

# The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Urban Secondary School Student Academic Achievement

## A Meta-Analysis

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A meta-analysis is undertaken, including 52 studies, to determine the influence of parental involvement on the educational outcomes of urban secondary school children. Statistical analyses are done to determine the overall impact of parental involvement as well as specific components of parental involvement. Four different measures of educational outcomes are used. These measures include an overall measure of all components of academic achievement combined, grades, standardized tests, and other measures that generally included teacher rating scales and indices of academic attitudes and behaviors. The possible differing effects of parental involvement by race and socioeconomic status are also examined. The results indicate that the influence of parental involvement overall is significant for secondary school children. Parental involvement as a whole affects all the academic variables under study by about .5 to .55 of a standard deviation unit. The positive effects of parental involvement hold for both White and minority children.

**Keywords:** *achievement; meta-analysis; education; parental involvement; family; urban*

For the past two decades, social scientists have sought to quantify the influence of parental involvement on the educational outcomes of secondary school children (Mau, 1997; Shanham & Walberg, 1985). Moreover, some educators have increasingly identified parental involvement as the primary vehicle by which to raise academic achievement from current levels (e.g., Hara, 1998). Many researchers have argued that in urban areas, in particular, parental involvement may be especially salient because of high family dissolution rates, numerous two-parent working families, and unique

sociological pressures on children (Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Hampton, Mumford, & Bond, 1998).

The question, therefore, emerges: Can parental involvement really improve the educational outcomes of urban children? More specifically, four issues are especially pertinent to parents and educators. First, to what degree is parental involvement associated with higher levels of school achievement among urban students? Second, do school programs of parental involvement positively influence urban students? Third, what aspects of parental involvement help those students the most? Fourth, does the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement hold across racial groups? To answer these four key questions, it is important to know what the overall body of research indicates. A meta-analysis statistically combines all the relevant existing studies on a given subject to determine the aggregated results of said research. This study uses meta-analysis to examine the effects of parental involvement on urban secondary school children, addressing each of the four research questions listed.

### **The Importance of Parental Involvement and These Four Research Questions**

Research indicates that American teachers and educational psychologists place great importance on parental involvement to elevate educational outcomes, particularly among students who face other disadvantages (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Jeynes, 2005a; McBride & Lin, 1996). However, no meta-analysis specifically examining the effects of parental involvement on the educational outcomes of urban secondary student populations has ever been published in an academic journal. This fact largely contributes to a dearth of knowledge about which aspects of parental involvement help urban student achievement and just what kind of parental involvement is most important (Christian, Morrison, & Bryant, 1998; Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Both urban parents and teachers need specific guidance and information to maximize the efficacy of parental involvement.

For the purposes of this study, parental involvement was defined as parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children. This definition is based on the most prominent research and theorizing in this discipline, which is important when conducting a meta-analysis (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). With these facts in mind, the first research question focuses on the degree of association between parental involvement and achievement outcomes among urban students.

Some researchers have noted little is known about the effects of parental involvement on the educational attainment of urban students specifically (Jeynes, 2005a; Shaver & Walls, 1998). Instead, most research tends to focus on the influence of involvement on the general population rather than on urban students. Further complicating the matter is the divergent results of two of the most comprehensive studies on the influence of parental involvement.

Mattingly, Prislín, McKenzie, Rodríguez, and Kayzar (2002) published a research overview or synthesis focusing only on parental involvement programs. The Mattingly study makes no statistical or meta-analytical attempt to combine the results of the individual studies. Nonetheless, Mattingly et al. concluded that parental involvement programs demonstrated virtually no influence on student educational outcomes. In contrast, Fan and Chen (2001) performed a meta-analysis examining the effects of parental involvement on the general student population and concluded that parental involvement positively influenced educational outcomes. Adding to the debate is the fact that neither study included calculations for urban students or identified and tested components of parental involvement.

This study's second research question addresses whether programs of parental involvement affect urban student achievement. Parental involvement programs are school-sponsored initiatives that are designed to require or encourage parental participation in their children's education. It is important to determine if these programs have an impact, because even though voluntary acts of parental involvement may positively affect educational outcomes, the same may or may not be true of programs, in which schools require or encourage involvement. Fan and Chen (2001) did not distinguish those studies examining parental involvement programs from other studies that examined parental involvement without the use of programs. This proves problematic in that even if parental involvement effectively raises achievement, this does not necessarily mean parental involvement programs work as well. They are, in essence, two distinct research questions.

For their part, Mattingly et al. (2002) focused only on parental involvement programs. In addition, they did not include a number of prominent studies in the research synthesis (e.g., Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Phillips, & Creamer, 2000; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999; Shaver & Walls, 1998). Instead, about one half of the studies were unpublished. Given that unpublished research more likely suffers from statistically insignificant results, their omission of published studies could bias the results in favor of the authors' conclusion; namely, parental involvement programs may have no impact. Furthermore, Mattingly concludes that some of the studies indicating a statistically significant effect for parental involvement programs actually show no impact.

The third research question addresses specific aspects of parental involvement that help urban students the most. Ballantine (1999) identifies many components of parental involvement and asserts that it would be helpful if researchers identified the aspects most beneficial to children. Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris (1997) further contend that once the academic community knows the constructs inherent in parental involvement, it can better predict the family and social attributes most ameliorative to producing parents who participate in the educational experience of their children. To fulfill this assertion, a meta-analysis needs to specify what aspects help the most (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

The fourth research question addresses whether the relationship between parental involvement and educational outcomes holds across racial and gender groups. Certainly, if educators are to be able to espouse the practice parental educational support, it would be imperative for parental involvement to have an influence that holds for virtually all groups (Jeynes, 2005a; Muller, 1998).

### **The Need for a Meta-Analysis for Urban Students**

Both the Mattingly and Fan and Chen studies contribute to initiating a broader debate about the influence of parental involvement. However, for the aforementioned reasons, a meta-analysis is needed to assess the effects of parental involvement on urban secondary school achievement, specific manifestations of parental involvement, and parental support programs specifically designed to help urban students. In addition to the four goals listed, this meta-analysis examines what are the effects of parental involvement across different kinds of academic measures, especially standardized versus nonstandardized measures.

## **Method**

### **Analytical Approach**

This meta-analysis examined the relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary student achievement. The first analysis consisted of computing effect sizes for the overall parental involvement variable and for programs of parental involvement (Research Questions 1 and 2). The second analysis assessed the association between specific types of parental involvement (e.g., checking homework and parental expectations) with student achievement (Research Question 3). The third analysis examined the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement by

race (Research Question 4). The procedures used to conduct the meta-analysis are outlined under this heading (Analytical Approach) and the following headings below: Data Collection Method, Study Quality Rating, Statistical Methods and Effect Size Statistics, and Defining of Variables.

Each study incorporated in this meta-analysis met the following criteria:

1. It needed to examine parental involvement in a way that could be conceptually and statistically distinguished from other primary variables under consideration. For example, if a school implemented a program that involved nine key variables, including parental involvement, and the impact of parental involvement could not be statistically isolated from the other features, the study was not included in the analysis.
2. It must include a sufficient amount of statistical information to ascertain effect sizes. That is, a study needed to possess enough information so that test statistics, such as those resulting from a *t* test, analysis of variance, and so forth, were either provided in the study or could be determined from the means and measures of variance provided in the study.
3. If the study included a control group, it had to qualify as a true control group and therefore be a fair and accurate means of comparison. Furthermore, if the research used a control group at some times but not others, only the former comparisons were included in the meta-analysis.
4. The study needed to be set in an urban environment and could be a published or unpublished study.

Given the nature of the criteria listed above, qualitative studies were not included in the study. Qualitative studies are definitely valuable, but they are difficult to code for quantitative purposes, and any attempt to do so might bias the results of the meta-analysis.

### **Data Collection Method (Coding and Rater Reliability)**

To obtain the studies used in the meta-analysis, a search was performed using every major social science research database totaling 25 databases (e.g., Psych Info., ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts International, Wilson Periodicals, Sociological Abstracts, and so forth) to locate studies examining the relationship between parental involvement and the educational outcomes of students from grades 6 through 12. The search terms included parental involvement, parents, schools, family, partnership, education, expectations, parental support, programs, communication, expectations, reading, attendance, homework, household, rules, parental style, and several other terms. Reference sections from journal articles on parental involvement were also examined to

locate additional research articles. Although this search yielded more than 5,000 articles and papers on parental involvement, nearly all of these articles were not quantitative in nature. This process yielded a total of 67 studies that quantitatively assessed the relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student achievement. Of these, 52 had a sufficient degree of quantitative data to include in this meta-analysis.

### Study Quality Rating

Two researchers coded the studies independently for quality, the presence of randomization, and whether both the definitional criteria for parental involvement and specific aspects of parental involvement were met. Study quality and the use of random samples were graded on a 0 (*lowest*) to 3 (*highest*) scale. Quality was determined using the following:

1. Did it use randomization of assignment?
2. Did it avoid mono-method bias?
3. Did it avoid mono-operation bias?
4. Did it avoid selection bias?
5. Did it use a specific definition of parental involvement?

We computed interrater reliability by calculating the percentage of agreement on the definition of parental involvement, issues of randomization, the specific components examined in each study, and quality of the study. Interrater reliability was 100% on whether a study examined parental involvement, 96% for the specific components of parental involvement examined in a given study, and 92% for the quality of the study. For the specific components of quality, interrater agreement percentages were 98% for randomization, 94% for avoiding mono-method bias, 94% for avoiding mono-operation bias, 92% for avoiding selection bias, and 96% for using a specific definition of parental involvement.

Two supplementary analyses were done to include first, only those studies with quality ratings of 2 and 3, and second, only those studies with quality ratings of 1 to 3.

### Statistical Methods and the Effect Size Statistics

Among the 52 studies that had a sufficient degree of quantitative data to include in this meta-analysis, the total number of subjects was well above 300,000. To ensure accurate statistical results, a number of steps were taken to make the meta-analysis more sophisticated. First, the Hedges' *g* measure

of effect size was used (Hedges, 1981). Because it uses the pooled standard deviation in the denominator, it customarily provides a more conservative estimate of effect size. Hedges also provides a correction factor that helps to adjust for the impact of small samples. Effect sizes from data in such forms as *t* tests, *F* tests, *p* levels, frequencies, and *r* values were calculated via conversion formulas provided by Glass, McGaw, and Smith (1981). When results were not statistically significant, studies sometimes reported only a significance level. In the unusual case that the direction of these not significant results was not available, the effect size was calculated to be zero.

The analysis in this study determines the overall relationship between parental involvement and achievement obtained for each study, as well as specific types of parental involvement mentioned earlier in the Method section. Four different measures of academic achievement were used to assess the effects of parental involvement on educational outcomes. First, there was an overall measure of all components of academic achievement combined. The other measures included grades, standardized tests, and other measures that generally included teacher rating scales and indices of academic attitudes and behaviors. The results that emerged in this study reflect the association between parental involvement and achievement found for each component of parental involvement, using each of these educational outcomes.

Two sets of statistical procedures were also used to distinguish between those analyses that included sophisticated controls (socioeconomic status [SES], race, gender, or previous achievement) and those studies that did not. The effect sizes were determined using weights based on the inverse of the variance, to give greater weight to studies with larger sample sizes. The results of these procedures are listed in different columns in the Results section, with the degree of statistical significance and 95% confidence intervals listed for each. An overall effect size was then determined, combining the studies that did and did not use sophisticated controls. No analyses of statistical significance were completed on the combined effect sizes given the different structure of the studies involved.

Supplementary analyses also addressed what effect sizes arose when adjusting for the quality of the study. In one set of analyses, only studies with an average quality rating of 2 or 3 (on a 0 to 3 scale) were included. In the second set of analyses, only studies with an average quality rating of 1 to 3 (on a 0 to 3 scale) were included. Tests of homogeneity were completed on the specific components of parental involvement to gain a sense of the consistency of specific parental involvement measures across studies.

For all the analyses, when only one study was included using a specific academic outcome for a specific parental involvement variable, the regression coefficient for this study is listed with a notation indicating that the table cell only included one study, to serve as a means of comparison with the various other effect sizes.

## Defining of Variables

For the purposes of this study, parental involvement was defined as parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children. The specific parental involvement variables, defined below, were the types of parental involvement identified by educators as most frequently practiced by parents, examined by researchers, and hypothesized by theorists as the most fundamental aspects of parental involvement (Deslandes, Royer, Turcott, & Bertrand, 1997; Epstein, 2001). The categorization of these specific parental involvement variables was based on the precise terms used in the original studies included in the meta-analysis. Fortunately, these researchers used widely accepted and recognized terms. Therefore, the proper categorization of effect sizes was nearly always self-evident (e.g., those studies included in the meta-analysis for “parental expectations” typically used precisely the same term).

*General parental involvement* includes the overall measure of parental involvement, as defined by the researchers of a particular study. If a study did not possess an overall measure of parental involvement, the effect size of this variable was determined by combining all its discrete measures.

*Specific parental involvement* includes a specific measure of parental involvement, as distinguished from other measures of parental involvement used in the study.

*Parental expectations* is the degree to which a student’s parents maintained high expectations of the student’s ability to achieve at high levels.

*Attendance and participation* is whether and how frequently parents attend and participate in school functions and activities.

*Communication* is the extent to which parents and their children communicated about school activities and reported a high level of communication overall.

*Homework* is the extent to which parents checked their children’s homework before the child handed it in to his or her teacher.

*Parental style* is the extent to which a parent demonstrated a supportive and helpful parenting approach. In the studies included in the meta-analysis, this most frequently referred to a simultaneous ability to be loving and supportive and yet maintain an adequate level of discipline in the household. It also included styles in which the parent demonstrated such qualities as trust and approachability.



## Results

### Homogeneity Tests

Homogeneity tests were performed to assess the extent to which the specific aspects of parental involvement across the various studies included were comparable. Generally speaking, for the same educational outcome measure, the results usually indicated that the tests for homogeneity were not statistically significant. These results indicate that within each specific component of parental involvement, the various measures of parental involvement were relatively homogeneous across studies.

Among the specific parental variables that did not test statistically significant for heterogeneity were parental expectations ( $X^2 = 4.33$ , n.s.), specific parental involvement ( $X^2 = 4.44$ , n.s.), and parental style ( $X^2 = 8.66$ , n.s.). In addition, parental programs were also homogeneous as indicated by this test ( $X^2 = 1.81$ , n.s.). Nevertheless, some of the other specific variables tested as heterogeneous (e.g., parental participation and attendance [ $X^2 = 13.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ] and household rules [ $X^2 = 5.59$ ,  $p < .05$ ]).

The results of the meta-analysis indicate that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement outcomes. This trend holds not only for parental involvement overall but also for most different components of parental involvement that were examined in the meta-analysis. Moreover, parental involvement is also associated with higher achievement for racial minority students as well.

The results of this study indicate that the general parental involvement variable yielded statistically significant outcomes of .5 to .55 of a standard deviation unit. Table 1 lists the effects that emerged for the individual studies examined in this meta-analysis. The effects varied from .01 to .83. Generally speaking, the effects that were the largest and smallest in size were from studies that had small sample sizes. This fact contributed to a "funnel pattern" in the effects that is desirable when one is doing a meta-analysis.

### Effect Sizes for Overall Parental Involvement

In Table 2 are listed the effect sizes for parental involvement in general, using the four academic achievement variables. For all the achievement variables combined, the effect sizes were somewhat higher for studies that did not use sophisticated controls than those that did. For the studies that did not use sophisticated controls, the overall effect size was .53 ( $p < .0001$ ) of a standard deviation versus .38 ( $p < .05$ ) for those studies that did use

**Table 1**  
**List of Studies Used in the Meta-Analysis for Parental Involvement,**  
**the Year of the Study, and the Effect Sizes for the Various Studies**

Study	Year	<i>N</i>	Effect Size Without Sophisticated Controls	Effect Size With Sophisticated Controls
Wise	1972	38	+ .83	—
Ma	1999	3,116	+ .82	—
Singh et al.	1995	27,834	—	+ .81
T. Z. Keith, Keith, Quirk, Cohen-Rosenthal, & Franzese	1996	16,378	+ .80	—
Simich-Dudgeon	1993	89	+ .76	—
Mau	1997	13,837	+ .74	—
Unger, McLeod, Brown, & Tressell	2000	115	+ .70	+ .65
Grolnick & Slowiaczek	1994	301	+ .67	—
T. Z. Keith, Keith, Troutman et al.	1993	21,814	+ .67	—
Paulson	1994b	247	+ .67	—
Zdzinski	1992	113	+ .67	—
P. B. Keith & Lichtman	1994	1,714	+ .65	—
Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts	1989	120	+ .63	+ .41
Russell & Elder	1997	377	—	+ .63
T. Z. Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey	1986	2,051	+ .63	—
Eagle	1989	11,227	—	+ .62
Paulson	1994a	80	+ .62	—
T. Z. Keith, Keith, Bickley, & Singh	1992	21,835	—	+ .61
Brown & Madhere	1996	1,394	—	+ .60
Jeynes	2000	20,706	+ .60	+ .27
Shanham & Walberg	1985	26,279	+ .56	—
Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling	1992	6,400	—	+ .56
Melby & Conger	1996	347	+ .51	+ .35
Jeynes	2002	20,706	+ .50	+ .29
Yan	1999	6,459	+ .49	+ .34
R. D. Taylor	1996	135	—	+ .49
Hoge, Smit, & Crist	1997	300	+ .47	—
O'Reilly	1992	131	+ .45	—
Deslandes, Royer, & Turcotte	1997	525	—	+ .43
Aeby, Thyer, & Carpenter-Aeby	1999	215	+ .42	—
Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers	1987	28,051	+ .42	+ .33
Stevenson & Baker	1987	179	+ .38	—
L. C. Taylor, Hinton, & Wilson	1995	566	+ .37	—

(continued)

**Table 1 (continued)**

Study	Year	<i>N</i>	Effect Size Without Sophisticated Controls	Effect Size With Sophisticated Controls
Bermudez & Padron	1990	162	+0.37	—
Uguroglu & Walberg	1986	970	+0.37	+0.17
Sui-Chu & Willms	1996	24,599	—	+0.35
Williams	1999	467	+0.30	—
Hampton, Mumford, & Bond	1998	676	+0.29	—
Yap & Enoki	1995	328	+0.28	—
Peng & Wright	1994	25,000	—	+0.27
Heiss	1996	2,296	—	+0.26
Desimone	1996	20,000	+0.28	+0.04
Sanders	1996	826	+0.26	—
P. B. Keith & Lichtman	1992	1,714	+0.25	—
Epstein, Herick, & Coates	1996	244	+0.25	—
T. Z. Keith, Keith, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings	1998	15,703	—	+0.23
Cardenas-Rivera	1994	217	+0.22	—
Fletcher	1994	216	+0.22	—
Brownell	1995	996	+0.20	—
McNeal	1999	14,103	+0.18	—
Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye	2000	709	+0.04	—
Veneziano	1996	281	+0.01	—

sophisticated controls. For those studies that did not use sophisticated controls, the regression coefficients were quite consistent across the academic measures, varying from .55 ( $p < .0001$ ) for standardized test scores to .34 ( $p < .001$ ) for other measures. For those studies with sophisticated controls, the regression coefficients ranged from .53 ( $p < .0001$ ) for other measures to .27 ( $p < .05$ ) for grades. Further analysis, not listed here, indicated that there were no differences in the influence of parental involvement among the different participants included in the standardized tests.

### Study Quality

In the secondary set of analyses that adjusted for the average quality rating of the study, the effect sizes were about the same as when no quality adjustments were made. When only those studies rated 2 and 3 (on a 0 to 3 scale)

**Table 2**  
**Effect Sizes for General Parental Involvement**  
**and Programs of Parental Involvement**

Parental Involvement and Academic Variables	Effect Size Without Sophisticated Controls		Effect Size With Sophisticated Controls		Overall Effect Size
	Effect Size	95% Confidence Interval	Effect Size	95% Confidence Interval	
<b>General parental involvement</b>					
Overall	.53****	.26, .80	.38*	.07, .69	.46 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.49***	.18, .86	.27*	.05, .49	.40 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.55****	.27, .83	.37*	.07, .67	.47 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.34**	.09, .51	.53****	.33, .73	.43 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Programs of parental involvement</b>					
Overall	.36*	.03, .69	N/A	N/A	.36
Grades	.25***	.11, .39	N/A	N/A	.25
Standardized tests	.36		N/A	N/A	.36
Other	.25***	.10, .40	N/A	N/A	.25

a. Confidence intervals tabulation not undertaken for combined effect size because of difference in sample distributions for the two sets of studies.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

were included, the effect sizes were .40 ( $p < .01$ ) for those studies that did use sophisticated controls and .55 ( $p < .0001$ ) for those that did not. When studies rated 1 to 3 were included, the respective effect sizes were nearly the same at .40 ( $p < .01$ ) and .54 ( $p < .0001$ ). As noted in Table 3, the correlation between the study's quality and its effect size was .02. As a result, across all the parental variables examined in this study, no statistically significant differences in effect sizes emerged from adjusting for study quality.

### Effect Sizes for Parental Involvement Programs

Among the parental involvement programs, the effect sizes were smaller than those that emerged for parental involvement overall. All the programs included in this meta-analysis did not include controls for SES. The overall effect size was statistically significant at .36 ( $p < .05$ ) of a standard deviation. Of the three specific measures of academic achievement, the effect sizes for grades and other measures were statistically significant, but the result for standardized tests was not.

**Table 3**  
**Correlations Between Measures Assessing the Quality of Study, Whether a Random Sample Was Used, Year of Study, and Sample Size for the 52 Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis**

	Correlation with Year of the Study	Correlation with Effect Size of the Study	Correlation with Quality of the Study	Correlation with Quality of Study's Definition of Parental Involvement	Correlation with Whether a Random sample was Used
Year of study	—	.02	.17	.19	.22*
Effect size from study	.02	—	.02	.03	.08
Quality of study	.17	.02	—	.57***	.55***
Quality of study's definition of parental involvement	.19	.03	.57***	—	.25*
Random sample	.22*	.08	.55***	.25*	—

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

**Table 4**  
**Effect Sizes for Specific Aspects of Parental Involvement**

Parental Involvement and Academic Variables	Effect Size Without Sophisticated Controls	95% Confidence Interval	Effect Size With Sophisticated Controls	95% Confidence Interval	Overall Effect Size
<b>Expectations</b>					
Overall	.88****	.72, 1.04	N/A	N/A	.88
Standardized tests	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grades	.85****	.80, .90	N/A	N/A	.85
Other	1.09****	.84, 1.34	N/A	N/A	1.09
<b>Parental style</b>					
Overall	.40*	.05, .75	N/A	N/A	.40
Grades	.45****	.22, .68	N/A	N/A	.45
Standardized tests	.39*	.04, .74	N/A	N/A	.39
Other	.65 <sup>b</sup>		N/A	N/A	.65 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Communication</b>					
Overall	.32*	.01, .63	.15		.24 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.29*	.03, .55	.04 <sup>b</sup>		.29 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.30**	.07, .53	.14		.23 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.24		.22 <sup>b</sup>		.24 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Homework</b>					
Overall	.38*	.02, .74	.13	.14, .20	.32 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.39*	.03, .75	-.10 <sup>b</sup>		.35 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.24		.14		.20 <sup>a</sup>

a. Confidence intervals tabulation not undertaken for combined effect size because of difference in sample distributions for the two sets of studies.

b. Based on one study.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

## Effect Sizes for Specific Components of Parental Involvement

### *Parental Expectations*

Table 4 lists the results for the various specific components of parental involvement. The largest effect sizes emerged for parental expectations. For overall academic achievement, the effect size for parental expectations was .88 ( $p < .0001$ ) of a standard deviation. The results were similar for standardized tests and other measures. The results for parental expectations were quite consistent among the various studies examined. Therefore, the confidence intervals were generally narrow, especially for standardized tests.

### *Parental Style*

For parental style, the effect sizes were quite consistent across the different academic measures. In the case of overall achievement, the effect size was .40 ( $p < .05$ ) of a standard deviation. The grades and standardized test variables yielded results of .45 ( $p < .0001$ ) and .39 ( $p < .05$ ), respectively.

### *Communication*

The results for family communication about school were stronger when no sophisticated controls were used than when they were. For all the educational measures combined, the beta was .32 ( $p < .05$ ). The effect sizes for standardized tests and grades were also statistically significant, but they were not statistically significant for other measures. When sophisticated controls were used, the effect sizes for overall achievement and standardized were in the positive direction but were not statistically significant.

## **Checking Homework**

The impact of parents checking homework was somewhat similar to that of family communication regarding school. When no sophisticated controls were used, the effect size for overall academic achievement was .38 ( $p < .05$ ) of a standard deviation. In terms of the specific measures of academic achievement, the impact of grades was statistically significant but the beta for standardized tests was not. When sophisticated controls were used, the regression coefficients for overall achievement and standardized tests were in the positive direction, but they were not statistically significant.

### *Other Parental Involvement Variables*

Table 5 lists the effect sizes for specific variables for parental involvement, parents attending and participating in school events, and having household rules regarding schoolwork. Overall, the effect sizes for overall achievement for the specific parental involvement variable were .40 of a standard deviation variable, .29 when no sophisticated controls were used, and .61 when these controls were used. Contrary to the general patterns evident for the other specific variables, the effect sizes for specific aspects of parental involvement were larger when sophisticated controls were used. The effect size for other measures when sophisticated controls were in place were .33 ( $p < .05$ ) for grades, .59 ( $p < .0001$ ) for standardized tests, and .99 for other measures.

The pattern that emerged for parental participation and attendance is that, for studies not using sophisticated controls, statistically significant

**Table 5**  
**Effect Sizes for Additional Specific Aspects of Parental Involvement**

Parental Involvement and Academic Variables	Effect Size Without Sophisticated Controls		Effect Size With Sophisticated Controls		Overall Effect Size
	Effect Size	95% Confidence Interval	Effect Size	95% Confidence Interval	
<b>Specific parental involvement</b>					
Overall	.29**	.09, .49	.61**	.21, 1.01	.39 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.32**	.11, .53	.33*	.07, .59	.32 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.28*	.04, .52	.59****	.41, .77	.34 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.25*	.04, .46	.99***	.37, 1.61	.94 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Rules</b>					
Overall	-.00	.02, .74	.02	.14, .20	.02 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.07	.03, .75	.07 <sup>b</sup>		.07 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.00		.02		.02 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.12*	.02, .22	.13 <sup>b</sup>		.12 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Attendance and participation</b>					
Overall	.14		.03		.11 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.21**	.06, .36	.07 <sup>b</sup>		.18 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.09		.05		.07 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.50**	.13, .87	.21 <sup>b</sup>		.38 <sup>a</sup>

a. Confidence intervals tabulation not undertaken for combined effect size because of difference in sample distributions for the two sets of studies.

b. Based on one study.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

results emerged for grades, .21 ( $p < .01$ ) and other measures, .50 ( $p < .01$ ), but not for overall achievement and standardized tests. When sophisticated controls were used, no statistically significant results emerged.

Of all the parental involvement variables examined, the regression coefficients for rules yielded the smallest effect sizes. Overall, the effect size for overall achievement was .00 (n.s.) when no sophisticated controls were used. Of the individual academic variables examined, only the beta for other measures was statistically significant, .12 ( $p < .05$ ). It was in the positive direction. When sophisticated controls were used, the effect sizes for overall achievement and standardized tests were not statistically significant. For grades and other measures, only one study was done that included sophisticated controls. Although no meta-analysis could therefore be done for these specific variables, the regression coefficients were roughly the



**Table 6**  
**Effect Sizes for General Parental Involvement for Studies**  
**With Mostly Minority and All Minority Students,**  
**With 95% Confidence Intervals in Parentheses**

Parental Involvement and Academic Variables	Effect Size Without Sophisticated Controls		Effect Size With Sophisticated Controls		Overall Effect Size
	Effect Size	95% Confidence Interval	Effect Size	95% Confidence Interval	
General parental involvement					
Mostly minority					
Overall	.53*	.02, 1.04	.36****	.24, .48	.53 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	N/A	N/A	.32 <sup>b</sup>		N/A
Standardized tests	1.08 <sup>b</sup>		.36****	.24, .48	.43 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.52*	.01, 1.04	N/A	N/A	.52 <sup>a</sup>
All minority					
Overall	.46***	.17, .75	.33**	.10, .56	.42 <sup>a</sup>
Grades	.42****	.33, .51	.26****	.18, .34	.33 <sup>a</sup>
Standardized tests	.49****	.10, .88	.27****	.21, .33	.26 <sup>a</sup>
Other	.49 <sup>b</sup>		.48****	.26, .76	.40 <sup>a</sup>

a. Confidence intervals tabulation not undertaken for combined effect size because of difference in sample distributions for the two sets of studies.

b. Based on one study.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

same for these individual studies as for the meta-analysis undertaken for the set of studies with no sophisticated controls.

### Effect Sizes for Parental Involvement by Child's Race

The effect sizes for parental involvement for minority children (see Table 6) showed consistent statistically significant positive results. For those studies that examined students that were 100% minority, the effect sizes were .46 ( $p < .001$ ) for overall achievement, .42 ( $p < .0001$ ) for grades, and .49 ( $p < .0001$ ) for standardized tests, when sophisticated controls were not used. The effect sizes were generally lower when sophisticated controls were used versus when they were not. The effect size for overall achievement was .33 ( $p < .01$ ). For the specific educational variables, the regression coefficients varied from .26 ( $p < .0001$ ) for grades to .48 ( $p < .0001$ ) for other measures.

For those studies that examined samples of mostly minority students (on average, about 85% minority students), the effect sizes were very close to those found for student samples made up of 100% minority students. The effect size for overall academic achievement was .53 ( $p < .05$ ) when sophisticated controls were not used and .36 ( $p < .0001$ ) when these controls were used.

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that parental involvement has a positive impact on children's academic achievement. This overall result holds for all measures of academic achievement that were examined. This pattern holds not only for the overall student population but for minority students as well.

### Research Question 1: Overall Parental Involvement

For the overall population of students, the effect sizes were in the general range of about one half of a standard deviation for overall educational outcomes, grades, and academic achievement when no sophisticated controls were used. The results for studies examining 100% minority students and mostly minority students were also close to about half a standard deviation unit. For overall achievement, the effect size was .46 for studies that examined all minority children and .53 for those studies that included mostly minority children. These results highlight the consistency of the impact of parental involvement.

The results on the influence of overall parental involvement should cheer those who desire to know whether parental involvement holds across populations and cultures. Although the United States is a diverse country, the impact of parental involvement apparently holds across different types of populations of children. Even when sophisticated controls were used, the overall impact of parental involvement was .38 for the overall population of students and nearly that high for racial minority children.

It should be noted that the effect size of slightly more than half a standard deviation were smaller than the .70 to .75 obtained in a meta-analysis of urban elementary school children (Jeynes, 2005b). There are a number of possible reasons for the fact that parental involvement is a better predictor of achievement at the elementary school level than it is at the secondary school level. First, children are generally more influenced by parental values in the lower grades than in their later years of schooling (Eisenberg & Wolchik,

1992; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Second, research suggests that parents are generally more involved in their children's lives when the children are young than when they are older (Dubas & Gerris, 2002; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Third, by the time children go to middle school and high school, they are more convinced of their academic and physical strengths and weaknesses (Hagger, Biddle, & Wang, 2005; House, 1995). Therefore, various aspects of parental involvement although perhaps appreciated by teachers and students, may have less of an impact on student achievement (Eisenberg & Wolchik, 1992; Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

### **Research Question 2: The Influence of Parental Involvement Programs**

Another interesting finding of this study is that parental involvement programs also had a positive impact on student achievement. When sophisticated controls were not used, the effect was .36, and when they were used, the effect was a somewhat smaller, .29. As one would expect, these numbers are smaller than those that reflected general parental involvement. It only makes sense that when one measures a parental involvement that is already practiced and is generally voluntary, the numbers will be larger than when a school initiates a program that compels parents to be involved.

The results for parental involvement programs are quite encouraging for those people who wonder whether parental involvement can work, if it is not initiated voluntarily. Nevertheless, the findings of this study suggest that voluntary parental involvement likely works better than parental support programs. Nevertheless, overall parental involvement programs appear to be effective.

### **Research Question 3: Specific Components of Parental Involvement**

One of the most vital aspects of this study was its examination of specific components of parental involvement to see which aspects influenced student achievement. One of the patterns that emerged from the findings is that subtle aspects of parental involvement such as parental style and expectations had a greater impact on student educational outcomes than some of the more demonstrative aspects of parental involvement such as having household rules and parental attendance and participation at school functions.

The effect sizes for parental style were generally around .40 of a standard deviation. The effect sizes for parental expectations were above .80. These regressions coefficients were the largest of all the specific components of parental involvement that were examined. The beta for other measures, under the parental expectations variable, was 1.09. Not only were the results for parental expectations quite large in standard deviation units but they also had 95% confidence intervals that were pretty narrow. This fact yielded effect sizes that were statistically significant at the .0001 level of probability.

The effect sizes for family communication about school were smaller than for either parental style or expectations. Nevertheless, when sophisticated controls were not used, the effect sizes were generally around three tenths of a standard deviation unit. However, when sophisticated controls were used, although the regression coefficients were in the positive direction, they were no longer statistically significant.

Among some of the more ostensible facets of parental involvement, the effect sizes were generally smaller than those found for the more subtle aspects of parental involvement. The effect sizes for the influence of household rules on overall academic achievement were not statistically significant either for studies that used sophisticated controls or those that did not. The effect size for other measures was statistically significant. Nevertheless, for the remaining measures, the size was not statistically significant. Parental participation and attendance had a mixed impact on academic achievement. Parental participation and attendance had no statistically significant impact on overall academic achievement, whether or not sophisticated controls were used. However, parental participation did have an impact on grades and other measures. Some possible explanations for this phenomenon include the following: (a) parental attendance is more likely to help students assimilate material covered in school than it is to help students excel in understanding the broad range of knowledge that is usually covered in standardized tests and (b) parental participation enhances the relationship between parents and teachers, which positively affects grades.

In fact, other measures and grades were somewhat more likely in the various elements of the meta-analysis to produce statistically significant results than standardized test scores. This result likely emerged for many of the same reasons that parental participation influenced other measures and grades more than it did standardized test scores. That is, first, parents generally focus their involvement on school outcomes more than the results of standardized tests. Second, parental involvement generally improves the relationship between parents and teachers, which likely affects school outcomes positively.

Although it is true that the influence of parental involvement largely transcended socioeconomic factors, the inclusion of the SES and other variables somewhat reduced the effects for parental involvement versus those that emerged when no sophisticated controls were used. The fact that the inclusion of these addition variables, especially SES, did have a little impact is not a surprise, given that past research indicates that there is a high correlation between SES and parental involvement. Highly educated parents are often more likely to acknowledge the importance of parental support in education (Legutko, 1998; Mulroy, Goldman, & Wales, 1998; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). Parents with a high SES level are also likely to appreciate the importance of a good education in terms of living a successful adult life (Grayson, 1999; Mulroy et al., 1998; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). Ascertaining the causal relationship between parental involvement and SES is a challenging one.

Clearly, some of the same attributes that help make a parent supportive are also likely to produce high SES parents. For example, a parent who believes diligence in school is important is more likely than most to be highly educated and is also more likely than most to support his or her children in scholastic endeavors. Moreover, a person with a supportive personality is more likely to excel as a boss and is also more likely to excel as an involved parent. One can make the argument that the addition of the SES variables dilutes the effects for parental involvement not because the causal nature of SES so much, as the fact that there are other causal components beyond SES and parental involvement that influence both variables. In terms of SES specifically, a growing number of studies indicate that the level of SES can be a result of various other factors rather than a primary cause (Gortmaker, Steven, Must, Perrin, & Sobol, 1993; Jeynes, 1998; Zakrisson & Ekehammer, 1998). Crane (1996) demonstrated that the influence of SES as a causal variable can be overestimated if mediating family factors are not taken into account. More research is needed to effectively understand the relationship between parental family structure and SES.

#### **Research Question 4: Parental Involvement by Race and Gender**

One of the most encouraging patterns that emerged from this meta-analysis is the broad association between parental involvement and school achievement. The correlation generally held across race. The fact that the relationship between parental support and educational outcomes held

across race is particularly important for both educators and parents in an increasingly diverse country.

The results of this study are especially noteworthy, because these findings suggest that parental involvement may be one means of reducing the achievement gap that exists between White students and some racial minority groups (Bronstein, Stoll, Clauson, Abrams, & Briones, 1994; Hampton et al., 1998). Numerous educators and sociologists have advocated this position, and the results of this study support their theories (Bronstein et al., 1994; Hampton et al., 1998; Offenber, Rodriguez-Acosta, & Epstein, 1979). It is also true that many of the parental involvement programs included in this study focused on minority students. As a result, this meta-analysis not only suggests that parental involvement overall may reduce the achievement gap but that programs of this nature may help as well. The fact that this study suggests that parental involvement may reduce the achievement gap between White and some racial minority groups has important implications. These results confirm the results of other studies that suggest that family and other domestic factors can contribute to reducing this gap (Jeynes, 1999, 2003).

This study's broad range of statistically significant effect sizes for parental involvement supports prior claims about the relationship between parental support and educational outcomes when applied to race (Mau, 1997; Sanders, 1998; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Villas-Boas, 1998) and background (Griffith, 1996; Hampton et al., 1998). Nevertheless, fostering parental involvement is not easy. Some teachers view parental involvement as intruding on their professional opinions (Lindle, 1990; Peressini, 1998). Moreover, some family situations more easily lend themselves to greater parental involvement than others. For example, research indicates strong relationships between parental involvement, SES, and whether a child is from an intact family (Jeynes, 2002a, 2002b; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Nevertheless, results of this meta-analysis indicate the success of parental involvement programs and the worth inherent in efforts to increase parental participation in their children's education

Taken together, the results of this study are very enlightening. First, these findings supporting the notion that parental involvement has salient effects that hold across various populations are fairly substantial. Second, not only does voluntary parental involvement have an effect but parental programs do as well. Third, this meta-analysis suggests that among the most important aspects of parental involvement are some of the more subtle facets of this practice. Among these more subtle aspects of parental involvement are parental style and parental expectations. Fourth, although the influence of parental involvement generally holds across academic variables, it appeared

to produce statistically significant effects slightly more often for grades and other measures than for standardized tests.

The findings of this study give an overall sense of the extent of the influence of parental involvement, based the present body of research. This study also gives teachers and parents guidance about which aspects of parental involvement are most helpful. Further research can examine whether using the most influential aspects of parental involvement, as uncovered by this study, will yield more effective parental involvement and parental support programs.

### **Limitations of Study**

The primary limitation of this meta-analysis or any meta-analysis is that it is restricted to analyzing the existing body of literature. Therefore, even if the researcher conducting the quantitative integrations sees ways the studies included could have been improved, there is no way to implement those changes. A second limitation of a meta-analysis is that the social scientist is limited to addressing the same research questions addressed in the aggregated studies. For example, it would be advisable to have parental expectations measures from all the studies included, but one can only aggregate the existing results.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The results of this study are particularly important, given the achievement gap between urban students and their counterparts in nonurban areas (Bronstein et al., 1994; Hampton et al., 1998). Indeed, this study's findings suggest parental involvement may effectively contribute to reducing that gap. Nevertheless, further research is needed to examine why certain aspects of parental involvement, particularly those that involve creating an educationally oriented atmosphere, are more noteworthy than others. Additional research can also help determine why parental involvement strongly influences the achievement of minority children in particular. Future research should also incorporate sophisticated statistical techniques, such as randomization and the use of hierarchical linear modeling.

Two lines of research could prove especially fruitful. Given that this meta-analysis provides evidence that parental involvement programs help struggling urban students, social scientists should undertake more studies to determine which programs work best and why. Qualitative research can also supplement the findings of this study by ascertaining the ways that teachers, parents, and students perceive that parental involvement benefits students the most.

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Asterisks indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.

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