

Education and Parenting in the United States



**Ann T. Skinner, Jennifer E. Lansford, Marc H. Bornstein,
Kirby Deater-Deckard, Kenneth A. Dodge, Patrick S. Malone
and Laurence Steinberg**

Introduction

A wealth of literature examines relations between parenting practices and child academic achievement. It is no wonder such a large body of literature exists; there are multiple definitions of what is considered “parent involvement,” and parents spend a great deal of time and energy thinking about and trying to influence their child’s education. This involvement can include a physical presence in the school through

A. T. Skinner (✉) · J. E. Lansford · K. A. Dodge · P. S. Malone
Duke University, Durham, USA
e-mail: askinner@duke.edu

J. E. Lansford
e-mail: lansford@duke.edu

K. A. Dodge
e-mail: dodge@duke.edu

P. S. Malone
e-mail: patrick.malone@duke.edu

M. H. Bornstein
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health
and Human Development, Bethesda, USA
e-mail: marc.h.bornstein@gmail.com

Institute for Fiscal Studies, London, UK

K. Deater-Deckard
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
e-mail: kdeaterdeck@umass.edu

L. Steinberg
Temple University, Philadelphia, USA
e-mail: laurence.steinberg@temple.edu

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019

E. Sorbring and J. E. Lansford (eds.), *School Systems, Parent Behavior, and Academic Achievement*, Young People and Learning Processes in School and Everyday Life 3,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28277-6_10

volunteering, attending school events or parent-teacher meetings, deciding where a child will attend school, choosing or facilitating an academic “track” for children, or homework support. Although some universals exist—some parenting practices are associated with better academic outcomes for all students—there is also great variation in how parenting practices are related to school success across different socioeconomic groups, for students of different abilities, for students with different ethnic backgrounds, and even by geography (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Hill et al., 2004). In the sections that follow, we describe education in the United States in historical, cultural, and policy contexts and discuss the ways in which parental values and societal norms inform parenting practices. Next, an overview of the current school system in the United States is presented, followed by a discussion of parenting in light of the school system. The penultimate section presents a review of the literature on how parenting practices are related to student engagement and academic achievement. Finally, we discuss future directions for research in education and parenting in the United States.

United States as a Cultural Setting

Historical and cultural background. The system of providing a public education for all in the United States can be traced back to the latter part of the 18th century, spearheaded by Thomas Jefferson (Mercer, 1993). The same values that guided the formation of the United States, beginning with separation from Great Britain in 1776 and in the country’s official recognition and forming in 1783, mirror those principles upon which public schools were founded: liberty, responsibility, freedom, and egalitarianism. Although debate continues about the best policies under which all can prosper in America’s education system, these founding principles still guide parent behavior, student goals, and public policy well into the 21st century.

The relation between parenting and academic achievement in the latter half of the 20th and early 21st century is characterized by an increased focus on cognitive development. This change came about in part due to the institutionalization of mass schooling during the late 1800s and throughout the 1900s, and society’s investment in public school education. As one example, in the 80-year period ending in 1990, the median years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and older increased from 8 to nearly 13 years (USDOE, 1993). The societal investment in public education and the subsequent return on this investment in education in terms of increased employment opportunities in turn influenced parental appraisals of cognitive development as an important attribute to develop in childhood (Schaub, 2010). Co-occurring improvements in child health and well-being meant that earlier investments of time and effort on immediate health and welfare concerns during childhood could give way to social and cognitive development, resulting in successive generations of children achieving higher levels of education than their parents throughout the 1900s (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010). Homework increased, cognitive stimulation by parents became normalized rather than discouraged, and preference for autonomy rather than

obedience developed as a goal orientation for parents. These shifts are reflected in historical trends, advice given to parents by professionals—such as providing stimulating activities to infants and parenting for social-emotional development—and in observations of parent involvement in schooling (see Schaub, 2010, for overview). Nationally representative data from a household survey in the last decade of the 20th century showed that, across all levels of income and maternal education, parenting for cognitive development was a normative behavior, reflective of American values of education as central to the creation of future opportunities. Not only was the value of education seen at a macro level in the expansion of public school opportunities for large proportions of the population, including secondary education, but it also pervaded individual values in the home (Schaub, 2010; USDOE, 2001).

Policy context. The oversight of the education of students in the United States rests with individual states; education is never mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. Because the federal government has a vested interest in the quality of education provided, however, federal funds in the form of grants supplement state funding for education and are tied to federal regulations and policies (USDOE, 2017). The federal financial contribution to public education is less than 10% of all resources. It is often assumed that the federal government mandates much of the operation of public schools, but the reality is more nuanced. Federal funding is made available to those states whose public schools comply with federal legislative directives, and although most states and localities do comply, there are occasional instances of individual school districts opting out of federal funding initiatives tied to individual pieces of legislation. Since 1787, nearly 100 pieces of education-related federal legislation have been passed that guide education; some of the more prominent ones include: (1) The 1965 authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including its reauthorizations as No Child Left Behind in 2002 and the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015; (2) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004); (3) The Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (1974); (4) The National School Lunch Program (1946) and other programs administered by The Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and (5) The Civil Rights Act (1964), administered by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). The USDOE dates to 1867, but it became a Cabinet-level Department only in 1979. It has the smallest staff of the 15 cabinet agencies, but the third largest budget, after the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services. In addition to providing supplemental funding to the states, the USDOE also functions as a leader in funding and disseminating research related to improving educational outcomes, increasing community involvement, and identifying issues and challenges facing the nation as it works to improve academic achievement.

By many measures, the United States is a prosperous country; 13th in the world on the Human Development Index, the life expectancy for a child born in the United States in 2017 is 79.5 years (UNDP, 2018). An adult can expect to receive an average of 13.4 years of schooling, and the infant mortality rate is 5.6 per 1000 live births. Even so, in 2014, 1 in 5 school-aged children in the United States was part of a family living in poverty (USDOE, 2014b), creating challenges for individuals and families in their everyday survival, health, and welfare, but also creating challenges

for schools trying to serve the educational needs of all students. The links between poor academic achievement and poverty and lack of resources are well-documented (Hernandez, 2011; Lacour & Tissington, 2011). As one example, 22% of children who have lived some part of their childhood in poverty do not graduate from high school, compared to 6% of those who have never lived in poverty. For children who spent at least half of their childhood in poverty, the non-graduation rate rises to 32% (Hernandez, 2011). Research has documented promising interventions for reducing the poverty-wealth gap as it relates to academic achievement (Lacour & Tissington, 2011), but reducing the gap requires coordinated efforts in areas such as policy, instructional strategies that value life experiences as starting points for developing literacy skills, and innovative school-home partnerships.

Current School System

Beginning at age 5 or 6, all children in the United States are mandated by law to be provided with a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE), regardless of economic status or disability. By 2027, enrollment in K-12 public schools is projected to exceed 52.1 million students, with significant variation in growth or decline by locality; the Washington, DC, school district, for example, is projected to increase enrollment by 28%, and Connecticut public schools are projected to decrease by 12%. The U.S. school aged population (ages 5–17) in 2016 was 52% White, 25% Hispanic, 14% Black, and 5% Asian (USDOE, 2017). Despite a high literacy rate (99%) (USDOE, 1993), and a world-renowned system of higher education, the United States harbors a great deal of economic and cultural variability in terms of opportunities for personal achievement, choice, and equality, which are in part a function of different experiences individuals have related to their ethnicity, social class, or geographic location.

Individual states typically oversee the public school curriculum, with some consistency across the 45/50 states that had adopted the Common Core curriculum by 2010 (NGA, 2010). The Common Core curriculum is composed of a set of learning goals for K-12 education in mathematics and English/literacy that describe what a student should be able to know and do at the end of each grade, irrespective of geographic location. Although it has been met with some controversy by critics who argue for more local control over public school curricula, adoption of Common Core by individual states aims to ensure that students across the diverse landscape and large geographic region that comprise the United States enter the workforce and institutions of higher education with a shared, common experience in English/literacy and mathematics.

Beyond curricula, local districts, state education offices, and the federal government further hold publicly funded schools accountable for meeting goals related to students' achievement in core subjects, in part through high-stakes testing and financial oversight. State and local taxes supply approximately 83% of the funding for K-12 education, approximately 8% is provided in the form of grants from the federal

government, with the remaining 9% coming from private sources. Per pupil spending varies widely by locality; in one example, two neighboring school districts in Illinois differ in per pupil spending by \$18,000 per year due in part to differences in property taxes paid by residents in the two districts (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010). Within each state, local school districts are responsible for the administration of education in their locality. Of the more than 13,000 school districts in the United States, most school systems adopt a typical arrangement of students grouped into three types of schools: elementary (grades K-5, with most students beginning kindergarten at age 5-6), middle (grades 6-8), and high schools (grades 9-12). The size of each district varies dramatically, with districts ranging in size from a few hundred students in the smallest districts to nearly 1,000,000 in the largest. Each district is typically governed by a locally elected board of education, working with the administrative office for each district through the office of a superintendent. States and localities set their own age of compulsory attendance and minimum and maximum ages of free education. Minimum ages range from as old as 7, and maximum ages are as young as 16. Most states require, on average, 180 instructional days in a school year, and students spend about 6.7 h/day in instruction (USDOE, 2004). In 2011-12, 76% of public school teachers were female, 44% were under age 40, and 56% had a master's or higher degree (USDOE, 2014a).

Because public schools receive a significant portion—on average just under half—of their funding from local property taxes, school districts across the United States vary widely in resources, materials, academic offerings, and teacher quality. Over 50 million students attend public K-12 schools, with 5 million more enrolled in private schools, and 2.7 million in public charter schools—schools funded with a blend of private and public funding. The number of students who are home-schooled rose 62% in the decade ending in 2012, and the number of charter schools is steadily on the rise in many states, creating unprecedented numbers in recent decades of students not educated through the traditional public school system. Nearly 1 in 10 public school students are English-language learners—those whose primary language is not English and for whom school services are provided to develop English language proficiency. Furthermore, nearly 25% of publicly enrolled students attend high poverty schools—those schools where 75% or more of the students qualify for federal meal subsidies—creating challenges for school districts such as high teacher turnover (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006), lower student academic achievement (Lacour & Tissington, 2011), and high dropout rates from secondary school (USDOE, 2014b).

Parenting in Light of the School System

Most school-aged children are educated through the public school system, but even within this system, families sometimes have choices regarding which schools their children attend. In some districts, the default assignment closest to the family's home is the only choice available, but in other localities, options involve magnet schools—available by application and which strive to create more economic diversity in a

locality by utilizing designated federal funds to adopt rigorous, specialized, and enriched curricula—and school choice programs, which allow families to choose a school in their district outside of their assigned attendance zone. This range of options can occur because a district adopts a free-choice policy, or when local, state, or federal authorities recognize that some schools do not meet basic academic standards and mandate that states provide families with other options. If parents opt out of the traditional public schools in their district for their children, they may apply for enrollment in a charter school, or abandon the public system altogether in favor of private, parochial, or home school. Parents who have the resources and flexibility to provide transportation to school or lunch during the school day—which private and charter schools are not typically required to provide even to those who are eligible by federal standards—have more options available when they are dissatisfied with their child’s assigned public school.

Because schools vary so much in their impact on a child’s academic outcomes, the most obvious, and strongest, influence that parents have on their child’s academic success is through their placement of a child into a particular school. Parents with limited financial means have few options and are typically resigned to place their child in a local school that might have poor resources. Wealthier families have more options: they can move to a neighborhood with better-quality schools or place their child in a private school. When the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted in 2002, school districts faced increased pressure to provide alternative schooling options to parents when individual schools failed to meet federal standards for achievement and growth. Parents were thrust in a new role, that of evaluating individual public schools on the basis of performance. One study of how NCLB affected parents’ decision-making around school choice reported that, when parents were given even simplified information about test scores at neighboring schools, there was a significant increase in the number of parents who chose higher-achieving schools, even when those schools were farther away from home and entry was not guaranteed (Hastings & Weinstein, 2008). There is no clear agreement in the literature, however, if such moves to new schools consistently result in marked increases in academic achievement for all students. The lack of consistent evidence for increased academic achievement following school choice decisions may be in part because parents choose alternate schools for their children for reasons other than academic achievement, such as increased diversity in students or staff, specialized curricula like Science Technology Engineering and Math—“STEM”—or the arts, and fewer reported discipline issues. Research has further informed the study of parenting behavior around school choice as impacted by geography. In the southeastern United States, which contains a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural areas, families in rural locations are limited in the choices they have because of the extra burden placed on them to travel long distances to an alternative choice school. Additional incentives like taxpayer-funded vouchers to attend private schools are unlikely to improve the situation for these families (Zhang & Cowen, 2009), and legal debates occur over the use of public taxpayer money to provide individual scholarships for private school tuition. Furthermore, the remote location of many schools makes it more challenging to retain teachers, and high

teacher turnover places further burdens on struggling schools (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007), making them less attractive choices for families.

Parenting Practices and Academic Achievement

Defining parent involvement. Parent involvement has been defined in a variety of ways, categorizing different characteristics of involvement based on specific research aims. Some researchers have focused on three general categories of involvement: Supporting children and motivational activities, socializing for school behavior, and cognitive activities and support to increase reading, writing, and mathematics skills. Kohl, Lengua, McMahon, and Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (2000) identified six dimensions of parent involvement: (1) parent-teacher contact; (2) parent involvement at school; (3) quality of parent-teacher relationship; (4) parent's value of education; (5) parent involvement at home; and (6) parent endorsement of school. Other models (Green et al., 2007) emphasize parent involvement with three components: (1) What parents believe they should do and how much effect they believe it can have on achievement for their child; (2) parents' perceptions of invitations from the school (school climate), teachers, and their child; and (3) parents' perceptions about their own skills and knowledge for assisting and how much involvement at school may demand of them in time and energy. Still other research has more broadly characterized all school involvement into two main areas: at-home support and at-school support (Epstein, 1987; Park & Holloway, 2013). In broad terms, parent involvement can be viewed as a collection of behaviors parents and caregivers demonstrate with the aim of increasing school success for their children. No matter what school is selected, parents have influence in many ways, including volunteering at school, helping children with homework, attending school functions, visiting the child's classroom, being a guest speaker, or becoming involved in school leadership activities (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Bornstein and Putnick (2019) expound on child preparation and teacher performance. In recent years, parental involvement has also expanded to include expectations specifically about college and financial planning for college (Park & Holloway, 2013).

However it is categorized, parent involvement in education has long been established as an important predictor of child success and adjustment in school. Prospective studies have shown that higher involvement by parents in their child's school is associated with better academic achievement and higher educational aspirations by the child in subsequent years (Hill et al., 2004). Higher rates of parental involvement are also related to lower rates of student absenteeism (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon, 2007), higher achievement and less retention in terms of having to repeat a grade (Jeynes, 2005; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996), and fewer discipline issues (Hill et al., 2004).

Parenting involvement in secondary school. Overall, parental involvement declines between elementary and middle school, especially for low-SES and ethnic minority families (Eccles & Harold, 1993). Parental involvement continues to

change as adolescents become more independent, but parental involvement is still linked with academic success during adolescence (Laursen & Collins, 2009). From a developmental perspective, however, increased autonomy means that parents and adolescents begin to function as partners in new ways (Gordon & Cui, 2012). In adolescence, parents and children can have discussions about school, talk about the value of education, and navigate future goal-setting. In a pragmatic way, parental involvement also means parents taking part in developing their child's course schedules, choosing and being involved in extracurricular activities, and making a connection with school personnel through conferences, phone calls, and emails. Parents' attempts to remain involved in their child's education in secondary schools, however, are more complicated because adolescents naturally share less with parents as peer relationships take a leading role in adolescents' lives. Parents may also be less able to assist academically because course material at the secondary level is more difficult. Navigating the physical, electronic, and social aspects of large high schools can also be overwhelming for parents. Further challenging the active engagement of parents in the academic lives of their children is that parents cannot always articulate what they themselves need (LaRocque et al., 2011). Developmentally, adolescence is a good time to build independence around school work and link education to future success, but this autonomy is harder for schools to influence. Ethnic minority families and vulnerable populations such as those parents of students with special needs may find connecting with schools even more challenging because children in these families often report they are less likely to be given a second chance after meeting with an initial failure, and parents and adolescents are therefore less likely to participate in parent-school events (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Moreover, when there is more diversity among students than staff, the chance for teacher-student conflict and misunderstanding arises (LaRocque et al., 2011). Still, there needs to be a balance between encouraging involvement yet fostering independence, all while avoiding putting too many demands on families, who may find participating in school activities in direct competition for their time and resources as they try to get time away from work, find care for younger children, and secure transportation to school activities.

Parent behaviors and school success. The research is mixed about which specific components of parent involvement are most strongly related to students' school success. Some research shows that parental expectations have the most powerful effect on student outcomes (Jeynes, 2005, 2007), but other work shows that, when different types of parental involvement (i.e., expectations, school-specific involvement, and general involvement) were examined in the same model, school-specific involvement has a larger effect on achievement than general parental support and parental expectations (Green et al., 2007). This differential effect of school-specific involvement may be attributable to the pathway direct interpersonal involvement provides for parents to "jump in" when needed and reach out to teachers when a student runs into difficulty at school, either academically or behaviorally. In support of earlier research (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005), this direct "hands-on" approach from parents appears to make a difference in achievement outcomes, perhaps because it also conveys to adolescents the importance their parents place on education, as evidenced by the time and effort parents devote to it.

Linked with the concept of parental expectations and its relation to academic success are two additional parent-driven practices related to positive academic achievement for adolescents. First, parents have a large role in scaffolding independence around academic activities, moving from heavy support when children are young, to more autonomy as children grow into adolescence (Hill, Witherspoon, & Bartz, 2018). The practice of fostering increased autonomy as children age is both developmentally sound and desirable by adolescents, parents, and teachers. Second, linking education to future success is a widely used parenting and teaching strategy for promoting academic achievement. Across ethnicities, both parents and adolescents express a desire to use their education to promote a quality of life beyond their current circumstance (Hill et al., 2018).

Although some research has shown that parental expectations are a powerful predictor of academic success (Jeynes, 2005, 2007), especially for adolescents, the strength of this relation differs by many factors, including SES, age of students, and ethnicity. Parent involvement does matter, but the mechanisms by which involvement affects academic achievement also differ across age and SES. For high-SES families of adolescents aged 12–16, parent involvement is related to fewer behavioral problems at school, which in turn is related to increased achievement, but for low-SES families, although parent involvement is related to higher expectations for adolescents, there is no relation between parent involvement and academic gains. Thus, it appears to be more difficult for low-SES families to influence achievement in the same indirect way as higher-SES families (Hill et al., 2004). Regarding age, compared to their elementary counterparts, secondary schools face additional challenges engaging parents, and many differences emerge across ethnicity and SES. In a nationally representative sample of 3248 parents of high school students, when compared to teachers at the primary level, secondary school teachers trust parents less, and parents seek less assistance from the school (Park & Holloway, 2013).

SES is also predictive of the strength of the relation between parental self-efficacy and involvement; that is, when parents feel that their involvement has the potential to effect real academic change for their children, they are more likely to be involved in their children's academic lives (Park & Holloway, 2013). Higher SES predicts more school involvement but not home involvement, and Spanish-speaking parents report the lowest level of involvement at school, even when controlling for SES. However, among immigrant groups, increased time spent in the United States and English language mastery were positively associated with increased school involvement (Turney & Kao, 2009).

In addition to confirming that communicating parental expectations is related to academic achievement, a meta-analysis of 50 studies of parenting and academic achievement in middle and high school identified two additional forms of parental involvement that showed consistent positive relations with academic achievement: involvement that fosters an understanding of the goals and purpose of education (future orientation)—like talking about goals for the future, and linking interests and strengths with future career and leisure activities—and parent involvement that models, teaches, and encourages specific strategies that can be used effectively by students to make decisions in the school setting (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Helping with

and checking homework—in contrast with providing an environment and support conducive to autonomous homework completion—at the secondary level was not consistently predictive of academic success among the studies included.

Goal orientation and parenting styles. The majority of research documenting the relation between parenting behavior and academic achievement has occurred during the last three decades. In its early years, foci on parenting style and its relation to academic achievement and risky behaviors were prevalent in the literature (Cohen & Rice, 1997; Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). Although a variety of parenting behaviors can have a positive effect on academic achievement, parental aims can be simplified by rooting the behaviors in the theories and principles of goal orientation. Two overarching goals are to foster mastery or foster performance (Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002). When focused on *mastery learning* a student is most inclined to accept new challenges and find success in learning new material for the sake of acquiring new knowledge. A student with a *performance goal orientation* is more likely to derive reward and define success based on the outcome of some external evaluation, such as grades or exam scores. High intrinsic motivation and autonomy are most often associated with a mastery goal orientation, whereas extrinsic motivation and low autonomy are more often associated with a performance goal orientation. Furthermore, mastery goal orientation is associated with better self-regulation (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989), higher levels of work satisfaction (Duda & Nicholls, 1992), and better acquisition of new skills. Authoritative parenting (see Baumrind, 1991) is consistently and positively related to students' mastery goal orientation, whereas authoritarian parenting (emphasizing obedience and conformity) and permissive parenting (providing warmth but lacking in rules and structure) are related to performance goal orientations (Gonzalez et al., 2002). However, the relation between parenting style and goal orientation does not hold for all ethnic groups. For example, African American students' goal orientations do not show the same relation to permissive and authoritative parenting (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Gonzalez et al., 2002; Park & Bauer, 2002; Steinberg et al., 1992). A neglectful parenting style, however, is consistently related to poor academic performance across diverse ethnic groups (Park & Bauer, 2002).

School outreach is also strongly related to parent involvement at school and at home, but parents report that a direct and welcoming invitation from the school is first necessary (Warren, Nofle, Ganley, & Quintanar, 2011). Thus, even into adolescence, despite the challenges of large schools and complicated systems, interpersonal connections are important tools for building partnerships between schools and families. As students begin the college planning process, schools can also help parents feel more confident about the process through education and information.

Qualitative and mixed-methods research provide some insight into the barriers to parental involvement and engagement and detail specific ideas from parents and teachers about how to overcome obstacles that hinder parent involvement. Both parents and teachers agree that parents find it difficult to participate in school events or meetings due to lack of childcare for other children, language barriers, and conflicts with work or other activities with children (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016).

Focus groups with parents and teachers in this study revealed that more consistent proactive communication, like weekly newsletters from teachers, multiple methods for reaching parents (e.g., email, text, and paper handouts), providing food during evening meetings, and professional development for teachers with a focus on engaging parents are all helpful in more positively engaging families in the school setting. Indeed, graduate coursework for teachers in collaborating with urban families and communities increases teacher perceptions of the importance of parent and community involvement and strengthens teachers' self-efficacy for believing teachers can be positive change agents (Warren et al., 2011). Even when parents and school staff agree about the goals for parent involvement, however, the strategies to reach those goals can often differ markedly between settings. Many urban school districts, for example, face low attendance rates at parent-teacher conferences. Some districts report noticeably higher participation rates when the conferences are held at night, by phone, or in the parents' homes to accommodate parents with conflicting demands of work, family, or transportation (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011).

In measuring student outcomes predicted by parent behavior in education, the contemporary literature is almost wholly focused on test scores, course enrollment, and grades as the primary outcomes of student success and is comparatively deficient of children's perspectives about their affective experience in secondary school as their experience relates to parenting and achievement. Many of the studies examining the role of parenting in relation to academic stressors and internalizing disorders have taken place outside the United States (Deb, Chatterjee, & Walsh, 2010; Quach, Epstein, Riley, Falconier, & Fang, 2015), even though the occurrence rates of these disorders in the United States warrant attention. As an example, nearly 13% of adolescents aged 12–17 in the United States—more than 3 million adolescents—experienced at least one major depressive episode during 2016, with nearly 1 in 5 females experiencing these episodes (NIMH, 2017a). Additionally, nearly 32% of adolescents had an anxiety disorder in 2016, with more than 8% of adolescents experiencing severe impairment (NIMH, 2017b). These statistics do not directly tie mental disorders specifically to academic stress or achievement, but the prevalence of anxiety and depression in the adolescent population in the United States warrants a more comprehensive research approach that includes children's perspectives alongside those of their parents and teachers, and an examination of how parenting and pressure for high academic achievement interact in an adolescent's world. For the subgroup of students in high-pressure academic environments, a growing body of evidence suggests both academic performance and mental health of adolescents are hindered rather than aided by high parental expectations and high stress about academic achievement (Kaplan, Liu, & Kaplan, 2005; Suldo, Shaunessy, & Hardesty, 2008).

Future Directions

The education system in the United States is built on the belief that a high-quality educational experience plays a critical role in the healthy development of children and adolescents, and that society benefits socially and economically when the education system is strong. Despite these guiding principles, American children must negotiate a complex web of risk factors for low academic achievement. On average across all 50 states, 84% of adolescents complete high school graduation requirements within 4 years of starting, but completion rates vary by state, ethnicity, and SES (see https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coi.asp for a detailed breakdown). The dropout rate in the United States—individuals ages 16–24 who have not completed a high school curriculum and are not enrolled in school—fell to 6.1% in 2016, but differences again emerge by ethnicity and gender, with males having a higher dropout rate than females, and Latino students having a higher dropout rate (8.6%) than their African American (6.2%) or European American (5.2%) counterparts (USDOE, 2018).

From over the last three decades of research about parental involvement in education, three common themes emerge. First, parents' relationships with their children and their children's schools and teachers have an impact on how involved parents become in their child's education, and in turn how parent involvement may affect academic achievement. Second, schools are beginning to understand more about the ways in which parent involvement is important and can better equip parents with the knowledge they need to be active participants in their children's secondary education. Third, further research is called for among various cultural groups and school types, but ethnicity and SES matter, both as direct and indirect influences on academic achievement. There is a fallacy, however, in assuming that an equal outlay of financial or staff resources directly to the schools will singlehandedly close the gap between poverty and achievement (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2006). Instead, community investments must be made at multiple levels prior to entry into K-12 schooling and continue through the lifespan. Successful frameworks for parental involvement must also include interventions for minority and underserved populations (Hill et al., 2018). Schools that implement programs and practices ("back-to-school night," parent workshops) to encourage parental involvement must recognize and account for the differential effects of parenting strategies across social and economic boundaries. For example, citing authoritative parenting as a "one size fits all" parenting style related to increasing academic achievement may not be true for non-majority groups in the United States. Furthermore, the affective experiences of the adolescents themselves must be included in future research, both with the simple act of including more adolescent perspectives in studies, but also by broadening our definition of school success to include mental health outcomes in addition to test scores and grades.

References

- Baker, T. L., Wise, J., Kelley, G., & Skiba, R. J. (2016). Identifying barriers: Creating solutions to improve family engagement. *School Community Journal, 26*, 161–184.
- Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). *The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). Parenting styles and adolescent development. In J. Brooks-Gunn, R. Lerner, & A. C. Petersen (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of adolescence* (pp. 746–758). New York, NY: Garland Learning Press.
- Bornstein, M. H., & Putnick, D. L. (2019). *The architecture of the child mind: g, Fs, and their hierarchy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H., & Vigdor, J. (2006a). Teacher-student matching and the assessment of teacher effectiveness. *Journal of Human Resources, 41*, 778–820.
- Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H. F., Vigdor, J., & Wheeler, J. (2006b). High-poverty schools and the distribution of teachers and principals. *North Carolina Law Review, 85*, 1345–1379.
- Cohen, D. A., & Rice, J. (1997). Parenting styles, adolescent substance use, and academic achievement. *Journal of Drug Education, 27*, 199–211.
- Deb, S., Chatterjee, P., & Walsh, K. M. (2010). Anxiety among high school students in India: Comparisons across gender, school type, social strata, and perceptions of quality time with parents. *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology, 10*, 18–31.
- Dornbusch, S. M., Ritter, P. L., Leiderman, P. H., Roberts, D. F., & Fraleigh, M. J. (1987). The relation of parenting style to adolescent school performance. *Child Development, 58*, 1244–1257.
- Duda, J. L., & Nicholls, J. G. (1992). Dimensions of achievement motivation in schoolwork and sport. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*, 290–299.
- Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. D. (1993). Parent-school involvement during the early adolescent years. *Teachers College Record, 94*, 568–587.
- Epstein, J. L. (1987). Parent involvement—What research says to administrators. *Education and Urban Society, 19*, 119–136.
- Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research, 95*, 308–318.
- Gonzalez, A. R., Holbein, M. F. D., & Quilter, S. (2002). High school students' goal orientations and their relationship to perceived parenting styles. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 27*, 450–470.
- Gordon, M. S., & Cui, M. (2012). The effect of school-specific parenting processes on academic achievement in adolescence and young adulthood. *Family Relations, 61*, 728–741.
- Green, C. L., Walker, J. M. T., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2007). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*, 532–544.
- Grolnick, W. S., & Ryan, R. M. (1989). Parent styles associated with children's self-regulation and competence in school. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*, 143–154.
- Hastings, J. S., & Weinstein, J. M. (2008). Information, school choice, and academic achievement: Evidence from two experiments. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 123*, 1373–1414.
- Heckman, J. J., & LaFontaine, P. A. (2010). The American high school graduation rate: Trends and levels. *The Review of Economics and Statistics, 92*, 244–262.
- Hernandez, D. J. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Hill, N. E., Castellino, D. R., Lansford, J. E., Nowlin, P., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., et al. (2004). Parent academic involvement as related to school behavior, achievement, and aspirations: Demographic variations across adolescence. *Child Development, 75*, 1491–1509.
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology, 45*, 740–763.

- Hill, N. E., Witherspoon, D. P., & Bartz, D. (2018). Parental involvement in education during middle school: Perspectives of ethnically diverse parents, teachers, and students. *Journal of Educational Research, 111*, 12–27.
- Hornby, G., & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational Review, 63*, 37–52.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education, 40*, 237–269.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education, 42*, 82–110.
- Kaplan, D. S., Liu, R. X., & Kaplan, H. B. (2005). School related stress in early adolescence and academic performance three years later: The conditional influence of self expectations. *Social Psychology of Education, 8*, 3–17.
- Kohl, G. O., Lengua, L. J., McMahon, R. J., & Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group. (2000). Parent involvement in school: Conceptualizing multiple dimensions and their relations with family and demographic risk factors. *Journal of School Psychology, 38*, 501–523.
- Lacour, M., & Tissington, L. D. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviews, 6*, 522–527.
- LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 55*, 115–122.
- Laursen, B., & Collins, W. A. (2009). *Parent–child relationships during adolescence*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Mercer, G. E. (1993). Thomas Jefferson: A bold vision for American education. *International Social Science Review, 68*, 19–25.
- National Governors Association. (NGA; 2010). *Common core state standards*. Washington, DC: Author.
- National Institutes of Mental Health. (NIMH; 2017a). Major depression. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression.shtml>.
- National Institutes of Mental Health. (NIMH; 2017b). Any anxiety disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/any-anxiety-disorder.shtml>.
- Park, H. S., & Bauer, S. (2002). Parenting practices, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and academic achievement in adolescents. *School Psychology International, 23*, 386–396.
- Park, S., & Holloway, S. D. (2013). No parent left behind: Predicting parental involvement in adolescents' education within a sociodemographically diverse population. *Journal of Educational Research, 106*, 105–119.
- Quach, A. S., Epstein, N. B., Riley, P. J., Falconier, M. K., & Fang, X. Y. (2015). Effects of parental warmth and academic pressure on anxiety and depression symptoms in Chinese adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*, 106–116.
- Radziszewska, B., Richardson, J. L., Dent, C. W., & Flay, B. R. (1996). Parenting style and adolescent depressive symptoms, smoking, and academic achievement: Ethnic, gender, and SES differences. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 19*, 289–305.
- Schaub, M. (2010). Parenting for cognitive development from 1950 to 2000: The institutionalization of mass education and the social construction of parenting in the United States. *Sociology of Education, 83*, 46–66.
- Sheldon, S. B. (2007). Improving student attendance with school, family, and community partnerships. *The Journal of Educational Research, 100*, 267–275.
- Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J. L. (2005). Involvement counts: Family and community partnerships and mathematics achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research, 98*, 196–207.
- Smith, J., Wohlstetter, P., Kuzin, C. A., & De Pedro, K. (2011). Parent involvement in urban charter schools: New strategies for increasing participation. *School Community Journal, 21*, 71–94.
- Steinberg, L., Lamborn, S. D., Dornbusch, S. M., & Darling, N. (1992). Impact of parenting practices on adolescent achievement: Authoritative parenting, school involvement, and encouragement to succeed. *Child Development, 63*, 1266–1281.

- Sui-Chu, E. H., & Willms, J. D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education, 69*, 126–141.
- Suldo, S. M., Shaunessy, E., & Hardesty, R. (2008). Relationships among stress, coping, and mental health in high-achieving high school students. *Psychology in the Schools, 45*, 273–290.
- Turney, K., & Kao, G. (2009). Barriers to school involvement: Are immigrant parents disadvantaged? *The Journal of Educational Research, 102*, 257–271.
- United Nations Development Program. (2018). Human development reports. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update>.
- United States Department of Commerce. (2010). United States Census Bureau, School Districts. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/did/www/schooldistricts/data/>.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (USDOE; 1993). National assessment of adult literacy. In T. Snyder (Ed.), *120 years of American education: A statistical portrait*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (USDOE; 2001). Fathers' and mothers' involvement in their children's schools by family type and resident status (NCES 2001–032). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001032.pdf>.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (USDOE; 2004). Average length of school year and average length of school day. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/tables/table_2004_06.asp.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (USDOE; 2014a). Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2012–13 teacher follow-up survey (NCES 2014–077). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014077.pdf>.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (USDOE; 2014b). Children living in poverty. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/Indicator_CCE/coe_ccc_2014_05.pdf.
- United States Department of Education. (2017). The federal role in education. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/role.html>.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2018). The condition of education 2018 (NCES 2018-144), Status Dropout Rates.
- Warren, S. R., Nofle, J. T., Ganley, D. D., & Quintanar, A. P. (2011). Preparing urban teachers to partner with families and communities. *School Community Journal, 21*, 95–112.
- Zhang, H., & Cowen, D. J. (2009). Mapping academic achievement and public school choice under the No Child Left Behind legislation. *Southeastern Geographer, 49*, 24–40.

Ann T. Skinner is a Research Project Manager at the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy in Durham, NC, USA, and a doctoral student at Gothenburg University, Sweden and University West, Sweden. Her research focuses on parenting stress and child adjustment, and the development of aggression in youth. Past research projects include school interventions to prevent middle school violence and programs to improve the academic skills of elementary school students with attention difficulties.

Jennifer E. Lansford is Research Professor at the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy in Durham, NC, USA. Her research focuses on parenting and child development in diverse cultural contexts. She leads the Parenting Across Cultures study and has consulted with international agencies, such as UNICEF, on parenting programs and child well-being around the world.

Marc H. Bornstein is immediate past President of the Society for Research in Child Development, and he has held faculty positions at Princeton University and New York University as well as visiting academic appointments in Munich, London, Paris, New York, Tokyo, Bamenda (Cameroon), Seoul, Trento, Santiago (Chile), Bristol, Oxford, and the Institute for Fiscal Studies,

London. Bornstein is Editor Emeritus of *Child Development* and founding Editor of *Parenting: Science and Practice*.

Kirby Deater-Deckard is Professor in Psychological and Brain Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA, USA, where he serves as program head in developmental science, and neuroscience and behavior. His research focuses on the transactions between biological, cognitive, and environmental factors in the development and intergenerational transmission of self-regulation and related psychological and health outcomes.

Kenneth A. Dodge is the Pritzker Professor of Public Policy and Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Duke University. He studies the development and prevention of aggressive and violent behaviors. His work provides a model for understanding how some young children grow up to engage in aggression and violence and provides a framework for intervening early to prevent the costly consequences of violence for children and their communities.

Patrick S. Malone is a Senior Research Scientist at the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy and Senior Consultant for Malone Quantitative. His primary research interests are in developing novel methods for longitudinal research and research with latent variable models, especially as applied to behavioral public health and child and youth risk behaviors.

Laurence Steinberg is a Professor of Psychology at Temple University and an affiliate of King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. His research focuses on psychological and brain development in adolescence.