parental involvement we learn that research in this field faces some problems and challenges for the future.

As has been stated in the introduction to this paper, the construct of parent involvement has been developed in order to gain more insight in mechanisms that put children from middle class families to an advantage. Some parent behaviours have been identified that contribute to these mechanisms. By referring to these behaviours as indices of parental involvement, the concept has been grounded in middle class values (see also Lightfoot, 2004). Therefore, research aiming at assessing the level to which parents perform these middle class defined behaviours is not free from normativity towards family practices. As some critics suggest, there are many ways of being involved that have not been recognized as such in empirical research (see Lopez, 2001), and to paraphrase Serpell (1997, p.590) in his enlightening essay on literacy connections between school and home: Attempts to market the particularly involvement practices of privileged sub-cultural groups maybe resisted partly on the rational ground that they are only one of several routes to involvement, and partly on the political ground that authentic parenting depends on retaining the authority to determine one's own practice of child socialization.

One of our main findings of our review of empirical studies is that the concept of parental involvement is not uniformly defined nor measured by researchers. The range of behaviours and attitudes that refer to the type and level of involvement varies across studies. It seems tricky to interpret some aggregate measure of parent behaviours in terms of the level of parent involvement, because of the more or less pragmatic use of behaviours for measuring the concept. Because of this situation of vagueness, we can follow Georgiou (1997, p. 206), who claims that 'it seems that parent involvement has become a generic term with so many meanings that soon it will have no meaning at all. It would be preferable to use the specific behavioural indicators rather than the universal and potentially misleading term

'parental involvement' that so often appears in the literature'.

When assessing behaviours that are suggested to be indicative for measuring some forms of involvement, we should keep in mind that the empirical evidence of involvement obtained with questionnaires is doubtful. Bias in ratings of involvement should be considered as a major problem, for which a solution is very difficult to find. The use of multiple informants, as suggested in the literature, does not seem satisfactory for overcoming this problem. The use of observations should be considered in future measures of parents' involvement.

An additional problem with the use of questionnaires is the content validity of ratings of the frequency of behaviours. It often is suggested that some behaviours, that are frequently shown by parents are indicators of high levels of involvement, although some predictors of indicators of involvement (such as

the frequency of teacher-parent contacts) are not located in the parents, but in the child or the child's school. It can be questioned whether the frequency of behaviour is the consequence of parents intentions. We suggest to use more qualitative methods for measuring parent involvement, for example by interviewing parents more in depth, after having assessed the frequency of their involvement-indicating behaviours, about their own accounts for their behaviours. For example, parents who have the same frequency of contact with the teacher may differ in their type and level of involvement, depending from their attitudes and intentions, as well as the content of their interactions with the teacher and their evaluations of these contacts. By intensively interviewing parents we possibly could also detect the more hidden features of their involvement in their children's education.

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Appendix A: Description of instruments of twelve empirical studies on parent involvement.

Source	Sample	Instrument	Sample item	Response format	Dimensionality (reliability)
Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling, 1992	11,669 students of nine high schools	Student ratings of parents' involvement in five respects: 1 helping with homework when asked 2 attending school programs 3 watching the student in sport or other extra-curricular activities 4 helping the student select courses 5 knowing how the student is doing in school	not provided	never (1), sometimes (2), usually (3)	One dimension $\alpha = .74$
Grolinck and Slowiaczek, 1994	302 11-14 year old children and their teachers	Parent-School Interaction Questionnaire - Teacher Report Four items about parent-school interaction: frequency of attendance at parent-teacher conferences, and other school events Parent-School Interaction Questionnaire - Child Report Same items as the Teacher Report Parenting Context Questionnaire - Child ratings - Parent involvement measure (based on Keith et al., 1986) - Parent involvement in intellectual / cultural activities frequency of engagement in 9 activities, such as reading newspapers and talking about current events	not provided not provided my mother knows a lot about what happens to me at school My father always knows where I am not provided	never (1) to regularly (5) never (1), sometimes (2), always (3) not at all true (1) to very true (4) not at all true (1) to very true (4) never (1) to a lot (4)	Three dimensions a) personal -child ratings ($\alpha = .78$ father / $.90$ mother) b) intellectual / cognitive - child ratings ($\alpha = .75$ father / $.82$ mother) c) behavior - child and teacher ratings ($\alpha = .74$ father / $.78$ mother)
Bauch and Goldring, 1995	575 parents who chose a magnet school or their specific magnet prgrams	Nine aspects a) seeking information before enrollment b) have current information about school c) seek information directly d) contact the school e) attend school meetings / evenings f) serve on committees g) enforce rules about school issues h) enforce rules about nonschool issues i) check over / help with school assignments	not provided	strongly agree (1) to strongly agree (5) not likely (1) to very likely (5) ever (1) to very often (5) “ “ “ “ “	Nine dimensions a) seek information ($\alpha = .63$) b) have current information ($\alpha = .76$) c) seek information directly ($\alpha = .59$) d) contact the school ($\alpha = .72$) e) attend school meetings ($\alpha = .80$) f) serve on committees ($\alpha = .74$) g) enforce rules – school ($r = .78$) h) enforce rules - nonschool ($r = .63$) i) check over assignments (1 item)

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Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996	24,600 8 th grade students and their parents (NELS-sample)	frequency of behavior, 12 items Talking with parents, Discuss school programs, activities, and homework, Monitoring homework, Limit TV time and going out, Being home after school, Parent-school contacts, Volunteering Membership of PTO	How often have you talked to mother about planning your high-school program? Since the beginning of the school year, how often have you discussed the selection of courses and programs at school with either or both your parents or guardians? How often do your parents or guardians check on whether you have done your homework? How often do your parents or guardians limit the amount of time you can spend watching TV? Is your mother or father at home when you return home from school? Since your 8 th grader's school opened last fall, how many times have you contacted the school about your 8 th grader's academic performance? Do you or your spouse or partner act as a volunteer at the school? Do you or your spouse or partner attend meetings of a PTO?	not at all (0) once or twice (1), three or more times (2) " never (0), rarely (1), sometimes (3), often (4) " never (0), rarely (1), sometimes (3), usually (4) none (0) once or twice (1), three or four times (2) more than four times (3) no (0), yes (1) no (0), yes (1)	Four dimensions a) home discussion – child rating b) home supervision – child rating c) school communication – child rating d) school participation – parent rating
Georgiou, 1997	852 parents of 6 th grade students	40 item parent self report of parents' involvement at home and at school	I examine my child after he/she finished his/her homework	never happens (0) rarely (1), sometimes (2) often (3) always happens (4)	Six dimensions a) parenting through emphasis on achievement b) parenting through pressure on the child c) parenting through control d) parenting through personality development e) learning at home f) volunteering and decision making at school
Brody and Flor, 1998	156 African American single mothers	teacher ratings of 15 parental school involvement activities, including attendance of parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and volunteering to help with field trips and fund-raisers	not provided	never (0), ever (1)	One dimension $\alpha = .86$
Baker, Kessler-Sklar, Piotrkowski, and Parker, 1999	190 kindergarten and 1 st grade teachers	Parent Involvement Survey-Teacher (PIS-T) Teacher ratings of 15 parent activities Three items to assess teacher ratings of parents' overall initiation	discuss the school day with the child helping in the classroom	never (0) rarely (1), sometimes (2) frequently (3) always (4) never (0), once (1), more than	Three dimensions a) extracurricular involvement $\alpha = .80$ b) schoolwork involvement $\alpha = .77$ c) at-school involvement $\alpha = .71$

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		Six items about teachers' knowledge of parent participation on the school premises		once (2)	
Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, and Fendrich, 1999	teachers of 1,205 urban, kindergarten through 3 rd -grade children	Teacher-Parent Survey (T-PS) teacher ratings of 4 aspects of parental school involvement: - number of contacts with parents - 2 items referring to the quality of teacher interactions with parents - 2 items referring to teacher perceptions of parent participation in school activities - 2 items referring to teacher perceptions of parent home involvement	not provided not provided not provided not provided	0-times (0) to 11 or more times (11) strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (3) no / don't know (0), yes (1) no / don't know (0), yes (1)	Four dimensions a) frequency of contacts b) quality of parent-teacher interactions, $\alpha = .91$ c) home participation $\alpha = .85$ d) school participation $\alpha = .73$
Reid, Webster-Stratton, and Beauchaine, 2001	634 families participating in Head Start and the children's teachers	Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (INVOLVE-P) involvement with education and activities at home and at school (parent reports) - amount of time spent playing, reading, etc. - frequency of activities Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (INVOLVE-T) involvement with education and activities at home and at school (teacher reports) - teacher ratings of parents' involvement - teacher ratings of parents' frequency of contact with the teacher	not provided	5-point scale / 7-point scale	Four dimensions a) parent involvement – parent rating $\alpha = .75$ b) teacher bonding with parents - teacher rating c) parent involvement in education – teacher rating d) parent involvement with school / teacher – teacher rating
McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, and Sekino, 2004	307 low-income, ethnic minority children and their caregivers	Parent Involvement in Children's Education Scale (PICES); 40 item parent self-report	not provided	not provided	Three dimensions a) supportive home learning environment b) direct school contact c) inhibited involvement
Bakker, Denessen, and Brus-Laeven, 2007	60 elementary school teachers and 218 parents	20 item parent-report agreement with statements about parents' involvement 20 item teacher report	I have contact with the teacher on a regular basis The parents have contact with the teacher on a regular basis	5-point scale	Five dimensions a) parent-teacher contact ($\alpha = .76$ parents, $.70$ teacher) b) parent influence at school ($\alpha = .71$ parents, $.45$ teacher) c) parent participation ($\alpha = .72$ parents, $.80$ teacher) d) home involvement ($\alpha = .69$ parents, $.82$ teacher) e) level of being informed $\alpha = .65$ parents, $.86$ teacher)
Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 2005	Four studies, 877, 495, 421, and 358	Parental role construction for involvement	I believe it is my responsibility to help my child with homework	6-point scale: disagree very strongly (1) to agree very	Two dimensions a) role activity beliefs ($\alpha = .80$)

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parents and their K-6 children	Parental sense of efficacy	I know how to help my child to do well in school	strongly (6)	“	b) valance towards school ($\alpha = .85$) One dimension ($\alpha = .78$)
	Parental perceptions of general invitations to involvement from the school	Teachers at this school are interested and cooperative when they discuss my child		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .88$)
	Parental perceptions of personal knowledge and skills	I know how to explain things to my child about his or her homework		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .83$)
	Parental perceptions of time and energy for involvement	I have enough time and energy to attend special events at school		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .83$)
	Parental perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the teacher	my child's teacher asked me to help out at school		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .81$)
	Parental perceptions of specific invitations to involvement from the child	My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework someone in this family helps out at at this child's school		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .70$)
	Types of involvement behavior		never (1) to daily (6)		Two dimensions a) home based activity ($\alpha = .85$) b) school-based involvement ($\alpha = .85$) One dimension ($\alpha = .92$)
	Parental report of encouragement	we encourage this child when he or she has trouble doing school work we show this child we know how to solve problems	6-point scale: not at all true (1) to completely true (6)		One dimension ($\alpha = .94$)
	Parental report of modeling	we show this child we like it hen he or she organizes his or her schoolwork		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .96$)
	Parental report of reinforcement	we teach this child to ask questions when he or she doesn't understand something		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .92$)
	Parental report of instruction	the person in my family who usually helps me with my homework		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .87$)
	Child report of parents' encouragement	encourages me to believe that I can learn new things		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .87$)
	Child report of parents' modeling	the person in my family who usually helps me with my homework likes to solve problems		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .87$)
	Child report of parents' reinforcement	the person in my family who usually helps me with my homework shows me that he or she likes it when I work hard on my homework		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .87$)
	Child report of parents' instruction	the person in my family who usually helps me with my homework teaches me ways to make my homework fun		“	One dimension ($\alpha = .86$)