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# Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Rosie Thornton

Prepared in Partial Fulfillment of the

Masters of Arts Degree in Multicategorical Special Education

Governors State University

Spring 2015

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**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT** **iv**

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vii
Title Page	1
Abstract	2
Chapter I: Introduction	3
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study	5
Question of the Study	5
Assumptions/Limitations	6
Significance of the Study	6
Definition of Terms	7
Chapter Summary	8
Chapter II: Review of Literature	9
Special Education/Parental Involvement and Homework	9
Special Education	10
Learning Disabilities	11
Homework	13
Parental Involvement	14
Importance	14
Barriers	16

<b>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
Interventions	20
Parental Involvement and Homework	21
Chapter Summary	22
Chapter III: Methodology	23
Participants	24
Instrumentation	24
Parent Survey	25
Teacher Survey	25
Procedures	25
Data Collection	26
Data Analysis	26
Chapter Summary	27
Chapter IV: Results	28
Demographic Information	28
Parental Involvement	29
Teacher Perception	32
Chapter Summary	36
Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion	37
Discussion	37
Parent Involvement	37
Teacher Perception	38
Conclusion	39

<b>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT</b>	<b>vi</b>
Educational Implications	39
Recommendations for Further Research	39
Summary	40
References	41
Appendices	46
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Form	46
Appendix B: CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative	51
Appendix C: Parent Survey	53
Appendix D: Teacher Survey	56

List of Tables

Parent Results:

Table 1—Support of Parents	29
----------------------------	----

Table 2—Difficulties and Understanding of Homework	30
--	----

Table 3—Overall Opinions of Home and School Connections	31
---	----

Teacher Results:

Table 1—Teacher and Parent Partnerships	33
---	----

Table 2—Home and School Connections	34
-------------------------------------	----

Table 3—Overall Opinions of Home and School Connections	35
---	----

List of Tables

Parent Results:

Table 1—Support of Parents	29
Table 2—Difficulties and Understanding of Homework	30
Table 3—Overall Opinions of Home and School Connections	31

Teacher Results:

Table 1—Teacher and Parent Partnerships	33
Table 2—Home and School Connections	34
Table 3—Overall Opinions of Home and School Connections	35

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**Abstract**

The parent-school relationship for families of students with disabilities is clearly prescribed by law and is one of the main systems of belief of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2004 (Hernandez 2008). The purpose of the study was to focus on homework, parental involvement, parental involvement in homework, and parental involvement in homework of students with special needs. This study was designed to analyze parents and teachers beliefs on parent involvement in their child's homework as it relates to higher student outcomes and achievement within a traditional urban elementary school setting. Participants consisted parents of primary grade level students in a Chicago urban elementary school and its teaching staff. Data was collected via surveys answered by parents and teachers based on a Lickert scale.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

The parent-school relationship for families of students with disabilities is clearly prescribed by law and is one of the main systems of belief of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA, Hernandez 2008). Research suggests students whose parents are actively involved in their children's education have higher academic achievement than parents who are not actively involved in their children's education. In a review of research on homework, Cooper (1994) notes that homework can lead to greater parental involvement in school but it can also result in increased differences between high and low achievers. The involvement of parents in their child's education is believed to be one of the most important aspects of academic achievement and is believed to improve the relationship between home and school. According to Cooper (1994), students with disabilities and without disabilities, parents, and teachers can all benefit from this experience. Students can achieve better in and out of the classroom with reinforcement and it will keep parents better informed about their children's learning ability. Homework links what is learned at school (LaRocque, 2011).

Parental involvement is of particular importance for children with disabilities, who are served in special education, because these students tend to be more vulnerable to violation of students' rights which were implemented by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, & Office of Special Education Programs (2004). Furthermore, based on the information in the contents of this document you will come to better understand the necessity of parental involvement which

helps protect student's rights while tending to their need. In addition, Hernandez et. al. (2008) there is a tendency to over represent diverse learners, not limited to those with low socioeconomic status and minorities who receive special education services, parental involvement for these particular students is very crucial (Hernandez et. al., 2008).

Researchers Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino and Steineret (2010), believe parental involvement in homework can be a tool to keep parents well informed of the child's strengths and weaknesses in several subject areas particularly reading. Likewise, other educational research has repeatedly established the benefits of effective homework concur, actively involved parents help to increase and stimulate a child's interest in school and encourage academic achievement for students and families particularly those students with special needs (Carr, 2013).

Studies show the connection between parental involvement, homework, and academic achievement for school aged children does increase (Carr, 2013). Carr (2013) also believed those parents involved in home-school activities could be a positive reinforcer that gives student's the confidence they need for positive school related outcomes. Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) agreed, homework for young children can have a long-term developmental effect. Homework can also help develop good study habits, promote positive attitudes toward school and communicate to students that learning takes place outside as well as inside of school (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers are invested in all students' academic achievement. It is important that all students be provided with an environment to be successful. This includes a home environment that supports academic success. This study will attempt to determine whether parental involvement in homework of primary grade student's improves academic achievement for students with special needs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study explores the possibilities that parental involvement with homework does occur and makes a difference in academic success of students in the second grade with special needs and without special needs. Because it is anticipated that students will routinely seek parental involvement while completing homework assignments, specifically this study examined the possibility that students with and without special needs, in the primary grades, increased academic achievement by having direct or indirect parental involvement with their homework.

### **Question of the Study**

This study gathered information pertaining to the effects of parental involvement in student's homework based on a survey of parents of primary grade students with and without special needs. The responses of parental involvement and non-parental involvement with homework in the study are compared. The research was designed to answer the following questions: Does parental involvement in homework impact student achievement? How can teachers involve parents in the homework process?

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

The anticipated limitations in this study will be expected:

1. I will not know if the student's parent is able to assist student.
2. There will be no way of knowing if the parent is actively engaged in the student's education.
3. I am relying on self-reporting.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is for the benefit of all students, parents, and teachers. Students will have better achievement in and out of the classroom with reinforcement and it will keep parents better informed about their child's learning. While there is some evidence in previous research that supports and promotes parental involvement in homework, it is still appropriate to investigate how much parental involvement of homework actually takes place in the lives of these primary grade students with and without special needs. Although research has proven and shows positive effects on academic achievement based on parental involvement in homework, teachers may subsequently be able to use the findings from this study to redesign homework assignments for primary grade students with and without special needs. Teachers everywhere will also gain additional insight for using homework in their classroom as a way to assist students more effectively and potentially become a resource for helping other students across the curriculum.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Academic Achievement.** Defined as excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as extracurricular activities. It includes excellence in sporting, behavior, confidence, communication skills, punctuality, assertiveness, Arts, Culture, and the like. The act of achieving or performing. Something that has been done or achieved through effort: as result of hard work (Fan, Williams & Wolters. (2011).

**Barriers.** Something not material that keeps apart or makes progress difficult. A general term relating to social pressures that prevent people born into a lower class from moving over the course of their lives, or even generations, into a more affluent class. These barriers could mean racial prejudice to socially acceptable/unacceptable gender roles, intersecting, overlapping, and dividing the population based upon what is socially acceptable at the time (Vera et al. 2012).

**Diversity.** The condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety; especially; the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. Exploring difference in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment (Vera et al. 2012).

**Homework.** Is referred to as work that is done at home especially school exercises set by the teacher. Homework is a formative assessment and is used for practicing and studying. A reinforcement of skills learned with daily practice (Marzano & Pickering 2007).

**Interventions.** To become involved in something (such as a conflict) in order to have an influence on what happens. Intervention that can promote positive outcomes where development is not following the expected pattern. Intervening as soon as possible to tackle problems that have already emerged for children and young people (Elsleger 1999).

**Parental Involvement.** Knowing the teacher, knowing what assignments are due, knowing what the teacher expects and giving support. Providing materials and time to do projects, expecting quality work from your child, checking up with questionable grades and occurrences, no unnecessary absences. Expecting homework to be done or reviewed daily even when the child says there is no homework while checking backpacks regularly (Fan, Williams & Wolters. (2011).

### **Chapter Summary**

Parental involvement and parental involvement in homework is known to be a factor in student achievement and success. Parental involvement in homework is tool to attract cohesiveness between home and school connections. This study explores the impact of parental involvement and parental involvement in homework for increased efforts in the hopes of engaging more parents in interactive processes that support student understanding, academic achievement and success.

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

This literature review focus is on research and studies of homework, parental involvement, parental involvement and homework, and finally parental involvement in homework of students with special needs. You will also learn how parental involvement and participation in the academic growth of our students, according to the studies and research in this review, can affect student's lives not only academically but both socially and emotionally as well. Parental involvement in student's school and homework can increase growth for all students particularly those with special needs. In 2000, South Carolina's General Assembly enacted the "Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act". This act was a featured and recognized model for the nation. According to No Child Left Behind (2004), Section 1118, Title 1 of the Act, "when implemented correctly, many of the provisions promoting parental involvement incorporate key elements for successful planning and sustaining of parental involvement for schools and families." p. 3

#### **Special Education/Parental Involvement and Homework**

According to, McLoughlin, Edge, and Strenecky (1978), parents and teachers of students with learning disabilities and without disabilities can benefit from parental involvement and can gain better insight in their role when equipped with the tools and skills pertaining to their child (McLoughlin, Edge, and Strenecky (1978).

**Special Education**

Hallahan and Kauffman (2006) states, students with disabilities may require special education services in order to reach their potential. In addition, special education instruction is specifically designed to meet the needs of those exceptional learners requiring specific materials, skills, equipment and or facilities (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006). The right and availability to receive special services for those students with special needs in the public school system came about in past legislation (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006).

Based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1990 which replaced by PL 94-142 1975 and most recently amended in 2004, outlines services to be provided to students with disabilities and how they should be administered (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006). The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, NICHCY (n.d.) believed academic performance should have a diverse affect in order to be eligible for services under IDEA. IDEA's guidelines include fourteen categories in order to deem students eligible for services and they include: cognitive disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, learning disability, traumatic brain injury, emotional disturbance, autism, mental retardation, multiple disability, developmental delay, speech and language impairment, visual impairment, deaf, and deaf/blind.

In order to be in compliance with IDEA, every student with a disability must be offered a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This FAPE must be offered regardless of the student's disability (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006). These services must

be offered at public expense and meet state standards which include preschool through secondary and reinforced by the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **Learning Disabilities**

The United States Department of Education (2006) report 1 out of 5 individuals have a learning disability with an estimation of 3 million children ages 3 to 21 being labeled as LD and receiving special education services. According to the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD] (2008), almost 80% of students with a learning disability has a reading deficiency. Furthermore, these students make up over half of all the students with disabilities who are receiving special education services (United States Department of Education, 2006).

In addition, the number of individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities has increased by 42% between 1987 and 1997 (Bryan, Burstein, & Bryan, 2001). However, Lerner (2006) explains the prevalence of learning disabilities experienced a rapid increase which was the inception of PL 94-142 in 1975 to the present and was based on several factors: (a) as public awareness increased, more pressure was put on schools to serve students with disabilities, (b) improved evaluation and assessment techniques allowed for more students to be properly identified, (c) the category of learning disability was less stigmatized than other categories previously labeled LD, including mental retardation or behavior disorders, and (d) court orders classifying minorities mentally retarded were discriminatory, identifying more students as learning disabled. Hernandez, Harry, Newman and Cameto (2008) designed a systematic telephone survey of parents of students with disabilities and were able to obtain feedback from

approximately 2800 parents of students with disabilities over a 2-year period to weigh parental awareness of special education rights and programs, perceptions of parental involvement, and satisfaction with a district's special education processes (Hernandez, Harry, Newman and Cameto (2008). The parent-school relationship for families of students with disabilities is clearly prescribed by law and is one of the main views of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2004 (Hernandez, Harry, Newman and Cameto 2008).

However, Hernandez, Harry, Newman and Cameto (2008) stated in their study that despite the difficulties, the efforts in the survey presented a level of considerable confidence in the majority of the findings for parental involvement of special needs students. In addition, contradictions continue to present challenges to service providers hoping to meet their students and family's needs (Hernandez, Harry, Newman and Cameto 2008). This information is based on income level, race/ethnicity, language, age of child, and child disability.

Deslandes, Royer, Potvin and Leclerc (1999), examined the relationship between two student education outcomes of which are French and time spent on homework. The participants in the study consisted of two groups, 525 general education students and 112 special education students (Deslandes, Royer, Potvin and Leclerc 1999). The independent variables used were home and school partnership practices which measured six types of involvement.

According to Deslandes, Royer, Potvin and Leclerc (1999) the results showed higher levels of home and school participation for general education students. On the

other hand partnerships for special education students had less involvement in supervision of time spent on homework activities (Deslandes, Royer, Potvin and Leclerc 1999). Therefore it was hypothesized that special education parents got involved less because they could not assist in their student's achievement-related outcomes and did not feel welcomed in helpful situations (Deslandes, Royer, Potvin and Leclerc 1999).

### **Homework**

The first section of this review will discuss homework as well as the belief that homework is an effective practice. According to Marzano and Pickering (2007), gives a brief history during the first couple of decades of the 20th century how educators believed that homework was a common way to create disciplined minds. Later, there were arguments against homework because it was believed it interfered in routine home activities. After being presented and published in several books and magazines, it was suggested parents, and groups insist on the reduction of homework. (Marzano and Pickering 2007), also state by the late 1950s, the trend against homework was reversed because it was believed education in the United States lacked rigor which sparked schools to adapt more rigorous homework as a partial solution to the problem (Marzano and Pickering 2007). Although the research was mixed, for and against homework, Marzano and Pickering (2007) provide growing evidence of the usefulness of homework when implemented effectively benefits student achievement.

Both Carr (2013); Marzano and Pickering (2007) believed homework has the potential to be an extremely valuable part of students' learning experience and supports its effectiveness for reinforcing learning. The researcher clearly discusses how teachers

can increase the effectiveness of homework assignments for all learners by applying research-based strategies in order to facilitate effective homework practice Carr (2013); Marzano and Pickering (2007). Some of these strategies include, purposeful homework assignments, design homework to be completed, involve parents appropriately and monitor the amount of homework Carr (2013); Marzano and Pickering (2007)

Further review of research on homework, Cooper and Nye (1994) found that homework can lead to greater parental involvement in school, but it can also result in increased differences between high and low achievers. As a result involvement of parents in their child's education is believed to be one of the most important aspects of academic achievement to improve home-school relationships. The student, parent and teacher can all benefit from this experience (Cooper 1994).

### **Parental Involvement**

#### **Importance**

According to, Catsambis (1998), parental involvement is viewed as one of the most effective educational strategies in student achievement and reducing education imbalances. Researchers show parent involvement in their in their child's education is linked to success (Yan & Lin, 2005), and a key factor related to success for children with learning disabilities (McLoughlin, Edge, & Strenecky, 1978). According to, McLoughlin, Edge, and Strenecky (1978), actively involved parents of students with disabilities are more likely to follow these processes: (a) parents and professionals exchange information, (b) increased encouragement in the role of the parent, and (c) there is a more productive and trusting relationship between the parents and teachers

(McLoughlin, Edge, & Strenecky, 1978). DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane p.361, believes adolescents are more positively affected when a relationship is sustained between home and school, and is a critical time when parental involvement is needed even more. Fenwick (1987) describes adolescent as a physical, emotional, and intellectual area of concern facing intense preoccupation that brings about questions of personal identity, peer pressure and values. According to The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) early involvement is the most powerful time in a child's life and has the following positive outcomes:

- Higher grades, tests scores, and graduation.
- Better school attendance
- Increased motivation, self-esteem
- Low incidence (suspension, behavior)
- Low drug and alcohol use (MDE, 2002, p.1)

There is also evidence of families and schools working together to support learning and they are:

- Better achievement in school and in life
- Empowerment for parents
- Boosting teacher morale
- Schools getting stronger
- Better communities being built (National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, n.d., p11, §1)

Academic achievement and social adjustment are predicted by the level of parental expectations such as high-achieving students have parents who set higher standards than those parents of low-achieving students (MDE 2002). When parents do not know how to get involved it is recommended schools offer support in every aspect of modeling and guiding. According to the Michigan Department of Education (2002), those children who do well in school have involved parents based on the following ways: (a) parents establish daily routines, (b) monitor out-of-school activities assuring structured time and set attainable goals, and (c) offer encouragement by expressing interest in progress (MDE, 2002). Moreover, parental involvement encourages activities filled with reading, writing, and meaningful family moments (MDE, 2002).

Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein (2008) studies on African American parental involvement suggested higher expectations for parents by providing workshops, and creating positive cultural environments. As a result, the participants were able to view parental involvement as important, and reported on how family structure and socioeconomic status, school personnel's expectations of parents, and the practices and policies of middle school personnel influenced their level of involvement (Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein 2008).

### **Barriers**

Parental involvement has been proven by researchers to be instrumental in student success and achievement, yet it faces many obstacles. Research shows that parental involvement begins to decrease after elementary school and is minimal by the time the child reaches high school (MDE, 2002). According to DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and

Duchane (2007), there are parents who believe when a child reaches adolescence he should have his own space for independence and growth (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane (2007). In addition, by the time the child reaches high school academics, there are parents who may not have the knowledge or know how of the subject areas which would make the parent feel awkward therefore becoming less involved in their child's educational process (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane 2007).

DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane (2007) describe factors that have an impact on parental involvement of students with learning disabilities. These factors include: (a) parents with little or no social networks, less financial stability, and lower educational levels will have a tendency to become less involved in school activities, (b) parents of students with learning disabilities are more likely to work outside of the home and less likely to be involved in school activities, (c) students with learning disabilities are less likely to have both parents in the home with a college education, and (d) parents of students with learning disabilities report they are less involved than those parents of students in general education (Bryan, Burstein, & Bryan 2001)

Vera et al. (2012) explored the educational involvement of parents of English Learners and examined the relationships among specific barriers such as school involvement, parental involvement, and daily communication with children about their day. Vera et al. (2012) found within this study implication for intervention based on a diverse group of immigrant parents and English Learners. The interventions included parent programs, school policy changes, faculty, and professional development on cultural differences. The goal was to increase the involvement of parents of EL children

in order to better serve these diverse learners and allow teachers and school officials to be able to communicate with the parents the expectations of their children and parental involvement.

LaRocque, Kleinman and Darling (2011) explore the method to use as a base for inviting more cultural and family based experiences to diverse families. LaRocque, Kleinman and Darling (2011) discuss many strategies for closing the achievement gap and increasing student learning through collaboration. Some strategies used to address these barriers are, addressing emotional barriers, cultural differences, physical barriers and language barriers. These researchers believed that in order to enable parents to grow in their ability to help their children get the best education possible, encouraging parental involvement has to be viewed as a process rather than a one-time event.

In a study done by Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino and Steineret (2010), the relationship between parental involvements, self-regulated learning (SRL), and reading achievement through analyzing the fifth grade data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–1999 was examined. Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino and Steineret (2010) identified six dimensions to foster parental involvement and of the six the three that was most effective was, parental involvement expectations, school involvement, and homework help. This was the framework for parents to help their children develop SRL skills and guide educators and school administrators as they intend to increase parental involvement and its effectiveness. The results yielded a direct connection between SRL, parental involvement and reading achievement (Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino and Steineret 2010).

Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) investigated the extent to which parental involvement took place in regards to their children's education. Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) found based on a parental involvement scale, parental involvement was high in communication with children, creating enabling home settings, supporting the child personality development and helping with homework (Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013). On the other hand the all-time low was in volunteering at the child's school.

LaRocque, Kleinman and Darling (2011) explore the method to use as a base for inviting more cultural and family based experiences to diverse families. LaRocque, Kleinman and Darling (2011) discuss many strategies for closing the achievement gap and increasing student learning through collaboration. Some strategies used to address these barriers are, addressing emotional barriers, cultural differences, physical barriers and language barriers. These researchers believed that in order to enable parents to grow in their ability to help their children get the best education possible, encouraging parental involvement has to be viewed as a process rather than a one-time event.

Hill and Tyson (2009) discuss changes in early adolescence and how it is affected by school context, family relationships, and developmental processes. According to Hill and Tyson (2009) the context of these changes, academic performance often declines, while at the same time the long-term implications of academic performance increase. This meta-analysis explored the types of parental involvement that are related to the student's achievement. Overall, parental involvement according to the 50 studies of African American families and European Americans showed a positive association with achievement, but not if it involved homework (Hill and Tyson 2009).

**Interventions**

This action research study Elsleger (1999) learned that parental involvement could be increased by offering an incentive as simple as a picnic. The goal of the study was to have direct parental involvement with the child at home and the child's developmental learning (Elsleger 1999). The interventions were given as a family project and needed to be performed as a family. Nine consenting families agreed to complete seven child-parent activities to be observed on each visit. Elsleger (1999) believed the specific task for the interventions were successful for the project, which lasted for three months. According to Elsleger (1999) the genuine incentive for increasing parental involvement in any family must come from parents who see themselves as their child's first teacher and work with them to build a foundation of learning that will make them lifelong learners.

Bartel (2010) initiated a before and after summer intervention for those parents who participated in an interview and agreed to attend three hour of parenting classes, computer classes, exercise and cooking classes. Children of the parent participants attended and all day interactive homework program for the parents and their children in an urban school setting (Bartel 2010). These same parents were interviewed and the surveys of teachers were used to determine the impact of home/school parental involvement in their children's education (Bartel 2010). The results indicated African American parents, with high school educations that had children in Title I schools, had the significant parental involvement. This information is also consistent with parents of high socioeconomic status. The results of the pre and post interview with parents and the

pre and post surveys from teachers showed success. The analysis from the state aligned test after the interventions showed good results (Bartel 2010).

### **Parental Involvement and Homework**

Fan, Williams and Wolters (2011) investigated how different dimensions of parental involvement similarly or differently linked to various constructs of school motivation across ethnic groups (Fan, Williams and Wolters 2011). A structural equation modeling approach used to examine the structural relations between student school motivation and parental involvement (Fan, Williams and Wolters 2011). The baseline model was applied to each of the ethnic samples in order to evaluate the model fit to assess the effects of parental involvement on student school motivation in each ethnic group (Fan, Williams and Wolters 2011). Overall, findings support aspects of parental involvement. (Fan, Williams and Wolters. (2011).

In this small-scale study Sheppard (2009) collected data on 57 pupils' attitudes to school and schoolwork and their perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education. Sheppard (2009) examined the role of these variables in relation to school attendance, 'good' and 'poor' attenders of 12 to 13 years of age, matched for ability, and were compared on a number of quantifiable measures regarding their perceptions of schoolwork and their parents' behavior in relation to aspects of their schooling. According to Sheppard (2009) both good and poor attenders avoided class work if possible, but good attenders were more likely to do their homework and perceived their parents as more involved in their education. Sheppard (2009) argues that Education Social Welfare Services need to take account of findings from parental involvement

research in their practice if they are to increase both children's school attendance and attainment.

### **Chapter Summary**

Each of the studies and research discussed a link between homework, parental involvement, parental involvement in homework and parental involvement in homework of special needs students. According to the researchers, the studies show relationships between homework and parental involvement does increase student outcomes. . Cooper (1994) indicates students are better achievers when there is the reinforcement of homework which encourages greater parental involvement in the child's education. LaRocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011) argued the laws for students with and without special needs, what schools need to know and do, addressed different barriers hindering parental involvement which they believe is the missing in greater student outcomes. They also believed in order to close the gap we need to equip parents with the tools they need to complete the missing link of parental involvement in home-school connections. Studies done by Bartel (2010) and Elsleger (1999) examined incentives as a means to help increase parental involvement in homework and others activities. The outcome of each of these studies showed an increase in parent participation and increased student outcomes. To conclude on the basis of evidence, parental involvement in homework does increase and improve student outcomes and achievement.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Methodology**

This study explores the possibilities that parental involvement with homework does occur and makes a difference in academic success of primary school students with special needs and without special needs. It is anticipated that students routinely seek parental involvement while completing homework assignments, specifically the study examines the possibility that students with and without special needs, in grades kindergarten through third, increased academic achievement by having direct or indirect parental involvement with their homework.

In previous studies Hill and Tyson (2009) discussed early adolescence and how it is affected by: (a) school context, (b) family relationships, (c) development.

Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013) investigated the extent of which parental involvement occurred. Vera et. al. (2012) explored relationships among specific barriers and parental involvement.

Therefore, this study is designed to examine the extent of parent involvement in their child's homework and explore relationships as it relates to student outcome and achievement within a traditional elementary school setting. The study took a qualitative approach based on two separate surveys of primary school aged children's parents and certified general education and special education teachers and the importance of homework and particularly parental involvement in homework.

### **Participants**

Participants were of parents of primary school students ranging from grades kindergarten through third. They were students with learning disabilities and without disabilities. According to the 2014 Illinois Report Card, demographics shows a total enrollment of approximately 474 students of which 15% are students with special needs. The student population consists of 98% low income status and the average class size is 18 students per classroom. In this predominately African American school there are twenty-five certified teachers of which there are four special educators, four ancillaries (1 male), four middle school (1 male), and thirteen general educators. In addition, the sample from this diverse population of parents who have students with and without special needs was surveyed from grades kindergarten through third. All certified and special education teachers were surveyed as well using a separate survey. These survey instruments were used to collect data and analyzed according to responses.

### **Instrumentation**

There are two survey instruments for this study. Both survey instruments are from previously conducted research and include twelve Likert-scale items adapted from Reglin, Cameron and Losike-Sedimo (2003).

Reponses are based on participants answers by choosing, *SA=Strongly Agree*, *A=Agree*, *UD=Undecided*, *D=Disagree*, *SD=Strongly Disagree* with all items pertaining to homework and parental involvement. Lastly, an open ended question was included at the end of each survey for comments about issues or concerns not addressed in the questionnaire.

**Parent Survey**

The first survey instrument was used to collect data from parents of primary grade students with and without special needs. The parent survey consists of (a) demographic information related to the child, (b) if the child has a disability and (c) parent availability for conferences. The second part of the parent survey relates to what extent of importance the parent believes parental involvement and parental involvement in homework is important. Finally, the third section would allow parents to make any comments or express their concerns about parental involvement and homework.

**Teacher Survey**

The second survey instrument was used to collect data from the general education teachers' grades kindergarten through eighth grade, ancillary teachers and special education teachers. The teacher survey consist of (a) demographics related to certification, (b) type, (c) years of experience, (d) subject, (e) types of students being taught, and (f) parent conference availability. The second part of the teacher survey is based on the extent of parental involvement and homework and its importance according to the Likert-scale. The range of the scale is from 1-5 with 5 being the most agreed upon. The third section allows teachers to include any comments or concerns about parental involvement and parental involvement in homework.

**Procedures**

The Institutional Review Board's ethics training and research application were completed prior to the study. Procedures were conducted in the spring of 2015. A qualitative approach was used to gather the data and information geared towards this

inner city school. The anonymity, confidentiality and the purpose of the study were all be described at the beginning of the survey.

### **Data Collection**

Surveys will be distributed to the parents of students in primary grades with and without disabilities, general education teachers, ancillary, and special education teachers in this inner city school. After four weeks, based on the number of surveys distributed, minus the number of surveys returned, another set of surveys will be sent out as a follow-up with a specific return date as a reminder to return the survey and if the survey has been returned they may disregard the request.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Gay, Mills and Raisin, a qualitative analysis was used to analyze the results of the surveys. Information gathered from the surveys will be used and analyzed to identify ways to improve parental involvement and homework of students with and without special needs. The data survey participants will provide an answer that corresponds to a response. Likert's sample scale had five response alternatives: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree, and the information will be stored and kept in a database. The database will also be used for statistical analysis, which in turn can be used to formulate ideas as they relate to parental involvement and non-parental involvement of students and homework. The most appropriate measure of this survey is the mode which is the most frequent responses or the median. The best way to display the distribution of responses i.e. (68% that agree, disagree etc.) is to use a bar chart.

### **Chapter Summary**

The purpose of the study is to show the connection between parental involvement, homework, and academic achievement for school aged children does increase (Carr 2013). The study also examines how parents and teacher feel about parental involvement and parental involvement in homework of school aged children. Data were collected and analyzed in order to see if there is a significant difference when parents are involved in the academic success of their students.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

This study describes parental involvement and the areas of parental involvement and its effectiveness on how much elementary school students parents get involved in the support of homework, actual involvement in homework, their attitudes towards homework, parent communication and teacher communication. Data on parental involvement in homework was collected and data on teacher perception of parental involvement in homework was gathered and charted based on responses.

### **Demographics**

The parent participants in the study were surveyed and answered questions about their son or daughters in primary grades ranging from ages five through ten and 76% of their children were females and 20% were males. The group of parents surveyed represented 98 % of African Americans in this urban school. Compared to the data for the overall school and state populations, African American students were over represented in this group. The teacher participants in the study were surveyed and answered questions about parents, support and teacher collaboration. The group of teachers surveyed represented 100% of the female population in this urban city school of which 70% are regular education 23% are special education and 6% are both, special educators and regular educators. Data was collected through a Lickert Scale using five response alternatives ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with strongly agree as the highest rating on the scale. There were 120 parent surveys and 24 teacher surveys distributed using this method.

### Parental Involvement

Table I provides information on the percent of students parents who offer support to their students. The responses of parent support in this table include (a) checking student's homework, and (b) helping students with homework. The responses were divided into categories based on the support of parents with homework and included the following: (a) one to two (disagree), (b) three (undecided), and (c) 4-5 (agree).

Table 1

#### *Parents Who Support Homework Efforts*

Themes	N	Agree %	Disagree %
Parents Checking Homework	58	88.2	8.5
Parents Willing to Help	58	91.5	3.4

Note: Agree & Strongly Agree = Agree; Strongly Disagree & Disagree = Disagree

The data in Table 1 shows that the majority of students had parents who did offer support in the student's homework efforts. The data shows that the greatest amount of parents agreed they offer support to the students by always checking homework and making sure it is done correctly.

Table 2 provides information on the percent of student's parents and their involvement in their student's homework. The responses of parent involvement in this table include (a) difficulty to be actively involved, and (b) several hours spent helping

child understand homework. The responses were divided into categories based on the involvement of parents with homework and included the following: (a) one to two (disagree), (b) three (undecided), and (c) 4-5 (agree).

Table 2

*Parents Who Have a Difficult Time for Involvement and Understanding Homework*

Themes	N	Agree %	Disagree %
Difficulty to be Actively Involved	58	8.5	88.1
Hours Spent Understanding Homework	58	17.5	57.5

Note: Agree & Strongly Agree = Agree; Strongly Disagree & Disagree = Disagree

The data in Table 2 shows that the majority of students had parents did not find it difficult to be actively involved in student's homework and did not spend several hours understanding the homework. The data shows that the greatest amount of parents disagreed there was a problem being actively involved in their child's education and are not spending hours trying to understanding homework.

Table 3 provides information on the percent of student's parents and their attitudes towards their student's receiving homework. The responses of parent attitude based on homework in this table include (a) teacher's responsibility to educate students, and (b) feeling awkward when at the child's school, (c) being overwhelmed by the educational process and programs, (d) excessive homework with no time to help, (e)

difficulty understanding homework to make corrections, (f) too much homework every night, (g) homework interfering with home activities, and (h) homework should not be a priority. The responses were divided into categories based on the attitudes/opinions of parents on school issues and homework included the following: (a) one to two (disagree), (b) three (undecided), and (c) 4-5 (agree).

Table 3

*Parents Who Have Formed Their Own Opinion about School and Homework Using % in Assessment*

Theme	N	Agree %	Disagree %
Teachers Responsibility to Educate	17	23.7	71.2
Feeling of Awkwardness	17	15.3	77.9
Overwhelmed with School Processes	17	15.3	78.0
Excessive Homework No Time to Help	17	1.7	89.8
Difficult Time Understanding Homework	17	11.9	79.7
Too Much Homework Every Night	17	3.4	58.1
Takes Time Away From Home Activities	17	6.8	91.5
Homework Not a Priority at Home	17	17.0	72.9

Note: Agree & Strongly Agree = Agree; Strongly Disagree & Disagree = Disagree

The data in Table 3 shows that the majority of student's parent's attitudes out of the eight categories did not negatively rate their attitudes towards (a) teacher's responsibility to educate students, and (b) feeling awkward when at the child's school, (c) being overwhelmed by the educational process and programs, (d) excessive homework with no time to help, (e) difficulty understanding homework to make corrections, (f) too much homework every night, (g) homework interfering with home activities, and (h) homework should not be a priority. The data shows that the greatest amount of parents disagreed that there was some issues pertaining to their child's education and homework.

### **Teacher Perception**

Table I provides information on the percent of teachers who collaborate with their colleagues and what they think of parents as partners. The responses of teacher collaboration in this table were divided into categories and include (a) sharing strategies for student success, and (b) teachers and parents as partners. The responses were divided into categories based on the collaboration of teachers and parent partnerships and included the following: (a) one to two (disagree), (b) three (undecided), and (c) 4-5 (agree).

Table 1

*Teachers and Parents as a Partnership Using % in Assessment*

Theme	N	Agree %	Disagree %
Teachers share strategies for success	17	70.6	5.9
Teachers and Parents as Partners	17	35.3	47.1

Note: Agree & Strongly Agree = Agree; Strongly Disagree & Disagree = Disagree

The data in Table 1 shows that the majority of teachers do share strategies for the success of students and the majority of teachers in category two did not consider parents as partners. The data in category one shows that the greatest amount of teachers agreed there was collaboration going on for the success of the student. The data in category two showed the majority of teachers did not consider parents as partners.

Table 2 provides information on the percent of teachers rating the importance of parental involvement. The responses from teachers on parent involvement in this table include (a) rating parental involvement as excellent, (b) the importance of having parental involvement (c) encouraging parental involvement, and (d) parents understanding the importance of parental involvement. The responses were divided into categories based on parental involvement and included the following: (a) one to two (disagree), (b) three (undecided), and (c) 4-5 (agree).

Table 2

*Parental Involvement at Home and School Using % in Assessment*

Theme	N	Agree %	Disagree %
Parental Involvement Rated Excellent	17	11.8	76.5
Importance of Parental Involvement	17	94.1	5.9
Encouraging Parental Involvement	17	70.6	5.9
Parents Understand Importance of Parental Involvement	17	23.5	47.0

Note: Agree & Strongly Agree = Agree; Strongly Disagree & Disagree = Disagree

The data in Table 2 shows that the majority of teachers negatively rated parent involvement as being excellent and parents knowing the importance of parental involvement. The data also shows the majority of teachers positively rated the importance of parental involvement as a teacher and teacher encouragement of parental involvement.

Table 3 provides information on the percent of teacher's attitudes toward parental involvement in homework. The responses from teachers on parent involvement in homework in this table include (a) parents make sure homework is correct, (b) parents understand how homework is done, (c) parents can communicate with students about homework (d) teachers are considerate when giving out homework, (e) parents get

involved and help with homework and (f) teachers concerned if parents can really help.

The responses were divided into categories based on parental involvement and included the following: (a) one to two (disagree), (b) three (undecided), and (c) 4-5 (agree).

Table 3

*Teachers Attitudes toward Parents and Homework Using % in Assessment*

Theme	N	Agee %	Disagree %
Parents check homework for correctness	17	5.9	64.7
Parents Understand and Can Help	17	11.8	47.1
Parents Communicate about Homework	17	58.9	29.4
Considerate when giving Homework	17	94.1	0
Parents get Involved in Homework	17	17.6	53.0
Teachers Concerned Parents Can't Help	17	70.6	5.9

Note: Agree & Strongly Agree = Agree; Strongly Disagree & Disagree = Disagree

The data in Table 3 shows teachers agree parents speak the language to communicate with their students about homework. They also agreed there is a concern that they are not sure parents are able to help their student with their homework assignments. However, all the teachers who participated in the survey agree they are considerate of the parents and the students when giving out homework assignments. The remaining three themes show that 55% of the teachers do not agree parents check

homework to make sure it is done correctly, that parents understand how to help their student with homework or get involved to make sure homework is done correctly.

### **Chapter Summary**

Data obtained in the two surveys administered were divided into the categories. Tables were created to show percentage of student's parent who had involvement in their child's homework and school through various questions including (a) teacher's responsibility to educate students, and (b) feeling awkward when at the child's school, (c) being overwhelmed by the educational process and programs, (d) excessive homework with no time to help, (e) difficulty understanding homework to make corrections, (f) too much homework every night, (g) homework interfering with home activities, and (h) homework should not be a priority. Tables were also created to show percentage of teacher's attitudes toward parental involvement in homework and school connection through various questions including (a) parents make sure homework is correct, (b) parents understand how homework is done, (c) parents can communicate with students about homework (d) teachers are considerate when giving out homework, (e) parents get involved and help with homework and (f) teachers concerned if parents can really help.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter discusses the results of the surveys and compares them to the related literature. The literature stresses the importance of parental involvement and parental involvement in homework through various channels such as; (a) communication, (b) parental presence in the school, and (c) successful academic outcomes. According to, United States Department of Education (2003), students who have parental involvement in their education have more academic success and are more likely to succeed. The data from the two surveys include parent involvement and perception of parents based on teacher attitudes. The literature also underscores how important parental involvement is through visibility of the parent at school in the order for the child to have success and be successful (MDE, 2002). The results of the study indicate the majority of the parents are involved at the school level and at home.

### **Discussion**

#### **Parent Involvement**

This study examined parent involvement in terms of homework, parental involvement and homework, and special education and parental involvement in homework as the research showed that these methods of parental involvement were key factors to the educational success of students. In this study, parents had significant participation when it came to checking homework and being willing to help with homework. The highest type of involvement by parents was their willingness to help with assignments. The study continued to show that the majority of parents did not favor

the thought of non-parental involvement leaning towards the idea there was no problem being actively involved in their child's education and no contest to not spending hours trying to understanding homework. Parents also ruled out any misconceptions about their feeling on school connections and homework showing they could be comfortable in the educational environment.

The data collected showed instances when parents were involved in their child's education at least 75% of the time. This indicates contrary to belief, and based on the research the surveys in favor of parental involvement is crucial to academic achievement.

### **Teacher Perception**

This study also examined how teachers perceived teacher partnerships, parent partnerships, parental involvement at home and at school and their opinion of parents based on ability. In this study teachers showed the majority did work together for the common good of academic success for all students. However, they did not perceive parents in the same light nor did they give parents a good rating for portraying the importance of or encouraging parental involvement in home and school activities. In this study teacher opinion was very high concerning the parent being able to communication about homework and concerned about those parents who can't help their students with homework or have the necessary skills to help their child be successful. Teachers formed a very high opinion of themselves based on they are very considerate when it came to the needs of the family's when giving out homework.

The data collected showed teachers had little to no confidence in the parent's ability and their involvement in the education process.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the study demonstrated that the majority of parents were involved in the education of their students' based on the magnitude of research on the importance of parental involvement. When parents are involved such as homework execution and school involvement it makes a significant difference in a child's education. The opinions of teachers could rate higher based on the data. As it stands, teachers have no confidence in parents, yet feel they need to rely on themselves.

### **Educational Implications**

The analysis of parental involvement and parental involvement in homework in this study and the emphasis on the need for parental involvement across the board, the literature implicates that schools need to implement more strategies in order to help improve the quality and consistency of parental involvement. The research strongly suggests the need for more restorative practice on the teachers part and more ways to improve parental involvement and the importance of schools recognizing and rolling out programs for increased parent involvement and increased parent-teacher relationships and communications (Bryan, Burstein, & Bryan, 2001; Sheldon, 2010).

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

We have learned that parental involvement is proven to be effective yet more times over not often used and therefore this research should continue to be studied and proven. More research should be focused on ways to encourage parental involvement based on results from both parents and teachers. More studies such as this should be done on a larger scale and conducted community wide. According to parents and

teachers in this study there are many areas of weaknesses on both parts. More studies mean increased knowledge and better preparedness for all students with and without disabilities.

### **Summary**

The literature shows parental involvement in education is instrumental in making a difference in student's academic outcomes thus reducing behavior problems in school. This study examined parental involvement in the education of primary school students in a poverty stricken, low-income community in Chicago. Data was collected through surveys based on questions from a Lickert scale in order to determine the extent of parental involvement and parental involvement in homework. The study showed the majority of parents are involved in the education of their students based on the research on the importance of parental involvement. The teachers based on their survey questions for the Lickert scale show low confidence in parent involvement. The results show room for improvement for parent teacher relationships and parental involvement, meanwhile there is still room for improvement and implementation of strategies for the success of all stake holders.

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Appendix C: Parent Survey

Dear Parents/Guardians,

My name is Rosie Thornton and I am currently pursuing my Masters in Multicategorical Special Education at Governors State University. I am surveying parents as part of my thesis and culminating project. I would appreciate if you filled out this short survey and answer as honestly as possible. **Your responses will be kept confidential.** Please note that by continuing on, you are consenting that you are willingly participating.

**Demographic Information**

- 1) I am completing this survey about my son/daughter.
- 2) My son/daughter is \_\_\_\_\_years old.
- 3) My child’s primary caregiver is his/her mother, father, either parents or other.
- 4) My child has the following disabilities....
 

Learning disability	Multiple Disabilities
Behavior/Emotional disorder	Diabetes, Asthma
Hearing impairment	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Visual impairment	ADHD
Speech/language	Orthopedic
- 5) Are you available for parent conferences mornings or evenings?

**Survey Questions**

Please select the answer that best describes your feeling on how important the following are to you as a parent. There are no right or wrong answers.

*SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree*

- 1) It is difficult to find time to be actively involved in my child’s education.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

- 2) It is the teacher’s full responsibility to educate my child.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

- 3) Whenever I am at my child’s school I feel awkward.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

- 4) I get overwhelmed trying to understand educational programs and procedures.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

5) I spend several hours trying to help my child understand homework.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

6) My child gets an excessive amount of homework every night and I don't have time to help.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

7) I always check my child's homework to make sure it is correctly done.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

8) I have a difficult time understanding my child's homework enough to make sure it is correct.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

9) My child receives too much homework every night.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

10) My child's homework takes time away from other home activities.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

11) Homework should not be a priority at home.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

12) I am always willing to help my child complete homework assignments.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

**Additional comments or concerns:**

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Appendix D: Teacher Survey

Dear Teachers,

My name is Rosie Thornton and I am currently pursuing my Masters in Multicategorical Special Education at Governors State University. I am surveying teachers as part of my thesis and culminating project. I would appreciate if you filled out this short survey and answer as honestly as possible. **Your responses will be kept confidential.** Please note that by continuing on, you are consenting that you are willingly participating.

**Demographic Information**

- 6) Are you a certified teacher in Illinois?
- 7) Are you a special education teacher or regular education teacher?
- 8) Total years of teaching experience.
- 9) Gender.
- 10) Grade and subjects taught.
- 11) Highest degree obtained
- 12) My students have the following disabilities....
 

Learning disability	Multiple Disabilities
Behavior/Emotional disorder	Diabetes, Asthma
Hearing impairment	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Visual impairment	ADHD
Speech/language	Orthopedic
- 13) Are you available for parent conferences mornings or evenings?

**Survey Questions**

Please select the answer that best describes your feeling on how important the following are to your occupation. There are no right or wrong answers.

*SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree*

13) I would rate parent involvement at my school as excellent.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

14) It is very important to me to have parental involvement.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

15) Teachers at my school share strategies I can use to help students be successful.

**SA                      A                      UD                      D                      SD**

16) Teachers at my school encourage parental involvement at home.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

17) My parents understand the importance of parental involvement by their actions.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

18) Teachers and parents think of each other as partners.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

19) My parents check homework to make sure it is done correctly.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

20) My parents understand how to help their student with homework.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

21) My parents speak the language to communicate with students about homework.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

22) I am considerate of my parents and students when giving out homework assignments.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

23) My parents get involved to make sure homework is done correctly.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

24) Teachers are concerned parents don't know how to help with homework.

**SA            A            UD            D            SD**

**Additional comments or concerns:**

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