

PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS:  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND PARENT EFFICACY

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B.Ed., The University of Victoria, 1991

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Faculty of Education; Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology  
and, Special Education; School Psychology

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 2003

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Date August 19, 2003

## ABSTRACT

Several researchers have suggested that parent efficacy has greater influence on parent involvement than status variables. This study examined the relationship between parent involvement and parent efficacy among 377 parents in four high schools of one school district in British Columbia. Through a mail survey parents reported their involvement in their adolescent's learning and their self-efficacy for helping their children in school. The findings reveal a small but significant relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement. The results demonstrated that parent involvement at home is greater than parent involvement at school. Multiple regression analyses demonstrated that parent efficacy explained more of the variation in parent involvement than the status variables; however, much of the variability associated with parent involvement is due to factors other than those specified in the model.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Parent involvement has long been recognized as an important aspect of a child's education and is associated with positive outcomes for the child. Numerous researchers and educators acknowledge the positive relationship that exists between parent involvement and student achievement (Carlton & Winsler, 1999; Culp, Hubbs-Tait, Culp, & Starost, 2000; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski & Apostoleris, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987; Marcon, 1999; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple & Peay, 1999). Recent movements in education including policy, legislation, and increased accountability requirements, have resulted in a greater need to explore the involvement of parents in schools today. For example, in British Columbia the Minister of Education, Christy Clark, announced on April 15, 2002 that each school was to form a council made up three parents, one teacher, and the school principal to develop an annual plan for their school that includes goals and outcomes for improvement. It is the ministry's intention to ensure that parents have a more meaningful role in reshaping the education system and to help make it accountable for increasing student performance (BC Ministry of Education, News Release, 2002). Furthermore, key changes in family structure have also affected home-school relations. In response to these changes, educational and social services have expanded their focus beyond the entire family (Coleman, 1997) and taken a more ecological approach to parent involvement that demands better communication between the family, school, and community. There is a growing movement toward a more encompassing, family centered approach based on the development of effective relationships between home and school for all families (Guralnick, 1999; Coleman, 1997; Epstein, 1995). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development is useful in describing the interconnectedness

between students, parents, teachers, and the environments they are involved in. Recent models of parent involvement, which take an ecological perspective, emphasize the need to understand the individual in relation to the whole system and to recognize the common roles that families and schools share in children's growth and development.

Parent involvement is complex (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski & Apostoleris, 1997) and multidimensional (Fantuzzo, Tighe & Childs, 2000; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994) with many definitions (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001) describing how parents should be involved in their child's education. Several studies have examined the multidimensional nature of parent involvement through an ecological cross-disciplinary perspective (Epstein 1995; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski & Apostoleris, 1997). Models of parent involvement, such as those described by Gordon (1977), Epstein (1991), and Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), provide frameworks to examine and understand the complexity of parent involvement relationships needed to develop collaborative home, school, and community partnerships that increase positive student outcomes. When schools and families share together the goal of educating children, the benefits of parent involvement for students, parents, teachers, and the community are many and varied.

The benefits of parental involvement in children's schooling have been recognized and acknowledged by researchers and educators (Chavkin, 1989; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein 1995, Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Leitch & Tangri, 1988). These studies document benefits for students, parents, teachers, schools, and the community when a collaborative relationship between the primary partners is established. Parent relationships with educational and community professionals form the basis for connecting the child's primary environments in ways that promote the exchange of ideas, information, and skills that in turn build positive

attitudes toward educating children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When schools actively involve parents in sharing the responsibility for the education of their children, parents feel more positive about the teacher's abilities, believe they understand more about the educational program, and feel more positive about their abilities to help their children learn (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein, 1982; 1986, 1991; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001; Swick, 1987; Swick & Broadway, 1997).

Alternately, as parent involvement increases, teachers report more positive feelings about teaching, an increase in energy, a better understanding of home environments, and an increase in resources and materials to use in class (Epstein, 1986; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Haynes & Ben-Avie, 1996; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Prosise, 1990; Swick, 1987; Swick & Broadway, 1997).

Just about all families care about their children, want them to succeed, and are eager to obtain better information from schools and communities so as to remain good partners in their children's education (Epstein, 1995). Teachers also recognize the value of parental involvement and want to see parents take a more active role in their children's learning (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Despite the positive effects of parent involvement, the literature reports low levels of parent participation or that participation is confined to certain roles (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). Furthermore, parents and teachers report that they are not as involved as they would like to be (Eccles & Harold, 1996). To gain a comprehensive understanding of parent involvement, it is necessary to examine the myriad of factors influencing their involvement, especially the barriers that parents perceive to hinder such involvement (Adleman, 1994; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Grolnick et al., 1997). Swick (1988) suggests that the major factor influencing parent involvement is the parents' beliefs about their

ability to help their child with their schoolwork. More specifically, when parents feel competent and think they can make a difference they are more likely to become involved (Epstein 1990; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992).

Eccles and Harold (1996) suggest that parents' view of their competence changes as their children develop into adolescents. Research findings report parent involvement typically declines (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, & Fendrich, 1999; Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2001) or shifts (Catsambis & Garland, 1997) as students get older and cite low levels of involvement for parents of students in middle and high school grades, typically between the ages of 13-18 years. Research has documented the limited contact between parents and high school teachers (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988). However, the importance of parent involvement at the secondary level is recognized (Connors and Epstein, 1994; Phelps, 1999). Secondary students benefit from their parents' participation in their schooling through increased academic achievement, lower dropout rates, and increased student attendance (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; Simon, 2000, 2001). Thus, researchers and educators must continue to examine how parent involvement and home-school partnerships evolve as students transition from elementary to high schools and how parents can best participate in their adolescent's education.

Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) is useful in understanding major factors influencing parent involvement. Parent self-efficacy is one of several factors viewed as having an influence on parent involvement; more specifically, several researchers have suggested that it is more important than such factors as status variables and believe that parent self-efficacy may explain much of the variation in parental involvement (Epstein, 1990; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Moles 1996). Self-efficacy can be broadly defined as a

person's belief in his or her ability to successfully perform a particular behaviour (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy places emphasis on beliefs and perceptions about one's abilities rather than the abilities themselves. Parent efficacy, then, refers to parents' beliefs and expectations about their ability and effectiveness to influence their child's learning. Haynes and Ben-Avie, (1996) illustrate more clearly the dynamics of parent efficacy by the following example: "the parents' efficacy need not be related to their ability to help their children complete homework in specialized subject areas, but involved parents' efficacy stems from their demonstrating to their children that learning is a life-long process that is valued" (p. 53). Thus, it is the parent's beliefs about their ability and skill that is significant, not the actual skill or ability. Furthermore, critical to the understanding of the relationship between parent involvement and parent self-efficacy is the mutual interrelationship: parent self-efficacy acts as a catalyst for initiating parent involvement while parent involvement maintains and extends parents' abilities to manage in efficacious ways (Swick & Broadway, 1997).

### Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of the study was to explore parent self-efficacy and the nature of its relationship to specific types of parent involvement: at home, at school, and a home-school collaborative partnership. The study focuses on parents of adolescent students in high schools. Specifically, the study focuses on parents' perceptions of their ability and competency to support their adolescent child in school learning. The study explores parent involvement across the two settings the adolescent is actively involved in, the home, and the school, from the perspective of the primary caregiver. In addition, parent involvement, as it is affected by the transition of the adolescent from elementary to secondary school, is a point of focus in examining the changes

and shift in the nature of parent involvement. Epstein's typologies of parent involvement are employed to examine the relationship between parent involvement and parent self efficacy. The study seeks to determine which types of parent involvement practices increase parent efficacy. In summary, the present study is concerned with parents of adolescents, their involvement in their children's education, how parent self-efficacy influences and motivates parent involvement and how such involvement sustains and increases parent self-efficacy.

### Research Questions

In this study the following questions in regard to parents of adolescents in secondary schools were examined.

1. Which types of parent involvement practices (as defined by Epstein's typology) are important for parents of students at the high school level?
2. In a high school setting, which types of parent involvement (as defined by Epstein's typology) are associated with high levels of parent self-efficacy?
3. Does parent self-efficacy explain more of the variation in parent involvement than status variables such as family income, parent level of education, and employment status, or geographical variables such as distance from school?

### Definition of Key Terms

#### *Parent*

A "parent" is the person who has a long-term commitment to the child's health, welfare and safety (Gelfer, 1991). The term "parent" will be used in this study to represent the primary caregiver with the most significant influence in the child's life.

### *Adolescent*

Adolescence has been operationally defined as the period in youth that is characterized by rapid and dramatic change (Eccles & Harold, 1993) and an increase in independence and autonomy (Scott-Jones, 1988). The onset of puberty and maturity is a gradual process and variable among individual; thus is it not practical to set exact age or chronological limits in defining the adolescent period (Taber, 1989). However, adolescence typically describes the teen years and thus, for the purposes of this study, adolescents refers to children and youths, 13 to 18 years of age attending a high school.

### *Parent Involvement*

Parent involvement refers to the relationship between the parent (or primary caregiver) and the school (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, 1996). Parent involvement includes not only behaviours or activities (e.g., attend parent-teacher conferences, helping with homework), but also attitudes (e.g., I believe it is part of my role as to 'teach' my child; I believe my child's teacher values my participation). For the purposes of this study, the term "parent involvement" will refer to all those things that parents (significant, primary caregivers) do at home and at school to contribute to the education of their children (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992, Davis, 1989).

### *Parent Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of achieving specific outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Parent self-efficacy refers to the parent's beliefs and expectations about the degree to which he or she is able to perform competently and effectively as a parent. It is a set of attitudes about one's ability to get necessary resources and offer effective help. Parent self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1989), involves not only, the parent's specific knowledge about

child-rearing behaviours, but also the degree of confidence the parent has in his or her ability to perform the specific behaviour and as Gettinger & Guetschow (1988) assert, this may vary across types of parent-involvement activities. Parent self-efficacy, for the purposes of this study, is therefore defined as a parent's belief that he or she is capable of exerting a positive influence on children's outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 1992).

### Significance of Study

The present study is significant because it focuses not only on parents of adolescents, but also on the process variable of parent self-efficacy. As students get older, parent involvement tends to decline or at least shift and change. What schools and educators need to know at this acute period in the lives of adolescents is how to sustain and increase parental involvement. In an effort to understand and increase parent involvement at this level, an examination of parent variables related to adolescents is critical. Several studies on parental involvement of adolescents have focused on the influence of parents (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998; Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Catsambis, 1998; Sanders, Epstein, & Connor-Tadros, 1999; Fan & Chen, 1999; Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Keith & Keith, 1993; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998; Shumow & Miller, 2001; Trusty, 1999; Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2001), teachers (George & Kaplan, 1998) and community (Catsambis, & Breveridge, 2001; Shumow & Lomax, 2001); as well as, on the attitudes (George & Kaplan, 1998; Shumow & Lomax, 2001), attendance (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000), achievement (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998; Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Catsambis, 1998; Catsambis, & Breveridge, 2001; Fan & Chen, 1999; Keith & Keith, 1993; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998;

Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2001), and career choices (Trusty, 1999) of middle and high school students. These studies demonstrate the importance and need for family and community connections with high schools and provide evidence of the impact of parent involvement on the success of adolescents. However, educators and schools need to know the practices and policies that promote family connections, what these connections look like, and how family-school connections can be facilitated effectively..

Self-efficacy theory suggests that a person's beliefs and attitudes about their skills and abilities are more important than the skills and abilities themselves (Bandura, 1995). Confident, competent parents have been found to be more highly involved than parents with low self-image and negative perceptions about their involvement in their children's learning. Research supports the theory that parent self-efficacy is positively associated with parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 1992; Shumow & Lomax, 2001; Swick, 1987; Swick & Broadway, 1997). Schools may have little control over the size, structure and income of families, parent education or parent employment status; however, these status variables do not necessarily determine parents' thinking, or actions, nor do they significantly influence their involvement in their children's learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) and schools can exert influence on parents' beliefs and attitudes that may contribute to an increase in effective parental involvement. Hoover-Dempsey's (1992) study with elementary schools is one of the few studies that empirically support the correlations between parent self-efficacy and indicators of parent involvement. With regards to parents of adolescents, the present study provides empirical support for the mutual relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement and seeks to inform secondary school educators on effective practices and policies that promote parent self-efficacy and parent involvement with adolescents.

## Summary

Parents play an important role in the education of their children. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is complex and multi-dimensional. Various models illustrate and describe the complexity of parent involvement by identifying the different ways parents are involved and the many factors that influence parent involvement. As students transition from elementary to secondary school, parent involvement shifts and changes. Examining the relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement provides an avenue to better understand the involvement of parent in their adolescent's schooling. The present study is concerned with parents of adolescents, their beliefs about their role in their child's educational life and their attitudes about learning and school. The purpose of the study was to explore this relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement with parents of adolescents. Researchers, educators, and schools will benefit from empirical findings examining how parent-self-efficacy is mutually interrelated to parent involvement.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The objective of this review is to summarize the literature relevant to parent involvement and parent self-efficacy as it pertains to parents' involvement in their children's learning and education. Seven aspects of parent involvement literature are reviewed: history of parent involvement practices, ecological perspectives of parental involvement, models of parent involvement, benefits of involvement, factors influencing involvement, parental involvement of adolescents, and parent self-efficacy and its relation to parent involvement. The history of parent involvement provides important background information about how parent involvement has evolved since early times and more importantly how parent involvement has been affected by child-rearing theories and the social development of society. In response to changes in educational and social services, parent involvement has more recently taken an ecological approach. A brief summary of the ecological theory of human development provides an understanding of the theoretical foundation used to build the various models of parent involvement. Three models of parent involvement are described. These ecological based models provide a framework for thinking about the dynamic processes that underlie parents' involvement in the children's learning. The benefits of parent involvement and factors influencing this involvement are presented. Parent involvement typically declines or shifts as students get older. However, parent involvement at this level is acknowledged as important by both parents and teachers, and requested by adolescents themselves. Specifically, the issues of parent involvement in an adolescent's learning are explored. Many factors affect parent involvement; one of these factors, parent self-efficacy, is believed to have a great influence on the intensity and duration of parents' involvement. The theory and development of self-efficacy

is discussed. Finally, research focusing on how parent-efficacy relates to parent involvement is examined.

### History of Parent Involvement Practices

Parent involvement is not a new concept. The importance of parents in the education of their children has been established since early times. As Berger (1991) notes, parents have always been nurturers and educators of their children through modeling, care giving, and guidance. However, through the years parent involvement has changed significantly. Children first received their education in the home; formal education outside the home emerged about 3787-1580 B.C. When schools were not available to everyone, the church and the family continued as the most important educational institutions.

Through the years, various theories guided child rearing and parent involvement in their children's education. Berger (1991) identifies three theories that guided North American education. One theory, based on the Calvinist doctrine, taught parents to discipline and break the will of their children. The second theory, based on Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel viewed children as basically good and was the foundation from which the concept of early education and kindergarten developed. John Locke's thinking contributed to the third theoretical view that children were thought to be influenced by the environment.

#### *Parent Involvement at the Turn of the 20th Century*

When North America was first colonized, education was viewed as a luxury. As Dodd and Konzal (1999) note, all children were "educated," but very few were "schooled". Indeed parents were involved in the education of their children, although parent involvement then looked very different from parent involvement today. In the late nineteenth century and early

twentieth century, the role of parents in their children's education was defined as teaching their children about good behaviour and attitudes to prepare children for school, while teachers were viewed as experts with specific knowledge to impart to children. Parent involvement in schools at this time was less important than it is today.

#### *Parent Involvement 1920 -1950*

During the 1920's parent involvement centered on global concern for children of the nation. To meet the needs of middle-class parents, there was an increase in parent education groups established. Due to high levels of illiteracy, parent education was delivered through study groups that provided enlightenment or responded to a need for health and nutrition information (Berger, 1991). Gordon (1977) refers to this time as the Progressive Education movement.

Mainstreaming - integrating immigrants into the mainstream - characterized the 1930s. Parent education groups focused on helping immigrants adjust to their new community. During the war, parent education continued and childcare services were provided to allow mothers to work in the war effort (Berger, 1991). Child-rearing practices changed dramatically and the social-emotional health of children was viewed as important.

After a depression and a major war, the 1950s were a time for reductions. Schools began to consolidate and children began travelling long distances to attend comprehensive schools. School administrators gained strength as educational leaders. Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) grow and promote health supervision of children from early childhood through high school. As literacy levels rose, books by authors such as Dr. Spock became popular. Spock's book and other childcare books increased parents' awareness of and experience with their children as young learners (Epstein, 1987). Parent involvement was shifting from a global

concern for the nation to specific individual concerns (Berger, 1991).

*Parent Involvement: 1960-1990*

In the 1960s, the role of family and schools in child development and education were separate and distinct (Coleman, 1977). Research demonstrating the benefits of early childhood education caused major changes in educational directions and shifted the role of parents so more parents became involved with their children's schools and teachers (Berger, 1991). The United States government legitimized parent involvement groups, such as those associated with project Head Start or Follow Through, and parent advisory councils (Moles, 1993). These preventative programs realized the important role of mothers' involvement in their children's learning; to be successful both the school and the children needed the mother's involvement (Epstein, 1987).

The effective schools movement characterized the 1970s. There was much debate about whether schools or families were important. As Epstein (1986) notes, the debate dissipated as it became increasingly evident that both schools and families needed to share the responsibility of educating children and simultaneously influencing them. Parent involvement, although not initially recognized as a key element, was soon added to an expanding list of components that research and practice suggested would improve schools and increase student success (Epstein, 1986).

In the 1980's, given the growing evidence that parents were important to school success, schools took the initiative in developing models for successful home-school partnerships (Berger, 1991). Mothers' level of education had increased significantly as had the number of educated mothers. This made a difference in how parents viewed teachers, how teachers viewed parents, and whether and how mothers become involved in their children's education (Epstein, 1987).

### *Parent Involvement in Canada*

Parent involvement in Canada, although somewhat slower, occurred in a similar fashion. In British Columbia the first B.C. Parent Teacher Federation was formed on April 22, 1922. Over the years, the provincial federation was successful in providing many educational, health and safety issues affecting schools and children in British Columbia. On March 14, 1987 Barry Sullivan (1988), commissioned by the British Columbia government submitted his report, "A Legacy for Learners". This document addressed a number of facets and issues of education and put forth a number of recommendations. Recommendations from the commission specific to parent involvement resulted in changes to the school act by recognizing parent advisory councils at every school in British Columbia (British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, 1998).

### *Parent Involvement Today*

The 1990s to the present time reflect two key changes in family structure that have affected family-school relations and parent involvement: an increase in the number of single parents and an increase in the number of mothers working outside the home (Epstein, 1987). In response to these changes, educational and social services have expanded their focus beyond the child to include the entire family (Coleman, 1997) and taken a more ecological, community approach to parent involvement. Such an approach demands better communication between family, school, and community. As Epstein (1987) asserts, the role of parents in children's education has become increasingly important; parents are once again recognized as "teachers". However, Berger (1991) notes both parents and teachers must recognize their responsibilities. Neither can expect the other to accomplish the task alone; it is a collaborative effort. The role of community in children's education is also becoming critically significant. Community centers,

advocacy groups, social service agencies and other groups are working with teachers and parents to support families and schools in creating dynamic and effective learning environment for children (Berger, 1991; Coleman, 1997; Comer & Haynes, 1991).

Parent involvement has changed over the years as social conditions have affected families and schools. Theories of parent involvement have moved away from distinct and separate roles of families and schools toward greater home-school partnerships in which teachers and parents cooperate, communicate and share the responsibility for children's education.

### Ecological Perspective of Parent Involvement

The move towards a more mutually supportive model of parent involvement is founded in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development that describes the interconnectedness between the individual and their involvement in groups and organizations. Development, as defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979), refers to "a lasting change in the way a person perceives and deals with his environment" (p. 3). The ecological environment in which development occurs can be explained using a set of nested Russian dolls; the image of a doll within a doll describes the interconnectedness of an individual within layers of context across time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At the center is the child, a developing, growing, dynamic entity; the subsequent layers are multiple, reciprocal and bidirectional influences that interact with and affect the child. There is an emphasis placed on understanding the individual in relation to the whole system (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). According to Bronfenbrenner, the individual is part of a small social system encompassed by four interrelated and hierarchical systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem and is influenced by the chronosystem,

an across-layer impact of time. Each system influences the other systems directly and indirectly as well as influencing human development. In this study, parent involvement is viewed from an ecological perspective. The seamless nature between the child's environments – home, school, and community – across time and systems is recognized with the primary focus on the family-school relationship.

#### *The Microsystem.*

The microsystem describes face-to-face relationships (e.g., parent-child interactions). The focus of the microsystem is on the experiences of an individual within the immediate ecosystem. An ecological perspective is not limited to the interactions between two persons; it takes into account the existence of the relationship within systems and with other persons. Parents' evaluations of their own capacity to function, as well as their view of their child, are related to such external factors as flexibility of job schedules, adequacy of child care arrangements, the presence of friends who can help out, the quality of health and social services, and neighbourhood safety. In this study the microsystem consists of the parent's understanding of their involvement in their adolescent's education as well as their perception of their effectiveness in their ability to support their adolescent child in school learning.

#### *The Mesosystem.*

The mesosystem involves two or more microsystems. For example, family-school partnerships focus on supporting the child's learning across home and school. An ecological approach considers the joint impact of two or more settings and focuses on changes over time in role and setting that occur throughout one's life span (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The present study examined the parent's involvement in their adolescent's learning across the two microsystems, home and school. The mesosystem takes into account how events at home can affect the child's

behaviour at school and how events at school can affect the parent-child interactions in the home.

#### *The Exosystem.*

The third system, the exosystem is defined as one or more settings that an individual does not directly participate in, but that affects or is affected by the immediate microsystem. These are influences from other contexts such as the parent's place of work, school district policies and actions, community activities, and the parents' family and friends. Parent employment, school parent advisory councils, school board policies, and the ministry's newly, mandated school planning councils are examples of exosystems in the present study that might influence parent involvement. The exosystem considers the impact of immediate settings or microsystems on the external contexts in which they are embedded

#### *The Macrosystem.*

The final layer, the macrosystem is the overall cultural blueprint (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001), which sets the context for the other three systems: micro, meso, and exo-systems. It is the broader social context, the foundation and driving force that is embedded in each of these systems. The macrosystem looks at the social contexts in which these individuals are found (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and embodies the principle of interconnectedness or linkages between settings.

#### *The Chronosystem.*

The chronosystem regards the cumulative effects of a sequence of developmental transitions over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). It refers to time and history: the impact of previous development as well as changes in development within the individual and within environments over time. For example, in this study the chronosystem addresses the changes in the adolescence – the increasing importance of peers and the desire for greater independence

from one's parents and family.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective has provided a strong, conceptual framework for parent involvement models; his conceptualization of development has influenced theoretical models of parent and family involvement that emphasize the interconnectedness between home and school and the shared responsibility between teachers and parents. Some examples of his influence include, Gordon's (1977) three family involvement models; Coleman's (1987) "interface of systems"; Epstein's (1987, 1996) overlapping spheres of influence; Comer's school development process (Comer & Haynes, 1991) and Grolnick and Slowiaczek's (1994) multidimensional nature of parent involvement. Models designed from an ecological perspective do not disengage home, school, and other contextual variables; instead they contend that children develop and learn in the context of the family (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Moreover, family development is viewed as a developmental process, established over time through intentional planning and effort from the individual in the home, school, and community settings (Coleman, 1977).

### Models of Parent Involvement

Models of parent involvement provide a framework for thinking about the dynamic processes that underlie parents' involvement in the education of their children. Ecological family-involvement models recognize the common roles that families and schools share in children's growth and development. Three models of parent involvement developed with an ecological perspective are discussed. One of the earliest models of parent involvement by Gordon (1977) suggests three levels or aspects of parent involvement that focus on the family, the school and the community. Gordon (1977) identifies three major settings or ecosystems that

impact a child's growth and development. Epstein (1991) lists five types of mutually supportive obligations through which families and schools may be linked and adds a sixth type of involvement that connects the community to families and schools. Epstein's model identifies the roles and responsibilities of the individuals in each of the settings described by Gordon. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) discuss the multidimensional nature of parent involvement through three process variables. These models of parent involvement emphasize the interconnectedness between families, schools and communities.

#### *Gordon's Models of Impact*

Gordon (1977) places parent involvement and parent education in a systems context in order to examine the underlying assumptions. A systems context, states Gordon (1979), "recognizes that no one agency operates in isolation, that life is always reciprocal, that what goes on within a family is influenced by many forces outside the family and that the family in turn plays a role in influencing the variety of social forces" (p.7). Gordon's model, consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, is based on the assumption that schools are but one subsystem within the society that influences a child's development. Three themes common to educational programs are identified: the home is important and basic for human development; parents need help in creating the most effective home environments for development; and the early years of life are important for lifelong development (Gordon, 1977). Gordon suggests three approaches of parent involvement and parent education: Family Impact Model; School Impact Model and Community Impact Model.

*Family Impact Model.* Gordon's (1979) first approach centers on the parent-child relationship and is based on two assumptions. First, the behaviour of parents influences their child's learning. Second, the child's health, nutrition, and social and psychological development

influence academic learning. Using Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979), Gordon's Family Impact Model is a microsystem. In this model, schools reach out to families through strategies such as home visits, workshops, and newsletters (Coleman, 1997). Parent education programs are designed to have an impact on the family so that the child will "fit" the school and the system's goals (Gordon, 1977). The family impact model assumes that the family wants to be part of the system but does not know how to participate and help their child acquire the necessary skills for success (Berger, 1991). This model has been at the heart of most school based parent involvement programs. Several research studies have focused on the effects of improving the parent child relationship and have shown that a positive learning environment in the home is associated with positive outcomes at school (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994, Henderson, 1988; Shumow & Miller, 2001; Trusty, 1999).

*School Impact Model.* Schools and programs within schools form the basis of Gordon's (1977) second approach and assume that if schools are more responsive to parents, student achievement will increase. In the mesosystem, parents are involved at the school level through volunteer activities, parent-teacher conferences, and attendance at special school events. This model involves teachers learning from parents and parents learning from teachers (Berger, 1991). It focuses on parent involvement in the school and is aimed at modifying the teacher and the school system (Gordon, 1979). Although the child is the common thread and focus of both the parent and the teacher, the parent-teacher relationship is central in this model. In the family impact model, the parent learns to deal with the school as it is; in the school impact model, the parent learns how to interact with the school, to make it more responsive to the family as it is (Gordon, 1979).

*Community Impact Model.* Gordon's third approach to parent involvement is the most

comprehensive, but it is the one that the powerless are least able to initiate or implement (Berger, 1991). In the community impact model, the assumption is that everything relates to everything else (Gordon, 1979). All elements or agencies in this exosystem change not only internally, but also in their relationship to each other. The community impact model involves connecting community resources to families and schools and is based on fostering and developing a strong relationship between community, families and schools. Gordon (1979) uses the image of a wheel to illustrate this model; the wheel implies equivalence, each spoke is necessary and represents a different form of involvement (classroom volunteer, adult learner, decision maker, adult educator, paraprofessional). In this model, parents play a number of roles that influence parent and student behaviour and the community agencies with which they interact (Henderson, 1988). This is a model of schools and community agencies joining together to provide education and support services for families (Berger, 1991).

Each of Gordon's three models has been implemented in isolation as well as in concert. Gordon's concern is that the effort of educators is not piecemeal, small-scale and sporadic, but rather placed in the broader social systems context (Gordon, 1977). It is Gordon's belief that educational achievement is influenced by a combination of the family and school impact models in a community impact model (Gordon, 1979).

#### *Epstein's Typology*

Epstein (1987) developed a framework of parent involvement that places the student at the center and is grounded in the theoretical perspective of "overlapping spheres of influence" (p. 126). The theory integrates and extends numerous ecological, educational, psychological, and sociological perspectives on social organizations and relationships (Epstein, 1996) and takes into account the history, developmental patterns, and ever-changing nature of families (1987). The

model identifies three spheres of influence or major environments, which simultaneously affect children's learning and development - family, school, and community - and is based on the assumption that the most effective partnerships have overlapping shared goals and missions concerning children and work in a collaborative fashion (Epstein, 1996.) Epstein's (1991) model of parent involvement is one of the most comprehensive systems of classifying the different types of parent involvement. A framework of six major types of involvement has evolved and is designed to help educators develop and implement an effective and balanced program of school and family partnerships: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with Community.

*Type 1: Parenting.* In this first category of parent involvement, schools assist families in developing and establishing a positive learning environment in the home. Through workshops, resources, materials, family support groups, and home visits this type of parent involvement focuses on helping families with parenting and childrearing skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level (Epstein, 1996). In this type of involvement, schools facilitate parents in their acquisition of the knowledge and support they need to help their children learn and develop, and to build positive home conditions (Epstein, 1991). Parent involvement focuses primarily on the basic obligations of families: food, clothing, shelter, health, and safety.

*Type 2: Communicating.* Communicating involves the memos, notices, phone calls, report cards, and conferences that most schools engage in to inform parents about school programs and children's progress (Epstein, 1991). It includes practices of school to home communication as well as what schools do to elicit information from home to school. In her definition of this second type of involvement, Epstein (1995) underscores that communication

about school programs and student progress is a multi-channel of communication that connects schools, families, students, and community. The student is an important “transmitter” of information from school to home and from home to school (Epstein, 1996). Typically, the home-school connections between parents and teachers of students in the elementary grades are more abundant than in the high school grades (Epstein, 1996). Effective communication demands that schools take responsibility for ensuring that the communication is understandable and ensures that the readability, clarity, form, frequency, and language is appropriate for its audience. According to Epstein’s model, communicating involvement focuses primarily on the basic obligations of schools: regular and frequent exchange of information between home and school.

*Type 3: Volunteering.* Volunteering is the most traditional and common type of parent involvement. Parents and family members may help students, teachers, and administrators, or attend and support student performances, sports, and other special events. Epstein (1986) has demonstrated that although some parents participate, most parents are not active at school and even parents who are active are involved infrequently. Volunteering includes what schools do to recruit and organize parent help and support (Epstein, 1995). Schools can do much to facilitate the volunteering involvement of parents through flexible scheduling, communicating requests for assistance, and demonstrating their appreciation of the parents’ time and efforts.

*Type 4: Learning at Home.* The fourth type of involvement centers on what parents do to assist their child with learning activities in the home. Schools provide information to families on how to monitor, discuss, and help their child with homework, learning activities, and decisions so that the student can be more successful in school (Epstein, 1991). Research findings show that most parents want to know how to help their own child at home (Epstein, 1996).

However, as their child becomes older, parents may shift their role from assisting with homework to discussing course selection and career decisions (Simon, 2000).

*Type 5. Decision Making.* Involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy includes parents and community (Epstein, 1991). Parents and families are involved in school decisions through committees, councils and other parent organizations such as PTA, Goal committees, Parent Advisory Councils, and School Planning Councils. Decision making involvement develops parent leaders and representatives (Epstein, 1995).

*Type 6: Collaborating with Community.* The sixth type of involvement is more global in nature including not only the school and the home, but also the community. Collaborative involvement includes connections with agencies, business, and other groups that share responsibility for children's education and future successes (Epstein, 1991). This involvement refers specifically to providing the family with access to community resources and supports such as after-school care, health services, mental health care and counselling, as well as community parenting programs and support. Collaborative involvement contributes to the understanding and development of school, family, and community partnerships (Epstein, 1995).

Epstein's (1991) model of parent involvement is prominent in parent involvement research. It is grounded in the theory of "overlapping spheres of influence" (Epstein, 1987) that was developed using numerous perspectives on social organization and relationships with special attention to critical attributes in family-school relationships. Epstein's (1991) model addresses the impact of the teacher, parent, and community in the child's learning, providing schools with a framework to develop comprehensive programs of school and family partnerships. Epstein's (1991) framework allows each school to individually tailor their practices to meet the needs and interests, time and talents, ages and grade levels of students and their families (Epstein, 1995).

At the same time, the model clearly identifies the common practices of successful parent involvement programs at all levels.

*Grolnick and Slowiaczek's Multidimensional Model*

Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) examined processes through which the multidimensional nature of parent involvement may be associated with school performance. The authors employed three process variables or dimensions to describe parent involvement: behavioural, intellectual-cognitive, and personal. In this model the child is viewed as an active processor of information rather than a passive recipient of input. By presenting measurable outcomes, Grolnick and Slowiaczek's multidimensional framework expands upon Epstein's model and is useful in assessing how parents choose to participate in their child's education.

*Behavior.* The first category of involvement, behaviour, defines the parent behaviour through overt action. Behaviour includes the action of parent involvement in the school setting, for example, going to school to help out in the classroom and participating in activities such as open houses and field trips. This type of involvement parallels Epstein's Type 3, Volunteering and Type 5, Decision Making. In this category, both the child and the teacher experience the parents' resources. The parent models to the child and demonstrates to the teacher, the importance of school and learning.

*Intellectual/cognitive.* A second dimension of this model is intellectual-cognitive which involves exposing the child to cognitively stimulating activities and materials such as books and current events (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). In this dimension, it is presumed that cognitively stimulating materials and experiences bring home and school closer together. Providing children with a rich experiential background prepares them for school learning. Research demonstrates the positive relationship between intellectual interests and activities at

home and children's achievement. Grolnick & Slowiaczek's intellectual-cognitive involvement is described in Epstein's Type 1, Parenting and Type 4, Learning at Home.

*Personal.* Grolnick and Slowiaczek's third dimension of parent involvement focuses on the parents' personal involvement with their child. This type of involvement provides an affective experience of parental caring about school and learning. Parents give children the message that school and learning are important.

### Benefits of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in schooling is positively associated with many benefits for students, parents, and teachers. Even the community benefits from the involvement of parents in their children's education (Southwest Education Developmental Laboratory, 2001). "Over 120 studies have described the relationship between family influences and student learning (i.e., a systems approach) by reporting significant, positive correlations in the low moderate-moderate range" (Christenson and Sheridan, 2001, p. 50). Benefits of parent involvement is thus, clearly evident. Various parent involvement activities not only, result in benefits for students, parents, teachers, and schools, but also have synergistic effects (i.e. what benefits students, benefits parents and schools as well) - for example, involvement in parenting education activities has been associated with improved student attendance, enhanced teacher awareness of parental challenges and increased parental respect for teachers' efforts (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Moreover, there is no consensus about a precise way for parents to be involved in their children's learning, nor is student achievement influenced directly by all types of parent involvement (Brandt, 1989; Epstein, 1995). Different types of involvement lead to different outcomes for parents, teachers, and students (Brandt, 1989; Epstein, 1986). Few studies have been conducted demonstrating

which parent involvement activities are most influential for student learning (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Furthermore, Epstein (2001) maintains that not all parent involvement activities lead quickly or directly to student learning, better report cards grades, or higher standardized scores. Although the benefits of parent involvement are dependent on a number of factors, the overall collective benefits of parent involvement for each of the key players will be discussed.

#### *Benefits of Parent Involvement for Students*

The primary benefit of parent involvement for students is increased achievement. When parents are involved in their children's schooling, students demonstrate higher academic achievement (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein 1986, 1991; Keith & Keith, 1993; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998, Reynolds, 1992). Gains in academic achievement are most likely to occur when parents help students in specific subject areas (Brandt, 1989). Parent involvement also results in improved student attendance (Henderson, Marburger & Ooms, 1986); increased student participation in learning activities (George & Kaplan, 1998); positive school orientation or disposition (Shumow & Miller, 2001); higher rates of homework completion (Brandt, 1989; Christenson, 1995; Kagan, 1984); improved student motivation (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992); improved social functioning (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001); increased self-esteem (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992); and greater perceived competence (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994).

In reference to adolescents, findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health show that when parents are involved in their lives, adolescents have a higher probability of avoiding high-risk behaviour such as substance abuse and violence (Resnick, Bearman, Blum,

Bauman, Harris, Ireland, Bearinger, & Undry, 1997). In addition, benefits of parent involvement for adolescents include lower drop out rates (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000); fewer suspensions (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Kagan, 1984); greater enrollment in post-secondary education (Baker & Stevenson, 1986) and increased ability to make independent decisions about their education (Epstein, 1996).

#### *Benefits of Parent Involvement for Parents*

There are also advantages of parent involvement for parents. Parents who are involved in their children's education report an increase in the amount of interaction with their children (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991) and improved communication about schoolwork and other topics (Christenson, 1995; Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992). Involved parents also report an increased understanding of the school (Southwest Educational, Development Laboratory, 2001) and a greater feeling of connectedness (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Other positive outcomes for parents include an increase in levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment (Griffith, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Hornby, 2000); positive changes in parenting styles (Hornby, 2000; Prosise, 1990); and an increase in access to health and social services (Wynn, Meyer, & Richards-Schuster, 2000). Dauber and Epstein (1993) report that school programs and teacher practices designed to involve parents also have important positive effects on parents' abilities to help their children across the grades. Finally, participation in their child's education may even lead parents to further their own education (Haynes & Comer, 1996; Haynes & Ben-Avie, 1996; Hornby, 2000).

#### *Benefits of Parent Involvement for Teachers and Schools*

Schools and educators also benefit from parent involvement. When teachers perceive more parent involvement in the school, they report improved teacher morale (Leitch and Tangri

1988); an increase in energy (Prosise, 1990); more positive feelings about teaching and about their school (Epstein & Dauber, 1991); and more support (Epstein 1986). Teachers also benefit from additional resources in the classroom when parents volunteer in the classroom, allowing teachers more time to devote to students (Chavkin, 1989; Davies, 1989; Prosise, 1990). Through involved parents, teachers may increase their knowledge base about the sociocultural context of the community. Haynes and Ben-Avie (1996) suggest that this knowledge base is likely to lead to an increased sense of efficacy among teachers. Schools that have greater parent involvement show a positive school climate (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989); are able to sustain school reform efforts (Lewis & Henderson, 1997); have more successful educational programs (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992); and more effective schools (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992).

#### *Benefits of Parent Involvement for Communities*

Research studies document the benefit of parent involvement for communities. When parents are involved, communities benefit from an increase in a sense of community pride (Davies, 1989) and report an improved quality of life in the neighbourhood (Lewis & Henderson, 1997). Involved parents at the school level leads to an increase in community access to school resources and facilities (Davies, 1989) and an increase in the exchange of physical and human resources among organizations (Wynn et al., 2000). As a result of parent involvement, parents' abilities and skills increase. The capacity of parents may lead to a transfer of newly acquired skills to address the needs of the community (Davis, 1989) and an increase in the connections to and support of community development projects (Wynn et al., 2000). Finally, teacher and parent engagement in learning activities that are relevant to local issues results in changes in local power and politics (Haynes & Ben-Avie, 1996; Lewis & Henderson, 1998).

When schools and families share together the goal of educating children, the benefits of parent involvement for students, parents, teachers, and the community are numerous. For schools to embrace and implement effective programs to actively involve parents, it is critical to understand the factors influencing or barriers to parent involvement. In the following section, the factors that influence parent involvement are discussed.

### Factors Influencing Parent Involvement

Parent involvement practices and actions change as children progress through the grades and vary for each individual parent. For example, most parents cannot and do not participate at the school building (Dauber & Epstein, 1993, Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Leitch & Tangri, 1988). Many parents work full or part-time during the school day and find it difficult to attend school activities (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1986). Few parents participate in and are involved in parent-teacher councils or advisory committees (Epstein 1986, Leitch & Tangri, 1988). Most parents are involved in their children's learning at home. (Eccles & Harold, 1996). However, for many parents, their involvement is uneven and tends to be crisis oriented (Scott-Jones, 1988). Numerous factors contribute to each parent's unique involvement in their child's learning. Parent involvement (Scott-Jones, 1988) can be influenced through actions initiated by the school, parents, or the students themselves (Griffith, 1996).

Studies provide useful frameworks and models for conceptualizing these influential factors or barriers to involvement (Adleman, 1994; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Grolnick et al., 1997). These frameworks are based on the assumption that there are a variety of influences on parent involvement. For the purpose of this discussion, influential factors or barriers to involvement will be discussed with respect to these frameworks, according to the student, the

parent/family, the teacher/school, and the community.

### *Student factors*

Parents vary their involvement in their children's schooling depending on the characteristics of the child such as age and gender (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996). Age is one of the most influential student factors. Studies demonstrate that parent involvement declines as children grow older (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dodd & Konzal, 1999; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1986, Izzo et al., 1999). Parents of young children are more likely to become involved in school activities than parents of older children (Scott-Jones, 1988). Shumow and Miller (2001) suggest that the child's gender predicts ways in which parents interact with their adolescents. For example, parents of male students in Grade 8 provided more homework supervision and made more contacts with the school than parents of female students (Ho & Willms, 1996). The student's previous academic experiences and personality also affect parent involvement. A child's competence level was found to predict parents' academic involvement (Shumow & Miller, 2001). Baker and Stevenson (1986) found that parents are more likely to help their child who is having trouble, especially if that child has done well in the past; whereas Ho and Willms (1996) found that parents help struggling students less. Parents try to provide more direct assistance to children who do poorly in school (Eccles and Harold 1996), whereas parents of children who do well might be more likely to become involved at school (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold 1996; Shumow & Miller, 2001). Henderson (1988) found that parents of exceptionally gifted students nearly always were enthusiastically involved in every aspect of their development. Parents are also more likely to help the child with whom they get along with (Eccles & Harold, 1996) and parents of at-risk students may be hesitant to relate directly to

schools (Karther & Lowden, 1997).

### *Parent/Family Factors*

Parents' level of involvement in school may be influenced by three sets of barriers: (1) indirect or more global and removed effects on parent involvement such as family structure and status variables; (2) direct or more specific and personal beliefs and attitudes such as process variables; (3) practical barriers including a lack of resources and obstacles to overcome.

First, the relation between parent involvement and family status variables such as family income, parents' education level, ethnic background, marital status, parent's age and sex, number of children, and parents' working status is well documented (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Pena, 2000; Scott-Jones, 1988). For example, parents who are better educated are more involved in school and at home than parents who are less educated; parents with fewer children are generally more involved at home; parents who work outside the home are less likely to be involved at school, (Dauber & Epstein 1989) and fathers tend to be equally involved at home but not at school activities. However, status variables are not the most important measures for understanding parent involvement (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1990; Hoover-Demsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). Moles (1996) states that the white paper *Strong Families, Strong Schools* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) also notes that what the family does is more important to student success than parent income or education.

Eccles & Harold (1996) identified a second set of factors based on parents' beliefs and attitudes that are influential in parent involvement both at home and at school. Social and psychological resources available to parents such as social networks, social demands on parents' time, parents' general mental and physical health, neighbourhood resources, and parents' general

coping ability influence parent involvement. As Grolnick et al. (1997) states, it is the parents' experienced inadequacy of resources that is most likely to disrupt involvement. Parents' efficacy beliefs such as how parents feel about their ability to help their child with their schoolwork is a major factor influencing parent involvement (Swick, 1988). Epstein (1990) suggests that parents feel competent when they can help their children and Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie (1992) indicate that when parents believe they can "make a difference," they are more likely to be involved. The parents' perceptions of their child - that is, how parents perceive their child's academic abilities and their child's receptivity to help affect the parents' involvement both at home and at school. Leitch and Tangri (1988) found a strong relationship between parent's level of expectation and aspirations for the child and parent's level of involvement. Parents' assumptions about their role in their children's education are another key influential factor. When parents believe they have a role in the teaching-learning process, they are more likely to take on involvement activities (Grolnick et al., 1997). Parents' attitude toward the school (that is the role parents believe the school wants them to play), how receptive they think the school is to their involvement, and the extent to which they think the school is sympathetic to their child and their situation are believed to affect the parent's involvement. Parents' perception of the school's support of their involvement and participation strongly influences parent involvement. Dauber and Epstein (1993) maintain that when parents perceive support for their involvement they are more likely to be involved at school and at home. Finders & Lewis (1994) suggest that parents with previous negative experiences in school or those who have dropped out of school may be less likely to be involved, although Leitch and Tangri (1988) found no reliable relationship between parent's own experience in school and the parent's involvement. Finally, parents' history of involvement and experiences with their children in

elementary school may impact the extent and level of involvement as their children progress through the grades.

A third set of barriers includes practical barriers and family issues that parents may encounter from a lack of resources to overcome such obstacles. These difficulties most frequently affect parents' involvement at school. Obstacles cited in parent involvement literature include a lack of time, economic constraints, lack of transportation, neighbourhood safety, lack of appropriate child care, language-communication barriers, diverse linguistic and cultural practices, and work schedules (Christenson & Sheridan 2001; Adleman, 1994; Davies, 1989; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Moles, 1997; Pena, 2000).

#### *School/Teacher Factors*

School and teacher characteristics and practices are important influences of parent involvement. It is these influences that schools have the most control over. Furthermore, school parent-involvement programs and teacher practices have been shown to be the strongest predictors of parent involvement. When parents feel schools are doing things to involve them, they are more involved in their children's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1993).

Epstein and Dauber note (1991) school factors are a primary influence on parent involvement. Involvement is limited when parent involvement programs do not exist in a school or are developed according to the needs of the school rather than the needs of the parents or students (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001). However, when schools create a sense of belonging and community, parents are more inclined to become involved in their children's education (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Parent involvement is moderated by a number of school factors such as smaller class size (Epstein & Dauber, 1991); elementary rather than middle or high schools (Epstein & Dauber, 1991); and more personal, welcoming

atmospheres (Eccles & Harold, 1996). The physical and organizational structure of the school building itself can be welcoming or intimidating to parents. For example, school policies and practices such as locking doors when school is in session may discourage parent involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Henderson et al. 1986).

Teachers are the school's primary contacts for parents and as such have the greatest potential to influence parent involvement (Grolnick et al., 1997). Teachers may facilitate or inhibit parent involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Teachers view parent involvement as important and worthwhile when schools provide strong parent involvement programs (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Teachers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about the parents' role, the parents' interest in their child's education, and the parents' resources and availability to become involved significantly impact parent involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Epstein, 1991; Pena, 2000). For example, teachers may think adolescents are better with less parent involvement and that parents are busy, disinterested, or not knowledgeable (Eccles & Harold, 1996). As a result, teachers have been found to discourage parent involvement at school (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987). Pena (2000) found that although some teachers valued parent involvement, they perceived it as too much work. Furthermore, evidence demonstrates that fewer teachers tend to help parents become involved as students progress through school (Epstein, 1986). Teacher efficacy is also related to parent involvement. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1987) found that teachers, who felt they were effective and capable met with parents more frequently, encouraged parents to volunteer in their classrooms and provided interactive homework assignments and by doing so encouraged greater parent involvement (Karther & Lowden, 1997). Teachers' knowledge of parent involvement strategies limits their ability to actively engage parents. Teachers may lack the experience and/or knowledge to

encourage parent involvement (Leitch & Tangri, 1988). Additionally, teacher practices of parent involvement may be restricted by the amount of administrative support received for implementing specific plans (Eccles & Harold, 1996). When teacher practices involve parents, parents take an active role at school and feel more positive about their abilities to help (Epstein, 1991).

### *Community Factors*

Community and neighbourhood characteristics and practices also affect parent involvement. Eccles and Harold (1996) suggest that neighbourhood characteristics such as cohesion, social disorganization, social networking, resources, and opportunities as well as the presence of undesirable and dangerous opportunities influence parent involvement. These factors are associated with the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of the parents living in the neighbourhood as well as the different opportunity structures, organizations, and resources in the community. Initial results from Eccles' "MacArthur Network on Successful Adolescence in High Risk Environment" study suggest that parents actively involved in their children's development and schooling use different strategies depending on the resources available in their neighbourhoods (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Community strengths are not often recognized; yet, informal networks such as extended families, religious groups, merchants, and social clubs may help families with basic personal, economic, spiritual and social needs that in turn foster parent involvement (Epstein, 1996). Community leadership can both facilitate and inhibit parent involvement.

## Parent Involvement of Adolescent Students

Adolescence is a time of rapid, dramatic change and development. This is a time in which adolescents transition from childhood into adulthood. It can be an exciting and successful period as children develop into healthy, interesting young adults. For many however, adolescence is a challenging period characterized by turbulence and unrest as they sort through independence and identity issues. The concern for adolescents is intensifying, especially as many adolescents experience school failure and involvement in delinquent, violent, and dangerous behaviour. Moreover, it has been suggested that adolescents acquire social learning by imitating the behaviour of others (Mayhew & Lempers, 1998) and that a child is more likely to imitate the social behaviour of a model highly regarded by the child (Thomas, 1985). Epstein (1996) found that when parents continue their involvement (from middle school to high school), students report better attitudes, behaviours, report card grades, and attendance. Thus, the role of parents is extremely significant. The importance of positive parent involvement in children's learning and development through adolescence is critical and should increase rather than decline as studies currently demonstrate is the trend (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dodd & Konzal, 1999; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1986, Izzo et al., 1999). The decrease in parent involvement during this critical period in children's development and the importance of the role of parents in their adolescent's schooling is the focus of the following discussion.

### *Parent Involvement Declines In Upper Grades*

As children enter adolescence, they become increasingly independent of their parents and form close ties with peers. The role of parents in their adolescent's life becomes more indirect. As children become adolescents, parent involvement tends to decline (Eccles & Harold, 1996;

Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dodd & Konzal, 1999; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1986, Izzo et al., 1999; Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2001). Specifically, Griffith's (1998) study found that parent involvement dropped off when students enter the fifth and sixth grades. Several reasons for this decline are hypothesized. Eccles & Harold (1996) suggest that the decline in parent involvement may reflect parents' beliefs that they should begin to disengage from their adolescent in order to accommodate their adolescent's desire and need for independence, while Epstein (1992) speculates the decrease in parent involvement is a result of a real decline in teachers' practices to involve parents. In a study of parents of children in Maryland's schools, Epstein (1992) found that fewer and fewer teachers helped parents become involved as the students advanced through the elementary grades. Thus, parents' repertoires of helping skills are not developed and improved over the school years, and as a result parent involvement tends to decrease or disappear as children progress through school. Limited contact between parents and high school teachers is documented in research (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988, Epstein, 1986). Other reasons cited for the decline in parent involvement in the middle and high school years include the quality of the link between parents and schools (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1993); the impersonal setting in large middle and high schools (Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996, Epstein, 1992, Simon 2001); fewer opportunities to build parent-teacher relationships (Adams & Christenson, 2000); a lack of understanding and knowledge of the advanced course work in the upper grades (Eccles & Harold, 1996); a lack of useful information about adolescent development and how to work with adolescents in meeting the challenges of this time (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein, 1992; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Leitch & Tangri, 1988); and feelings of incompetence (Eccles & Harold, 1993). On the other hand, Catsambis & Garland (1997) believe

that parent involvement does not actually decline but shifts; as students near graduation, parent are less involved with the behaviours of the student and focus more attention on their student's learning opportunities. Finally, parent involvement of adolescents differs from parent involvement of young children and it may be hard for some parents to change their involvement as their child transitions to high school. For example, a more structured system of parent monitoring of homework may produce positive results for elementary students; however, the same high level of monitoring can have a negative impact on adolescent's homework completion (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) suggest that parents' choice of involvement need to be developmentally appropriate for a given child. They maintain that striking this "developmental match" tends to be easier for parents of younger as compared to older and adolescent children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p. 316).

#### *Parent Involvement Underscored*

Secondary students benefit from their parents' participation in their schooling through increased academic achievement, lower dropout rates and increased student attendance (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; Simon, 2000, 2001). Recent studies demonstrate that both teachers and parents think that family involvement in schools is important and want to be more involved in the adolescent's schooling (Eccles & Harold, 1993, 1996; Dauper & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Leitch & Tangri, 1988). The importance of parent involvement at the secondary level is recognized (Connors and Epstein, 1994; Simon 2000). Secondary students need effective parent involvement just as much as younger students (Phelps, 1999). The significance of the role of parents in adolescents' development emphasizes parent support and control for a number of socialization outcomes (Gecas & Seff, 1990) such as global self-esteem and adolescents'

psychological well being (Harter, 1990), and adolescents educational goals and future plans (Davies & Kandel, 1981). Gecas & Seff (1990) found that parenting skills and warm parent-child interactions make a positive difference in the social, emotional and educational development of adolescents; Kaplan, Liu & Kaplan (2001) found that parents' feelings about their own educational attainment influenced their expectations of and interactions with their adolescents; and Marjoribanks (1986) demonstrated that adolescents' aspirations are strongly influenced by perceptions of their parents' encouragement. Furthermore, adolescents are more likely to listen to, or model themselves after, adults who exhibit positive self-feelings (Ryan & Stiller, 1994; Scott-Jones, 1995). Mayhew & Lempers (1998) found that parents' skills and interactions are dependent upon the parents' development of a healthy self-esteem, self-efficacy and coping skills for dealing with adversity. When parents see themselves as efficacious they are more likely to be involved in their children's schooling (Epstein, 1986; Grolnick et al., 1997).

#### Parent Self-Efficacy

Parent self-efficacy is only one of several factors viewed as having an influence on parent involvement. However, several researchers have indicated that what the parent does is more important to student success than status variables (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1990; Moles, 1996) and believe that parent self-efficacy may explain variations in involvement decisions more fully (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). More specifically, parent self-efficacy is more important than status variables because parent self-efficacy "functions as a set of determinants of human motivation, affect, and action" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Furthermore, unlike status variables, schools have greater opportunity to affect change in this area. Schools may design parent involvement approaches

that focus specifically on increasing parents' sense of positive influence in their children's school success (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). Therefore, it is important to examine parent self-efficacy and explore how it relates to parent involvement. To understand the mechanisms that affect efficacy and parent involvement and the efficacy-involvement relationship, a discussion of the theory and development of self-efficacy ensues. Parent self-efficacy will be described and related to parenting. Finally, research regarding parents' sense of efficacy and parent involvement will be presented.

### *Self-efficacy Theory*

Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of achieving specific outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is not concerned with the skills of the individual, but with the *beliefs* about what one can do with those skills, especially in the face of situational demands, failures and set-backs that have significant personal and social repercussions. In general, persons with high self-efficacy will be more likely to engage in behaviours leading to a goal and be more persistent in the face of obstacles than will persons with a lower sense of efficacy. Self-efficacy is concerned with the individual's beliefs about their abilities to exercise and maintain some level of control over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1989). As Bandura (1995) states, "people's level of motivation, affective states and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively the case" (p.2). Moreover, it is this belief that one can affect real change that provides a powerful incentive to develop and exercise control (Bandura, 1995; Coleman & Karracher, 1997). In summary, self-efficacy places emphasis on beliefs and perceptions about one's abilities rather than the abilities themselves.

### *Development of self-efficacy*

A person's sense of efficacy is formed through major influences or sources of

information. Bandura (1995) outlines these four main forms of influences on people's beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Mastery experiences are the most effective ways of creating a strong sense of efficacy. Successes build a belief in one's personal efficacy; failures may undermine it. Successful experiences encourage one to overcome obstacles through perseverance. Vicarious experiences or social models allow people to see they succeed by observing the efforts of others they view as similar to them. The greater the assumed similarity, the more persuasive the model is perceived. Social persuasion involves verbally persuading the individual that they possess the capabilities to master the given activity. Individuals who successfully build efficacy in others do more than positive talk, they structure the environment in ways that bring success and avoid failure. Lastly, physiological and emotional states refer to the individual's mood that affects one's judgment. A positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy, whereas negative moods limit or restrict efficacy. Personal efficacy then is a dynamic, complex process, continually growing and developing from one's experiences.

#### *Parent Self-efficacy Described*

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) assert that parents' sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school is drawn from all four sources. This personal sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school means that a person believes that he or she is capable of exerting a positive influence on children's outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Parent self-efficacy also refers to the parent's beliefs and expectations about the degree to which he or she is able to perform competently and effectively as a parent. It is a set of attitudes about one's ability to get necessary resources and offer effective help. Parent self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1989), involves not only the parent's

specific knowledge about child-rearing behaviours, but also the degree of confidence the parent has in his or her ability to perform the specific behaviour. Parents who hold positive self-efficacy beliefs assume their involvement will be beneficial for children and are more likely to participate actively in school activities, even when faced with difficulties or barriers. Efficacious parents also believe in the abilities of their child and have confidence in their own ability to guide their child's learning (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). Personal self-efficacy, independent of underlying skills, is demonstrated as one of the most influential aspects that determines one's performance (Heflinger & Bickman, 1996) and thus is a powerful concept for schools to understand and endorse in their development and implementation of parent involvement programs.

#### *Parent Self-efficacy and Parenting*

Parenting today can be complex and stressful, placing continual and heavy demands on parents. Parents not only have to deal with ever-changing challenges as their children grow and develop, but also have to manage interdependent relationships within the family and social connections to others outside the family (Bandura, 1995). Swick and Broadway (1987) maintain that competence in parenting is best understood within the construct of parent self-efficacy. They identify four key elements or attributes of parent self-efficacy that are linked to effective parent involvement: self-image, locus of control, developmental status, and interpersonal support. A positive self-image is an important attribute associated with parenting. Swick (1988) found that self-image predicted the parent's ability to carry out the role of "parent as educator." The idea of locus of control refers to the place where individuals locate decision-making factors that influence their lives: within themselves (internal) or in the environment (external) or a combination of both (Swick & Graves, 1986). The more internal control parents have, the more

effective they are in sharing their resources and talents with their children. Externally controlled parents tend to leave decisions to chance, whereas parents with an internal locus of control are more proactive and consistently positive in their interactions with their children. They have a greater awareness of their child's educational needs and are more likely to take action based on this awareness (Swick, 1988). As parents develop and refine their control of parenting, they reinforce their belief that they can influence and parent their children effectively; in turn their level of efficacy increases. Developmental status is based on the concept that parents grow and change through the various developmental stages that occur naturally over the family's life span. This means that parents are knowledgeable about their role in their child's growth and development. Parents actively build and enhance their status or image as a parent using their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Efficacious parents assimilate and accommodate experiences. Interpersonal support refers to the external support from extended family members, friends, neighbours, and other persons in the community. Positive and effective interpersonal supports increase parent self- efficacy. In summary, it is important to note that the attributes of self-image, locus of control, developmental status, and interpersonal support not only strengthen parenting skills, but also contribute to the parent's sense of efficacy.

#### *Parents' Sense of Efficacy and Parent Involvement*

Although parent involvement literature generally concludes that involved parents have a positive influence on children, the source of this influence and the intensity and duration of its power are rarely studied (Coleman & Karracher, 1997; Swick, 1988). Early studies noted that parent self-image was related to the child's overall developmental functioning and to later school performance (Gordon, 1975). Swick (1988) reports that subsequent literature confirmed that effective parents engage more frequently in more involvement activities than do less confident

parents. However, existing studies and literature demonstrate the relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Gettlinger & Guetschow, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Swick, 1987; Swick & Broadway, 1997).

As noted earlier, Eccles & Harold (1996) cite parents' efficacy beliefs as a primary factor that influences parent involvement. Furthermore, Eccles & Harold propose that, parents' view of their competence changes as their children transition to higher grades and encounter more specialized content. Gettlinger & Geutschow (1998) examined the perceptions of roles, efficacy, and opportunities for parent involvement in schools. They found that more positive beliefs about efficacy and high effectiveness ratings were associated with high ratings of parent involvement. Moreover, parents saw themselves as most effective through direct involvement activities. Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (1992) in a study of parents of elementary school students found that parent efficacy facilitates increased levels of parent activity in some areas of parent involvement. Parent efficacy was found to be related to educational activities, volunteering, and telephone calls. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) suggested that although higher levels of education may give parents a higher level of skill and knowledge, efficacy increases the likelihood that a parent will *act* on his or her knowledge. Swick (1987) engaged teachers in exploring the relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement in an early childhood context. This study suggests that parent self-efficacy is positively related to the quality and quantity of parental involvement. Highly involved parents at home and at school exhibited a sense of high control, very positive self-concept, positive views of their children, and rated their child's school as excellent. They perceived their support system as excellent. Conversely, parents in the lower efficacy groups reported few ways they were involved in their child's schooling. These parents had negative perceptions of their involvement with their child;

they saw support systems as ineffective and had a low self-image of themselves.

In summary, Swick (1987) emphasizes the mutual interrelationship between efficacy and parent involvement. Swick and Broadway (1997) recognize that the attributes of parent self-efficacy - locus of control, self-esteem, developmental status and interpersonal support - are challenged during times of rapid growth and change. As acknowledged earlier, adolescence is not only a period of rapid growth and change for the child; it is also a time when parents must quickly assimilate and accommodate the demands of this stage of their child's development.

### Summary

In this chapter the literature relevant to parent involvement and parent self-efficacy as it pertains to parents' involvement in their children's learning and education was reviewed. The history of parent involvement practices was related, and the ecological perspectives of parental involvement and models of parental involvement were described. A discussion of the benefits of involvement described the positive outcomes associated with parent involvement for students, parent, teachers, the school, and the community. However, numerous factors identified as influencing parent involvement were found to contribute to each parent's involvement in their child's learning. A primary focus of this study is adolescents and thus, the uniqueness of involvement with respect to parents of adolescents was discussed. Although the literature has generally found parent involvement to decline as students become older, recent studies are beginning to suggest that parent involvement tends to shift rather than to decline. Finally, parent self-efficacy was defined and its relation to parent involvement was described.

A review of the literature demonstrates that the importance of parent involvement to student achievement has been established. However few studies, until recently, have focused on

the involvement of parents of adolescents. Adolescents in their quest for independence and their own identity tend to distance themselves from their parents; and parent involvement, for a variety of reasons, tends to decline or shift and change as their children grow older. Parent involvement practices that were quite appropriate when children are younger quickly become inappropriate as children transition to high school. Despite the confusion that many parents experience during the turbulent adolescent years, they still want to remain involved in their children's education. Moreover, students and teachers want parents to be more involved at the secondary level. Research indicates that process variables such as parent self-efficacy, rather than status variables such as parent income, education and employment status, play a greater role in influencing parent involvement. Parent self-efficacy, or the belief that one is capable of exerting a positive influence on children's outcomes, has been recently identified as an influential factor of parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Swick, 1994). However, the relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement with adolescents has yet to be explored. Thus, the primary focus of this study was to extend the knowledge on parent involvement practices that support adolescents. Knowing parent's beliefs about their involvement in their adolescent's learning and how parents are involved in their adolescents' education will help schools and educators design and implement appropriate and effective parent involvement practices at the secondary level so that outcomes for adolescents can be enhanced.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHOD

The importance of parent involvement and the link to student achievement has been well established. Parent involvement significantly contributes to student success. It not only benefits students, but also, when viewed within an ecological perspective, produces positive results for schools, teachers, parents, and communities. Parent involvement is valued and recognized by governing bodies. Changes to British Columbia's school act empower parents to take a greater role in reshaping the education system and making it accountable for increasing student performance. Research demonstrates that parent involvement tends to decline or at least shift as students become older. However, it is adolescents who require the most support to successfully transition through the confusion and angst of the teenage years (Eccles & Harold, 1993). Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie (1992) and Swick (1994) advocate that parent self-efficacy, or parent's beliefs about their ability to help their children learn, directly influences parents' decision to become involved in their children's education. The parent efficacy study with elementary school students by Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Brissie (1992) is the foundation of the present study, which seeks to explore the relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement practices among parents of adolescents.

#### Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this investigation was to explore parent self-efficacy and the nature of its relationship to specific types of parent involvement with parents of adolescent students in secondary schools. Parent involvement has been found to decline or at least vary as students become older. Therefore, a secondary purpose of the study was to explore parent

involvement as it is affected by the transition of the adolescent from elementary to secondary school.

### Research Questions

This investigation was designed to answer the following research questions.

1. Which types of parent involvement practices (as defined by Epstein's typology) are important for parents of students at the high school level?

It was hypothesized that at the high school level parent involvement practices such as *parenting*, *communicating*, and *learning at home* would continue to be important types of parent involvement practices for parents at the high school level. However parent involvement practices at the school level such as *volunteering* would become less important while *decision making* and *collaborating with the community* would take on greater significance for parents at the high school level.

2. In a high school setting, which types of parent involvement (as defined by Epstein's typology) are associated with high levels of parent self-efficacy?

In this study, it was hypothesized that high levels of parent efficacy would be associated with high levels of parent involvement. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that direct parent involvement practices that involve parents working closely with their children, such as *volunteering* and *learning at home* would increase parent self-efficacy.

3. Does parent self-efficacy explain more of the variation in parent involvement than status variables such as family income, parent level of education, and employment status or geographical variables such as distance from school?

In this study, it was hypothesized that parent self-efficacy would explain more of the variation in parent involvement than family status variables such as income, level of education and employment status and the geographical variable of distance from school.

### Participants

Participants in the study were parents of adolescents in Grades 8 to 12 attending one of the four secondary schools within the Sunshine Coast school district in the province of British Columbia. Parents of children in Grades 8 to 12 were invited to participate in this study. Surveys were distributed to most of the parents of the 1977 identified adolescents of the Sunshine Coast area. Dillman (1978) states that a sample cannot be considered representative of a population unless all members of that population have a known chance of being included in the sample. By including all parents of adolescents in this geographical area, a representative sample was anticipated. However, since it is known that respondents to surveys may differ from the general population, specific family background information was gathered through a questionnaire included in the survey (See Appendix A) and compared to the profile of the general population as determined by the 2001 Canada Census. Common difficulties in mail surveys include transient families who move during the mailing period. Surveys that were returned were rechecked for current addresses. Every attempt was made to ensure that each parent of an adolescent registered at one of the high schools in the school district received a survey packet.

A large sample size was selected for three reasons. To obtain a reasonable sampling across the five grade levels of the school district required an overall large sample size. Although there are 1977 adolescents attending the secondary schools in the Sunshine Coast, the four high schools report a total of 1583 families. Secondly, in mail surveys sample size is dependent upon

response rates. Although Dillman (1978) maintains that a response rate of 50-94% is possible using a total design survey, it is more typical for mail survey response rates to be in the range of 20-30%. However, some studies report response rates as low as 11.5%. According to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools of School District # 46, Sunshine Coast (Stewart Hercus, personal communication, October 26, 2002), a return rate of 18% is typical for parent surveys conducted in this school district. Using an average estimate of a 25% response rate, a sample size of 375 was expected. Thirdly, a large sample size was required to conduct the statistical analysis to test the hypotheses formulated. Two sources concur in determining a sample size. Tabachnick & Fidell (1996) recommend a subject to independent variable ratio of 20:1 for multiple regression analysis. In this study, given five independent variables, a minimum sample size of 100 is suggested. Cohen (1992) asserts that statistical power analysis is calculated among the four variables involved in statistical inference: sample size, significant criterion, population effect size, and statistical power. In consulting Cohen (1992), a minimum sample size of 91 is required for a multiple regression with five variables to ensure a medium effect size at a power of .80 for an alpha of .05. Although a conservative response rate exceeds the minimum sample size required for the statistical analysis, to ensure adequate representation of this widely varying population, survey packets were distributed to all families with adolescents in the district.

A total of 1583 surveys were mailed to families. There was a total response rate of 28%. 26 surveys were returned that were undeliverable; 24 surveys were returned incomplete or respondents refused to participate in the study; 10 surveys were completed by parents of grade 7 students, thus resulting in 377 usable surveys (24%). Of the 24 returned surveys, three indicated the receipt of more than one copy; however, it is expected that there were several more families that received more than one survey packet. Upon inquiry, the investigator discovered that it is

not uncommon for a family to have children in more than one high school in the district. Thus, the response rate may be an underestimate of the actual response as some families received more than one copy of the survey.

#### *School District Profile*

The school district is composed of 10 elementary schools (Kindergarten to Grade 7) and four secondary schools (Grades 8-12) that serves a total of approximately 4 000 students. Approximately 50% of the students in the district are adolescents attending one of the four secondary schools. The secondary schools vary in geographic location within the coast, size (132 to 826 students) and type (regular and alternative); 22% of the students are identified as students with special needs; 8% of the students are identified as students with First Nations heritage; 0.15% of the students are identified as students with English-as-a-second-language students as defined by the Ministry of Education.

#### *School Participants*

The four secondary schools of the Sunshine Coast school district were invited to participate in this study and all agreed. The total district population of secondary students is 1977 which is more or less evenly distributed through Grades 8 to 12: 355 in Grade 8, 357 in Grade 9, 381 in Grade 10, 399 in Grade 11, and 485 in Grade 12. The four schools vary in size; two of the schools are larger (populations of 826 and 724 students) and two of the schools are smaller (populations of 265 and 132) students.

## Instruments

This study used survey research methodology in order to determine the type of parent involvement practices associated with parents of adolescents and examined the relationship between parent involvement and parent efficacy. Information regarding the demographic profile of this population of adolescents was gathered from the school district office as well as from the principal of each school. Information was collected from parents of adolescents in Grades 8 through 12 through three paper and pencil mail survey instruments. The High School and Family Partnership - Questionnaire for Parents (Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993) was employed to describe the parent involvement of the sample group (See Appendix B). The Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale/Thinking about Helping My Child (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1992) was employed to determine levels of parent self-efficacy for the sample group (See Appendix C). Finally, a Family Background Questionnaire was specifically developed for this study to collect family background data (See Appendix A).

### *High School and Family Partnerships - Questionnaire for Parents.*

High School and Family Partnerships - Questionnaire for Parents, originally developed for use by Epstein, Connors, and Salinas (1993) was adapted with permission of the author and used in the current study. The original version of the High School and Family Partnerships - Questionnaire for Parents was developed for and used with families of children in the ninth grade. The original research sample included 420 parents in six high schools in Maryland – two urban, two suburban, and two rural high schools (Connors & Epstein, 1994). The original version of the High School and Family Partnerships Questionnaire for Parents asked participants to give information on family attitudes about family practices of involvement in the teen's education; how well the school keeps them informed and involved at school and at home; the

practices they would like to see initiated or improved at their schools; information desired by families about adolescents, homework, the community; family background and experiences; and open-ended comments. The current study focused on parents of adolescents at various grade levels, especially during the transition years between elementary and secondary school, as well as on the change in parent involvement as students become older. The authors of the original survey suggest that users of the survey make purposeful choices, selecting only the scales that are important for the research, and adapt the survey for students in other grades (Epstein, Connors-Tadros, Horsey, Simon, 1996). The original version of the High School and Family Partnerships - Questionnaire for Parents was adapted for students in Grades 8-12 and included the items from Subscales 2 and 3, which provide information about family practices of involvement in the student's education based on the Epstein's six types of involvement. In the original study reliabilities on these scales vary from .56 to .82. Subscale 2 consists of 13 questions about how often parents get involved in different ways with their high school students at home. Participants are provided five frequency options from 'never' to 'every day.' Subscale 3 consists of nine questions about how often parents participate at high schools in different ways. Participants are provided four frequency options from 'never' to 'many times.'

*Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale/Thinking about Helping My Child.*

The Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale/Thinking about Helping My Child was developed during a study of relationships among teacher efficacy, parent self-efficacy, and parent involvement in elementary schools (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). In the original study, the scale was administered to 390 parents of regular education students from four public elementary schools. Alpha reliability for the scale with this sample was .81. The Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School/Thinking about

Helping My Child Scale in this first study was included as part of a larger Parent Questionnaire but has been used as a free-standing instrument in two subsequent studies. In the first study with a sample of 74 parents of public elementary school children from Grades 2 through 5, alpha reliability for this scale was .81 (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997). In the second study, the instrument was modified to include a six point (rather than the original five point) response scale; alpha reliability for the Scale with a sample of 20 parents of public elementary school children in Grade 4 was .84 (Hoover-Dempsey, Barreno, Reed, & Jones, 1998). The Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale was developed as a measure of the respondent's beliefs about his or her ability and effectiveness to help their child with school related learning activities. Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues (1992) based the Parent Efficacy scale on the teaching efficacy literature and parenting literature because interest in the original study "focused on parents' perceptions of personal efficacy specifically in relation to children's school learning" (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992, p. 289). The researchers indicated that the similarity to selected items on a Teacher Perceptions of Efficacy Scale that was developed for the 1987 study and its grounding in related literature supports the validity of this scale.

The Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School/Thinking about Helping My Child Scale contains 12 Likert-scale response items that are designed to assess parents' perceptions of their own efficacy. The scale includes items such as "I know how to help my child do well in school" and "If I try hard, I can get through to my child even when he/she has trouble understanding something" (See Appendix C). Items in this scale focus on assessment of parents' perceived general abilities to influence children's school outcomes and their specific effectiveness in influencing children's school learning. Items are scored on a six point scale

ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Negatively worded items are subsequently rescored so that higher scores uniformly reflected higher efficacy. A score of six consistently reflects the highest level of parent self-efficacy for helping children succeed in school, and a score of one reflects the lowest level of parent self-efficacy for helping children succeed in school. An overall global score is obtained to represent the parents' sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed in school. Possible total scores for the scale can range from 12 to 60, with higher scores representing higher levels of parent self-efficacy and lower scores representing lower levels of parent self-efficacy. In the original studies, the efficacy variable and the involvement variable were treated as a measure of a continuous nature for a variety of correlational analyses.

#### Use of the Instruments in the Present Study

According to the Hoover-Dempsey, et al. (1992) and from a review of the literature, the Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School/Thinking about Helping My Child Scale has not been used in research with parents of adolescents. Thus, the reliability of the scale with this particular population was examined by using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School/Thinking about Helping My Child Scale demonstrated a high level of internal consistency with a reliability of .87. The instrument's reliability for the initial studies with parents of elementary children is similar (.81-.84) indicating that the construct of self-efficacy is similar for parents of children across ages.

The reliabilities of the various scales for the High School and Family Partnership – Questionnaire for Parents were also examined by using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. A high level of internal consistency was demonstrated by the Total Parent Involvement scale ( $r = .84$ ) as

well as most of the types of parent involvement ( $r = .61$  to  $.84$ ) As indicated in Table 1, sample reliabilities for all but one scale are similar to or higher than the reliabilities of the original study. The scale, Type 3 - Volunteering is considerably lower than the original study. The lower reliability of this scale, comprised of two items, suggests that the concept of volunteering varies considerably across the grades. With the exception of the Volunteering scale, the consistently strong reliabilities obtained in the present study for both instruments indicate the psychometric strength of the tools used and provide a solid foundation from which to interpret the results obtained.

Table 1

*Reliabilities of Instruments*

Instrument/Scale	Present Study	Original Study
Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School	.87 n=377	.81 n=74 .84 n=20
High School and Family Partnerships	n=377	n=418
Parent Involvement – Total	.84	Not provided
Parent Involvement at Home	.80	.82
Type 1-Parenting	.65	.64
Type 4-Learning at Home	.74	.77
Parent Involvement at School	.84	.81
Type 2-Communicating	.74	.68
Type 3-Volunteering	.61	.83
Type 5-Decision Making	.76	.72

*Family Background Questionnaire*

The Family Background Questionnaire was specifically developed for this study. The development of this questionnaire was based on similar surveys and findings in the literature as

well as in consultation with professionals in the field. The purpose of the questionnaire was twofold: to provide a description of the sample and to determine family status variables that have been found to make a significant difference in parent involvement. Three items from the questionnaire were used to develop the family-status variable: parent income, parent education and parent employment status. In addition to examining the three status variables separately, the three status variables were combined to develop a family-status composite variable to determine whether parent self-efficacy explains more of the variation in parent involvement than does family-status variables. Finally, the geographical variable, distance from school, was also included for consideration as a factor affecting parent involvement.

## Procedure

### *School Level*

The Superintendent of Schools for School District # 46, Sunshine Coast was contacted to obtain permission to collect data in the school district. After receiving written permission from the school board office, the proposal was presented to the secondary administrators of School District # 46 for endorsement. With permission granted from the school board and endorsement from the secondary administrators, permission was obtained to have survey packets distributed to parents.

### *Pilot Study*

A small pilot study was conducted to provide information about the presentation of the survey packet, the clarity of the instructions, and the length of time to complete the survey. The survey packets were distributed to seven parents of adolescents living outside the Sunshine Coast region. The participants were asked to complete not only the survey packet, but also a series of

questions about the survey including the length of time to complete the questionnaire, the ease of completing the questionnaire, and the content of the questions on the Background Questionnaire. Based on feedback from the pilot study, revisions were made to the survey packet and the final packet was developed.

#### *Survey Distribution*

Parents were informed of the study through the schools' monthly newsletter distribution in the month prior to the distribution of the survey. Letters of interest and survey packets were prepared and provided to the schools to be mailed to parents of students in Grades 8 to 12. The letter of interest described the study and contained a phone number of the investigator and co-investigator should parents have questions or concerns about the study (See Appendix D). The High School and Family Partnerships - Questionnaire for Parents, the Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Scale/Thinking about Helping My Child and the Family Background Questionnaire were included in the packet (See Appendices A, B, & C). Parents were informed through the letter of interest that all information is confidential and that each survey is assigned an identification number solely for the purpose of tracking response rate.

#### *Survey Return and Follow-up*

Parents were provided a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the completed survey within two weeks of receipt of the survey. Four weeks after the survey had been distributed, a follow up request reminding parents to complete and return surveys was made through the schools' newsletter distribution.

## Data Analysis

### *Research Question 1.*

Which types of parent involvement practices (as defined by Epstein's typology) are important for parents of students at the high school level?

Analysis: The data analysis for Research Question 1 demonstrated the degree of relationship among the variables. Each variable was identified as one of the six types of parent involvement. The means of each of the six types of variables were compared to each other as well as to their respective variables in the original study conducted with students in the ninth grade. Means with a difference greater than one standard deviation of the original means were determined to be significantly high or low parent involvement. Analyses also included combining the variables into two broad categories, parent involvement at home (items from parenting, communicating, learning at home, and collaborating) and parent involvement at school (items from communicating, volunteering and decision making), to determine if there was a significant difference between parent involvement at home and parent involvement at school.

### *Research Question 2.*

In a high school setting, which types of parent involvement (as defined by Epstein's typology) are associated with high levels of parent self-efficacy?

Analysis: The data analysis for Research Question 2 included several correlational analyses, which examined the relationship between parent self-efficacy and parent involvement as well as the relationship between parent self-efficacy and the various types of parent involvement as defined by Epstein's typology. Analyses also included combining the variables into composite variables, parent involvement at home (items from parenting, communicating, learning at home, and collaborating with the community) and parent involvement at school

(items from communicating, volunteering and decision making). Parent efficacy scores were assigned to categories of high, medium and low and a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated for parent efficacy, as well as for each of the parent involvement variables and the two composite variables.

*Research Question 3.*

Does parent self-efficacy explain more of the variation in parent involvement than status variables such as family income, parent level of education, and employment status?

Analysis: The data analysis for Research Question 3 included a stepwise multiple regression analysis of parent involvement to analyze the collective and separate effects of the independent variables. The independent variables in the multiple regression analysis of parent involvement include parent self-efficacy, parent income, parent education level, parent employment status, and distance from school. The percentage of variance each factor accounts for in parent involvement was determined. The first analysis determined the amount of variance accounted for by parent efficacy, the three individual parent status variables, and the single geographical variable. A second analysis demonstrated the amount of variance accounted for by parent efficacy, the three parent status variables combined, and the single geographical variable.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Demographic Information

##### *Parents*

Parents completed a Background Questionnaire, which provided the investigator with contextual information from which to interpret the parent efficacy and involvement survey results. The questionnaire was specifically designed to provide a description of the sample and to determine family status variables that have been found to make a significant difference in parent involvement. A total of 377 parents returned completed surveys that were used in the analyses. The majority of respondents were mothers (84%) of two parent families (66%) who worked fulltime (32%), part-time (28%) or were self-employed (24%). Forty-six percent of the respondents indicated that they had had some post secondary education. Ninety-six percent of the participants reported a racial/ethnic background of white, Caucasian. Sixty-four percent of the participants indicated they lived within 5 to 10 kilometers of the school. Sample statistics were compared to the 2001 Canada Census statistics of the community. The sample characteristics of the study were found to be similar to the population of the Sunshine Coast as reported by the 2001 Canada Census. Canada Census collection is broader surveying the entire population and thus, provides a general description of the population. Furthermore, there is some variation in the way Canada Census gathers information and the way the information was gathered for the study. However, a comparison of the sample with the census information provides an indication of the similarity of the sample to the general population. For example, the population of the Sunshine Coast as indicated by 2001 Canada Census is primarily Canadian born (83%). The sample for this study is primarily white, Caucasian 96.8%. Additionally, 39.2% of the population of the Sunshine Coast reported some post secondary education (2001 Canada Census) whereas, 45.5 % of sample respondents indicated some post secondary education. 2001 Canada Census indicated that 72% of families on the Sunshine Coast are two parent families. Sixty-five percent of sample respondents indicated two parent families;

however, an additional 9% reported blended and another 2% indicated extended family structures. Given the similarities between the statistics of the population as reported by the 2001 Canada Census and the sample statistics, the sample is considered to be representative sample of the population of the Sunshine Coast. The demographics of the parent sample in the current study are provided in Table 2.

Table 2		
<i>Parent Demographic Data</i>		
Parent Characteristics	N	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
30-39	31	8.3%
40-49	241	65.0%
50-59	97	26.2%
60-69	2	0.5%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	365	97.3%
Aboriginal	4	1.1%
Asian	5	1.3%
Other	1	.3%
<b>Family Structure</b>		
Two parent	248	66.1%
Single parent	82	21.9%
Blended	35	9.3%
Extended	10	2.7%

### *Schools*

The sample was also compared to the school district population in terms of school, grade aboriginal ancestry and special needs. Overall, Grade 10 students are slightly overrepresented (district 19%, sample 23%) and Grade 12 students are slightly underrepresented (district 25%,

sample 20%). The two larger schools were over represented by 3.8% and the two smaller schools were underrepresented. One school may have been underrepresented, as it is an alternative school with many students at this school not residing with their parents. One school includes Grades 7 through 12 and parents of grade 7 students were not included in the sample, although the number of respondents was compared to the total school population. Table 3 provides the demographics of the schools in the current study.

Table 3 <i>School Demographic Data</i>				
School Characteristics	Sample		School District	
	n	Percentage	N	Percentage
Grade				
8	71	19%	355	18%
9	67	18%	357	18%
10	87	23%	381	19%
11	78	20%	399	20%
12	74	20%	485	25%
School				
School A	33	9%	132	6.7%
School B	172	45%	826	41.8%
School C	158	42%	754	38.1%
School D	14	4 %	265	13.4%
Students				
Special Education	65	17.2%	435	22%
Aboriginal	4	1.1%	155	7.8%

As Table 3 indicates, the school district reports an aboriginal population of 7.8%. The sample, indicating 1.1% for aboriginal ancestry, under represents the First Nations population in the school district. Involving parents of First Nations students is in its initial stages in the school district. School district aboriginal support staff report that, at this time, First Nations parents would not typically respond to a mail survey without direct personal contact. The design of this

study did not provide for direct contact with respondents and, as a result, students with First Nations ancestry are under-represented in this study. The school district reports that 22% of the secondary student population is designated as students with special needs; respondents of the sample indicated that 17% of the students had special needs. With the exception of aboriginal students, the sample closely approximates the secondary student population of the school district.

Three items from the Family Background Questionnaire were used to develop the family-status variable: parent income, parent education and parent employment status. Table 4 indicates the distribution and frequency of each of the three variables used to form the family status variable as well as the distribution and frequency of the geographical variable.

**Table 4**  
*Distribution and Frequency of Variables*

Variable	n	Percentage
Family Income		
Less than 14 999	13	4.0%
15 000 – 24 999	20	6.2%
25 000 – 34 999	37	11.4%
35 000 – 54 999	80	24.7%
55 000 – 74 999	88	27.2%
over 75 000	86	26.5%
Parent Education		
Some high school	29	7.1%
High school diploma GED	75	19.5%
1-3 years of post-secondary	172	45.9%
Bachelor's degree	70	19.2%
Graduate degree	30	8.3%
Parent Employment		
Work full time outside home	119	31.8%
Work part time outside home	105	28.0%

Table 4

Variable	n	Percentage
Unemployed	32	8.5%
Self employed	90	24.0%
Work in the home	29	7.7%
Distance from school		
< than 5 kilometers	69	18.4%
5-10 kilometers	238	63.5%
>10 kilometers	68	18.1%

## Findings

### *Research Question 1*

The first research question focused on relationships among the various types of parent involvement. The means of each of the scales for the six types of parent involvement was compared to each other as well as to means for the respective scales in the original study conducted with students in the ninth grade.

In Table 5, a comparison of means between the indicators of parent involvement reveals that parent involvement at home is higher than parent involvement at school. Moreover, there was little variability between the types of parent involvement comprising the composite variable, parent involvement at home. Within the composite variable parent involvement at school, Type 5 – Decision Making was significantly lower than the other two types of parent involvement, communicating and volunteering. Although decision making was an important aspect of parent involvement, it is also the most indirect type of involvement, suggesting that parents are more likely to be involved in activities that relate more directly to their child's learning. These results

suggest that with parents of adolescents, parent involvement at home is significantly greater than parent involvement at school. Furthermore, as students move through the grades, parent involvement at home takes on greater significance than parent involvement at school.

Table 5  
*Means and Standard Deviations of the Types of Parent Involvement*

	Original Study (n= 418)		Present Study (n = 377)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Parent Involvement At Home	3.55	.56	2.39	.53
Type 1 - Parenting	4.17	.64	2.68	.64
Type 4 - Learning at Home	3.41	.72	2.37	.62
Parent Involvement At School	1.90	.81	1.23	.78
Type 2 - Communicating	2.14	.68	1.53	.80
Type 3 - Volunteering	1.91	.83	1.42	.97
Type 5 - Decision Making	1.68	.72	0.80	.82

A comparison of means between the Epstein's (1993) study and the present study demonstrated no significant difference for the four scales: parent involvement at school, communicating, volunteering, and decision-making. A significant difference from the original means was indicated in three scales: parent involvement at home, parenting, and learning at home. The greatest change was noted in type 1 – *parenting*. The parenting variable describes the direct involvement of a parent with his/her child, which as previously noted changes as children become older and more independent. The original study focused on parents of ninth graders, whereas the present study includes parents of students in Grades 8 through 12. Thus, the results might indicate that as students move through the grades the greatest change in parent involvement is at home. Low parent involvement at school continues as students become older, but parent involvement at home tends to decrease as students progress through the grades.

## Research Question 2

Several correlational analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between parent self-efficacy and types of parent involvement as described by Epstein's typology. In Table 6, the correlations between parent efficacy and the types of parent involvement are summarized.

**Table 6**  
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Between Parent Involvement and Parent Efficacy (n = 377)*

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Efficacy	-	.21*	.26*	.05	.23*	.03	.07	.26*	.02	.15*
2. Total Parent Involvement		-	.89*	.74*	.70*	.71*	.65*	.73*	.60*	.47*
3. At Home			-	.35*	.86*	.47*	.31*	.83*	.25*	.46*
4. At School				-	.17*	.75*	.87*	.26*	.87*	.29*
5. Type 1- Parenting					-	.29*	.12*	.53*	.10*	.24*
6. Type 2- Communicating						-	.58*	.24*	.48*	.25*
7. Type 3- Volunteering							-	.25*	.68*	.30*
8. Type 4 - Learn at Home								-	.20*	.40*
9. Type 5 - Decision Making									-	.22*
10. Type 6 - Collaborating										-
<i>M</i>	52.65	44.40	35.78	8.63	17.10	6.12	2.84	14.25	2.41	1.69
<i>SD</i>	9.65	11.14	8.01	5.46	4.19	3.22	1.95	3.74	2.48	0.91

\*  $p < .05$ .

The variables that make up the total parent involvement variable include 22 items from Epstein's High School and Family Partnership Survey of Parents. Of these, fifteen items were considered to indicate parent involvement at home, while seven items report parent involvement

at school. The items were further categorized into one of the six types of parent involvement. Thus, the variable of self-efficacy was compared not only to total parent involvement but also to eight variables that describe specific aspects of parent involvement. Correlation between parent efficacy and total parent involvement was statistically significant (.21). Of the eight remaining variables, four had a statistically significant correlation with the variable of parent self-efficacy. A higher level of parent efficacy was associated with parent involvement at home (.26) as well as the types of parent involvement associated with parent involvement at home, (parenting (.23), learning at home (.26), and collaborating (.15)). Parent efficacy is related to increased levels of parent activity in some areas of parent involvement, specifically parent involvement at home.

### *Research Question 3*

The third research question employed a stepwise multiple regression analysis of parent involvement to analyze the collective and separate effects of the independent variables parent self-efficacy, parent income, parent education level, parent employment status, and distance from the school. In the multiple regression analysis, parent efficacy, income, and distance from school were significant and unique predictors in parent involvement. Although parent efficacy accounted for a greater proportion of the variance, the three predictors together only accounted for 7% of the variance. Thus, much of the variability associated with parent involvement was due to factors other than those specified in the model. Parent education and employment status did not make a significant, unique contribution to parent involvement when the effects of other predictors were controlled.

Parent involvement scores revealed significant variation related to parent efficacy  $F(3, 316) = 12.310, p = .001$ . Further analysis demonstrated more specifically that parent efficacy accounts for more of the variation in parent involvement at home  $F(3, 316) = 21.417, p < .001$ ;

whereas, employment accounts for more of the variation in parent involvement at school  $F(3, 316) = 4.546, p = .034$ . Additional analysis examined the amount of variance parent efficacy accounts for in comparison to the three parent variables (parent income, parent education level, parent employment status) combined. The results indicated that in comparison to the parent status variable (three variables combined) parent efficacy explained more of the variation in parent involvement,  $F(2, 317) = 12.310, p = .001$ . In Table 7, a summary of the multiple regression analysis is provided.

Table 7  
*Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Parent Involvement (n = 377)*

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1			
Efficacy	.22	.06	.19*
Step 2			
Efficacy	.21	.06	.19*
Family Income	1.24	.45	.15*
Step 3			
Efficacy	.22	.06	.19*
Family Income	1.24	.44	.15*
Distance from school	2.17	.97	.12

Note.  $R^2 = .04$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = .02$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = .02$  for Step 3 ( $p < .05$ ). \* $p < .01$ .

The results demonstrated the three variables combined explain less of the variation than did parent income when the variables were considered independently. Parent income was found to have a greater relationship on parent involvement at home, whereas parent employment status affected the variation of parent involvement at school. Analysis revealed that the variable, distance from school had a greater effect on parent involvement when the parent status variables

were grouped rather than entered separately. It is interesting to note that the variable, distance from school, did not have an effect on parent involvement at home or at school, but did have a small effect on total parent involvement when all variables were entered separately. Parent efficacy and parent income explained more of the variation in parent involvement than distance from school, but distance from school explained more of the variation than did parent level of education or parent employment.

### Summary

In summary, data analysis reveals that the sample was representative of both the school district and the larger community of the Sunshine Coast. The results show that parent involvement at home is greater than parent involvement at school. Although modest, the correlation between parent efficacy and total parent involvement, is significant. Finally, a multiple regression analysis reveals that the process variable, parent efficacy, explains more of the variation in parent involvement than does the variables of family income, distance from school or the parent status variable; however, much of the variability associated with parent involvement is due to factors other than those specified in the model.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

Parent involvement has been recognized as an important aspect of a child's education (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie; 1987, Marcon, 1999; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple & Peay, 1999). There is a growing movement toward family and parent involvement. Parent involvement is not only encouraged but also mandated from the Ministry level. However, studies cite low levels of parent involvement, especially with parents of adolescents. Few studies have described the nature of parent involvement for students in the secondary grades.

Most parents want their children to be successful and want to be involved in their children's education (Epstein, 1995). Swick (1988) has suggested that the involvement of parents in their children's learning is directly influenced by process variables such as parent beliefs and parent attitudes. The relationship between self-efficacy and parent involvement has been described as a mutual relationship and is bi-directional: parent self-efficacy acts as a catalyst for initiating parent involvement and parent involvement maintains and extends parents' abilities to manage in efficacious ways (Swick & Broadway, 1997).

This chapter discusses the findings of the present study and how the outcomes relate to the findings of previous research. The strengths and the limitations of the study as they relate to the impact upon the findings are acknowledged. The findings of the study suggest a number of implications for schools and educators. Finally, implications for future research involving parents of adolescents are put forth for consideration.

Initial analyses were conducted to describe the involvement of parents of adolescents. The present study found higher levels of parent involvement at home and lower levels of parent involvement at school. Specifically, a comparison of mean scores demonstrated that the at

school parent involvement scales (i.e., volunteering, communicating, and decision-making) were lower than the scales of the at home parent involvement, (i.e., parenting and learning at home). The finding that low parent involvement is associated with parent involvement at school matches what schools, educators, and studies have been reporting about parent participation in previous studies. Simply viewing parent participation in school activities in the school building as parent involvement is a narrow perspective of parent involvement and has consistently been reported in the literature to decline as children progress through the grades. However, it has been found that parents' home involvement with their children's learning can have important influences on children's achievement (Epstein & Becker, 1982) and allow many parents to take a more active role in their children's education (Epstein 1990). The present study supports this finding and suggests that parents of adolescents are more involved in their children's learning at home rather than at school. In comparing the mean scores of this study with mean scores of the original study, there is little difference in parent involvement at school. However, a significant difference is noted in the scales of parent involvement at home. The difference in Type 1, parenting demonstrates a difference of three standard deviations. Although there are geographical differences as well as cultural differences between the samples in the two studies, the primary difference is the age of the children. The original study included parents of ninth graders, whereas the present study investigated parents of adolescents in Grades 8 to 12. Thus, the findings suggest that at-home involvement for parents of adolescents, although higher than at-school parent involvement, may actually tend to decline or at least change significantly as students become older. At the same time, parent involvement at school is consistently lower than parent involvement at home and does not appear to change as students move through the secondary grades. Schools report the significant decline in parent involvement as children

transition from elementary to secondary school. Indeed, parent involvement indicators may differ significantly as children become older and as a result parent involvement needs to be measured differently in the secondary grades.

The relationship between parent involvement and parent efficacy was examined through a correlational analyses. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) found that with parents of elementary school children, parent efficacy was related, at modest but significant levels, to volunteering (.11) and educational activities (.15). The present study, with parents of secondary school students, examined the correlation between parent efficacy and parent involvement as defined by Epstein's typology and found that parent efficacy is related, at modest but significant levels, to parent involvement at home (.26). More specifically, the cluster of parent involvement at home is composed of the three scales parenting (.23), learning at home (.26), and collaborating with the community (.15). Although the present study employed different indicators of parent involvement, it builds upon and confirms previous findings suggesting that parent efficacy is related to parent involvement across the grades and facilitates increased levels of parent activity at home. The correlational nature of the results indicates a relationship exists between efficacy and parent involvement. As efficacy influences involvement choices, the varied forms of involvement may influence parents' sense of efficacy. Regardless of the source of the influence, the link between efficacy and at home involvement is reasonable, especially when considering parents of adolescents.

Learning at home may be linked to efficacy because parents are directly involved with and actively engaged in their own child's learning and it provides parents with the opportunity to observe firsthand, their child's success with learning. Furthermore, parents may perceive higher levels of efficacy or competency in the home because in comparison to school, the home is a

safe, secure and familiar environment. Bandura (1977) suggests that perceived self-efficacy is directly related to expectations of eventual success. Thus, it is reasonable for parents to anticipate to be successful at home; and as a result self-efficacy would be greater at home rather than at school. Learning at home includes listening and/or reading something their adolescent has written, helping their adolescent with homework as well as discussing their adolescent's grades, courses and career plans with them. Working with their children in this way in the home requires a sense that one has educationally relevant skills and knowledge that can be used effectively. Furthermore, by engaging in these activities with their adolescent, parents may learn new and positive information about their child and their effectiveness with their own adolescent and be encouraged to continue their involvement with their child, especially if their adolescent's school performance improves. Success breeds success and in this way the involvement – efficacy cycle is one that may continuously increase and spiral, creating positive experiences and benefits for the adolescent, the parent, and the teacher as well as the school and the larger learning community.

This study explains about 7% of the variation in parent involvement of adolescents. As hypothesized, parent efficacy predicted more of the variation than did the parent status variables individually or combined. Furthermore, the geographical variable, distance from school, only affected total parent involvement when each of the variables was considered separately. Family income accounted for more of the variation than did distance from school. It is interesting to note that family income, not parent employment was found to be a significant variable in explaining parent involvement. This finding suggests that it is not whether or not parents are employed and working regularly but rather that the family has incoming and sufficient funds to support the family needs. Thus, higher levels of income tend to increase a parent's efficacy,

which in turn, results in higher levels of confidence to help their adolescent with school learning. Distance from school, although positively correlated to parent involvement, is negatively correlated with both parent efficacy and family income. Parent education, although positively correlated with parent efficacy, was not linked to the variation in parent efficacy, matching the construct of efficacy as described by Bandura (1977) that parent efficacy is linked not to one's abilities but to one's beliefs about one's abilities. The present study's findings also support previous findings by Haynes and Ben-Avie (1996) that parents efficacy stems from parents demonstrating to their children that learning is a valuable life-long process.

#### Limitations of the Present Study

A number of limitations of this study are evident and merit consideration. Challenges are presented by survey research itself, the single focus on parents, the sample, the definition of parent involvement and the correlational nature of the data. By its very nature, survey research is limiting and does not allow interaction with the respondents or individual follow up to check on the respondent's understanding of questions. The length of the survey may have deterred some parents from completing it or caused them to respond with less concentration as they proceeded through the survey. Those parents who did not return surveys may be significantly less involved in their adolescent's schooling and may exhibit varying levels of self-efficacy. Survey research does not provide the investigators with demographics of the non-respondents. Thus, there is a lack of clarity regarding the non-respondents. Survey research, like behaviour rating scales, is based on perceptions, not actual behaviours. Further research may gain valuable insights from parents about their involvement in their adolescent's education by employing a structured interview approach. Secondly, the present study focused on only one facet of parent

involvement - the parent. Parent involvement is complex and multidimensional. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of parent involvement of adolescents, it is necessary to include multiple perspectives. A study including adolescents, teachers, and community persons in addition to parents may provide a much broader and comprehensive picture than the present study that focused on parents. Thirdly, a limitation of the study also involves the characteristics of the sample. Although the sample was large and not unlike many public schools in general demographic characteristics (e.g. parent employment, family structure, and family income), the proportion of ethnic minority parents and first nations parents in the sample was small. The study's findings should be replicated with a more ethnically diverse parent sample representing the large ESL population of parents in larger urban centers of British Columbia. Next, there has been much discussion and debate regarding the definition of parent involvement and what it involves. Parent involvement was defined for the purposes of this study as "all those things that parents do at home and at school to contribute to the education of their children." The instrument measuring parent involvement in the present study used 22 items to capture the "things" parents do that relate to education of children across grades. Future studies using an instrument with indicators of parent involvement specific to the education of adolescents may yield different results. Finally the data are correlational and thus the direction of causality for obtained findings cannot be determined. For example, it may be as reasonable to assume that parent involvement influences parent efficacy as it is to assume that parent efficacy influences parent involvement. In fact, the mutual interrelationship between efficacy and parent involvement has been emphasized by Swick (1987). Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable information for schools and educators in their implementation of programs that foster and encourage the involvement of parents in their adolescent's learning.

### Strengths of the Present Study

The current research findings can be viewed with some confidence because of the numerous strengths of the study. Access to the entire secondary school population of the Sunshine Coast school district is non-restrictive and increased the likelihood that the sample population is representative of the general population. Comparison of demographic information with Canada Census 2001 indicated that the sample was indeed representative of both the community population and the secondary school population. Thus, non-respondent bias was minimized. Additionally the high response rate (28%) provided a generous sample size upon which to ground the data analyses. The high response rate also provided a source of social validity. Parents responded quickly and timely. The majority of the surveys were returned within two weeks. Many parents contacted the investigators, demonstrating their personal support of the study. Parents of this sample are highly interested in their children's education. Over 50% of the parents requested a copy of the study's results.

Reliabilities are strong (.84 and .87) for the instruments and moderate for individual scales within the instrument (.61- .76). The reliabilities of the instruments used in this study match the reliabilities of the original studies. Thus, data analyses were conducted with confidence in the instruments.

Finally, the strength of the study is found in the modest but significant correlation of the relationship between parent involvement and parent efficacy. The relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement at home (.26) was found to be stronger than the correlation reported in the original study between parent efficacy and educational activities (.11) and volunteering (.15). Although differing aspects of parent involvement were measured, the strength of the correlation contributes to the study's overall strengths. The strengths of this study

form a strong foundation from which schools can draw upon to develop interventions to assure increased parent involvement in families of adolescents.

### Research Implications of the Present Study

The findings of this study offer suggestions for practice, for both schools and parents. For parents, the findings demonstrate the relationship between efficacy and involvement. The findings help parents understand that their belief in themselves affects their involvement and is directly linked to their adolescent's learning. By recognizing that their involvement choices are important and dependent upon their view of themselves, parents can make informed choices about their involvement. In order to help their adolescent, parents need to believe they are competent and believe they can make a difference. Parents can nurture their own sense of parent efficacy through observing friends, talking to their adolescent's teachers, taking courses, reading, and interacting with information about adolescent development and education. Many parents feel helpless and overwhelmed by their adolescent. This study's findings suggest their involvement is not only dependent on school and student variables, but also on how they as parents view themselves with respect to their adolescent's learning.

For schools, the findings suggest that parents of adolescents are more involved at home. The impact of parent involvement at home cannot be ignored. Schools need to recognize, value and strengthen the home involvement of parents. Schools need to reach out to families and communicate to parents the significance of the parents' role in their adolescent's learning. Many school communications restrict rather than include parents. In her book, *School, Family and Community Partnerships*, Epstein (2001) advocates using a number of strategies to involve more parents. For example, in helping parents with Type 1, Parenting activities, schools typically

offer workshops for parents. Epstein challenges schools to look beyond the traditional workshop offered in the school building and view the workshop not only as a meeting on a topic held at the school building, but also as content of that meeting that is to be viewed, heard, or read at times and in locations convenient to the parents. Moreover, schools need to examine intervention programs that provide parents with a wide variety of opportunities to increase their involvement in their adolescent's learning. For example, school may consider the implementation of programs such as Epstein's TIPS program (Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork) that help teachers design activities for parents and students to do at home. Through TIPS parents learn what their students are learning in school and thus are able to take an active and informed role in their adolescent's learning.

This study also demonstrates and confirms what educators of secondary schools have recognized for years – that the involvement of parents of adolescents at the school level is minimal and for many parents is non-existent. Previous research (Henderson, 1988) suggests that simply involving parents at home is not enough to improve student achievement. Thus, schools must not only focus on encouraging parent involvement at home, but also work to strengthen the home-school connection and build effective partnerships with parents (Christenson, Rounds, and Gorney, 1992) so that parents will become more actively involved at the school level as well as at home. Secondary schools need to examine the physical plant of their school building to determine how welcoming, friendly and inviting their school is, as well as investigating their communication practices.

Finally, the relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement cannot be ignored by schools. The mutual relationship between these two constructs is evident. Schools need to implement parent involvement practices that focus specifically on increasing parents'

self- efficacy. As Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) notes, schools need to design parent involvement approaches the focus specifically on increasing parents' sense of positive influence in their children's school success. For example, schools might provide examples and models of how to work with adolescents, establish parent support groups, and encourage parents to discuss and model how they work with their adolescent at home. Schools need to help parents believe they can help their children learn successfully.

### Directions for Future Research

One of the purposes of the present study was to explore parent self-efficacy and the nature of its relationship to specific types of parent involvement and in so doing build upon the results of 1992 research study by Hoover Dempsey and colleagues that examined the relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement of children. The original study was based on a sample of elementary school students; the present study investigated a population of parents of adolescents. To fully understand and measure the effect of parent efficacy on parent involvement, further research is needed to describe parent involvement at the secondary level. Indeed, the findings of the present research study suggest that the constructs of both parent involvement and parent efficacy warrant further investigation. Parent involvement of adolescents has not been clearly described and as such is unable to be accurately measured. The current study demonstrates that although parent involvement of adolescents is similar to parent involvement during the elementary years, it is distinct and unique. Catsambis (1998) reports that the most effective types of parent involvement are not those geared towards behavioural supervision, but rather those geared towards advising or guiding teens' academic decisions. Parents of adolescents are involved in their adolescent's education but the current measures of

parent involvement are not adequately capturing that involvement. Future research needs to examine different ways of measuring parent involvement of adolescents that focus on parent's involvement with their adolescent in career exploration and development, problem solving, conflict resolution, course selection, and gaining independence.

Parent efficacy does explain more of the variation in parent involvement than do parent status variables. However, much of the variation is unexplained. The findings of this study suggest that although parent efficacy plays an important role in parent involvement, there are other variables involved. Parent involvement is complex and multi-dimensional and is dependent upon child, teacher, school and parent variables (Eccles & Harold, 1996). In addition, although the literature has demonstrated the positive influence of involved parents, the source of this influence and the intensity and duration of its power has yet to be clearly identified (Coleman & Karracher, 1997; Swick, 1988). In recent studies Adams and Christenson (2000) suggest that the *relationship* between the primary persons - child, parent, and teacher - influences parent involvement and demonstrate that positive home-school partnerships contribute to increased parent involvement. Further investigation is needed to determine which child, teacher, school, and parent variables significantly affect parent involvement. More importantly, research is required to investigate how relationships between parent-child, parent-teacher, and teacher-child affect parent involvement. Adams and Christenson (2000) suggest that trust is a powerful determinant in home-school partnerships. They argue that the measurement of trust is important for dialogue that can ensue and improve family-school partnerships and subsequently result in positive outcomes for students. An exploration of the relationship between trust and parent efficacy as it relates to parent involvement may provide valuable contributions to the growing understanding of knowledge about parent involvement.

The relationship between parent efficacy and parent involvement with respect to school variables is also worthy of investigation. Bandura suggests that social persuasion is one of the four major influences of efficacy (1977). Social persuasion involves verbally persuading the individual that they possess the capabilities to master the given activity. Individuals who successfully build efficacy in others do more than positive talk; they structure the environment in ways that bring success and avoid failure. Several studies have reported the unwelcoming and intimidating environment of secondary schools. It would be interesting to investigate how the physical plant of a secondary school and/or teachers affects the parent's feelings of efficacy and parent at-school involvement.

### Summary

In summary, parent involvement is a significant factor in the education of children. Parent involvement in children's education benefits not only the student, but also teachers, parents, and the community. In addition, parents and teachers both want parents to be involved in children's learning. Despite the benefits of parent involvement and the desire for parents to be involved, low levels of parent involvement is cited, especially for parents of adolescents. Therefore, it is important to investigate parent involvement at this level and examine how such involvement is assessed and the factors contributing to low levels of involvement. Previous studies suggested that parents with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more involved than parents with low levels. Thus, it was hypothesized that parent involvement was positively related to parent efficacy. The results of the present study demonstrate that parents of adolescents are involved in their child's learning especially at home. Findings also demonstrated a moderate relationship between parental self-efficacy and parent involvement in adolescent's learning. In

addition, parent efficacy was found to explain a small portion of the variance in parent involvement. Considerations for future research were extended including, further studies to more fully describe parent involvement of adolescents so that the construct can be measured with greater accuracy; an investigation of the relationships between the primary persons influencing parent involvement (adolescent, community persons, parent, and teacher; and an examination of the school's role in fostering parent efficacy and the role of trust in developing parent-teacher, parent-adolescent, and teacher-adolescent relationships. The complexity and multidimensional nature of parent involvement demands extensive and comprehensive research to provide a broad understanding of the many variables affecting parent involvement.

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## FAMILY BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help us to better understand your family. Please tell us about yourself.

1. What is your relationship to the student? (please circle response)

Mother   Father   Grandmother   Grandfather   Sister   Brother   Aunt   Uncle

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. How do you describe the family living in the home? (please circle response)

Two parent   Single parent   Blended   Extended (includes relatives other than parents)

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many children 18 years and younger are living in your home? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many adults live in your home? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your highest level of education? (please check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ attended elementary school/high school  
\_\_\_\_\_ High School Diploma/GED  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 to 3 years of post-secondary education  
\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate Degree

6. a. Please describe your current employment (please check each one that is applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ working full time  
\_\_\_\_\_ working part time  
\_\_\_\_\_ unemployed  
\_\_\_\_\_ self employed  
\_\_\_\_\_ work in the home  
\_\_\_\_\_ work out of the home

- b. What is your current occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the year of your birth? \_\_\_\_\_

8. a. Have you lived in British Columbia all of your life? \_\_\_\_\_

b. If no, how long have you lived in B.C.? \_\_\_\_\_

c. In what provinces/states/countries other than B.C. have you lived? \_\_\_\_\_

9. a. Did you attend a school on the Sunshine Coast? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. If yes, did you attend the same school that your child currently attends? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is your ethnic background?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aboriginal/First Nation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ African
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Asian
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Arabic
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Latin American
  - \_\_\_\_\_ South Asian
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Annual household income (optional)
- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ less than \$14 999.  | _____ \$55 000 - \$74 999.    |
| _____ \$15 000 - \$24 999. | _____ \$75 000 - \$99 999.    |
| _____ \$25 000 - \$34 999. | _____ \$100 000 - \$129 999.  |
| _____ \$35 000 - \$54 999. | _____ greater than \$130 000. |
12. How far do you live from the school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ within walking distance (0 –5 km)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5-15 minute drive (5-10 km)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ greater than 15 minute drive (> 10 km)
13. a. Are there any additional primary caregivers in the home? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. If yes, and they are interested in completing the survey please call me 604-740-6364 and a copy of the survey will be mailed to them.

If you have anything you would like to share with us, please write your comments below:

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**THANK-YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.**

## Appendix B

# HIGH SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

## Parent Survey

(Epstein, Connors, Salinas, 1993)

If you have more than one teenager in school, please select one of your teens to use as a focus for this survey.

About your teen. *Please circle your response.*

1. My teenager is:    male    female
2. My teenager is in grade: 8    9    10    11    12
3. How long has your teen attended this school? 1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years 5 years
4. My teenager has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or is identified as having special needs: yes no
5. What grades did your teen receive on his/her last report card . *Please check your response.*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mostly A's and B's  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mostly B's and C's  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mostly C's and I's  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

- 1. Parents get involved in different ways with their high school students at home. About how often have you done the following with your son/daughter this year?**

### PLEASE CIRCLE RESPONSE

- |  |       |           |         |        |           |
|--|-------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|
| a. Talk to my son/daughter about school.               | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| b. Listen to my teen read something that he/she wrote. | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| c. Talk about a homework assignment.                   | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| d. Help my teen with homework.                         | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| e. Discuss grades on tests and schoolwork.             | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| f. Check that my teen goes to school.                  | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| g. Talk about a TV show with my teen.                  | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |

- |   |       |           |         |        |           |
|---|-------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|
| h. Help my teen solve a personal problem.                                   | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| i. Help my teen plan time for homework, chores, and other responsibilities. | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| j. Talk with my teen about next year's courses.                             | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| k. Talk with my teen about future plans for college or work.                | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| l. Tell my teen how important school is.                                    | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |
| m. Attend a community event with my teen.                                   | Never | 1-2 times | Monthly | Weekly | Every day |

**2. Parents participate at high school in different ways. How often have you done the following at your teen's high school this year?**

- |   |       |           |             |            |
|---|-------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| a. Go to a high school PAC meeting.   | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| b. Help with fund-raising for the school.   | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| c. Attend open house or back-to-school night.                                       | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| d. Attend a parent-teacher conference.  | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| e. Work as a volunteer at the school.   | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| f. Attend a committee meeting at school.  | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| g. Give the school information about special circumstances at home.                 | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| h. Thank someone at school for something he/she did for your teen.                  | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |
| i. Attend a high school sports events, play, concert, or other student performance. | Never | 1-2 times | A few times | Many times |

## Appendix C

### PARENT EFFICACY FOR HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL THINKING ABOUT HELPING MY CHILD SCALE

(Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992)

Parents think differently about helping their teens at high school. Please circle the number that most closely matches your response to each question.

	Agree very strongly	Agree	Agree just a little	Disagree just a little	Disagree	Disagree very strongly
a. I know how to help my teen do well in school.	6	5	4	3	2	1
b. My teen is so complex, I never know if I'm getting through to him/her.	6	5	4	3	2	1
c. I don't know how to help my child make good grades in school.	6	5	4	3	2	1
d. A student's motivation to do well in school depends on the parents.	6	5	4	3	2	1
e. I feel successful about my efforts to help my teen learn.	6	5	4	3	2	1
f. Other children have more influence on my teen's grades than I do.	6	5	4	3	2	1
g. Most of a student's success in school depends on the classroom teacher, so I have only limited influence.	6	5	4	3	2	1
h. I don't know how to help my teen learn.	6	5	4	3	2	1
i. If I try hard, I can get through to my teen, even when he/she has difficulty understanding something.	6	5	4	3	2	1
j. I make a significant difference in my child's school performance.	6	5	4	3	2	1
k. Other children have more influence on my child's motivation to do well in school than I do.	6	5	4	3	2	1
l. My efforts to help my child learn are successful.	6	5	4	3	2	1