

Research and Evaluation of Family Involvement in Education: What Lies Ahead?

Division H: School Evaluation and Program Development

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Today we're considering specific elements of a *system of family-student-school-community relationships*, including:

- Parent-child and parent-student-school relationships
 - Why parents become involved
 - How their involvement influences student outcomes
 - How teachers and schools can be supported in encouraging involvement
- Broader issues in parental behavior and relationships with schools (e.g., home-school communication, parental expectations for school success)
- School-based programs of school, family, and community partnerships; roles of districts and states in guiding these programs
- Community organizing as a means of involving parents, improving schools and children's learning and development

This portion of the panel's presentation focuses on the first area: Parent-child and parent-student-school relationships. These are important because:

- Parents and families play a major role in children's school success
- Parents do things with their children that contribute to children's school success
- What parents do to enhance their children's school success is influenced by teachers, schools, and communities

Suggestions and priorities here are based on:

- A theoretically grounded model of the parental involvement process (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; see Figure 1)
- Research in our lab and by others that has led to changes in the model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; see Figure 2)
- A process of continuous refinement and revision as we learn more about this portion of the parent/family-child-school-community system

Why do parents become involved? What the research suggests at this point:

- Psychological motivators encourage involvement
 - Parent has an active role construction (believes he or she *should* be involved)
 - Parent has a positive sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed in school (believes his/her involvement will make a difference for the child)
- Parent perceives invitations to involvement from others
 - General school invitations (e.g., welcoming school climate)
 - Specific invitations from the child
 - Specific invitations from the teacher
- Parent perceives that life context variables allow and enable involvement
 - Parent believes he/she has knowledge and skills that will help the child succeed in school
 - Parent believes that she/he has time and energy for involvement

Why do parents become involved? What are priority areas for continued/new research?

- How can schools and teachers encourage active role construction, positive valence toward school, strong sense of efficacy? How do these activities change across the developmental periods of preschool through high school?
- What kinds of invitations from others (school general, child specific, teacher specific) are most effective in encouraging involvement? How do the content and focus of effective invitations change from the preschool through the high school years?

- How can schools most effectively tailor invitations to family/community/cultural realities? How do these approaches change across different family cultures and communities? How do they change as parents and schools experience success in this area?

How does parental involvement influence student outcomes? What the research suggests at this point:

- Through home-based, school-based, and other forms of involvement
- Through specific mechanisms of influence, including encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction
- Through children's perceptions of parents' involvement
- Through the influence of parents' involvement on proximal student outcomes, e.g.,
 - Academic self-efficacy
 - Intrinsic motivation for learning
 - Self-regulatory strategy use
 - Social self-efficacy for relating to teachers

How does parental involvement influence student outcomes? What are priority areas for continued/new research?

- How may schools best offer and encourage forms of involvement most consistent with family culture and circumstances?
- What mechanisms of parental influence are particularly helpful in supporting children's school success? How do these change across time (pre-K through 12) and across family circumstances?
- What proximal student outcomes are strongest targets for parental involvement influence?

How can teachers and schools be supported in encouraging involvement? What the research suggests at this point:

- The importance of focused, respectful, participatory school consultation/in-service programming that builds on
 - Participant experiences and strengths
 - Parent and community experiences and strengths
 - Takes participants' and families' positive and negative experiences into account
 - Encourages active brainstorming, planning with peers and parents
 - Encourages on-going evaluation and adjustment of approaches, plans, programs
- The importance of strong, informed principal and district support

How can teachers and schools be supported in encouraging involvement? What are priority areas for continued/new research?

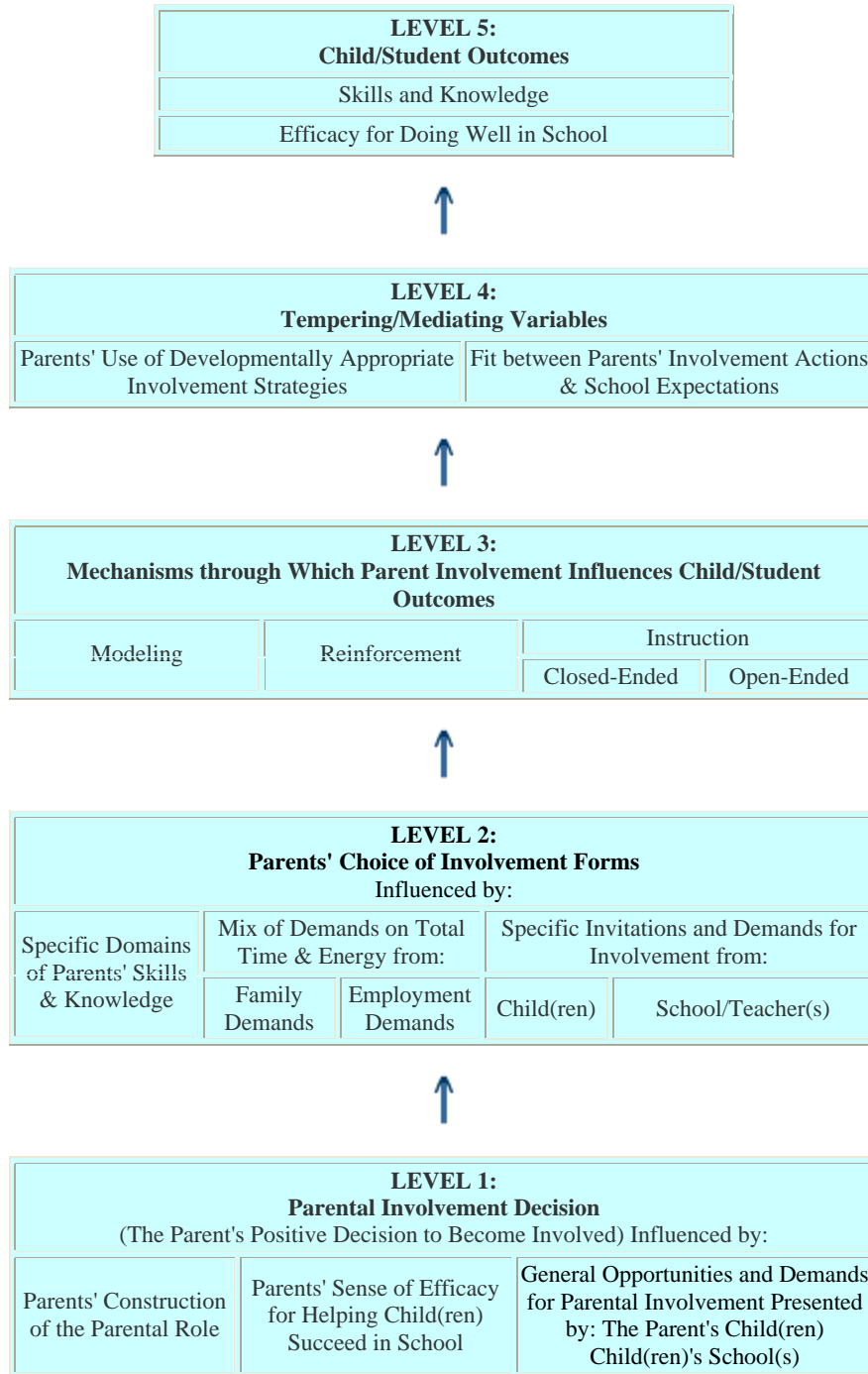
- What influence does pre-service preparation for parent, family, community involvement have on teachers' sense of efficacy for involvement, invitations to involvement?
- How can new-teacher mentoring programs best support teachers' family involvement practices?
- What pedagogical and consultation approaches are most effective in enhancing teachers' and schools' invitations to parental involvement

Sample References

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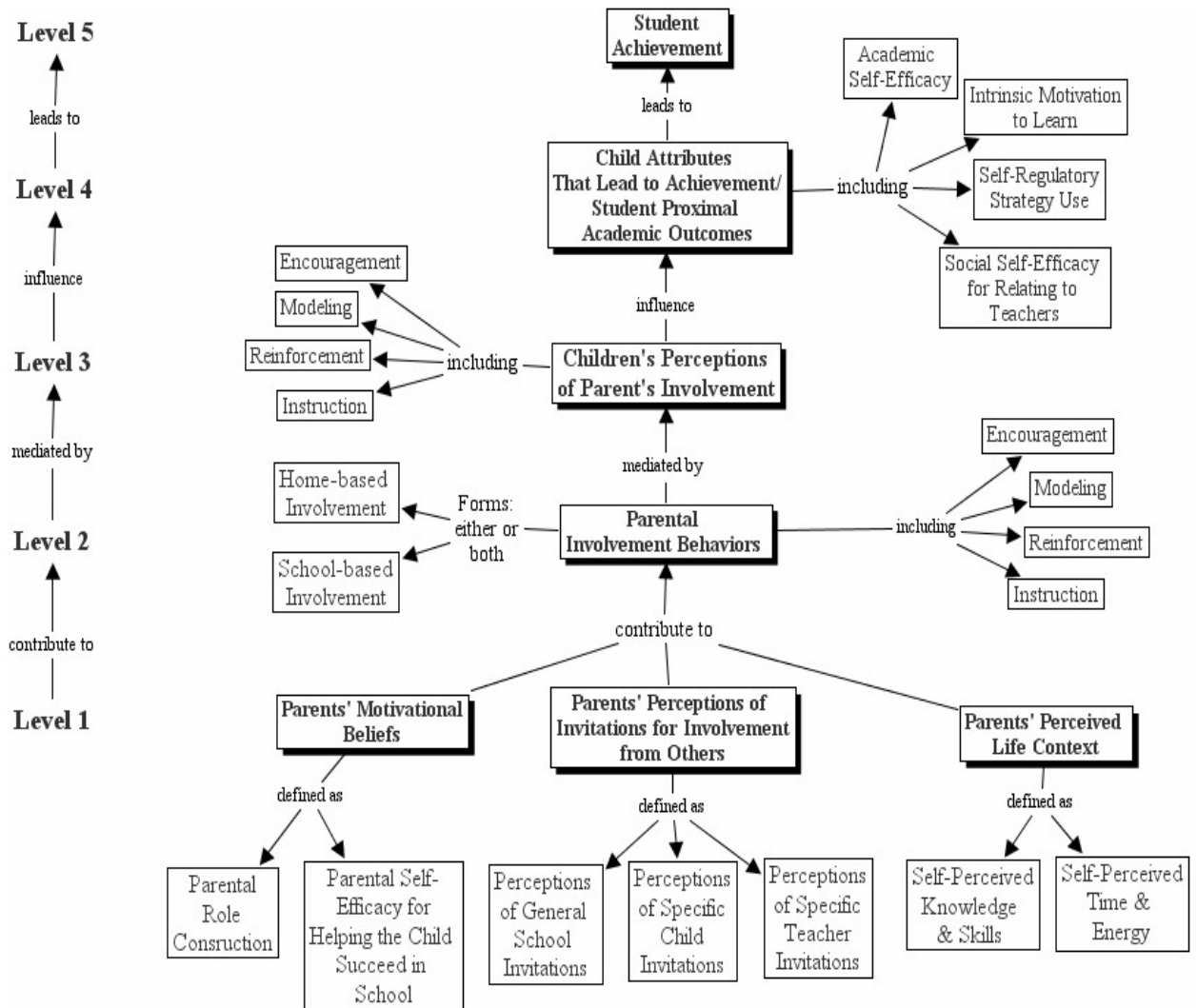
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Figure 1: Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) original model of the parental involvement process



Source: Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H.M. (1995). Parental involvement in children's education: Why does it make a difference? *Teachers College Record*, 97, 310-331; Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. & Sandler, H.M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67, 3-42.

Figure 2: Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) revised model of the parental involvement process



Source: Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H.M. (2005). *The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement. Final Performance Report: OERI Grant #R305T010673*. Office of Educational Research and Innovation/Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.