

**INCREASES IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR BLACK WOMEN:
IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTING PRACTICES AND BELIEFS RELATED TO
CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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This study aimed to describe and identify differences in the family culture among Black families based on socioeconomic variables (education and income). A sample of 26 Black mothers with children (5-8 years of age) enrolled in elementary school was recruited. Black mothers with children in early elementary grades described practices (e.g., mealtime routines, homework routines, reading activities, parent interactions with the school) and beliefs (e.g., future education expectations, importance of literacy) similar to those found in past studies with other racial or ethnic groups. Mothers reported strong beliefs in the importance of literacy, high levels of proactive involvement in school, and high educational expectations for children. However, differences in the family culture were evident as a function of socioeconomic status (SES). Three SES groups were formed: low SES mothers had no post-secondary attainment and low income; middle SES mothers had post-secondary attainment and low income; and high SES mothers had post-secondary attainment and high income. High SES was positively associated with aspects of the family culture that support academic achievement. Specifically, mothers in the high SES group had significantly greater education expectations for their children than mothers with low SES. In addition, high SES mothers reported proactive involvement in school (parent initiated contact)

with an academic focus more often than both middle and low SES mothers. Middle SES Black mothers had a strong focus on homework completion as a priority in their home, more so than both the high and low SES groups. In contrast, parents' expectations of schools were similar across SES groups; all mothers expected teachers that were effective, cared for students, and communicated with parents.

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PREFACE

“If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all alone, together women ought to be able to turn it rightside up again” (Truth, 1852/1987). I have witnessed firsthand the strength and positive impact of a coalition of women. Throughout my life I have had the benefit of being surrounded by strong, intelligent, nurturing women with an amazing ability to make everything right in times of need. I am truly grateful for their guidance, time, and encouraging words that have supported my growth and development. I would also like to acknowledge all of the men in my life that have been supportive through many struggles and challenges. From my family, colleagues, and friends, to my dissertation committee members, I thank you all. Most of all I would like to thank my mother, my husband, and my sons’, Marcos and Gabriel, for without them none of this would have been possible.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Black American community has undergone significant changes in the last few decades, specifically in the areas of education. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2011) between 1970 and 2011, the percentage of Black people over the age of 25 with a Bachelor's degree or higher more than tripled, from 6.1 to 20.2%. The rate of Black women with a four year degree, historically a lower percentage than their male counterparts until the mid-1990's, is steadily increasing, from 5.6 to 21.7%. This increase in post-secondary educational attainment in the Black community, especially for women who are often the primary caregivers of children, may hold implications for achievement-related parenting practices. In fact, there is some indication from the Nations Report Card that Black children's achievement has also improved during this time (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011a). The Black American community had an increase in several educational outcomes during this time; yet, a gap remains in education outcomes between Black children and other racial/ethnic groups. For instance the gap in reading proficiency between Black children and other racial/ethnic groups is decreasing, although these rates are still significantly lower for Black children (NCES, 2011a). In addition to achievement, there have been positive changes in high school drop-out rates. The percentage of Black adolescents dropping out of school has decreased in the last few decades, from 27.9% to 9.3%. Nevertheless, the percentage of Black students dropping out in 1970 was two times greater than that of White students, and at present a similar trend remains (US Department of Education, 2010).

Home environment characteristics, especially parenting practices, have been identified in the research literature as a factor that contributes to the observed ethnic/racial achievement gaps (Brooks-Gunn & Markum, 2005).

Within the home exists several opportunities for proximal processes that promote skills needed for academic success (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). More specifically, high levels of parent involvement in children's schooling are associated with academic success for Black students (Barnard, 2004). Moreover, from early childhood through adolescence the home environment and parenting practices are related to academic outcomes (Baumrind, 1991; Brody & Flor, 1998; Clark, 1983; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). The increases in post-secondary educational attainment for Black women should influence the home environment and parenting practices related to academic success (Becker, 1991; Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Bingham, 2007; Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Davis-Kean, 2005; Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005; Taylor et al., 2008; Weigel, Martin & Bennett, 2006). Thus, the present mixed methods study had two primary aims: (1) investigating how Black parents support academic achievement through parent involvement in school, the home learning environment (cognitive stimulation and routines), and education beliefs; and (2) examining whether there are differences based on educational attainment and/or family income in these supportive parenting practices and beliefs for Black parents.

1.1 COMPLEX ASSOCIATIONS AMONG CULTURE, RACE/ETHNICITY, AND SES FOR BLACK FAMILIES

An important change is occurring in the Black community: in 2011, 20% of Black Americans had a Bachelors' degree or more and almost 22% of Black women had attained a Bachelors' degree or

more, a 14% and 16% increase, respectively since 1970. The attainment of a Bachelor's degree provides economic opportunities, and assists in upward movement socioeconomically (Becker, 1993). By 44 years of age approximately 83% of Black women have given birth to at least one child (US Census Bureau, 2010). As Black women and Black people overall experience increased educational attainment compared to previous generations, potential within group differences in parenting practices that may be associated with these changes in SES indicators should be examined.

Although there are a few studies that have focused on middle income and affluent Black families (McAdoo, 1981; McAdoo, 1995; Ogbu, 2003), most studies of Black families focus on low SES families (e.g. low income and low education) (Garcia Coll et al, 1995). Overall, this work demonstrated that when family economic conditions worsen, parents experience higher levels of stress and depression symptoms (Cain & Combs-Orme, 2005; Elder, Eccles, Ardel, & Lord, 1995; Jackson, 1998; McLoyd, 1990) and lower levels of parental efficacy (Elder et al, 1995). Parental efficacy or a parents' sense of competence in their role as a parent is positively associated with parent involvement in their child's life and the parent-child relationship (Shumow & Lomax, 2002). If increases in post-secondary educational attainment in the Black community result in higher earnings, then the income gains could influence the resources available for the home learning environment and the relationship between home and school (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lamont & Lareau, 1987; Lareau, 1987). However, increases in education may not necessarily translate into immediate economic or socio-cultural change (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007; McAdoo, 1981). This inconsistent relation between education and earnings may be due to entry into fields with lower wages, timing of degree completion, or obstacles associated with upward mobility in the Black community, such as giving

back to others (Becker, 1993; McAdoo, 1981; McAdoo, 1995). Black parents from working class families, who were moving into the middle class, determined by occupational prestige and educational attainment, reported greater stress and pressure to provide support to others, than their second generation middle class counterparts (McAdoo, 1981). As upwardly mobile Black families attempt to better their social and economic conditions, they may need to both rely on and give back to their social support network more often than their second generation middle class counterparts (McAdoo, 1981; McAdoo, 1995). Parents new to the middle class and/or striving to maintain middle class status report using their social support network, including extended family, friends, community organizations and community members, for child care, financial assistance, and overall support (McAdoo, 1981; McAdoo, 1982). Because of the complexity of upward mobility for Black families, and the intricate relationship between educational attainment and financial resources, variation within Black parents' practices and beliefs are often overlooked.

In general, broader contextual variables such as culture, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status have been associated with differences in parenting practices (Baumrind, 1972; Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Garcia-Coll, 2001; Brody & Flor, 1998; Steinberg, et al., 1992). This paper examines the influence of income, and educational attainment on the achievement-related parenting practices and beliefs of Black parents. Culture can be described as shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices. A parent's personal beliefs, values, attitudes and practices assist in the formation of the family culture (Sonnenschein, Baker, & Serpell, 2010). Studying culture however, is complex; cultures are difficult to describe, measure, and define as they are constantly changing, contested, and renegotiated by members of the group (Benhabib, 2002; Harkness & Super, 1995). Moreover, multiple factors may shape family culture (Figure 1). Families of different racial/ethnic groups but of the same socioeconomic status (SES) may display similar beliefs, values, and

practices in the home (Peters, 1997; Serpell, Sonnenschein, Baker, & Ganapathy, 2002). SES in particular seems intertwined with family culture. As parents move into new SES groups, parenting practices change and the existing family culture may be renegotiated (Peters, 1997).

Figure one displays the proposed conceptual framework of the associations among SES, family culture (i.e. parenting practices and beliefs), and achievement. The framework focuses on components of family culture identified in the extant literature as supportive of academic achievement: (1) home learning environment (Brody & Flor, 1997; Clark, 1983; Fiese, 2001; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002) (2) parent involvement in school (Dearing, et al., 2006; Jeynes, 2003), and (3) parent beliefs and expectations (Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund, et al., 2004). This framework depicts a mediated pathway between SES and children's academic achievement, such that SES is related to family culture and family culture predicts academic achievement. For instance, parents with greater years of education and/or higher income tend to have greater involvement in school (McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004), engage more in cognitively stimulating activities (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002), and have higher educational expectations for their children (Davis-Kean, 2005). These differences in family culture (e.g. home learning environment, parental involvement in school, and parental beliefs) then predict children's academic achievement.

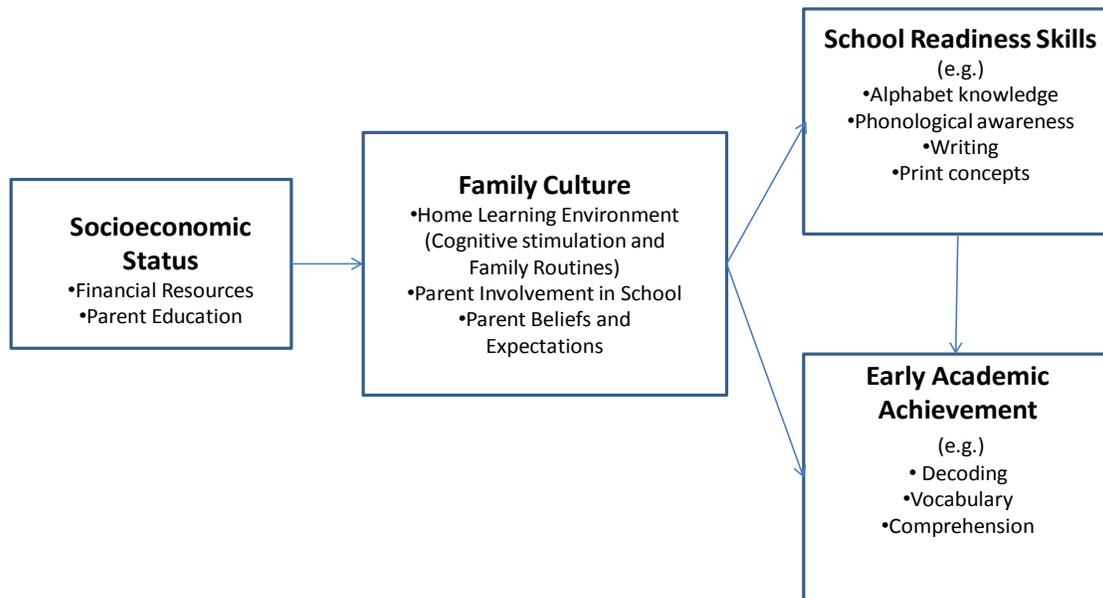


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Socioeconomic Influences on Achievement-Supporting Parenting Practices and Beliefs

The family investment model supports this conceptual framework. The family investment model proposes that parental investments in children (e.g. use of time and SES resources) mediate the association between SES factors (i.e. family economic resources, parent education, and parent occupational status) and child development (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Foster 2002). Indeed, numerous past studies have demonstrated that parenting practices and beliefs partially or fully mediate the association between SES and child performance on tests of early literacy development and academic achievement in elementary school (Davis-Kean, 2005; DeGarmo, Forgatch, & Martinez, 1999; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Kohen, 2002; Raviv, Kessenich, & Morrison, 2004).

1.2 PREDICTORS OF PARENTING PRACTICES

Extant literature in developmental science has established that parenting behaviors and beliefs play a critical role in the development of children (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). Parent initiated activities and parent-child interactions that occur frequently and over an extended period of time are most effective in supporting positive developmental outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). High levels of physical and social stimulation are particularly beneficial for cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore these microsystem processes (e.g. parenting) may differ between groups as a result of macrosystem influences (e.g. SES, culture) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). In addition, economic theory suggests that parents also support children's acquisition of skills and knowledge (human capital) by investing their time and financial resources (Becker, 1991). It is important to note, however, that both parenting practices and the use of time and financial resources are shaped by a parent's culture, subculture(s), socioeconomic conditions, and experiences over their life course (Becker, 1991; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Elder & Shanahan, 2006; McLoyd, et. al, 1994). In studies of Black parents and low-income parents, the family stress model is often used to understand and explain the parenting practices expressed in the samples (Elder, et. al, 1995; McLoyd, 1990). The family stress model proposes that when there is financial strain in the family, the economic pressures may lead to psychological distress for parents and as a result influence parenting (McLoyd, et. al, 1994). For this paper, the focus is not on the potential effects of financial stress but on the potential parental investments as a result of increases in socioeconomic conditions. The family investment model proposes that parents' educational attainment and parents' occupational prestige, as well as family financial resources, are related to parents' investment in their children (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). The family investment model suggests that parents with greater years of education would focus their

time and resources on practices, services, and products that promote academic success for their children.

Greater years of parent education are strongly associated with cognitively stimulating home environments, education preparedness, and positive educational outcomes for children (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Roberts, et al., 2005; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Greater years of education predict higher early literacy development (Bingham, 2007; Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002) and higher levels of literacy performance in elementary school (Dearing, et al, 2006). The number of years of education for parents is indirectly related to early academic achievement through its association with parent beliefs, expectations, and parent involvement in school (Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004). Parents with more years of education tend to believe that literacy is important during the preschool years and enjoy engaging in literacy activities with their child (Weigel, et al., 2006). Weigel and colleagues (2006) also found that parents that enjoyed reading were more likely to view early literacy as important. Children in families that view reading as entertaining tend to engage in literacy promoting behaviors more (Serpell, et al, 2002) and perform better on tests of reading achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005; Serpell, et al., 2002). Parents with greater years of education were more likely to be viewed by teachers as involved in their child's education (Englund, et al., 2004). Furthermore, parent education is positively associated with a parent's educational expectations for their child (Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund, et al., 2004). Among Black families, if increases in education transpire without comparable increases in financial resources, educational attainment may be a more useful predictor than income of parenting practices and beliefs related to academic achievement.

2.0 PARENTING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

On the first day of school, achievement gaps across race and SES are evident. These gaps continue into early elementary school grades. In 2005, fourth-grade children eligible for free/reduced lunch ($\leq 185\%$ poverty level) were scoring below basic achievement levels in reading and mathematics at two to three times the rate of ineligible, economically advantaged children attending U.S. public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a, 2005b), and the magnitude of these income disparities in reading and math achievement has remained virtually unchanged from 2005-2011 (NCES, 2011a, 2011b). Similarly, ethnic gaps in fourth graders' NAEP 2011 reading and math scores remain large (20-25 point difference), but the Black-White achievement gap has narrowed since 1992 (NCES, 2011a, 2011b). At even earlier ages, substantial achievement disparities are evident at kindergarten entry: children of low SES score 1.3 standard deviations lower on math assessments than their higher SES peers (Duncan & Magnuson, 2011), and the achievement test scores of Black and White, and Hispanic and White children differ by .62 - .77 standard deviation (Duncan & Magnuson, 2011; Fryer & Levitt, 2004). These gaps are often attributed to variability in the home learning environments (Brooks-Gunn & Markum, 2005; Phillips, 2011).

Parenting practices such as literacy engaging activities and parent involvement in school are associated with high academic outcomes (Hood, Conlon, & Andrews, 2008; McWayne, et al., 2004; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). For children of low SES, these enriching/stimulating parenting practices can protect against the effects of poverty (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Clark, 1983; Serpell et al., 2002). In fact parenting practices have been identified as a partial mediator of the association between educational attainment and/or family income, and early literacy skills (Linver, et al., 2002; Raviv, et al., 2004). In a sample of parents with children enrolled in early elementary

grades (i.e. K-3), home activities, such as literacy engagement for entertainment purposes and consistent family routines, completely mediated the association between maternal education and academic achievement (DeGarmo, et al., 1999).

Socioeconomic status is associated with differences in the family culture (i.e. parenting practices and beliefs) that are ultimately associated with differences in academic performance. Race or ethnicity-related experiences and beliefs may also contribute to the association between family culture and academic achievement. Parents of Black children face multiple challenges, similar to other minority groups. Parents of Black children have to prepare their child for potential discrimination and prejudice that may interfere with their academic achievement (Lawson & Sanders-Lawson, 2002). In addition to preparing their children for an environment with discrimination and prejudice, Black parents may need to socialize their children to function in two separate cultures, the home and majority culture (Garcia Coll, Meyer, & Brillon, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Peters, 2002). The incongruence between the home and majority culture often presents itself in school settings. For example, Black children are overly diagnosed with mental health disorders and placed in special education services at higher rates than their non-Black peers (Anderson, Boyd-Franklin, & Draper, 2002). These alarming rates for Black children are potentially a result of cultural discontinuity, such that school personnel may misinterpret the origin of both, behaviors that appear problematic or student difficulty in grasping concepts. Also confounding our knowledge of Black parenting is the disproportionate amount of Black families living in poverty, and the lack of education variability within samples examining Black parenting practices (Garcia Coll, Meyer, & Brillon, 1995).

The important role of parents in supporting child development (Bronfenbrenner 1989, Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978) and the influence of SES factors on the family

culture (Becker, 1991; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Conger & Donnellan, 2007) are outlined in theoretical models of human development and human capital. Research examining the associations between the home and academic achievement, support these models and identify key components of the family culture (e.g. cognitively stimulating activities, family routines, parent involvement in school, and beliefs) related to academic success. Parenting practices such as literacy engaging activities and consistent family routines have partially mediated or fully mediated the associations between SES and children's academic achievement (DeGarmo, et al., 1999; Linver, et al., 2002; Raviv, et al., 2004). In addition to literacy engaging activities and family routines, high levels of parental involvement in school have been associated with positive academic outcomes (Dearing et al., 2006; McWayne, et al., 2004). Lastly, the expectations and beliefs of parents are significant and act as a mediator between SES and children's academic achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund, et. al, 2004).

2.1 HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The two dimensions of the home learning environment that seem most influential on academic achievement are *cognitively stimulating* activities and consistent, meaningful *family routines*. Cognitively stimulating activities in the home often include literacy promoting activities such as reading as a family, creating books, identifying colors, and encouraging writing, support early literacy development and later reading achievement (Bingham, 2007; Evans, et al., 2000; Hood, et al., 2008; Roberts, et al., 2005; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Serpell et al., 2002). A similar pattern continues throughout elementary school; students that perform well on tests of reading achievement continue to perform well the following year (Hood, et al., 2008; Storch & Whitehurst,

2002). Establishing strong reading skills early has been recommended as beneficial for continued reading success throughout a child's education (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Moreover, the association between early literacy skills and SES factors such as parent education and family income are partially mediated by the home learning environment (Raviv, et al., 2004; Linver, et al., 2002).

Unlike the early childhood years, during elementary school, children begin reading to their parents or read independently to themselves. Reading exposure, continues to surface as a significant factor in predicting later reading ability (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002), even after controlling for reading ability in previous grades (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). It then becomes important to motivate children to read and cultivate avid readers. One strategy for motivating or cultivating avid readers is to establish a family culture that promotes literacy.

Parents play a pivotal role in the design and implementation of a consistent setting that creates a sense of belonging, and emphasizes academic study habits and literacy development (Fiese, 2001; Phillips, 2011). In general, established family routines are also associated with better academic performance (Brody & Flor, 1997; Fiese, 2001). Additionally, studies that have reported the significance of family routines are often from small samples with qualitative measures (e.g. observations and interviews) (Brody & Flor, 1997; Clark, 1983; Serpell et al., 2002), but a few have also reported positive associations between routines and academic performance with quantitative measures (Fiese, 2001; Serpell, et al., 2002). The following family routines were strong indicators of third grade reading ability: homework as a family activity, dinnertime together, reading aloud, and joint literacy activities (Serpell, et al., 2002). Furthermore, when family routines hold a special meaning, they become more than a routine and reflect the family culture (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). The mechanisms at play when examining the relationship between

family routines and academic success seem unclear, but the predictability, planning, and meaningfulness of the routines can support academic activities (Fiese, 2001). More specifically, children of Black families, regardless of socioeconomic status perform better academically when the family regularly engages in cognitively stimulating activities that increase learning (Clark, 1983; Serpell et al., 2002) and the successful implementation of these home routines may act as a buffer for children at greatest risk for school failure or poor reading achievement.

2.2 PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL

Finally, the parent role extends beyond the internal home interactions; the parent-school relationship is also influential in academic outcomes for children (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Epstein (1995/2010) identified six types of parent involvement: (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with community. Two of the six types of parent involvement, parenting and learning at home, are captured in the home learning environment. These are the activities that parents facilitate at home through family routines or cognitive stimulation. Of the remaining four types of involvement, three (i.e. communicating, volunteering, and decision making) focus on the parent-school relationship or parent involvement in school. Young children, preschool and elementary school students with parents that have frequent contact or communication with the school perform better socially and academically (Dearing, et al., 2006; McWayne, et al., 2004).

Comer and Haynes (1991) identified three levels of *parent involvement* in school where parent involvement ranges from minimal involvement to parents participating in governance and the decision-making process. Comer and Haynes parent involvement levels overlap with Epstein's

typology of parent involvement. The basic or minimal level of involvement includes an expectation from the school for basic support of school programs (e.g. supervise homework, fundraising, attend school events). The minimal level of involvement includes learning at home (e.g. managing homework completion), and some volunteering such as fundraising. The mid-range level of involvement also includes volunteering. However volunteering at this level is more than fundraising, parents regularly volunteer in the school (e.g. reading with children, copying materials, chaperoning school trips) and use their expertise to assist in the classroom or advocate for students, teachers, and school programs. In Epstein's (1995/2010) model of parent involvement, volunteering also included the involvement of families in activities or as audiences at the school. At the third level of involvement, the decision-making level, the partnership between parents and schools is strongest. Both Comer & Haynes (1991) and Epstein (1995/2010) identify parental inclusion in the decision making process as an important component of parent involvement. Parents are sharing responsibility with the school for the education of their child (Comer, Ben-Avie, Haynes, & Joyner, 1999). In order to achieve success at this level, school administrators, school personnel, and parents must possess and demonstrate respect for each person's role in the education of the child (Comer, Haynes, & Joyner, 1996).

In a meta-analysis of parent involvement across several studies with students ranging from grades K-12, Black students seemed to particularly benefit from parent involvement, more so than Latino and Asian American students (Jeynes, 2003). Greater parent involvement for Black students was associated with greater GPA, higher scores on achievement tests, and more positive teacher ratings of academic behavior. In fact, in Black families, involvement in school may portray a parenting process referred to as close monitoring, which involves parents closely monitoring a

child's behavior and activities (Brody & Flor, 1998). Close monitoring as a parenting practice is often associated with positive outcomes for Black children (Clark, 1983; Jarrett, 1999).

Unfortunately, even when parents of varying SES are equally involved, the quality of the parent-school partnership may differ, favoring higher SES families. For example, middle class Black families have reported a school culture that encourages their input, whereas working class or poor Black families perceived the elementary or middle school as resistant to their involvement (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Moreover, Auerbach (2007) found in a small qualitative study comprised of parents with low levels of educational attainment that Black parents presented with two types of involvement, advocates and companions. The advocates demonstrated proactive parent involvement through the following activities: communication with teachers and school counselors, school event attendance, close monitoring of child's progress, and information sought on post-secondary education. The companions and advocates provided moral support, set behavioral limits, and stressed the importance of education, but the companions were less proactive in their involvement with the school. Similar to the findings of Diamond and Gomez (2004), working class parents with proactive involvement, reported the school as resistant to their involvement (Auerbach, 2007). These parents also reported not feeling knowledgeable or competent when attempting to navigate the K-12 and higher education systems (Auerbach, 2007). If the experiences of parents with fewer economic resources or less education are more combative than for their more affluent peers, then they may be less likely to be involved or engaged.

It is also important to note that Black parents of children that are successful academically tend to have a different parent-school relationship than those that have a child that is struggling academically (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). Parents of students with high academic achievement initiate contact with the school and regularly monitor their child's progress (Gutman & McLoyd,

2000). However parents of students with low academic achievement are often responding to school initiated contact, typically to discuss a problem or concern. For this reason, both frequency of contact and a qualitative description of the parent-school relationship, are important dimensions of parent involvement to consider. School personnel and teachers seem to be in the best position to facilitate parent involvement, however very often teachers are not prepared or able to effectively engage families (Caspe, Lopez, Chu, & Weiss, 2011). Thus the level of involvement may depend greatly on the parents' beliefs, comfort, and expectations.

2.3 PARENT BELIEFS AND EXPECTATIONS

As previously mentioned when discussing the association between parenting and educational attainment, parental expectations have been identified as a key predictor of child performance in school, and a mediator in the relationship between socioeconomic status (i.e. parents years of education and family income) and academic achievement (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund, et al., 2004). Davis-Kean (2005) found that Black parents with higher levels of education and higher levels of income had greater educational attainment expectations for their children and these expectations were positively associated with reading achievement for elementary and middle school students. Furthermore, high parental education expectations were associated with a whole host of characteristics that support academic success such as higher student education expectations, higher student academic efficacy, and higher self-regulatory efficacy (e.g. intrinsically motivated, strategic, competent, and self-reactive to academic performance) for students in elementary and middle school (Bandura et al., 1996; Merchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001).

2.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND AIMS

This current study focuses on the similarities and differences in aspects of the family culture identified as supportive of academic achievement among Black parents with varying levels of educational attainment and income. Higher parent educational attainment potentially changes the culture of the home and family (Peters, 1997), which could result in greater parental investment in young children's academic achievement (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Foster, 2002). Parents with more education may also feel more comfortable interacting with their child's school (Diamond & Gomez, 2004) and have greater educational expectations for their child (Davis-Kean, 2005). However the association between race, culture, socioeconomic status, and parenting practices is complex, particularly for Black parents. As noted before, increases in education may not lead to immediate increases in income, and extended family and community responsibilities may accompany upward mobility for Black families (KewalRamani, et al., 2007; McAdoo, 1981).

Although it seems that increases in educational attainment will support a more cognitively stimulating and consistent home learning environment and greater levels of parent involvement, the additional stressors related to parenting in Black families may dampen this association. If parents are overwhelmed with additional responsibilities, feel unwelcome at the school, or there is incongruence between the home and school culture, the association between parent education and factors such as cognitive stimulation, family routines, and parent involvement may be lower than expected. As a response to these additional stressors or conflicts, Black parents may present atypical parenting practices or rely on a social support network to assist in supporting academic achievement. Furthermore partnering with parents to support academic achievement has become the focus of many government agencies, school districts, community organizations, and education policies. In order to better engage and partner with Black parents, it is essential to understand how

Black parents view their role in their children's education and support academic success. In addition, this study highlights the growing economic and educational diversity within the Black community and examines how this variability relates to parenting practices and beliefs.

This study examined themes across a sample of Black parents with 5 to 8 year-old students enrolled in early elementary school (i.e., grades K-2). More specifically, a within-group analysis of Black parents from a wide range of income and educational backgrounds were performed to address the following aims:

- (1) Explore how Black parents support their children's academic achievement through three aspects of family culture: (1) parent involvement in school, (2) the home learning environment (i.e. cognitive stimulation and family routines), and (3) parent expectations and beliefs.
- (2) Examine whether there are differences in these three aspects of family culture according to Black parents' educational attainment and/or family income.

3.0 METHODS

This chapter outlines the procedures for recruitment, sampling, and data collection. A detailed description of the sample, measures, and data analysis procedures are also provided.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The participants were drawn from a larger study examining the association between school readiness skills and child characteristics, parenting practices, as well as early childhood education center activities. For the larger study parents were recruited over a two year period, from 28 urban community-based child care centers, located primarily in areas with high poverty rates within a mid-Atlantic city. All but one of the centers participated in a state early childhood quality initiative program. Parents were recruited during afternoon and evening hours at the child care center. The original sample included 248 participants; two cohorts of parents with children 4 to 5 years of age enrolled in a preschool classroom with a parent interview completion rate of 90% ($n=223$), and 60% identified as Black ($n=133$). The educational attainment of Black parents included 33% high school diploma or GED, 45% some college but less than a Bachelor's degree, 23% Bachelor's degree or more; the average years of education was 14.5 years. The partnering status included 23% married, 10% cohabitating, 19% in a romantic relationship, 48% single. Most of the participants were mothers (96 percent). The average income-to-needs ratio was 1.53 with a range of 0 to 4.60. An income-to-needs ratio at 2.00 is 200% above the federal poverty guidelines; a ratio

at 2.00 or below is considered low-income. The median age was 30, with a range of 20 to 50 years of age.

For this study, to complete a follow-up interview, purposive sampling was employed to recruit 30 participants from the larger study sample. One hundred and thirty three participants were contacted via letter and phone. Of those participants, 46 of the phone numbers were confirmed as no longer in service or valid, 15 expressed an interest but did not complete the interview (e.g. parent not at home when interviewer arrived), six participants declined to participate, and the remaining 40 were not able to be reached. The final study sample includes 26 participants. For recruitment purposes only, the participants from the previous study were separated into two groups (*Bachelor's degree or more* and *less than a Bachelor's degree*) based on educational attainment reported in the previous study. An attempt was made to recruit 10-15 participants with a Bachelor's degree or more. Recruitment involved an initial introductory letter mailed home and a subsequent phone call to parents with a brief overview of the study (e.g. objective of the study, the benefits and risks of participating). Those that expressed an interest after the brief introduction were invited to review the consent form and participate in a semi-structured interview.

Two trained interviewers were present for each interview and at least one of the interviewers self-identified as Black or African American. Six pilot interviews were completed in January 2011. At the completion of the pilot interviews, the data were transcribed and coded to assess potential themes. Interview questions were adjusted at that time to accommodate the emerging themes. Remaining data collection occurred from February 2011 through October 2011 with 20 participants, not including the interviews completed during piloting. Recruitment for this study began 1-2 years after the completion of the prior study; therefore all participants are parents of children 5-8 years of age. There were 14 boys and 12 girls. Also all of the participants recruited

for this study were mothers. The educational attainment of parents included 12 % high school diploma or GED, 38% some college but no degree, 4% Associate's degree, 19% Bachelor's degree, 27% Some graduate work or Master's degree; the average years of education was 15.42 years. The partnership status included 27% married, 4% cohabitating, 11% in a romantic relationship, 58% single. The average income-to-needs ratio was 2.21 with a range of .26 to 7.32. The median age was 32.5, with a range of 21 to 43 years of age. At the time of this study 19% of the children were enrolled in a public urban neighborhood school, 27% enrolled in a public urban magnet school, 19% in a public suburban school, 12% in a charter school, and 23% in a private school.

3.2 PROCEDURES

After the interviews were scheduled, an interview-confirmation letter and consent form were mailed to the home. At the beginning of the interview, the consent form was reviewed with the participant and then signed by the participant and interviewer. Upon signing the consent form, participants completed a paper questionnaire that included surveys of demographics, the home learning environment, and parent beliefs. The questionnaire generally took 15 minutes to complete. The visit then concluded with a semi-structured interview. The length of time for each semi-structured interview varied, ranging from 20 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes ($M= 57$ minutes). The interviews were completed in the home, or another agreed upon private location at the parent request (e.g. parent's business office or library meeting room), with two interviewers always present. The secondary interviewers' primary role was to listen and prompt for clarification or

expansion on themes. All interviews had at least one interviewer racially match the parent. The interviews were also digitally recorded and then later transcribed.

3.3 MEASURES

3.3.1 Parent and family characteristics

In the questionnaire, mothers reported family demographics that include years of education, highest degree attained, parent age, partnership status, number of household members, and family income. Parents reported on partnering status (1 = *married*, 2 = *live-in partner*, 3 = *in a romantic relationship*, 4 = *single*), and education, with a range of 11 to 22 years. Parents reported highest degree attained (3 = *some graduate courses or Master's degree*; 2 = *post-secondary certificate, Associate, or Bachelor's degree*; 1 = *high school diploma/GED or some college but no degree*). Parents reported the number of children currently living in their household, the number of adults, and their total monthly household income. Based on this data, an income-to-needs ratio was calculated for each family by dividing the total household income by the federal poverty threshold for the appropriate family size.

3.3.2 Home learning environment

The *home learning environment* was measured during the semi-structured interview and through the paper questionnaire with scales on dinnertime routines, reading activities, homework routines (Fiese & Kline, 1993; Serpell et al., 2002) (Appendix B). The semi-structured interview consisted

of seven open ended questions. Two of the questions were intended to assess *cognitive stimulation* and *routines* (Appendix A): (1) “what are three activities, routines, or rules that are frequent or important in your home Monday through Thursday” (2) “what are three activities, routines, or rules that are frequent or important in your home Friday through Sunday”.

The survey of dinnertime routines consisted of eight items (e.g. “some families regularly eat dinner together BUT other families rarely eat dinner together”, and “in some families, everyone is expected to be home for dinner BUT in other families you never know who will be home for dinner”). Parents chose which statement was more like their family and then decided how true (i.e. sort of true or really true) the statement was for their family. Each item received a score ranging from 1 to 4. The composite score was calculated by averaging the responses of the eight items ($\alpha = .77$). Higher scores reflect greater consistency and meaningfulness in home routines. Seven items in the reading activities survey were obtained ($\alpha = .70$). The survey of reading activities, which measured both *cognitive stimulation* and *routines*, included items such as “some families regularly read aloud together BUT other families rarely read aloud together”, and “in some families, reading aloud is just so others can hear BUT in other families, reading aloud is more than just information; it has a special meaning”. Because the reliability for the homework routines measure was low for this sample, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on 8 items of the family homework routines measure using principal components analysis (PCA) with an oblimin rotation. Three items with factor loadings greater than .7 were retained for this measure of family homework routines. The items include consistent time for homework vs. flexible homework time, special meaning for homework vs. task assigned by teacher, and homework time is planned in advance vs. little planning around homework. Again, the composite score was

calculated by averaging the responses of the three items ($\alpha = .74$). Higher scores reflect greater consistency in the home learning environment and more meaningful routines.

3.3.3 Parent involvement in school

During the semi-structured interview mothers were asked to discuss their relationship with the school and current teacher (see Appendix A). Some of the questions and prompts included: (1) “how would you describe your relationship with the school”, (2) “what do you expect from the school”, (3) “how would you describe your relationship with the teacher (or teachers)”, and (4) “what do teachers expect from parents”.

3.3.4 Parent beliefs and expectations

The aforementioned questions addressing parent involvement may also elicit a discussion of parent beliefs and expectations. In addition, in the questionnaire, mothers reported on their *beliefs* about their role in education and specifically, their beliefs concerning literacy development using a measure adapted from the 42-item Parent Reading Belief Inventory (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994) (see Appendix C). A composite score was calculated by averaging the responses of the 42 items ($\alpha = .89$). Some of the items include: “schools are responsible teaching children, not parents”, “even if I would like to, I’m just too busy and too tired to read with my child”, as well as “children inherit their language ability from their parents, it’s in their genes”. Parents were also asked to report, how far they *expected* their child to go in his/her education (1 = *receive less than a high school diploma*, 2 = *graduate from high school*, 3 = *attend a vocational or technical school after*

high school, 4 = attend two or more years of college, 5 = finish a four-or-five year college degree, 6 = earn a graduate degree or professional degree beyond a Bachelor's).

3.4 ANALYSIS PLAN

Statistical analysis of the quantitative data was carried out, by examining distributions (*Ms* and *SDs*) and correlations, as well as by significance tests of mean comparisons across levels of educational attainment and income for scale scores. In the analysis, the education variable was treated as interval (*1=high school or some college, 2=undergraduate certificate or degree, 3=some graduate courses or graduate degree*). Follow-up post hoc analysis using Tukey HSD was performed for significant univariate results. Findings from subsequent qualitative analyses sometimes complemented the quantitative results by illustrating or elaborating on them. The qualitative analysis was a two-step process. The first step involved the creation of a master or final code list. Two coders each coded four transcripts using a list of provisional codes created on the basis of the research aims of this study and a review of the literature. During coding, the two coders utilized notes and coded for additional patterns or themes not listed in the provisional codes. The strength of these codes was assessed according to two criteria: (1) internal homogeneity (e.g., whether the data within each code held together well) and (2) external heterogeneity (e.g., whether there were clear differences between codes) (Patton, 2002). The final product, a master code list (Table 1) was then used to code all the interview data.

Table 1. Master Code List

OUTCOME VARIABLES- MAJOR CODE	
Home Learning Environment	HLE
Parent Involvement in School	PI
Parent Beliefs and Expectations	PBE
OUTCOME VARIABLE MINOR CODE	
Home Learning Environment	
Cognitive Stimulation – Literacy Activity	HLE-CSLA
Child Initiated	HLE-LAC
Parent Initiated	HLE-LAP
Parent-Child Reading	HLE-LA-PCR
Joint Reading	HLE-LA-JR
Child Reading	HLE-LA-CR
Art	HLE-LA-ART
Television	HLE-LA-TV
Non-Electronic Games	HLE-LA-GAM
Video Games	HLE-LA-VGAM
Family Routines	HLE-FR
Child Initiated	HLE-FRC
Parent Initiated	HLE-FRP
Assist with Homework	HLE-FR-AH
Supervise Homework	HLE-FR-SH
Homework First	HLE-FR-HF
Downtime First	HLE-FR-DTF
Chores	HLE-FR-CH
Mealtime(s)	HLE-FR-MT
Sporting Events	HLE-FR-SPE
Religious Activities	HLE-FR-RA
Art	HLE-FR-ART
Television	HLE-FR-TV
Non-Electronic Games	HLE-FR-GAM
Video Games	HLE-FR-VGAM
Parent Involvement in School	
Proactive	PI-P
Reactive	PI-R
Communication	PI-COM
Phone	PI-COMP
Email	PICOME
Written Document(s)	PI-COMW
In-Person (Out of School Contact)	PI-COMIP
School-Wide Parent-Teacher Conference	PI-COMPTC
Child Focused Meetings	PI-COMCFM
Other Meetings	PI-COMOTH
School Event Attendance	PI-SE
In-School Volunteer	PI-ISV
Classroom	PI-ISV-CL
Administrative	PI-ISV-ADM
Events	PI-ISV-EV
Field Trips	PI-ISV-FT

Table 1 (continued) Fundraising Out of School Volunteer	PI-ISV-FUND PI-OSV
Parent Beliefs and Expectations	
Education Beliefs	PBE-EB
Teacher's Don't Care	PBE-EB-TDCAR
Education Economic Benefit	PBE-EB-ECON
Education Foundation	PBE-EB-FOU
Education as Job	PBE-EB-JOB
Private/Charter/Magnet better	PBE-EB-PRIVB
Teacher/School Expectations for Parent(s)	PBE-TEP
Assist with Homework	PBE-TEP-AH
Supervise Homework	PBE-TEP-SH
Home Teaching Academic Skills	PBE-TEP-HTA
Home Teaching Morals and Values	PBE-TEP-HTM
Discipline	PBE-TEP-DIS
Communication	PBE-TEP-COM
Review Materials	PBE-TEP-REV
In-School Volunteer	PBE-TEP-ISV
Out of School Volunteer	PBE-TEP-OSV
Parent Expectations for Teacher(s)/School	PBE-PET
Communication	PBE-PET-COM
Effective Teaching	PBE-PET-EFF
Safety	PBE-PET-SAF
Classroom Management	PBE-PET-CMAN
Care for Students	PBE-PET-CAR
Motivate Students	PBE-PET-FUN
Ghetto	GHET

The master code list was entered into the mixed method statistical software NVivo 10. Two coders coded the data and 23% (i.e., six) of the interviews were double coded to calculate inter-rater reliability. The percentage of agreement ranged from 98.8 to 99.8. After coding was complete, the second step in the qualitative analysis was completed, which involved a cross-cases analysis of the data. Each interview was classified on the basis of socioeconomic variables (education and income). A comparison coding matrix query was then performed to assess group similarities and/or differences in content and in frequency of codes. When these analyses revealed patterns in content, new codes not listed in the master code list were created to describe the qualitative post hoc findings. Follow-up group coding queries were also performed, when appropriate, to assess co-occurrence of codes.

4.0 STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE RESULTS

Before conducting analyses to address the first research aim, the means and standard deviations for the demographic variables were examined to obtain descriptive information about the sample and examine skewness (Table 2). The average age of the mothers was 32.58 years, and 27% of the mothers were married. The average number of adults in the household was 1.46, and the average number of children in the household was 2.58. Demographic data for the families during both the preschool years and for this current, follow-up study during the early elementary school years were available. The length of time between the preschool study and the early elementary school study varied for participants, with a range of one to three years. The parent and family characteristics remained similar over time for most demographic variables, except socioeconomic factors. Sixty-two percent of mothers (16 participants) increased their level of educational attainment (Table 3). Fifty-eight percent of the sample (15 mothers) reported an increase in their total household income; the remaining 40% reported a decrease. During preschool, the average total monthly income was \$3,098, amounting to \$37,176 annually. For this follow up study, mothers reported an average a total monthly income of \$4,096, equivalent to \$49,152 annually. Likewise, the average income-to-needs ratio for the sample also increased over time; at preschool, the average income-to-needs ratio was 1.76, and for this follow up study, the average income-to-needs ratio was 2.21. An income-to-needs ratio of 2.00 is 200% above the federal poverty guidelines; an income-to-needs ratio of 2.00 or below is considered low-income (Boushey, Brocht, Gundersen, & Bernstein, 2001).

Table 2. Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics for the Elementary School Study

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Demographics											
1. Parent Age											
2. Married	.41*										
3. Number of Adults in Home	.40*	.47*									
4. Number of Children in Home	.41*	.27	-.05								
5. Income-to-Needs Ratio	.30	.17	.65***	-.30							
6. Maternal Education	.32	.20	.44*	-.01	.54**						
Family Routines											
7. Dinner	.08	-.30	.03	.10	-.25	-.27					
8. Homework	-.09	.02	.37 [†]	-.18	.07	.38					
9. Reading Aloud	.05	.42*	.27	.18	-.17	-.05	.53**				
Parent Beliefs and Expectations											
10. Literacy Beliefs	.40*	.36 [†]	.15	.52**	-.02	.11	-.10	-.01	.47*		
11. Future expectations	.38	.21	.26	.06	.34	.54**	-.24	.09	.13	.39*	
Mean	32.58	.27	1.46	2.58	2.21	1.88	2.84	2.97	2.93	3.46	2.46
<i>SD</i>	(6.72)		(.71)	(.99)	(1.87)	(.82)	(.62)	(.81)	(.53)	(.25)	.76
Min	21		1	1	.26	1	1.63	1.33	2.17	2.93	1
Max	43		4	4	7.32	3	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.76	3

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Changes in Maternal Education between Preschool and Elementary School Study

Preschool Study	Elementary School Study								Preschool Study Total
	Less than HS	HS	Some college	Post-Secondary Certificate	Associate degree	Bachelor degree	Some graduate courses	Graduate degree	
Less than HS		1							1
HS			6	1					7
Some College			3	2		2	1		8
Post-Secondary Certificate									0
Associate degree					1				1
Bachelor degree						3	4		7
Some graduate courses									0
Graduate degree								2	2
Elementary School Study Total		1	9	3	1	5	5	2	26

After examining the descriptive statistics for the demographic variables within the sample, the responses on the family routine scales (Tables 4, 6, & 7), the parent reading belief scale (Table 2), and the education expectation question (Table 2) from the questionnaire were examined in conjunction with the semi-structured interview data (Table 5), in order to discover overall patterns. A coding query was performed to assess the frequency in reporting of minor codes (e.g., family routines, education beliefs) within each major code category (e.g., home learning environment, parent beliefs and expectations). In addition, interview content was examined to provide a description of how Black parents support their children's academic achievement through aspects of the family culture (i.e. the home learning environment, parent involvement in school, expectations, and beliefs). The three most frequently reported minor codes from the interviews are discussed and presented in Table 5.

4.1.1 Home learning environment

The home learning environment was assessed by questionnaire data and interview codes on family routines and cognitively stimulating practices. The findings from the questionnaire data were reviewed first, after which the qualitative data were analyzed.

4.1.1.1 Family routines

Analysis of the quantitative data revealed that dinnertime and homework routines were consistent and meaningful for families (Table 2). For the dinnertime routine scale, the average score was 2.84 on a 4-point scale. For the homework routine scale, the average score was 2.97 on a 4-point scale. Higher scores indicate consistency in the routine for families and that these routines have a special purpose. A closer examination of each survey item showed that some items were more frequently endorsed by mothers than others. Most mothers reported that eating together is important and that dinnertime has a special meaning in their family (Table 4). However according to the dinnertime routine scale, the timing of dinner and the planning around dinnertime seemed less consistent across the entire group.

In the semi-structured interviews, mealtime was one of the most frequently reported family routines, with 65% of mothers mentioning mealtimes with two or more family members together (Table 5). Mothers described their lives as busy or “crazy,” and mealtime was an opportunity to be together as a family, to be silly, and to catch up on the day or week.

Dinner’s important because that’s our time to come together as a family, eat and laugh and talk. And we get caught up on Ryan and his social life. That’s the 18 year old. Then Anthony talks about what happened at school. Him and Molly fight like always.

Me and my husband get to get our little jabs in at each other. I think it's just, it's just our time to be silly and just enjoy each other cause I mean our lives are so crazy.

Another mother stated:

... I figured on the weekends to make it special we'll have a big breakfast and we'll sit down together with waffles, eggs, sausage, bacon... whatever they want. And we'll sit down together because even if I feel like it's important to sit down and have a meal together, we sort of do it however we can because my schedule is so crazy. So I figure that Saturday guaranteed no matter what we're gonna sit down, we're gonna talk, laugh, spend time together, and eat.

The majority of mothers enjoyed having mealtime together with the family and even discussed the importance of the mealtime routine in their home when they were children. However, some parents/mothers reported variable mealtimes, related to the "crazy" lives that many families were managing. For example, one mother stated, "We're in the car or we're at the table. We're doing it together." Another mother said, "I don't always [get to eat with them], because sometimes they'll eat dinner at daycare so when I come home...like sometimes when I had night classes, they already ate and I didn't get out of school until 9." In both the interview data and the survey data, parent responses suggested that mealtimes were meaningful and important but, for multiple reasons, not always consistent.

Table 4. Dinnertime Routine Questionnaire Responses for Entire Sample

	Really true for my family	Sort of true for my family		Sort of true for my family	Really true for my family
Regularly eat dinner together	11 (42.3%)	9 (34.6%)	Rarely eat dinner together	2 (7.7%)	4 (15.4%)
Everyone has a job or role at dinnertime	12 (46.2%)	9 (34.6%)	People do different jobs at different times depending on needs	3 (11.5%)	2 (7.7%)
Dinner is scheduled or at the same time everyday	6 (23.1%)	9 (34.6%)	Dinnertime is flexible	8 (30.8%)	3 (11.5%)
Everyone is expected to be home for dinner	13 (50%)	7 (26.9%)	You never know who will be home for dinner	5 (19.2%)	1 (3.8%)
We feel strongly about eating dinner together	12 (46.2%)	6 (23.1%)	It is not that important if people eat together	7 (26.9%)	1 (3.8%)
Dinnertime is more than a meal and has a special purpose	9 (34.6%)	12 (46.2%)	Dinnertime is just for getting food.	2 (7.7%)	3 (11.5%)
Dinnertime has always been and will always be a regular family event	10 (38.5%)	4 (15.4%)	Dinnertime has changed over the years	11 (42.3%)	1 (3.8%)
Dinnertime is planned in advanced	2 (7.7%)	6 (23.1%)	There is little planning around dinnertime.	14 (53.8%)	4 (15.4%)

Table 5. Most Frequently Reported Family Culture Interview Codes across Entire Sample

	Total Cases	#1	Number of Cases	#2	Number of Cases	#3	Number of Cases
Home Learning Environment							
Family Routines	26	Assisting with Homework & Homework Completion as Soon as You Come Home	17	Mealtime Together	17	Television/Movie Viewing or Video game Play	17
Cognitive Stimulation (Literacy)	21	Joint Reading or Child Reading	19	Television or Video Games	5	Non-Electronic Play	2
Parent Involvement in School							
Types of Involvement	26	Communication	25	Attending School Events	8	Volunteering	6
Types of Communication	25	Phone	20	Meeting	12	Written	10
Parent Beliefs and Expectations							
Parent Expectations of Teachers & Schools	26	Effective Teaching	24	Communicate	23	Care for Students	18
Education Beliefs	24	Public Urban Neighborhood Schools are Poor Quality	12	Education Leads to Economic Gains	11	Teacher's Don't Care	8
School & Teacher Expectations of Parents	24 ^a	Communicate	16	Assist with Homework	13	Home Teaching	13

^aThe total available sample for this code was 24 participants. One participant was not asked this interview question, and the audio file of another interview was damaged. For all other codes the total available sample was 26 participants

In the questionnaire data, a consistent homework routine and the belief that homework has a special purpose were reported as true for most families (Table 6). Homework routines also emerged as a theme in the semi-structured interviews for the majority of families (Table 5). Like mealtimes, homework routines were frequently discussed, with 65% of mothers reporting assisting with homework and 65% reporting that homework completion was the first priority when children came home. By assisting with homework or ensuring that homework was completed, mothers believed that they were fulfilling their responsibility to achieve the common goal of parents and schools to educate their child. This theme was illustrated in the following statement: “[Homework] is my part, so I feel like that’s important because when she comes home that’s when I step in....” Parents wanted to be not only involved but also knowledgeable about their children’s learning. Another mother said, “I wanted to make sure she’s doing homework. I want to see what she’s learning. I want to participate. I want to help her.” For these mothers, homework provided an opportunity to be involved, observe their child’s developing skills, and review the material that their children were learning.

Table 6. Homework Routine Questionnaire Responses for the Entire Sample

	Really true for my family	Sort of true for my family		Sort of true for my family	Really true for my family
Homework time is consistent each day	11 (42.3%)	9 (34.6%)	Homework time is flexible	2 (7.7%)	4 (15.4%)
Homework has a purpose	12 (46.2%)	9 (34.6%)	Homework is just a task assigned by a teacher	3 (11.5%)	2 (7.7%)
Homework time is planned in advance	6 (23.1%)	9 (34.6%)	Little planning around homework time	8 (30.8%)	3 (11.5%)

After homework and mealtimes, the third most frequently discussed family routine in the semi-structured interviews was television/movie viewing and video game play. Since both of these activities are often stationary and typically involve the use of a television, the television and video game codes were aggregated (Table 5). It is also important to note that if television viewing or video game play was identified as having a literacy or educational focus, then it was coded as cognitive stimulation and not a family routine. Sixty-five percent of families identified television viewing, renting a movie, going to a movie theater together, or playing video games as a typical family routine. Parents made comments such as, “We’ll either go to the movies or rent a movie,” “Playing on the Wii,” or “We’re... watching TV together.” Watching television, movies, or playing video games was a leisure activity that families enjoyed together.

4.1.1.2 Cognitive stimulation

The discussion of family routines both in the questionnaire items and in the semi-structured interviews highlighted literacy activities that have been identified in the extant literature as

cognitively stimulating. Mothers responded to questionnaire items on the consistency and meaningfulness of reading aloud routines. The average score on the reading aloud routines measure was 2.93 on a 4-point scale, with higher scores indicating that the routine was consistent and had a special purpose for the family. As in the case of the dinnertime routine scale, most mothers reported that reading aloud was important and had a special meaning or purpose (Table 7). However, an item analysis revealed that for the majority of families, there was little planning around reading aloud time. In fact, for a sizable proportion of families (42%), the timing of reading aloud was flexible and the routine had changed over the years.

In the interview data, the most frequently endorsed literacy activity was book reading, reported by 19 out of 26 participants. Book reading activities included joint reading (i.e., an adult or older sibling reading with a child) and independent child reading. For some mothers, reading was part of a bedtime routine. One mother stated, “[The children] would brush their teeth and then shower, bathe, and then one of us would read a story to them and/or have them read the story.” The school also prompted reading as a family activity through reading logs or conversations between parents and teachers. In another example, a mother described a daily reading aloud routine that was prompted by the school.

I have the children’s Bible, that’s what we read every night. My kids take turns and we read a chapter a piece and well the older two can...the youngest one he just read a paragraph here and there and then we’ll switch off and let someone else read. Then we’ll stop and we’ll go back over and try and understand what’s going on together....

She then later discussed the reason for this family routine: “[The teacher] just said that [my children’s] reading scores were low and to try to get them to read more books and read to each other.”

The next two most frequently endorsed literacy activities were reported by a small number of families: 5 out of 26 (19%) discussed video games or television; 2 out of 26 (8%) discussed non-electronic play activities. One mother mentioned the use of a video game titled “Star Fall”. She said that her daughter “picks out the words that correspond to what the object is.” Another mother described use of television with a literacy focus.

I’ll put the closed captioning on in the TV so [my daughter] can see the words people are talking and she’ll go, “Oh that’s a star word. Oh that’s, you know, ‘has’. That’s a star word!” And I’m like, “Mm hmm.” I’m like, “You know what you’re doing?” “I’m reading.”

For non-electronic play activities with a literacy focus, one mother described a game that she and her son play together.

He’s very good at making his sentences and stuff and I’m also trying to get him to use his imagination. Once a week I have him sit down here and I have him make up a story about going to the store, or a loaf of bread, or the table, or something he might find amusing. Like he might find a baseball bat so like ...how did the bat become a bat?

These mothers were finding methods for incorporating literacy into the home environment through technology and imaginative play.

According to these three questionnaire reports (dinnertime, homework, and reading aloud), homework routines seemed stable over time, but both dinner and reading aloud routines were more likely to have flexible timing or change over the years. The interview data also suggested that homework, mealtime, and reading were typical routines for most of the families. The interview data moreover uncovered a new theme not captured in the questionnaire data, namely that television and video game play were frequent leisure activities for families.

Table 7. Reading Aloud Routine Questionnaire Responses for the Entire Sample

	Really true for my family	Sort of true for my family		Sort of true for my family	Really true for my family
Regularly read aloud together	14 (53.8%)	8 (30.8%)	Rarely read aloud together	4 (15.4%)	0 (0%)
Reading aloud is scheduled or at the same time everyday	6 (23.1%)	9 (34.6%)	The timing of reading aloud is flexible	8 (30.8%)	3 (11.5%)
We feel strongly about reading aloud together	12 (46.2%)	12 (46.2%)	It is not that important whether people read aloud or not	1 (3.8%)	1 (3.8%)
Reading aloud is more than a just information and has a special meaning	14 (53.8%)	10 (38.5%)	Reading aloud is just so others can hear	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)
Reading aloud has and will always be a regular family event	7 (26.9%)	8 (30.8%)	Reading aloud has changed over the years	9 (34.6%)	2 (7.7%)
Reading aloud is planned in advanced	3 (11.5%)	9 (34.6%)	There is little planning around reading aloud	10 (38.5%)	4 (15.4%)

4.1.2 Parent involvement in school

Parent involvement in school was captured only in the interview data. Therefore, all analysis of parent involvement in school was qualitative. The three most frequently reported types of involvement were communication, school event attendance, and volunteering (Table 5). Twenty-five out of 26 participants discussed communication with the school. The most commonly reported method for communicating was the telephone or an in-person meeting. Communication was the most frequently reported interaction, but a few parents spoke of other types of interaction: 8 out of 26 (31%) mentioned attending school events, such as performances or award ceremonies, and 6 out of 26 (23%) mentioned volunteering. One mother stated, “[My husband and I have] gone to plays [at the school], different events. If they have people coming, for the most part we try to make it.” Others talked about volunteering their time in the classroom, on field trips, at events, or with fundraising. One mother read to students in the classroom every year.

I’ve gone in to read for Dr. Seuss’s birthday week because our favorite Dr. Seuss book is *Oh the Places You’ll Go*. So every year, whenever they celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday, whoever’s class is doing it, that’s the book I go read.

In relation to volunteering on field trips, one mother stated, “[The school] went to the pumpkin patch, I went on field trips with them.” Although only a few reported school event attendance and volunteering, those who did appeared to engage in a variety of activities at the school.

A closer examination of communication, the most frequently reported interaction or involvement, revealed the complex and bidirectional nature of communication between parents and schools. Some of the communication ($n=7$) was initiated by teachers or school personnel (*reactive involvement*), but a large number of mothers ($n=19$) reported that they initiated contact

(*proactive involvement*) with teachers or school personnel (Table 8). Proactive involvement included mothers discussing spontaneous visits to the school to observe typical interactions, or their attempts to contact teachers and personnel to advocate for their children. A careful review of passages coded as proactive involvement revealed qualitative differences in the content, requiring the creation of two additional codes (preventative-proactive and responsive-proactive) to differentiate mothers' proactive behaviors as either preventative or responsive. Eight out of the 19 proactive involvement cases were preventative (42%), and 13 out of the 19 were responsive (68%). Examples of both preventative-proactive involvement and responsive-proactive involvement are provided below. The first quote illustrates preventative-proactive involvement. This mother contacted the school with the intent to monitor progress, not in response to a teacher- or parent-identified issue.

Yeah, I called her just to call her to make sure Joe is doing good. "Is he in any trouble today? Is there any tantrums today?" Sometimes he would go happy and go to school and not want to do anything, not want to talk, not want to conversate, he just wants to do his work. Sometimes you just got to be conversational at school, whether you want to or not.

Other than that, I called her class to check up on him, she doesn't really call me that much.

The second statement illustrates responsive-proactive involvement. The mother initiated contact with the school bus driver and monitor because her child was being harmed on the bus. This mother's proactive involvement was in response to an issue or event.

...some little kid was grabbing him and hit him and you know I didn't like it so I told the bus driver and the bus monitor. The bus monitor sits at the front of the bus. I had to talk to him, like, "There's kids behind you, what are you sitting in the front for?" He said, "Oh, well, I talk to the bus driver." "I don't care! There's nobody else on the bus." "Okay, well,

I'll make it a habit. I'll sit in the back.” “Okay, well that’s what I needed you to do! You don’t sit in the front of the bus.”

Table 8. Frequency of Proactive and Reactive Interview Codes for the Entire Sample

Codes	Number of Cases
Total Proactive	19
Preventative-Proactive	8
Responsive- Proactive	13
Total Reactive	10
Reactive-Positive	3
Reactive-Negative	7

Note: N=26

As mentioned previously, the communication between parents and teachers was complex and bidirectional. Although most mothers discussed parent initiated contact (*proactive involvement*), a few also mentioned school initiated contact (*reactive involvement*). Reactive involvement included teachers or school personnel contacting parents to discuss student progress. Similar to the findings with the proactive involvement, a careful review of passages coded as reactive involvement revealed qualitative differences in the content, requiring the creation of two additional codes (reactive-positive and reactive-negative) to differentiate school prompted communication as either positive or negative. Out of the 10 cases of reactive involvement, seven were coded as negative. Below are two examples of reactive involvement. In the first example, a teacher contacted a parent to provide an update on her child’s progress for the week (reactive-positive).

Sometimes she calls me at the end of the week, just to let me know how he did overall, how the week went. I guess she’s writing it down in her notes throughout the days. I really like those conversations.

In the second example, a teacher contacted a parent to report a problem (reactive-negative). The mother stated, “[The teacher] called on the phone, she was like, ‘This happened with your child. I know it wasn’t him but somebody else told him to do it. As a result he’s in trouble.’”

It should be noted that mothers were not exclusively proactive or reactive: 8 out of 26 mothers (31%) reported both proactive and reactive involvement. Moreover, it is important to restate that most mothers reported proactive involvement. Only two (8%) exclusively discussed reactive involvement, while 11 out of the 26 (42%) exclusively mentioned proactive involvement.

4.1.3 Parent beliefs and expectations

In the questionnaire, mothers reported their future educational expectations for their child as well as their beliefs about their role in promoting literacy, the importance of reading, and their own personal experiences with reading as a child (Table 2). The majority of mothers (62%) reported that they expected their child to attain a graduate degree. The average response on the reading belief inventory was 3.46 on a 4-point scale. This very high average reading belief score suggests that most mothers viewed themselves as pivotal in promoting literacy, viewed literacy as important, and expressed positive experiences with reading as a child. In the semi-structured interviews, mothers expressed beliefs about the quality and benefits of education as well as their expectations for schools and teachers (Table 5).

4.1.3.1 Education beliefs

There were no direct questions in the questionnaire or semi-structured interview that asked for a parents’ education beliefs. However, during the semi-structured interviews, many mothers expressed strong views about the quality and benefits of education. Half of the sample said they

believed that public urban neighborhood schools were of poor quality (Table 5). During the interview, one mother said, “City schools, I don’t want to talk bad on them, but I don’t like city schools.” Many mothers talked about public urban neighborhood schools as having “ghetto” students or families. A “ghetto” person was described as someone loud, disruptive, and aggressive, using foul language, or unprofessionally dressed. Other mothers in this group who discussed the poor quality of urban neighborhood schools viewed public urban magnet schools, public suburban schools, or urban charter schools as better quality, because these schools were less likely to have “ghetto” students and families. One mother stated, “Since it’s a charter school, they can be more selective of the students. So if there’s a bad element they can go back to their home school.” Mothers also identified the lack of individualized education in public urban neighborhood schools as one of the factors reducing the quality of the schools.

You have right now, Jeremy has 22 kids in his class. At Charter School A they don’t go over 20 kids and they also have three teachers. ...no matter what level you are on in the Public Urban District K school system, everyone’s taught at the same level, regardless if you’re more advanced, if you’re average, or if you’re slacking, where at Charter School A they work based on your needs.

Some mothers preferred curricula that included foreign languages or performing arts, which seemed unavailable at public urban neighborhood schools. Another mother expressed a preference for urban magnet schools and, when asked why, replied, “I don’t know. I guess ’cause when I was growing up I’ve always been in a magnet school. It’s like being beaten in my head, like, the magnets are better!” There was a negative perception of public schools in general. One of the mothers stated, “...I don’t want my kids to go to public school and be stupid.” Not only did the parents in this study express dissatisfaction with public urban neighborhood schools, but most

of them were also choosing other options for elementary school. Out of 26 participants, only five had children enrolled in a public urban neighborhood school at the time of this study. Of these five, one mother expressed a strong desire to have her child removed from the school for the next school year. Another had her child enrolled in a private school initially but felt it was too challenging and transferred the child into a public urban neighborhood school. Two children were enrolled in a public magnet school, after having originally attending a public urban neighborhood school. The fifth mother had a family member working in the school and expressed overall satisfaction with the school.

When these mothers were discussing their beliefs about education, they also reported their belief that education led to economic gains. Education was viewed as a path to upward mobility in socioeconomic status. More specifically, they expressed a need for post-secondary education to achieve financial self-sufficiency. One mother stated, “[Education] is important just because you need it now to provide for your children. It’s no longer the days where people could be steelworkers and just have their high school diploma and still provide for their family.” Another mother stated:

...Without the proper education, will you be able to get a good job? Times have changed. Like McDonald’s, Burger King, and any fast food restaurants or whatever...they’re now kind of gearing towards you to go ahead and get your education. You know, you can’t make it out of a \$5 or \$7/hour job. ...Bottom point that I’m trying to say is that education is the only way for your future, the only way for you to support yourself in the near future. It takes...you have to go to school in order to get an education...in order to find or do a good job...or find that perfect career.

This same mother then went on to say that she wants her daughter's life to be different from her own and even different from her mother's life. "I want her to just be successful. Like, I'm living paycheck to paycheck. I don't want it to be like this forever. I don't want her to live like this. My mom's still living like this. It's not good." Education was viewed as a path to success, and success was associated with financial self-sufficiency or economic gain.

The third most frequently discussed belief about education in this sample was a lack of caring on the part of teachers. Some attributed this lack of concern to the school district, type of school (e.g., public urban neighborhood school), teacher's age, or length of service as a teacher. The two examples presented below are from parents who felt that teachers in public schools in general or specifically public urban neighborhood schools are often uncaring.

Yes, you can go to school and take a nap. You can go to school and really be in class and not do work and nobody will care. That's how public school is. Some people go and graduate and go on and have a good career and whatever. But for the most part – if you don't want to do it, you don't have to do it. No one's there to force you to do it.

Another mother said:

...the teachers are, as far as when I was going to school, ...just trying to push you through and give you the ability to get out. They really weren't concerned if you were academically prepared to go on or prepped for college courses or anything like that. They weren't too concerned about your behavior. It was just, you know, you act up, you're getting suspended for a certain amount of days. ... It wasn't never nobody sitting down, speaking with you about your behavior. You never had no one who was actually concerned about your personal [life]: "Why are you acting like this? What is going on at home to cause you to act out?" ...And it was just a number of things that I experienced growing up. A

lot of it was because I wanted to explore the world, be adventurous, things like that, but more than likely [the teachers] weren't too concerned about your education, you know, and your behavior. Just it wasn't what it was supposed to be.

A few parents speculated that age or length of service of teachers possibly accounted for their lack of concern. For instance, one mother stated, "You have the newer teachers that's probably gonna come in tryin' to prove themselves. It ain't like you've been here for years and you don't care." This mother believed that older teachers were not concerned about the students. Another mother expressed a similar belief that age was associated with the level of concern a teacher might have for student, but she felt that younger teachers were more likely to demonstrate a lack of concern for students.

...I feel like I've gotten lucky because the two teachers he's had have been old teachers, like they're not young, they're older and they are more worried about education. ...Whereas I have a serious issue with his art teacher. She's young, she don't care.

4.1.3.2 Parent expectations of school and teachers

Parent expectations of the school and teachers were captured solely in the semi-structured interviews. Overwhelmingly, parents expressed a concern for their child to learn, and to be cared for by the teachers and other school personnel (Table 5). These mothers wanted teachers to view their role in a child's life as more than just a job. One mother stated, "I just want a relationship to the point where I know that [the teacher has] my son's best interest at heart and, you know, [the teacher is] gonna teach him and take him from this to the next level." Another mother stated, "I want a team of people that are professional that really care about my son's life, his learning." Mothers wanted teachers to know their child as a learner, to challenge their child and prepare her

or him for the next grade or step in life. One mother discussed her desire for her child to be challenged more and her initiative to discuss concerns with the teacher.

...I was really wondering about those books that were coming home for homework. Like Erin is really reading these books and she is bored with these books, so we would get through those books really quick and we would read the books we like to read. But I hadn't even had the chance to mention that to her teacher, but when I met with her teacher, she brought it up to me before I could even say something to her, which I thought was pretty keen.

In this example, the teacher demonstrated her knowledge of the child's skills and needs. Other parents mentioned a desire for the teacher "to do everything that she can to help" or "cater to [the students'] different learning styles".

Parents also felt strongly about teachers keeping them aware of their child's progress and willingness to listen to their concerns. One mother stated that she expected teachers to "communicate with [me]. Keep [me] up to date on things that [I] can do as a parent to help [him]. Keep [me] in the loop on his development and anywhere that he may be struggling." Another mother expected "an open door policy, that [I] can come in and talk to [the teachers]" or "...contact them through email." Along those same lines, a mother stated that she wanted the teacher "to hear [me and my husband].... So if [we] do have a concern, not that it's come up, but if [we] did, [I] would want them to address it appropriately." This expectation of teachers keeping parents "in the loop" or listening and responding to parents was coded as communication. In this sample of 26 mothers, almost all mentioned effective teaching and communication as an expectation they had for teachers ($n=23$ and 24, respectively).

4.1.3.3 School and teacher expectations of parents

Mothers most often reported that the schools and teachers expect parents to communicate, assist with homework, and support academic skills at home (Table 5). The schools might not have explicitly shared these expectations with parents, but nonetheless parents had drawn conclusions about teacher and school expectations from materials sent home and the types of questions posed to parents by teachers or school personnel. For instance, one mother commented that, “[The teacher] expects open communication.... She gave us her phone number and her school email, phone number, and extension to keep lines of communication open.” Mothers felt that schools expected them to be available and responsive. One said, “...she expects us to work with our children, read with them, help them with their homework, help them study for their tests and different things.” In addition to having an open line of communication, parents reported that assistance with homework and the reinforcement of academic skills at home was an expectation.

I think they expect the parents to be parents and teachers to their kids. I mean, they want you to sit down and go over exactly what the teacher went over in class so that your child gets it at home as well.

4.1.4 Research aim one qualitative post hoc analysis

Three post hoc analyses were performed, one for each three prominent school expectations (i.e., communication, assistance with homework, and home teaching) to examine patterns of co-occurrence with related parent behaviors. The most frequently reported parent behaviors in the home learning environment and parent involvement in school were similar to the three prominent school expectations of parents, namely parents were assisting with homework, reinforcing academic skills (home teaching) through reading activities, and communicating with the school.

4.1.4.1 School and teacher expectations and parents behaviors

To further examine the similarities between school expectations and parent behaviors, a group coding query was performed to assess overlap or co-occurrence of the most frequently reported school expectations with related parent behaviors (Figure 2). The black bars represent mothers that reported schools expect parents' to communicate, assist with homework, and reinforce academic skills at home; the gray bars represent the number of parents that reported both the school expectation and related parent behavior(s).

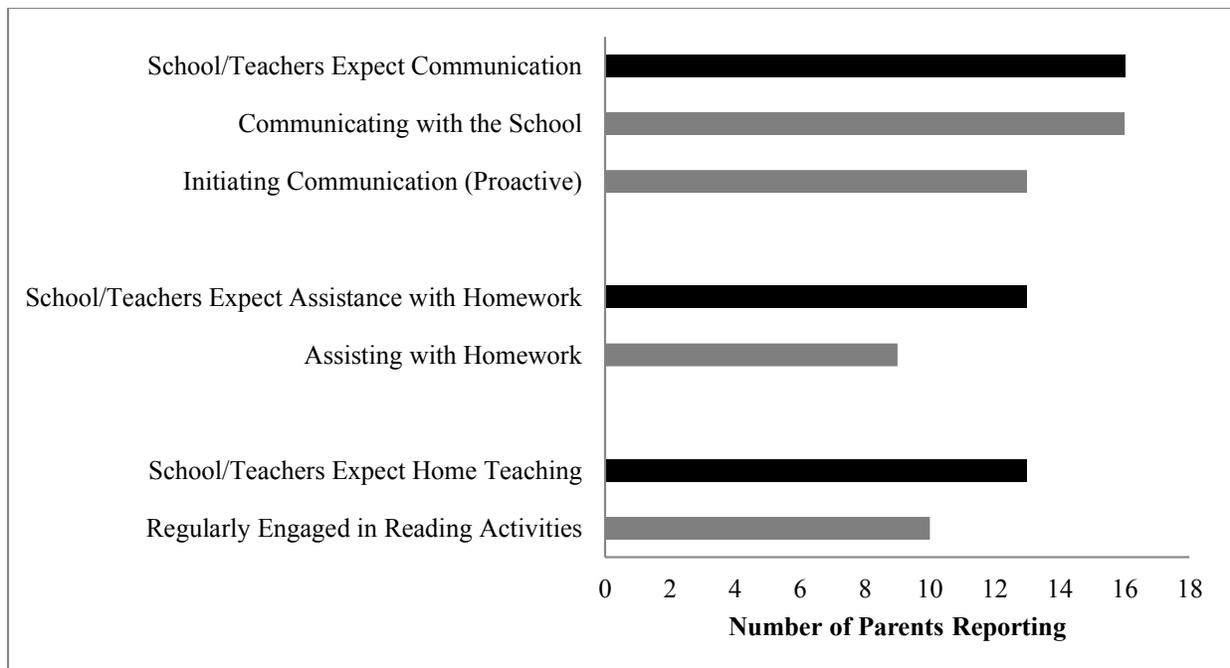


Figure 2. Co-occurrence of School/Teacher Expectations and Related Parent Behaviors

Sixteen out of 24 (67%) parents reported that schools and teachers expect parents to communicate with school personnel (Figure 2). Of the 16 who reported this school expectation, 13 (81%) said that they initiate communication with the school (proactive involvement). The next two most frequently endorsed school expectations were reported at the same frequency: Parent assistance with homework and home teaching. Thirteen out of 24 parents reported that schools and teachers expected them to assist with homework. Of the 13 mothers who reported this school

expectation, nine (69%) said in the semi-structured interview that they frequently assisted their child with homework. Thirteen out of 24 parents reported that schools expected them to teach or reinforce academic skills at home. Of those 13, 10 discussed parent-child reading, joint reading, or independent child reading as a regular activity in the home. Overall parents seemed to discuss parenting practices that responded to school and teacher expectations. It is possible, however, that parents select schools with parent expectations that are aligned with their family culture.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO RESULTS

In pursuing the second research aim, correlations were calculated for demographic and parenting variables to identify socioeconomic (SES) patterns in the quantitative data (Table 2). The correlation results revealed significant and non-significant associations among SES variables (education and income), and between SES variables and quantitative measures of family culture (family routines, parent beliefs). In this sample, there was a strong association between educational attainment and the family's financial resources ($r=.54$). Families with a higher income-to-needs ratio were more likely to have mothers who had completed some graduate courses or a graduate degree.

In addition to the associations between the two SES variables, the associations of each SES variable with the quantitative measures of family culture were reviewed to assess potential patterns. There were significant correlations between educational attainment and the other questionnaire data (i.e., measures of family culture and other demographic variables). Educational attainment was strongly associated with routines and future education expectations. The future education expectations variable was treated as interval: (*1=less than a Bachelor's degree,*

2=*Bachelor's degree*, and 3=*graduate degree*). Mothers with greater educational attainment were more likely to have greater education expectations for their child ($r=.54$) and more likely to have consistent and meaningful homework routines ($r=.38$) than those with less educational attainment. There were no significant associations between income and the measures in the parent questionnaire (e.g. family routines, literacy beliefs, future education expectations).

Because a strong positive association between income and education was found (Table 2), a crosstab was performed with the parent education categories (i.e., high school/some college, undergraduate certificate or degree, some graduate/graduate degree) and a dichotomous income variable (0 = low income-to-needs ≤ 2.00 ; 1 = high income-to-needs > 2.00) to assess whether there were adequate numbers of cases in each cell to test education x income interactions. The dichotomous income variable reflected the guidelines for low-income and middle income status; an income-to-needs ratio at or below 2.00 is considered low-income (Boushey et al, 2001). The crosstab analysis indicated that several combinations of education and income occur infrequently within this sample, namely mothers with low education (high school diploma or some college) and high income ($n=2$), or high education (some graduate courses or a graduate degree) and low income ($n=2$). Also few mothers with an undergraduate certificate or degree had high income ($n=3$) (Table 9). Due to the patterns of overlap and sparse association between education and income, education-income combination groups were formed to assess potential SES differences in the questionnaire and interview data.

Table 9. Crosstab of Education and Income Categories

	HS Diploma or Some College (<i>n</i> =10)	Undergraduate Certificate or Degree (<i>n</i> =9)	Some graduate courses or Graduate degree (<i>n</i> =7)
Income-to-Needs 2.00 or Below (<i>n</i> =16)	8	6	2
Income-to-Needs Above 2.00 (<i>n</i> =10)	2	3	5

Three SES groups were created (*1=low SES 2=middle SES, 3=high SES*) (Table 10). Mothers with post-secondary educational attainment and high income were categorized as high SES, those with post-secondary attainment but low income were labeled middle SES, and those with no post-secondary attainment and low income were classified as low SES. A description of each group and the significant differences among them on family characteristics are provided below (also see Table 10). The low SES group all had a high school diploma or some college and most had an income-to-needs ratio below 2.00. Two cases in this low SES group had income-to-needs ratios between 2 and 2.80. A review of the questionnaire data showed that both participants' responses on the survey seemed similar to the other mothers in the low SES group; thus they were combined for analysis.

The low SES group (*n*=10) had significantly less educational attainment than the middle and high SES groups. Families in the low and middle SES group also had fewer adults in the household than the high SES group. It is important to note that 50% of the high SES mothers were married, while 20% of low SES and 13% of middle SES mothers were married. However even for those mothers in the high SES group that were not married, all but one had another adult in the home (*M*=2.00). The same was not true for the low SES group with an average of 1.2 adults in the home or middle SES group with an average of 1.3 adults in the home. The high SES group

also had significantly greater financial resources than the low and middle SES groups. There were no other significant differences in parent and family characteristics such as parent age and the number of children in the home among the three SES groups.

To better understand the difference between the middle SES group and the high SES group, the monthly income and employment status was explored for these two groups. At the time of this study, four out of the eight women in the middle SES group had no income. Possible reasons for the lack of employment and thus lack of income were known for two of the mothers: one was a full time student and pregnant, the other was also pregnant. In addition, half of the middle SES mothers were not working at the time of this study. The average monthly income for the working middle SES mothers was \$1,953. The average monthly income for the mothers in the high SES group, all of whom were working, was \$3,821. The high SES mothers, independent of income from other adults in the home, had higher gross monthly income than the working middle SES mothers. Additionally, four of the eight mothers in the middle SES group received their post-secondary certificate or degree within one to three years prior to this study. Moreover, 50% of the mothers in the high SES group had management positions, whereas only one mother in the middle SES group held this type of position. The middle SES group consisted of single mothers, only one was married, with an average of 2.9 children, whereas in the high SES group most households (75%) had two or more adults, half of the mothers were married, with an average of 2.4 children. As a result, the middle SES mothers had post-secondary attainment and were potentially in entry level positions or had fewer demands of their time outside of the home than the high SES mothers.

Similar to the analysis for the first research aim, the family demographics and family culture questionnaire data were examined in conjunction with the semi-structured interview data to address the second research aim. In addition, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was

performed to investigate SES differences in the questionnaire data, which included the following scales or items: (1) dinnertime routines, (2) homework routines, (3) reading aloud routines, (4) parent reading beliefs, and (5) future education expectations (Table 10). After the quantitative analysis, a matrix coding query was then performed to assess differences among the SES groups in the interview data. The most frequent code(s) for the home learning environment (family routines, cognitive stimulation; Table 11), parent involvement in school (method and type; Table 12), and parent beliefs and expectations (education beliefs, expectations of the teacher/school, and teacher/school expectations of parents; Table 14) were examined. Patterns where there was at least a 20% difference in reporting between two or more SES groups were identified as different. In addition to examining the frequencies, the content of coded passages were reviewed for potential SES differences in the nature of activities or behaviors occurring within a given code.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics and Analysis of Variance for SES Groups

	Low SES (n=10)	Middle SES (n=8)	High SES (n=8)	Tukey HSD
Demographics				
Parent Age	30.90 (7.78)	30.88 (3.31)	36.38 (6.99)	
Married	.20	.13	.50	
Number of Adults in Household	1.20 (.42)	1.25 (.46)	2.00 (.16)	L<M*; M<H†
Number of Children in Household	2.50 (1.18)	2.88 (.84)	2.38 (.92)	
Income-to-Needs Ratio	1.29 (.73)	1.03 (.40)	4.54 (1.63)	L<H**; M<H**
Maternal Education	1.00 (.00)	2.25 (.46)	2.63 (.52)	L<H**; L<M**
High School or Some College ¹	1.0	0	0	
Certificate or Undergraduate Degree ²	0	.50	.12	
Graduate Courses or Degree ³	0	.50	.88	
Family Routines				
Dinnertime	3.09 (.57)	2.80 (.54)	2.56 (.70)	
Homework	2.80 (.67)	3.33 (.69)	2.83 (1.04)	
Reading	3.03 (.58)	2.98 (.50)	2.75 (.47)	
Parent Belief & Expectations				
Literacy Beliefs	3.47 (.24)	3.43 (.34)	3.46 (.20)	
Education expectations for child	2.00 (.94)	2.62 (.52)	2.87 (.35)	L<H*
Less than BA/BS ¹	.40	0	0	
BA/BS ²	.20	.37	.12	
Graduate Degree ³	.40	.63	.88	

Note: †p<.10. *p<.05. **p<.01. for post hoc Tukey HSD.

4.2.1 Home learning environment

Analysis of the home learning environment included questionnaire data and interview codes on family routines and cognitively stimulating practices. The findings from the questionnaire data are reviewed first, followed by the findings from the qualitative data.

4.2.1.1 Family routines

The one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences among the SES groups on the questionnaire composite measures (homework or dinnertime routine scales) (Table 10). However, the item analysis revealed SES differences in the reporting of homework and dinnertime routines. The middle SES group reported a special purpose for homework more often than the other two groups. While most mothers in all three SES groups reported that homework has a special meaning or purpose, all of the middle SES group reported this as true for their family, whereas 80% of the low and 63% of the high SES group reported this as true. Comparatively, in the dinnertime routine scale, most mothers in all three SES groups reported that eating dinner together is important in their family, however the low SES group reported more often than the other two groups that eating together is important in their family. Eighty percent of the low SES mothers reported that eating together is important, whereas 63% of middle SES and 63% of high SES mothers reported this as true for their family.

Table 11. Most Frequently Reported Home Learning Environment Codes for SES Groups

Home Learning Environment	Low SES	Cases <i>n</i> =10	Middle SES	Cases <i>n</i> =8	High SES	Cases <i>n</i> =8
Family Routines	TV or Video games	8	TV or Video games	5	TV	4
	Homework Completion First	5	Homework Completion First	7	Homework Completion First	5
	Meals Together	7	Meals Together	6	Meals Together	5
Cognitive Stimulation (Literacy)	Joint or Child Reading	7	Joint or Child Reading	5	Joint or Child Reading	7

An examination of the qualitative data supported the quantitative findings but also broadened the depiction of family routines for all three groups. The family routine codes that appeared frequently within each SES group were homework routines, mealtime routines, and television or video game routines. As seen in the quantitative findings, SES differences were detected in the frequency of homework routines. The middle SES group discussed homework completion as a priority far more often than the other two groups (Table 11). While there were differences between SES groups in the frequency of reporting the homework completion as a priority, there were no apparent differences in the description of this code between SES groups. A mother from the low SES group said that homework completion before all other activities was essential because “if you don’t get it done now you won’t ever get it done.” A mother from the middle SES group with the same family routine stated:

I was raised as soon as you come home you do your homework immediately. ...since the weather has gotten nicer, [my son’s] been going to go play with a friend. If he had a good day at school he’s allowed to go play with a friend that’s his age and goes to the same school. And he goes “Cameron doesn’t have to do his homework when he gets home”. And

I go “well that sounds personal I’m not Cameron’s mother”. But I’ve always been raised that you do your homework when you get home. And it works good for us because sometimes homework takes 10 minutes and sometimes it takes 2 hours. So I wouldn’t wanna wait until the end of the day and you know here we’re sitting here, we’re past bed time because we’re still trying to do homework because homework was a little bit harder today or you forgot what you did in school and now its hours later. And I still want to do it while it’s fresh in [his] mind.

Across SES groups, the mothers that talked about homework completion as a priority expressed concerns with the length of time for completion, difficulty focusing, and the possibility of incomplete homework. A mother from the high SES group said:

Even though I’d like [my children] to, you know, rest their brains a little bit. ...What I found a lot of times is if they start watching TV and start getting relaxed or even going outside then it’s hard for them to regain that focus again. Especially, like I said they can have volumes of homework and so it may not be something that they can just bust out real quick. I mean, sometimes it is but other times it takes a little more time. Just to maintain that focus and then they can be rewarded and then they don’t have to worry about it anymore.

Across the SES groups, parents mentioned their child completing homework before playing or having time to relax, again with expressed concerns around the ability for their child to remain engaged and attentive, or the possibility of incomplete homework.

In the interview data, mealtime was discussed by the majority of mothers within each SES group. Although there were no significant differences between groups on the dinnertime routines scale, the interviews complemented the pattern found in the item analysis of the dinnertime scale.

Mothers in the low SES group were reporting, in the questionnaire, more meaningful dinnertime routines than the other two groups and, in the interviews discussed mealtime together more often (Table 11). However, no differences in the description of mealtime routines emerged among the groups in the interview data. Mothers in each SES group viewed mealtime as an opportunity for communication and togetherness. A mother from the low SES group stated, “We eat together, even if it’s takeout food, or pizza, we eat together because it’s our time to be silly and sit at the table.” A similar description of mealtime was provided by a mother from the middle SES group said:

We’re...all around each other, they’ll sit and talk. “I’m almost done, I’m going to be the winner of the dinner.” It’s a little race kind of, but it’s not. They’ll tell me like my daughter might say, “Jonah’s not eating his vegetables,” that sort of thing, like it’s a competition.

Comparatively, a mother in the high SES group stated:

...we eat dinner. ... it’s the time we use to connect because you don’t get that when you’re at school or we’re at work. We don’t really get that, just to check in, “How is your day?” “What went on?,” that kind of stuff.

In the quantitative measures television and video game play were not assessed. However, television and video game play were frequently discussed in the qualitative interviews, particularly among low SES mothers. Eighty percent of the low SES mothers and 63% of middle SES mothers reported television or video game play as a typical family routine, whereas 50% of the high SES group mentioned television viewing (none reported video game play) as a typical routine. One mother from the low SES group said, “...I let them watch TV for a little bit and it’s bedtime.” Another mother from this group stated, “He has a couple of game systems, so I allow him to either play the game or watch TV for a half an hour.” Similar statements were made in the other two

SES groups, but at lower frequency (see Table 11). For example, a mother in the middle SES group said in reference to her daughter, “She watches TV for a little bit, she might play the Wii.” A mother in the high SES group said that her daughter was “allowed to watch a movie or something if she wants.”

4.2.1.2 Cognitive stimulation

As with the family routines findings, the one-way analysis of variance revealed no significant differences between the SES groups on the reading aloud routine scale (Table 10). The item analysis of the reading aloud routine scale showed that the high SES mothers reported more often changes in reading aloud routines over time. Sixty three percent of high SES mothers reported that their reading aloud routines have changed over time, whereas 25% of middle SES and 40% of low SES mothers reported that this routine has changed over time. In the qualitative data, the frequency of reporting of reading activities differed among SES groups. Eighty-eight percent of the high SES mothers reported reading as a frequent routine, compared with 70% of mothers with low SES and 63% of mothers with middle SES (see Table 11). There were no differences in the description of the reading activities among the groups during the interview. Across SES groups, most mothers described reading as part of the bedtime routine. A mother from the low SES group stated, “He gets in the shower, gets his clothes on, his night clothes. We read; I let him know that we have to do some reading, like we do not go to sleep without reading.” From the middle SES group, a mother stated, “We read for half an hour, then they’re set to take baths, then we’re going to bed.” Finally, a mother from the High SES group said, “[My children] would brush their teeth and then shower, bath, and then one of us would read a story to them and/or have them read the story.”

4.2.2 Parent involvement in school

The parent involvement in school data was captured only in the semi-structured interviews. To assess potential differences in parent involvement in school, a matrix coding query was performed with the three SES groups. The type of interaction most frequently reported within each group was communication with schools and teachers (Table 12). The second most frequently reported type of interaction with the school was school event attendance. There were no clear differences between SES groups in the reporting of school event attendance. There were also no differences in the description of the aforementioned interactions. The matrix coding query performed with the parent involvement codes and the SES groups displayed a difference in the methods of communicating with schools and teachers (Table 12). Mothers with high SES used written communication more often than the other two groups, in the form of either email or handwritten notes. All three groups mentioned using the phone, but mothers in the low SES group reportedly used this form of communication more often than the other two groups.

Table 12. Most Frequently Reported Parent Involvement in School Codes for SES Groups

Parent Involvement in School	Low SES		Middle SES		High SES	
		Cases <i>n</i> =10		Cases <i>n</i> =8		Cases <i>n</i> =8
Type of Interaction	Communication	9	Communication	8	Communication	8
	School Event Attendance	2	School Event Attendance	3	School Event Attendance	3
Type of Communication	Phone	9	Phone	6	Phone	5
	Written Messages	2	Written Messages	3	Written Messages	5

Beyond the examination of the frequency in communication methods employed, the potential differences in the content of these interactions were explored through a review of the

minor codes titled proactive and reactive involvement. A matrix coding query revealed a difference in the frequency of proactive and reactive involvement between the SES groups (Table 13). The majority of parents from each SES group reported proactive involvement, with the high SES group reporting proactive involvement most. As mentioned previously in the research aim one parent involvement in school result section (p. 56), content differences found within proactive involvement were labeled as either preventative or responsive. There were no clear differences among SES groups in the frequency of preventative-proactive involvement.

Table 13. Frequency of Proactive and Reactive Interview Codes for SES Groups

Involvement	Low SES <i>n</i> =10	Middle SES <i>n</i> =8	High SES <i>n</i> =8
Proactive	6	6	7
Preventative	3	3	2
Responsive	5	3	5
Reactive	6	3	1
Positive	3	0	0
Negative	4	2	1

There were also no differences between the SES groups in the description of preventative proactive involvement. Most parents across all three groups described early and continuous efforts to assess the school and their child’s progress.

I mean, I introduce myself to everybody, gave everybody my phone number. “You need to call me in reference to...Evan is out of sorts at recess.... Call me! It doesn’t matter when.” So you have to initiate as a parent, you have to initiate a positive relationship to get one back.... – *Low SES mother*

And I let the teacher know that from the very beginning; I’m here, I’m always open, you know, be honest with me. If she’s struggling in an area, let me know what I can do at home

to support what you're doing in the classroom, and I'll let her know the same thing. –
Middle SES mother

She and I had actually communicated quite a bit about my daughter at the beginning of the school year. Just because I wanted to kind of be aware what was going on with her and if there were any problems I wanted to be on top of that. – *High SES mother*

However, in respect of responsive-proactive involvement, there were differences in the frequency of reporting across groups; the high SES group was reporting at a higher rate than the other two groups (Table 13). Sixty-three percent of the high SES group, 50% of the low SES group, and 38% of the middle SES group mentioned responsive involvement. In addition to differences in the frequency of reporting of responsive-proactive involvement, there were content differences in descriptions between the groups. Most parents in the low and middle SES groups discussed safety and behavior concerns.

I went down to the school and tried to get her switched out of the classroom to the other first grade class because of [a male classmate] but they said that the other class was full and they would try to do what they can do. – *Low SES mother*

[My son] always gets a U in music and it's because...she says he talks too much and he doesn't listen to her. ...so we ... surprised him one day and went up to the class and sat in the music class. –*Middle SES mother*

By contrast, academic concerns featured most commonly among the high SES parents.

I have told her that I had a little bit of a concern, which she is only six, but her biggest thing right now that I have been noticing, she's been doing for a while and again it's her age. She flips her letters a lot. – *High SES mother*

The matrix coding query not only revealed differences in the proactive involvement between SES groups, but in the frequency of reactive involvement across SES groups as well (Table 13). Sixty percent of mothers in the low SES discussed reactive involvement, while only 25% of mothers in the middle SES and 13% mothers in the high SES discussed reactive involvement. However, despite these frequency differences, all three SES groups' of both positive and negative reactive involvement centered on student behavior.

...for the whole week they get green, red or yellow. Green is good, yellow is in-between, and red is bad. So say if she starts off red, you know, and she makes it to green [the teacher will] call and say, "Well she started out having a bad day but she made good choices, she turned it around and she turned it into green." He'll let you know if it is good or bad. –

Low SES mother

A mother from the middle SES group stated, "They just kept calling and she kept getting phone calls and they would call and say [my daughter] was cutting up." One mother from the high SES group cited an occurrence related to student behavior. She said, "[The teacher] called on the phone, she was like 'this happened with your child, I know it wasn't him but somebody else told him to do it. As a result he's in trouble.'" Only one parent in the entire sample reported reactive involvement with a focus on the child's academic performance. This mother, from the low SES group, stated, "[my son's] teacher will call me and ask me, you know if [I] wouldn't mind to come in to see how Joe does his reading skills or his spelling skills." In short, most teachers and school personnel contacted parents to discuss student behavior, and low SES mothers mentioned school initiated contact more often than both middle and high SES mothers.

4.2.3 Parent beliefs and expectations

A one-way analysis of variance was performed with the SES groups on parent expectations and beliefs as solicited by the questionnaire items. The ANOVA results revealed a significant difference in future education expectations (Table 10). High SES mothers on average had greater education expectations for their children than mothers with low SES. There was no significant difference between mothers with middle SES and those with high SES ($p=.75$), nor between mothers with middle SES and those with low SES ($p=.15$). However, the middle SES group on average had greater education expectations for their child than the low SES group. Finally, there were no significant or observed differences among the SES groups on the reading belief scale. The highest possible score on the reading belief scale was 4.00. The average score for the low SES group was 3.47, for the middle SES group 3.43, and for the high SES group 3.46. All three groups reported positive literacy experiences and a strong belief in the importance of literacy, as demonstrated from their high scores on the reading belief scale.

4.2.3.1 Education beliefs

As stated previously, there were no items in the questionnaire or semi-structured interview directly prompting parents to discuss their education beliefs. However, in the interviews, parents frequently expressed strong views on the importance of education and educational quality as a function of school type. Assessment of the education belief interview codes across the SES groups exposed two prominent codes (i.e., public urban neighborhood schools are of poor quality, and education leads to economic gain), occurring at different rates among the SES groups (Table 14). The high SES group most frequently discussed the poor quality of public urban neighborhood schools. Seventy-five percent of the high SES mothers spoke of their dissatisfaction with the

quality of public urban neighborhood schools. The other two groups also mentioned the poor quality of neighborhood schools but at a much lower frequency. Forty percent of the low SES and only 20% of the middle SES group brought up this theme.

Table 14. Most Frequently Reported Parent Belief and Expectations Codes for SES Groups

Parent Beliefs and Expectations	Low SES	Cases <i>n</i> =10	Middle SES	Cases <i>n</i> =8	High SES	Cases <i>n</i> =8
Parent Expectations of Teachers & Schools	Effective Teaching	10	Effective Teaching	7	Effective Teaching	7
	Communication	9	Communication	8	Communication	6
Education Beliefs	Urban Neighborhood School Poor Quality	4	Urban Neighborhood School Poor Quality	2	Urban Neighborhood School Poor Quality	6
	Education Leads to economic gains	3	Education leads to economic gains	5	Education leads to economic gains	2
School/Teacher Expectations of Parents ^a	Communicate	6	Communicate or Review Documents	5	Communicate	7
	Assist with Homework	5	Assist with Homework	3	Assist with Homework	5
	Home Teaching	6	Home Teaching	3	Home Teaching	4
	Volunteer	3	Volunteer	3	Volunteer	5

Note: ^aOnly 8 total from the Low SES group for this code

Despite frequency differences, mothers across groups provided similar descriptions of the poor quality of public urban neighborhood schools. Parents in all three groups mentioned that public urban neighborhood schools tend to have large student-teacher ratios, “ghetto” families and/or student body, lack of individualized instruction, and lack of variety in the curriculum. The following are descriptions from all three SES groups regarding “ghetto” students and families at public urban neighborhood schools.

I just wanted to get out of the city schools just because I didn’t like it. Because I mean just don’t want him to feel like he has to get picked on in kindergarten and next year he might want to be the bully. And then second grade [he] don’t wanna go to school. And third grade he’s just, who knows what’s going on, because kids out there like four or five [years old] are very very bad. When I say very bad, they cuss, they don’t care, they kick you, they throw stuff at you. ...they’re so young and they’re very bad. –*Low SES mother*

Since it’s a charter school they can be more selective of the students, so if there’s a bad element they can go back to their home school. They only want kids who are smart, who want to excel, whose parents are involved and they tell you that from the beginning that they require involvement from the parent. –*Middle SES mother*

Public Urban Neighborhood School AG was more of a...low, ghetto school. ...The neighborhood bad kids are in that school. So you got all the neighborhood little bad kids in one school compared to Partial Magnet C, which are the parents who want their children to learn. You got parents right now where their kids are over in Public Urban Neighborhood School AG and they don’t care. –*High SES mother*

The majority of middle SES mothers reported that education was associated with economic gains, more so than the other two groups. Only 30% of mothers with low SES and 13% of those

with high SES discussed this theme. Although there were differences in the frequency among SES groups, there were no differences in content.

Bottom point that I'm trying to say is that education is the only way for your future...the only way for you to support yourself in the near future. It takes...you have to go to school in order to get an education...in order to find or do a good job...or find that perfect career.
– *Low SES mother*

[My dad] cleaned office buildings because he didn't have that education. He always told me, "Get your education and it will be easier for you. You won't have to do all this labor and shovel so hard for pennies." So he taught me that working hard...you get what you want. You reap what you sow. – *Middle SES mother*

Only one mother from the high SES group endorsed this code of education leading to economic gains. The high SES mother spoke of the economic benefits of her own educational attainment. She stated that "the more education that [she] had would be helpful for [her] to be able to run a more successful business."

4.2.3.2 Parent expectations of school and teachers

The matrix coding query identified two prominent themes in parent expectations for teachers and schools across SES groups: (1) effective teaching, and (2) communication (Table 14). Expectation of effective teaching was reported by 100% of low SES parents, 88% in the middle and high SES groups. There were no clear differences between groups, in frequency or content, with regard to the expectation of effective teaching. Parents from all three groups expected teachers to prepare their child for the next academic challenge, such as a new grade or college. Some parents, again across all three groups, also mentioned an expectation that teachers make adjustments when needed to assist their child in learning.

I expect her to help Anthony go from one level to the next. Go through the kindergarten process. Master the things that are necessary in the curriculum for kindergarten and to help him gradually get ready for first grade. –*Low SES mother*

I pretty much expect them to teach my child. ...It's like they tell you what your child should know after they complete a certain grade and I expect for my child to have touched upon those different subjects or topics and have them be familiar with it. –*Middle SES mother*

I think [children] have different learning styles. Like my one daughter, Emma, the one who the interview is about, she picks up things like that [snaps fingers]. You tell her one thing and it's just like bam, bam. She's just on it. The other daughter, it just takes her a little bit longer but she's still doing really well too. I like [teachers] to cater to different learning styles, not to just be solely lecture or solely visual or whatever but to be sensitive to that. –*High SES mother*

Communication, the second most frequently discussed parent expectation for schools and teachers, was reported frequently across all three groups: 90% for low SES, eight out of eight for middle SES, and seven out of eight for the high SES group. As seen with effective teacher, no clear differences surfaced among SES groups in the frequency or content of communication from the school and teachers. Parents expected routine communication on their child's academic progress, and to be informed of opportunities for parental assistance. One mother from the low SES group stated that she expects the teacher to, “communicate with [her]. Keep [her] up to date on things that [she] can do as a parent to help [her son]. Keep [her] in the loop on his development and anywhere that he may be struggling.” Mothers from the middle SES and high SES groups expressed a similar sentiment. A mother from the middle SES group stated, “I expect [the teacher] to communicate with me. That was, that's my biggest thing, like whenever she has a problem,

whether it be good, bad, or indifferent.” A mother from the high SES group said she expected the teacher to:

... just have an open communication with us, if you need something from me I need to know that. If there’s something going on with her and her classroom or what have you, I need to know that. I expect there to be a dialogue between the two of us, I mean whether it be the principal or her teacher or what have you, PTA, whatever. I expect there to be an open dialogue there.

4.2.3.3 School and teacher expectations of parents

The matrix coding query for the school expectation of parents exposed similarities and differences across the SES groups. Four codes emerged as prominent themes: (1) communication, (2) home teaching, (3) assisting with homework, and (4) volunteering. There were differences among the groups in the rate of endorsement of these codes. Communication was mentioned most often by high SES mothers (88%), whereas 60% of low SES and 63% of middle SES mothers discussed communication as a school expectation of parents. A small number of parents in the middle SES groups ($n=2$) mentioned that teachers expected them to review documents, but not necessarily correspond with the teacher or school. For example, a mother in the middle SES group stated that the teacher expects parents to review, “a weekly curriculum that she sends home so we know what’s going on for that week.” All of the parents in the low and high SES group discussed a communication exchange between parents and the school. An examination of the content also revealed a difference among the SES groups. The high SES mothers were talking about teachers expecting them to communicate concerns or to assist in providing solutions for issues that may occur in the classroom. The low and middle SES mothers discussed communication in general, relationship building, and reviewing and signing documents.

One low SES mother said:

[The teacher] likes parents who at least take the time maybe even come see her once a month...you know maybe just to wave in, "Hi, how are you doing?" You know, or send a note, "How's my kid doing?" You know some type of parental interaction. ...it's bothersome to only see a parent once a year. Like, you don't even know who this parent is or you only talk to a parent because you got a call because your kid is like so out of control."

Another low SES mother stated:

You're expected to go through their book bag every night, sign off on their sheet.

Anything that [the teacher] sends home that you're supposed to read over and sign, send back. Open communication. She gave us her phone number and her school email, phone number and extension to keep lines of communication open. Anything that requires your attention she expects you to respond to.

A mother from the middle SES group also talked about reviewing documents, signing and returning them. She stated that "[the teachers] ask you to sign different documents and send them back: different homework's and tests that the children may have." The low and middle SES mothers discussed an expectation for parents to communicate for the purpose of building a positive relationship or to respond to teacher requests. In contrast, the high SES mothers also reported teacher interest in responding to parent concerns or suggestions.

A high SES mother said:

You can e-mail [the teacher] directly on the site or she's actually given me her e-mail address where if you have any questions or concerns she's like, you know, post it on the board. If you want something more personal send me an e-mail, I have no problem getting back to you with that.

Another high SES mother discussed the teacher being open to parent suggestions. She stated that “[the teacher] always says like you know if there’s anything you could suggest to help me to help him. You know then just let me know I’m open to it.” While the schools expectation for parents to communicate was a prominent theme for each SES group, high SES mothers were reporting this theme at a higher rate than the other two groups and the description of communication from the high SES mothers differed from the other two groups. Across SES groups teachers wanted parents to be responsive and to have a method for exchanging information, however it seemed that teachers also solicited advice or welcomed conversations about parental concerns from high SES mothers.

Home teaching, another prominent theme, was mentioned most often by low SES mothers, with 75% of this group discussing this theme. Half of the high SES group mentioned this expectation, compared with 38% of the middle SES group. One mother from the low SES group stated that the teacher expects her “to help [her children] read.” Another mother from the middle SES group stated, “[The teacher] expects us to work with our children, read with them.” There was a subtle difference in the content of the home teaching theme among SES groups. Reading with children or assisting children with reading seemed more often the focus in the middle and low SES group. Seventy-eight percent of low and middle SES mothers that reported the school expectation of home teaching specifically referenced an expectation to support literacy development, whereas none of the high income group specifically referenced literacy support. Mothers from the high SES group spoke more generally about assisting with learning or reinforcing academic skills at home. For example, one high SES mother said:

I think they expect the parents to be parents and teachers to their kids. I mean, they want you to sit down and go over exactly what the teacher went over in class so that your child gets it at home as well.

The third most frequently endorsed school expectation of parents was assistance with homework. There were no differences among SES groups in the frequency or content of this code. Mothers from each group described a teacher expectation of parents completing homework with their child and providing assistance when needed. A mother from the low SES group stated that “[the teacher] expects [her] to help [her son] with the homework.” She then went on to say that if “he does his homework wrong and takes it back to school then [the teacher] knows [she is] not helping him because it’s wrong.” Mothers from the high education groups made similar statements. A mother from the middle SES group stated:

[The teachers] send [the child] home with homework but [for the parent] to help the kid with homework. You can’t just tell them to sit down and do it. If you tell them to sit down and do it, they’re not going to learn anything.

A mother from the high SES group said, “[The teacher] expects that we are going over that homework with the kids every night.”

The final code that emerged as prominent for school expectations of parents was volunteering. Mothers in the high SES group were reporting an expectation for parents to volunteer most often. Sixty-three percent of those in the high SES group, 38% of the middle SES, and 38% of the low SES discussed volunteering as an expectation. There were no content differences among groups. Parents discussed fundraising, school event attendance, and parent meetings. A mother from the low SES group stated, “[My children] bring a letter home and then say, ‘We have a parent meeting...’ and I guess they want parents’ ideas on what books...we want

[the students] to read.” A mother from the middle SES group and one from the high SES group mentioned fundraising as an expectation.

But they really expect that you maintain involvement. Not only with your child but with the school, with the things that are going on there, to participate whether it be fundraisers or different activities or different events that they have, they really encourage participation.

–Middle SES mother

They have parent-teacher conferences. Umm, open house, there’s a lot of fundraising activities that go on. So they do expect you to be involved with the fundraisers and also just interact with, you know, just being involved at the different things that happen at the school – the programs, the fundraisers, etc. – *High SES mother*

4.2.4 Research aim two qualitative post hoc analysis

Post hoc analyses were performed for the qualitative results that appeared to differ by SES groups to assess potential alternate explanations of the SES differences. Three variables (i.e., previous parenting experience, child gender, and school enrollment), two of which (previous experience and school enrollment) were not directly asked of participants but captured in the interview data, were examined for their overlap with SES and related family culture codes (e.g. TV routines, cognitive stimulation, proactive involvement).

4.2.4.1 Previous parenting experience

In past literature, formal maternal education was associated with a host of parenting practices that support children’s academic success. In addition to formal methods of education (e.g., post-secondary training), informal maternal education (e.g. previous parenting experience)

may also influence parenting practices (Whiteman, McHale, & Crouter, 2003). During the semi-structured interviews, many mothers discussed lessons learned from previous parenting experiences. Each interview where the mother discussed previous parenting experience (i.e., a child older than the target child) was noted (Table 15). It is also important to note that the mothers with previous parenting experience ($M = 36.6$) were significantly older than those without ($M = 29.6$; $p = .006$).

Table 15. Parenting Experience for SES Groups

Previous parenting	Low SES $n=10$	Middle SES $n=8$	High SES $n=8$
Yes	5	3	3
No	5	5	5

Family routines

In the interview data, mothers in the low SES group discussed television and video game play most often. Post hoc analysis was performed to examine the previous parenting experiences for those reporting TV or video game play as a frequent family routine. The post hoc analysis illustrated in Figure 3 has black bars that represent the mothers within each SES group that reported television or video game play. The subsequent white and gray bars represent the number of experienced and inexperienced mothers within those that reported television or video game play as a typical routine. The post hoc analysis revealed that four fifths of the experienced low SES mothers discussed TV or video game play (Figure 3) compared to one third of the experienced middle and high SES mothers. Previous parenting experience appeared associated with less TV and video game play but only among parents in the high and middle SES group. This finding, of the more experienced low SES mothers reporting television viewing and/or video game play at a

high rate (80%) was unexpected. Since previous parenting experience is an informal measure of education, the expectation was a reduction in television or video game play.

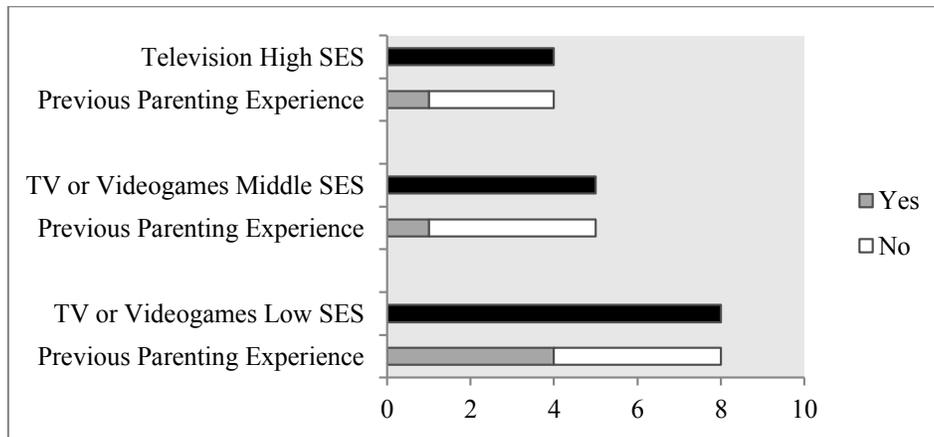


Figure 3. Co-occurrence of Parenting Experience and Family Routine of TV/Video game Play

A second SES difference that emerged from the interview data involved family routines. The middle SES mothers more often than the high and low SES mothers reported a family routine of homework completion before all other activities. Again the post hoc analysis was illustrated with a figure (Figure 4). The black bars represent the mothers within each SES group that reported homework completion before all other activities in the home. The subsequent white and gray bars represent the number of experienced and inexperienced mothers within each SES group that reported the routine of homework first. The post hoc analysis revealed that many of the less experienced mothers, regardless of SES, were reporting this routine (Figure 4). All five of the inexperienced mothers, regardless of SES, were reporting this routine (Figure 4). All five of the inexperienced mothers in the middle SES group reported homework first. Two thirds of the experienced mothers in the middle SES group reported this routine. Previous parenting experience did not seem associated with the reporting of the homework first routine, and thus, does not provide a plausible alternative explanation for the SES differences found in the frequency of reporting homework completion as a priority.

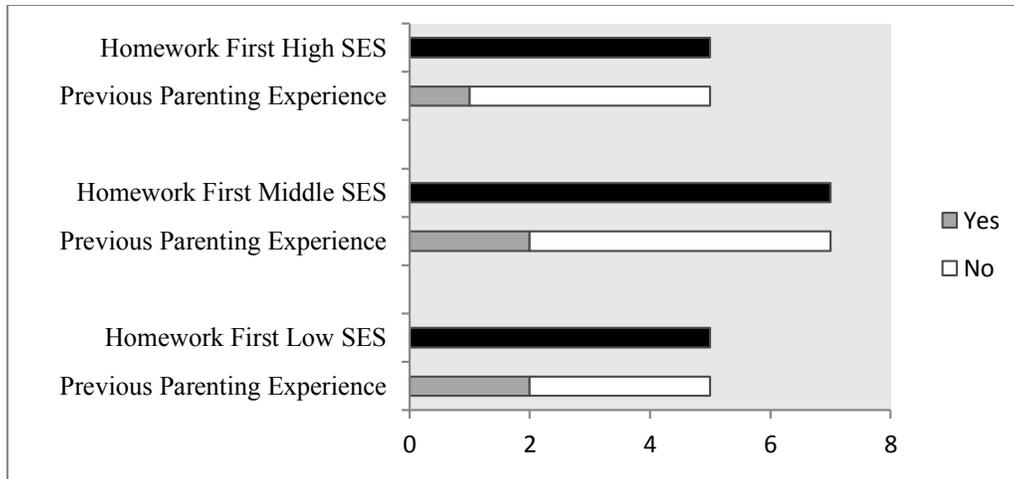


Figure 4. Co-occurrence of Parenting Experience and Family Routine of Homework First

Cognitive stimulation

The analysis of cognitive stimulation in research aim two highlighted a SES difference in the frequency of reporting reading activities in the semi-structure interview. The high SES group discussed joint or child reading activities as a typical routine more often than the middle SES group. All of the parents with previous parenting experience in the middle and high SES group were reporting reading as a typical family routine; four out of the five experienced mothers (80%) in the low SES group reported reading activities (Figure 5). In Figure 5, the black bars represent the mothers within each SES group that reported reading activities. The subsequent white and gray bars represent the number of experienced and inexperienced mothers within each SES group that reported reading activities. All but one of the experienced mothers discussed reading as a typical routine. The majority (86%) of inexperienced mothers did not mention reading; however this was more so true for the low and middle SES groups. The less experienced mothers in the high SES group (80%) reported reading more often than the inexperienced mothers in the middle (40%) and low SES (50%) groups. Both previous parenting experience and high SES seemed positively related to reading routines in the home.

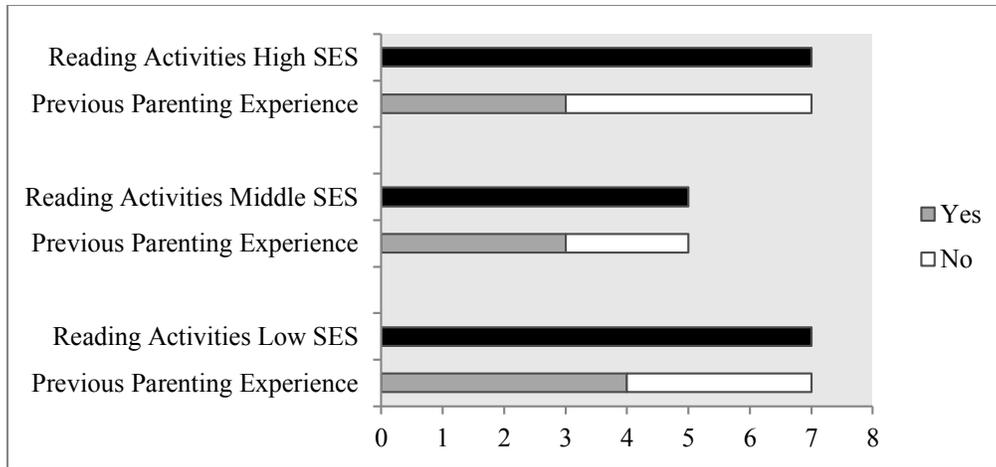


Figure 5. Co-occurrence of Parenting Experience and Family Routine of Reading

Proactive involvement

Mothers in the high SES group also reported greater frequencies of proactive involvement than mothers in the low SES group, but not more than the middle SES mothers. The number of experienced mothers within each SES group reporting proactive involvement was examined to assess the potential of previous parenting experience as an alternative explanation for the SES difference. All mothers with previous parenting experience in the high and middle SES group reported proactive involvement, whereas half of the low SES mothers with previous experience discussed proactive involvement (Figure 6). In Figure 6, the black bars represent the mothers within each SES group that reported proactive involvement. The subsequent white and gray bars represent the number of experience and inexperienced mothers within each SES group that reported proactive involvement. The experienced low SES mothers reported less proactive involvement than experienced mothers in the middle and high SES group. In fact the inexperienced low SES mothers reported proactive involvement at a higher rate than the experienced low SES mothers. Previous parenting experience appeared positively associated with

proactive involvement for mothers with post-secondary education attainment (middle and high SES groups), but negatively associated for those without (low SES group).

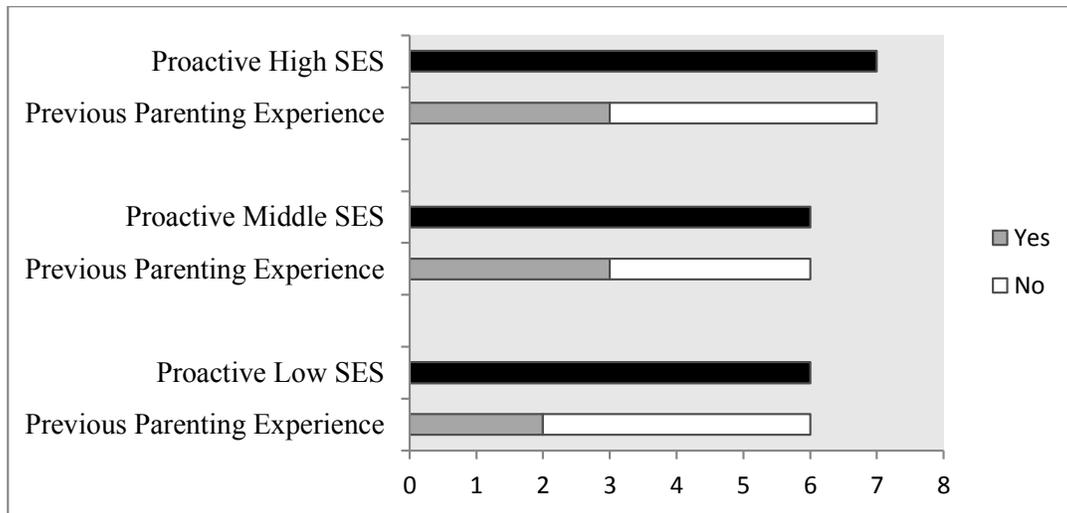


Figure 6. Co-occurrence of Parenting Experience and Proactive Involvement

4.2.4.2 Child gender

Although the sample consisted of 14 mothers (53%) with sons and 12 (47%) with daughters, the distribution of sons and daughters across SES groups was not divided evenly. The low SES mothers had a disproportionate number of male children, with 70% of low SES mothers having sons, compared to 37% of middle SES mothers, and 50% of high SES mothers (Table 16). The low SES mothers were reporting reactive involvement more often than middle and high SES mothers. However, low SES mothers also had more sons. Thus, SES differences in the family culture may actually reflect parental or school responses to the child’s gender.

Table 16. Child Gender for SES Groups

Child Gender	Low SES <i>n</i> =10	Middle SES <i>n</i> =8	High SES <i>n</i> =8
Boy	7	3	4
Girl	3	5	4

Reactive involvement

Black males, particularly those from low-income families, are disproportionately disciplined and identified as having problem behaviors in school (Monroe, 2005). For this reason the child's gender among mothers reporting reactive involvement was assessed for each SES group. Most of the reported reactive involvement within each SES group was reported by mothers with sons (Figure 7). In Figure 7, the black bars represent the mothers within each SES group that reported reactive involvement. The subsequent white and gray bars represent the number of mothers with a male or female child within each SES group that reported reactive involvement. This finding of more reactive involvement for male children was notable for the middle SES group which in total had more girls than boys. For the high SES group, only one mother discussed reactive involvement but this mother also had a son. In the low SES group, the proportion of mothers with sons reporting reactive involvement (67%) was similar to the percentage of mothers overall in the low SES group with sons (70%). Child gender was possibly associated with the frequency of reported reactive involvement. Teachers potentially focus more on males, particularly Black males, which could explain the association between reactive involvement and child gender.

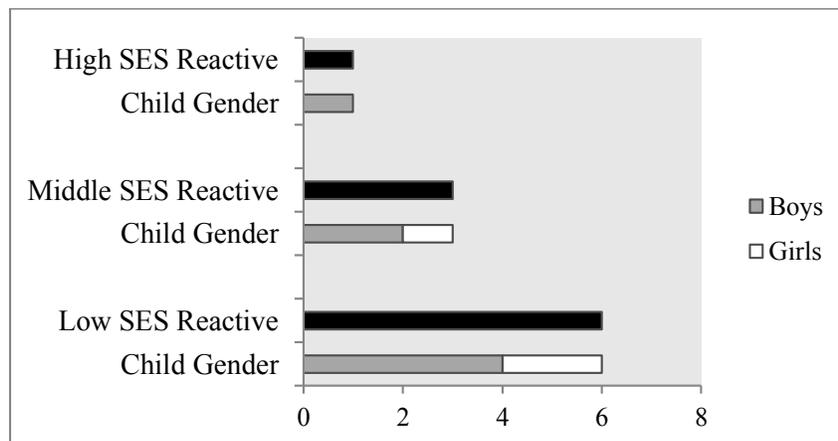


Figure 7. Co-occurrence of Child Gender and Reactive Involvement

4.2.4.3 Elementary school enrollment

As mentioned in section 4.2.4, elementary school enrollment was not directly asked of parents. However, during the semi-structured interview parents provided the names of the schools their children attended. The schools were classified as private, charter, public urban magnet, public urban neighborhood school, and public suburban neighborhood school. In the interviews parents described public schools in general but in some cases more specifically public urban or public urban neighborhood schools as poor quality. For this reason the public schools that were not urban or urban neighborhood schools (charter, magnet, and suburban) were categorized separately. Ultimately the schools were classified into five types of schools: private, charter, public urban magnet, public suburban and public urban neighborhood school. Parents across SES groups seemed to be accessing a variety of options for elementary school (Table 17). The high SES group, however, appeared to access private schools more often than the other two groups. High SES mothers were also predominately (88%) selecting schools that require early and planned enrollment (e.g., magnet, charter, and private schools). Comparatively, half of the low and middle SES mothers were selecting schools with early and planned enrollment (e.g., magnet, charter, and private schools) while the other half had children enrolled in a neighborhood school.

Elementary school enrollment may provide an alternative explanation for the SES differences found in the communication methods utilized with schools and the school expectations of parents. Similar to the previous post hoc results, the analyses are illustrated with figures (Figures 8-12). The black bars represent mothers within each SES group that reported the target code(s) (i.e., communication methods or school expectation of parents). The subsequent bars, either gray or black and white patterned, represent the school enrollment for those within each SES group that reported the target code.

Table 17. Elementary School Enrollment for SES Groups

School Type	Low SES <i>n</i> =10	Middle SES <i>n</i> =8	High SES <i>n</i> =8
Public Urban	2	2	1 ^a
Public Urban Magnet	3	2	2
Public Suburban	3	2	0
Charter	1	1	1
Private	1	1	4

^aChild previously enrolled in private school.

Communication methods

As described earlier in section 4.2.2, low SES mothers discussed phone communication more often than middle and high SES mothers. This method of communication may suggest a preferred method of parents by SES group or a preferred method of schools. To assess patterns by school enrollment, elementary school enrollment for mothers that reported telephone contact with the school was examined (Figure 8). There were no clear patterns in school setting within each SES group. The mothers reporting phone communication had children enrolled in a variety of different school settings.

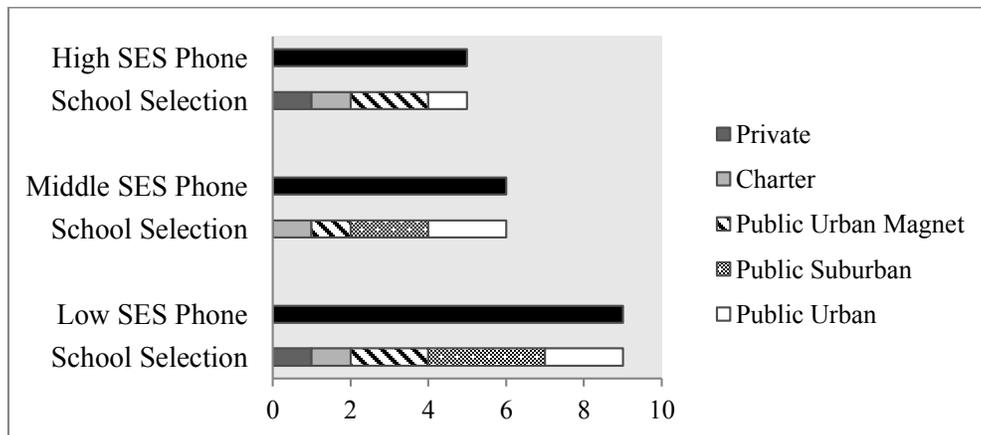


Figure 8. Co-occurrence of School Enrollment and Phone Communication

While the low SES mothers discussed phone communication most often, the high SES mothers reported written communication most often. Again as stated previously with the post hoc

analysis of phone communication, the method of communication may suggest a preferred method for parents or a preferred method of the school. To assess potential patterns by school enrollment, the school enrollment for mothers reporting written communication with the school was then examined (Figure 9).

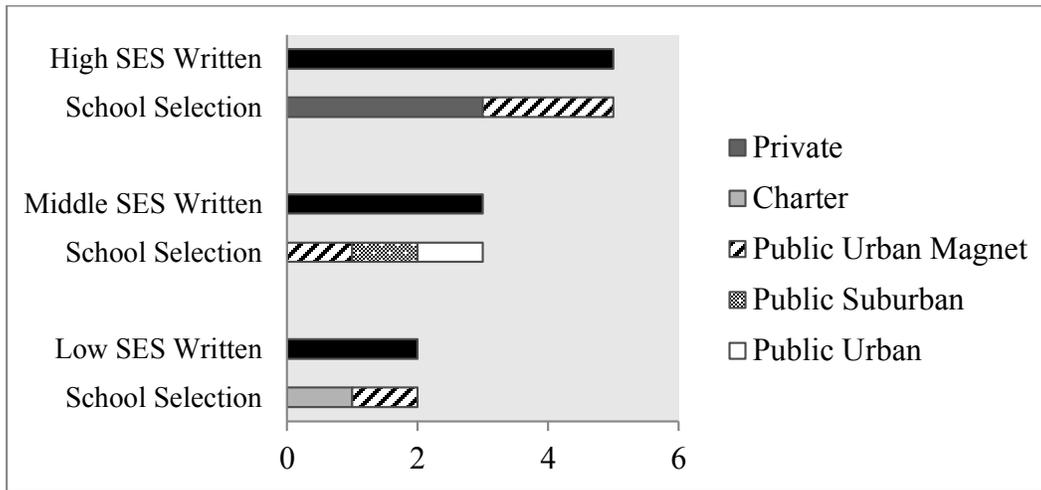


Figure 9. Co-occurrence of School Enrollment and Written Communication

A large portion, 60%, of the mothers in the high SES group that discussed written communication had a child enrolled in a private school. However, the middle and low SES mothers with children enrolled in private school did not mention written communication. There were no other patterns detected in the school enrollment within SES groups for those that discussed written communication. It is important to note that 50% of the mothers in the high SES group had a child enrolled in a private school, and 67% of the children in the sample enrolled in a private school were from the high SES group. Because the low and middle SES mothers with children in private school did not mention written communication and the high SES mothers were more likely to have a child enrolled in private school, it was difficult to ascertain if school enrollment was a plausible alternative explanation for the SES differences found.

School and teacher expectations

High SES mothers reported a school expectation for them to communicate and volunteer more often than the middle and low SES mothers (Figure 10). This pattern in the qualitative data may suggest that schools are more open to high SES mothers' involvement, that high SES mothers perceive their involvement as welcomed, or that the high SES mothers that reported this code have children enrolled in a school that differs from the other groups. To examine the potential for patterns in elementary school enrollment for those that reported an expectation of communication and volunteering within each SES group, post hoc analyses were performed.

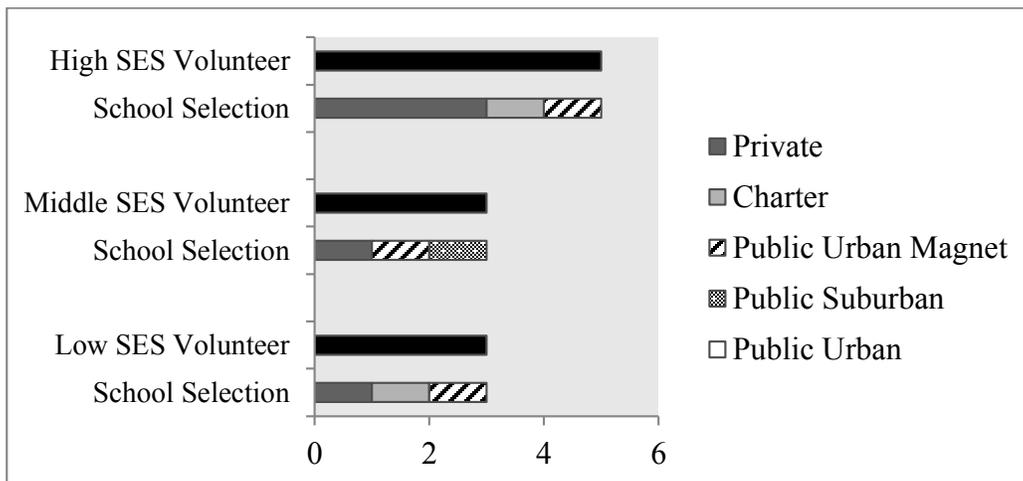


Figure 10. Co-occurrence of School Enrollment and School Expectation of Volunteering

The majority of high SES mothers (60%) that discussed volunteering as an expectation had children enrolled in a private school (Figure 10). The middle and low SES mothers with children enrolled in private school also reported volunteering as an expectation. In addition, within each SES group the percentage of mothers reporting volunteering as an expectation in public urban neighborhood schools (0%) and public suburban (20%) was very low (Figure 10). School type is a potential alternative explanation for the SES differences found in the school expectation of parent volunteering; elementary school enrollment in a private school seemed positively associated with

an expectation for parents to volunteer and enrolled in a neighborhood school negatively associated with an expectation to volunteer.

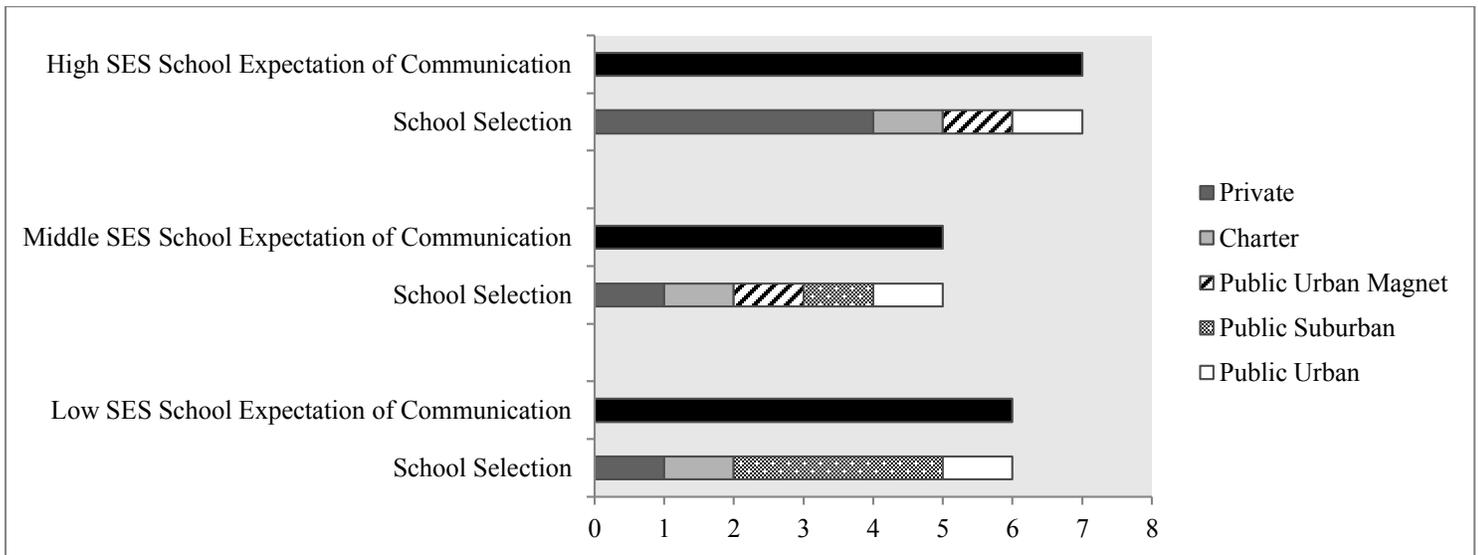


Figure 11. Co-occurrence of School Enrollment and School Expectation of Communication

Similar to the findings in volunteer expectations, all high SES mothers with children enrolled in a private school discussed communication as a school expectation (Figure 11). Furthermore, the middle and low SES mothers with children enrolled in private school also reported communication as an expectation. In addition, all of the low SES mothers with a child in a public suburban school reported communication as a school expectation. One of the two middle SES mothers with a child in a public suburban school also reported communication as an expectation. Moreover, all of the parents across SES groups with children enrolled in a charter school mentioned communication as an expectation. Parents within each SES group with children enrolled in private, public suburban, and charter schools were discussing communication as a school expectation more often than the parents in the urban school district. Only a small number of mothers across SES groups with children in the public urban school district, both magnet and neighborhood schools, mentioned communication as an expectation (27%), even though a large portion (46%) of the sample were enrolled in these types of school. School type is a potential

alternative explanation for the SES differences found in the school expectation of communication; elementary school enrollment in a private, public suburban, or charter schools seemed positively associated with an expectation for parents to communicate.

The final school expectation that appeared to differ in reporting by SES groups was the expectation of home teaching. This pattern may reflect a more prominent feeling among low SES mothers that schools expect them to reinforce academic skills at home, or that low SES children attend schools that ask parents to reinforce academic skills. To assess the potential a pattern in school enrollment on home teaching, the school enrollment type for those reporting an expectation of home teaching within each SES group was examined (Figure 12). As described in section 4.2.3.3, low SES mothers reported an expectation of home teaching more often than the middle SES mothers, but not more often than high SES mothers. All mothers in the low SES group with a child enrolled in a public suburban school discussed home teaching as an expectation ($n=3$), which is half of the low SES mothers that mentioned home teaching as an expectation. In contrast, middle SES mothers with children in public suburban schools did not mention this expectation. This pattern could not be assessed in the high SES group because none of the high SES mothers had children enrolled in a public suburban school. School enrollment or the selection of certain schools by parents may partially explain the observed SES difference in the reporting of home teaching as a school expectation for parents.

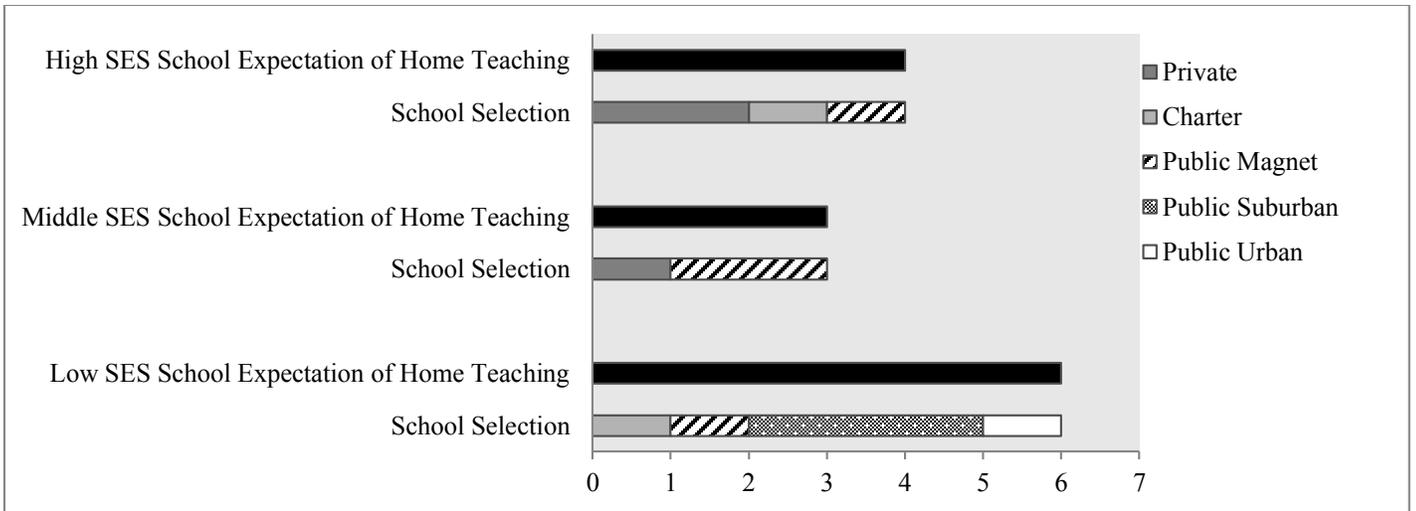


Figure 12. Co-occurrence of School Enrollment and School Expectation of Home Teaching

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE FAMILY CULTURE

The purpose of the present study was to examine family culture, including the home learning environment, parent involvement in school, and parent beliefs and expectations, in a socioeconomically diverse sample of Black parents of elementary school children. Overall, the Black mothers' depictions of their family culture were similar to past studies with White, Latino, and Asian samples (Boutelle, et al, 2003; Hoover-Dempsey, et al, 2005; US Department of Labor, 2012). For example, Boutelle and colleagues (2003) surveyed parents with children enrolled in schools in the Minneapolis metropolitan area and found that most parents stressed the importance of eating together but also had difficulty maintaining this routine as a result of busy schedules. Likewise, Black mothers in the current study described mealtime as a time for togetherness and communication, but it was also described as something families try to do in the midst of managing “crazy” lives. As a result, some mothers described meals with at least one family member missing or having family meals together in a car.

Furthermore, the Black mothers in this sample had a strong desire to be involved in their child's education and believed that schools expected them to be involved through assisting with homework and reinforcement of academic skills at home. In fact, mothers established routines in the home related to these beliefs and expectations: (1) assisting with homework, and (2) joint or child reading. A review of the literature on parent involvement in student homework supports the findings of this study; parents from diverse backgrounds have reported participating in homework routines because of a belief that their involvement was influential and the perception that teachers

expected their involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, et al, 2005). In addition to homework and mealtime routines, mothers frequently described television or video game play as a typical leisure activity for the family, which is consistent with recent national data on leisure activities in families with children. In a national survey of working families, leisure time was most often spent viewing television (3 hours a day on average) (US Department of Labor, 2012). Lastly, the mothers in this sample had an expectation of effective and caring teachers as well as an expectation for to teachers to maintain an open line of communication between home and school. The three prominent parent expectations in this study are similar to those identified in Rich (1998): (1) knowledgeable teachers (2) caring teachers and (3) teachers that facilitate communication between home and school. In short, the patterns found in Black families, were similar to American families and illustrated a family culture invested in educational success.

5.2 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND FAMILY CULTURE

Past research literature on Black families often focused on low-income samples, often without obtaining meaningful measures of education (e.g. degree attainment), or disproportionately represented families with very low income and education (i.e., high school diploma or less) (Garcia Coll et al, 1995). In 2011, 51% of the Black community met the federal guidelines for low-income status (i.e., an income-to-needs ratio at or below 2.00) (US Census Bureau, 2011). In fact, Black Americans from 25 to 34 years of age with a Bachelor degree or less had higher unemployment rates than their non-Black peers with the same level of education (US Census Bureau, 2011). Over the last four decades there have been steady increases in educational attainment without

comparable increases in income for Black Americans, but the research continues to ignore variation within Black families, especially within low-income Black families.

In this sample of Black parents who enrolled at least one of their children in center-based preschool, the levels of educational attainment were fairly high. All but one participant had some college experience. Sixty two percent had an undergraduate certificate or degree, while 27% had post baccalaureate study. Even with this generally high level of educational attainment, 62% of mothers met the federal criteria for low-income status. In fact, 50% of those with a post-secondary certificate or degree, such as associates or bachelors, met the federal guidelines for low-income status. These family characteristics demonstrate that greater education does not necessarily translate into immediate or commensurate increases in income for families.

5.2.1 SES comparisons in home learning environment

In general the relation between SES and the home learning environment was mixed; there were no significant differences in the quantitative data. Typically low-income parents are described as having chaotic and inconsistent routines, such as working multiple nonstandard work shifts (e.g. overnight, evening, or weekend) and utilizing multiple childcare settings (e.g. friends, family, afterschool programs) (Roy, Tubbs, & Burton, 2004). However in the current sample, no significant differences in routines for literacy, dinnertime, or homework emerged across the SES groups from the questionnaire. The chaotic and inconsistent routines typically identified in the research literature on low-income parents may be related to nonstandard work schedules (Joshi & Bogen, 2007) such that low-income parents are more commonly employed in jobs that have nonstandard work schedules (Presser, 2003). The low-income mothers in this study possibly acquired more post-secondary school attendance and used more center-based care than low-

income parents in past research. Low-income parents with atypical work hours often access home based providers (Morrissey, 2007). The majority of low-income working mothers in this sample reported having administrative or classroom positions with standard (9am-5pm) work hours. The lack of difference among SES groups on the quantitative measures of the home learning environment may reflect similarities in standard work schedules across SES groups.

However, SES differences were detected in the qualitative data; the frequency of reporting reading activities, television or video game play, and the routine of homework completion first differed among SES groups. However some of the differences detected were unexpected. For instance the middle SES mothers reported that homework is completed before all other activities, more often than the high and low SES mothers. Many of the middle SES mothers had recent increases in post-secondary education (within the past one to three years), which suggests that they were current or recent college students. Current research literature investigating student mothers found that their attitudes and experiences as a college student are related to their parenting beliefs, particularly with respect to homework. Highly motivated student mothers, both intrinsically and extrinsically, had greater perceived benefits of assisting their child with homework (Ricco, Sabet, & Clough, 2009). College student status or more specifically recent successful completion of a post-secondary education program may influence family homework routines.

In addition, the high SES mothers were reporting reading activities more often than middle SES mothers but not more than low SES mothers. In the current study 40% of the low SES mothers had previous parenting experience. Also the experienced mothers were significantly older than the inexperienced mothers, and all of the experienced mothers reported regularly engaging in reading activities during the semi-structured interview. Possible explanations for this result is that older mothers engage in literacy promoting activities more often than younger mothers (Burgess,

2005) or previous parenting experience positively impacts parenting (Whiteman, McHale, & Crouter, 2003). Thus, the low SES mothers in this study have life and previous parenting experience that could increase the likelihood of a cognitively stimulating home environment.

It is also important to note that the description of reading activities across SES groups seemed for the purpose of reinforcing an academic skill. Serpell et al. (2002) found that Black parents with middle SES described reading as a leisure activity more often than Black parents with low SES. However, only three mothers in this sample, one from each SES group, expressed a love for reading as the reason for promoting literacy activities. Ultimately the act of reading and literacy activities need to become a form of entertainment for families, to ensure frequent engagement in these activities, especially as children get older and begin to read more independently (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Conversely television and video game play were often described as a leisure activity. SES differences were uncovered in the frequency of reporting television and video game play, with the high and middle SES mothers reporting this activity less often than the low SES mothers. The US Department of Labor (2012), *American Time Use Survey* revealed a similar pattern, such that the amount of hours spent viewing television decreased as parents' educational attainment increased. Higher levels of educational attainment are associated with a decrease in television viewing as a leisure activity. However that does not translate into an increase in reading as a leisure activity, which is necessary to ensure frequent engagement in reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Serpell et al, 2002).

5.2.2 SES comparisons in parent involvement in school

Parent involvement in school, only captured through qualitative data, differed in both frequency and content by SES groups. High SES mothers reported proactive involvement in school more

often than the low SES mothers, but not the middle SES mothers. Other studies have also found that high SES Black mothers felt that schools welcomed and valued their input, while low SES Black mothers felt resistant to their involvement from the school (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). In the current study, high SES mothers also reported responsive-proactive involvement that qualitatively differed from the responsive-proactive involvement in the low and middle SES groups. High SES mothers were more often responding to academic concerns (e.g., grades, developmental delays), whereas low and middle SES mothers were responding to safety and behavioral concerns. Past qualitative studies with White and Black parents demonstrated that high SES mothers have resources and knowledge (e.g. social capital) that are valued by schools and enable them to successfully navigate school systems (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lamont & Lareau, 1987; Lareau, 1987). Thus, the high SES mothers in this study may have been more comfortable or better able to discuss academic concerns.

Another interesting finding was the number of experienced and inexperienced mothers reporting proactive involvement. In the high and middle SES groups, all experienced mothers described proactive involvement strategies with teachers and school staff. These high and middle SES mothers shared similar resources in common, namely post-secondary degree attainment, which may have been useful in navigating the education system. In the low SES group, only half of the experienced mothers discussed proactive involvement. Proactive strategies tended to be enacted by the less experienced mothers. Past evidence has repeatedly shown that schools may be resistant to the involvement of low SES minority mothers (Auerbach, 2007; Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Thus, the experienced low SES mothers may have encountered over the years resistance to their involvement from the school and as a result initiate contact (proactive involvement) less.

In addition to the SES differences in the frequency and type of proactive involvement, SES differences emerged in the frequency reactive involvement. The low SES mothers reported reactive involvement more often than the other two groups. However, the low SES mothers also had a higher number of male children. This pattern of male children and reactive involvement presented in the middle and high SES groups as well, which had either an evenly divided number of male and female children, or more daughters than sons. Black males, particularly those from low-income families, are disproportionately disciplined and identified as having problem behaviors in school (Monroe, 2005). Albeit in this sample, low SES mothers reported teachers contacting them to report both positive and negative information about their sons. In fact, positive reactive involvement was only reported for male students. In a meta-analysis of the literature on child gender and student-teacher interactions, Jones and Dindia (2004) found that male students received more attention from teachers than females. Potentially Black male students, more specifically low SES Black male students, may receive more teacher attention, which could have contributed to their mothers' reactive involvement patterns in elementary school.

5.2.3 SES comparisons in parent beliefs and expectations

Even with this very small sample, the high SES mothers had significantly greater future education expectations than the low SES mothers. The middle SES mothers, although not statistically significant $p=.15$, also had greater future education expectations than the low SES mothers. Parents with greater years of education tend to have higher education expectations for their children (Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund, et al., 2004), and this finding seems robust across ethnically diverse samples. Importantly, high parental expectations have been identified as positively associated with reading achievement for elementary and middle school students (Davis-Kean,

2005). High parental education expectations were also associated with a whole host of characteristics that support academic success such as higher student education expectations, higher student academic efficacy, and higher self-regulatory efficacy (e.g. intrinsically motivated, strategic, competent, and self-reactive to academic performance) for students in elementary and middle school (Bandura et al., 1996; Merchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001). Thus, post-secondary educational attainment and the combination of both income and post-secondary attainment are associated with greater future education expectations, and mediate the relationship between SES and child academic performance.

Lastly, school expectations of parents to volunteer and communicate seemed related to the type of school that a child attended. The high SES mothers discussed volunteering and communication more often than both the low and middle SES mothers. In addition, the reporting of volunteering as an expectation was associated with private school enrollment. Furthermore the reporting of communication as an expectation was associated with enrollment in private, charter, or public suburban schools. Parents with children enrolled in the major metropolitan area public school district were reporting the expectation of communication at a much lower rate. Efforts from the school and teachers to communicate and involve parents in their child's education are the strongest predictors of parent involvement for urban district parents (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). In brief, different school types (e.g. private, charter, or public suburban schools) may have different expectations for parents and these expectations predict parent involvement in school more so than SES factors (Dauber & Epstein; 1993).

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Despite the richness of data afforded by this mixed-method study of Black parents, several limitations should be noted for this study. The first set of limitations is in reference to the sample. The sample was small, restricted to one geographic region, and included parents that chose center based care during preschool. Black parents in more rural regions, or parents who elected to stay at home with their preschoolers or use family care providers rather than center base care, may differ in the family cultures they create (Brody & Flor, 1998; Roy, Tubbs, & Burton, 2004). In addition, the current study included no parents with less than a high school diploma or GED, as well as few parents ($n=3$) with graduate or advanced professional training. This restriction in the range of educational attainment as well as the uneven distribution of male children and elementary school enrollment across the SES groups may limit the generalizability (Schutt, 2006). Moreover, the small sample size may also restrict the statistical power of the current findings (Shavelson, 1996).

The second set of limitations involves the study measures. In the interviews, the original routines questions prompted participants for the three most frequent family routines. This question was later changed to ask for a description of a typical day in the home to get a better sense of the home environment, but this change was made after a fourth of the interviews had been completed. In addition, the inclusion of questionnaire items about alternative forms of education such as previous parenting experience, student status, post-secondary education major, and previous work experience would have been useful. Moreover, all data was reported by mothers, which is common in past literature, however additional reporters such as a father, live-in partner or spouse, other adults in the home, and teacher reports on the home learning environment, parent involvement in school, and expectations could provide a more comprehensive description of the family culture.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS

5.4.1 Research

National trends in educational attainment and income within the Black community suggest that a more complex examination of socioeconomic status in relation to parenting practices and beliefs is warranted. Additionally the findings of this study highlight the potential for complex heterogeneity within Black families as a function of SES. Education is associated with higher income, but for a variety of reasons, diversity in educational attainment exists within low-income families in the Black community. These increases in education have implications for parenting practices and beliefs in the home related to academic achievement (e.g. reading routines, proactive involvement, and future education expectations).

These findings also propose additional forms of education to consider when examining parenting practices and beliefs. For example, mothers in the low SES group and mothers in the high SES group appeared similar on the reporting of reading routines in the semi-structured interview. Many of the mothers in the low SES group that reported reading routines had previous parenting experience. Both parenting experience and high SES were associated with more a cognitively stimulating home environment. Also many of the low SES and middle SES mothers had recent increases in post-secondary education (within the past one to three years), which suggests that they were current or recent college students. Current research literature investigating student mothers found that their attitudes and experiences as a college student are related to their parenting beliefs, particularly with respect to homework. Student mothers with high levels of motivation had greater perceived benefits of assisting their child with homework (Ricco, Sabet, & Clough, 2009). In addition, a few mothers in the low SES group mentioned current or previous

work experience in an early childhood education setting. Greater knowledge of child development was associated with more cognitively stimulating home environments for minority mothers (Huang, et al, 2005). Previous work experience, current professional experience, and previous parenting experience are alternative forms of education that might influence the family culture (Huang, et al, 2005; Whiteman, McHale, & Crouter, 2003). When examining the predictors of proximal processes in the home, informal forms of education such as previous parenting experience or work experience in education should be considered.

Furthermore, fathers outside the home, live-in partners, spouses, and additional family members in the home may shape the family culture as well. Parents in the same home may have different styles or view the family culture differently (Winsler, Madigan, Aquilino, 2005). In order to provide a better understanding of the needs within families, a more complex examination of family characteristics is essential.

This study also brings attention to the benefit of mixed method analyses. Current research on parent involvement often produces mixed results in relation to child academic outcomes, with positive (Fan & Chen, 2001) or null effects (Okpala, Okpala, & Smith, 2001; Reynolds, 1992) often detected. This inconsistency is partially due to the data collection methods. Reports of frequency alone are not meaningful indicators of parent involvement. If a child is having a difficult time in school, parents may be very involved reactively (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). Qualitative assessments of parent involvement are necessary to understanding the nature of parents' interactions with teachers and schools, as well as the potential relationship of these varying kinds of involvement with children's academic outcomes. These qualitative study findings also illustrate the nuances between education and income groups in the description of parent involvement. Parents may engage in analogous types of involvement, but demonstrate subtle differences. For

instance, low and high SES mothers were both engaged in responsive-proactive involvement at similar rates; however the high SES mothers were focused on academic concerns and the low SES mothers on safety or behavior. Future research examining parent involvement should explore the impact on child outcomes of preventative-proactive involvement, responsive-proactive involvement, and more specifically the effect of responsive-proactive with an academic focus compared with responsive-proactive with a safety or behavior focus. Additionally, since school expectations potentially influence the family culture, the strategies that schools and teachers utilize to communicate expectations and the effectiveness of those efforts should be examined.

When discussing socioeconomic factors and their influence in the home, it is important to remember that these variables are complex and change. The complexity and potential for change in SES was evident in this small sample with only one to three years between data collection time points (e.g., increase in income-to-needs ratios from 1.76 to 2.21), which translates into a move from low to middle income status. On average, the amount of income for each household increased but again, the financial resources for a family are complex. An income-to-needs ratio of 2.21 for a family of four in 2011 was approximately \$49,394. Families with an income-to-needs ratio above 1.85 are not eligible for income based programs that provide assistance, such as the Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, or the school program for free or reduced lunch (US Department of Agriculture, 2013). An income-to-needs ratio of 2.21 is still a limited amount of financial resources, on the cusp or margins of low-income status especially when considering potential financial obligations for children outside of the household (e.g. child support) or an increase in family expenses as a result of becoming ineligible for supportive programs. In contrast to family income, educational attainment is a resource that will never decrease. For this reason the investments that parents make in the family culture as a result of their own educational

attainment may be more stable than income-based investments over time. In a study of mothers in a welfare-to-work program small increases (i.e., 8 months) in maternal education was associated with increases in school readiness skills and a more cognitively stimulating home (Magnuson, 2003). Thus it is important to not only understand the investments that parents make as a result of educational attainment, but also when those investments will come to fruition (e.g. during enrollment, after graduation).

5.4.2 Practice

Programs and schools that serve Black families should recognize the diversity within the Black community and within low-income families. Parents may have high education and low income, previous parenting experience, knowledge of child development through training, or access to others with high education and/or high income (social capital). Teachers and professionals interacting with parents across racial/ethnic and SES groups should make an effort to know and relationship build with parents (Epstein, 2001). An effective partnership between parents and schools support academic success for Black children (Jeynes, 2003). It is important to note that the majority of parents in the sample wanted to be informed of academic progress and student behavior. All teacher initiated communication in this study focused on student behavior. Parents should be made aware of academic progress at the same rate, if not more often than they are made aware of behavior. Teachers are in the best position to initiate and foster a relationship with parents, but very often do not have the skills needed (Caspe et al, 2011; Epstein, 2001). Higher education teacher training programs need to incorporate more extensive training for teachers on partnering with families with an emphasis on minority families and families of varying socioeconomic status.

5.5 CONCLUSION

On the whole, the combination of higher education and increased income provides parents with greater resources for school selection and response proactive involvement. High SES parents were not restricted in their school selection by a lottery system, a method utilized for enrollment into public urban magnet and charter schools with limited space available. High SES parents were in a better position to access private schools, and were initiating contact with the school to advocate for services related to academic performance (e.g. tutoring, developmental testing, and grades), unlike the other SES groups,. Also high SES and middle SES mothers had greater education expectations for their child than low SES mothers, and greater expectations are generally associated with positive academic outcomes and behaviors (Davis-Kean, 2005). Mothers across SES groups were responding to teacher expectations with supportive practices in homework and reading. Furthermore, parents across SES groups had the same expectations of schools: (1) effective teaching, (2) communication, and (3) care for students. Unfortunately, others have found that teachers are not always equipped or prepared to effectively meet the parent expectation of communication (Caspé et al, 2011).

In short, parent education, in this study and throughout the literature, was associated with parent involvement in school and future education expectations. VanderVen (2003) discussed the oxygen principle which outlines the importance of focusing on parents in an attempt to improve child outcomes. The oxygen principle references the instructions provided to parents traveling with children on an airplane; parents are instructed to give themselves oxygen first before assisting children. Likewise, when thinking about Black children's academic success and the influence of the family culture, the academic experiences of parents are influential. The oxygen principle takes Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1989) one-step further. The intent is not to intervene

with the target child at the mesosystem level, but with the adult with the intent to improve adult development. Meeting the needs of parents better equips them to support their child's academic success. Therefore, supporting Black parents in completing high school and post-secondary education is imperative. Parents with post-secondary educational attainment have resources and social capital that assist in navigating the school system (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Moreover, the majority of parents wanted to assist with homework and be involved in their child's education; unfortunately as children get older and schoolwork becomes more complicated the ability of low SES parents to provide support may be limited (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005). Thus, a focus in both practice and research is needed. In practice, as mentioned previously, the support of parent educational attainment would better equip parents to support their child's academic success, but teachers could also benefit from training on how to partner with parents. Additionally in research, a better understanding of the parental investments that parents make as a result of educational attainment and when those investments begin is essential.

Finally the qualitative data presented findings that complemented the quantitative findings. The use of a mixed method approach, allowed the revelation of nuances or lack thereof that would be undetected in quantitative findings alone. Specifically, differences in the description of parent involvement in school were found in the content when the frequency of reporting appeared similar. The qualitative data also allowed for the discovery of unanticipated themes and provided a context and voice to the participants in the sample.

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Before we begin, we would like to hear how _____ has been doing?
 - a. How has _____ adjusted to school?
 - b. Probe – How has _____ done academically and behaviorally?

2. Now we'd like to start by asking you to think back to when you chose a preschool for (child's name). Could you walk us through the process by which you chose your child's preschool?
 - a. What were the major factors that influenced your selection of childcare/school? (*Interviewer Note: Minimum of 3*) Explain.
 - b. Of those, which was the top concern? (*Interviewer Note: Maximum of 1*)
 - c. If you had to do it again, would you do anything differently? If yes, describe what would be different.
 - d. If you had to do it again, would you choose the same preschool? If no, describe the preschool you would choose now.
 - e. Probe - Did the Keystone Stars rating of the center influence your decision to enroll your child in that center?

3. Now we'd like to ask about how you chose your child's current school. Could you walk us through the process by which you chose your child's school?
 - a. What were the major factors that influenced your selection of childcare/school? (*Interviewer Note: Minimum of 3*) Explain.
 - b. Of those, which was the top concern? (*Interviewer Note: Maximum of 1*)
 - c. If you had to do it again, would you do anything differently? If yes, describe what would be different.
 - d. If you had to do it again, would you choose the same school? If no, describe the school you would choose now.

4. In (child's name) current school, (*Interviewer Note: Specify that we only want to know about the school as a whole and not the teacher, we will ask about the teacher next*)
 - a. How would you describe your relationship with the school?
 - b. What does the school expect from parents?
 - c. What do you expect from the school?

5. In (child's name) current classroom,
 - a. How would you describe your relationship with the teacher (or teachers)?
 - b. What do teachers expect from parents?
 - c. What do you expect from the teacher (or teachers)?

6. What are three activities, routines, or rules that are frequent or important in your home Monday through Thursday?

a. Probe: Why do you do it? Why is it frequent or important?

7. What are three activities, routines, or rules that are frequent or important in your home Friday through Sunday? Why is it frequent or important?

a. Probe: Why do you do it? Why is it frequent or important?

8. What can parents do at home to help children be successful in school?

a. Probe: What did your parent(s) do to help you be successful?

APPENDIX B

FAMILY ROUTINES

Information About Your Family Routines

Think about a typical dinnertime in your family. Choose the response that best describes your family. Please check only one response for each line.

For our family

For our family

Really true	Sort of true		BUT		Sort of true	Really true
—	—				—	—
—	—	1. Some families <i>regularly</i> eat dinner together.	BUT	Other families <i>rarely</i> eat dinner together.	—	—
—	—	2. In some families everyone has a specific role and job to do at dinnertime.	BUT	In other families people do different jobs at different times depending on needs.	—	—
—	—	3. In some families dinnertime is flexible. People eat whenever they can.	BUT	In other families everything about dinner is scheduled; dinner is at the same time every day.	—	—
—	—	4. In some families, everyone is expected to be home for dinner.	BUT	In other families you never know who will be home for dinner.	—	—
—		5. In some families people feel strongly about eating dinner together.	BUT	In other families it is not that important if people eat together.	—	—
—	—	6. In some families dinnertime is just for getting food.	BUT	In other families dinnertime is more than just a meal; it has special meaning.	—	—

—	—	7. In some families dinnertime has always been and always will be a regular family event.	BUT	In other families dinnertime has changed over the years as child grow up and schedules change.	—	—
—	—	8. In some families there is little planning around dinnertime.	BUT	In other families dinnertime is planned in advance.	—	—

*The Dinnertime Routine Scale is part of the Family Ritual Questionnaire (Fiese & Kline, 1993)

Think about the way homework is typically done in your family.

For our family

For our family

Really true	Sort of true				Sort of true	Really true
—	—	1. Some families regularly do homework together.	BUT	Other families rarely do homework together.	—	—
—	—	2. In some families, the same parent or older child always helps the youngest child with her/his homework	BUT	In other families, different people help the child with homework depending on who is available.	—	—
—	—	3. In some families, the timing of homework is flexible. Children get homework done whenever they can	BUT	In other families, homework is strictly scheduled; it is done at the same time every school day.	—	—
—	—	4. In some families, parents feel strongly that they should check the children's homework.	BUT	In other families, It is not that important whether parents check the homework or not.	—	—
—	—	5. In some families, parents feel strongly that they should help with children's homework	BUT	In other families, it is not that important whether parents help with homework or not.	—	—
—	—	6. In some families, homework time is just for getting the task assigned by the school teacher done.	BUT	In other families, doing homework is more than just a task assigned by the teacher, it has special meaning.	—	—

*Homework Routine Scale (Serpell, et al., 2002)

Think about reading activities typically done in your family.

—	—	7. In some families, homework has been a regular event ever since the oldest child started going to school and will remain that way until the youngest finished school.	BUT	In other families homework time has changed over the years as children grow up and schedules change.	—	—
—	—	8. In some families, there is little planning around homework (time).	BUT	In other families, homework (time) is planned in advance.	—	—
For our family				For our family		
Really true	Sort of true				Sort of true	Really true
—	—	1. Some families <i>regularly</i> read aloud together.	BUT	Other families <i>rarely</i> read aloud together.	—	—
—	—	2. In some families, the same parent or older child always reads aloud to the youngest child.	BUT	In other families, different people read aloud to the child at different times depending on who is available.	—	—
—	—	3. In some families, the timing of reading aloud is flexible. People read aloud whenever they get the (a) chance.	BUT	In other families, reading aloud is very definitely scheduled; it happens at the same time every day.	—	—
—	—	4. In some families, people feel strongly about reading aloud together.	BUT	In other families, it is not that important whether people read aloud or not.	—	—
—	—	5. In some families, reading aloud is just so others can hear.	BUT	In other families, reading aloud is more than just information; it has special meaning.	—	—
—	—	6. In some families, reading aloud has always been and will always be a regular family event.	BUT	In other families, the time at which people read aloud has changed over the years as children grow up and schedules change.	—	—
—	—	7. In some families, there is little planning around reading aloud.	BUT	In other families reading aloud is planned in advanced.	—	—

*Reading Aloud Routine Scale (Serpell, et al, 2002)

APPENDIX C

PARENT READING BELIEFS

Reading with Children

Listed below are several statements about parent's attitudes and beliefs. Circle the answer that is closest to your feelings. Please answer each question in response to your child. There are no right or wrong answers. Your own opinions are important to us.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. As a parent, I play an important role in my child's development.	1	2	3	4
2. There is little I can do help my child do well in school.	1	2	3	4
3. My child learns many important things from me.	1	2	3	4
4. I would like to help my child learn, but I don't know how.	1	2	3	4
5. I am my child's most important teacher.	1	2	3	4
6. Schools are responsible for teaching children, not parents.	1	2	3	4
7. Parents need to be involved in their children's education.	1	2	3	4
8. When my child goes to school, the teacher teaches my child everything my child needs to know so I don't need to worry.	1	2	3	4
9. Children do better in school when their parents also teach them things at home.	1	2	3	4
10. I find it boring or difficult to read with my child.	1	2	3	4
11. I enjoy reading with my child.	1	2	3	4

12. I have good memories of being read to when I was a child.	1	2	3	4
13. Reading with my child is a special time that we love to share.	1	2	3	4
14. My child does not like to read together.	1	2	3	4
15. I feel warm and close to my child when we read.	1	2	3	4
16. I have to scold or discipline my child when we try to read.	1	2	3	4
17. I want my child to love books.	1	2	3	4
18. I don't read with my child because he or she won't sit still.	1	2	3	4
19. I read with my child whenever he or she wants.	1	2	3	4
20. When we read I try to sound excited so my child stays interested.	1	2	3	4
21. Children learn new words, colors, names, etc. from books.	1	2	3	4
22. Reading helps children be better talkers and better listeners.	1	2	3	4
23. My child knows the names of many things he or she has seen in books.	1	2	3	4
24. When we read, I want my child to help me tell the story.	1	2	3	4
25. I ask my child a lot of questions when we read.	1	2	3	4
26. When we read, I want my child to ask questions about the book.	1	2	3	4
27. When we read we talk about the pictures as much as we read the story.	1	2	3	4
28. I read with my child so he/she will learn the letters and how to read simple words.	1	2	3	4
29. Parents should teach children how to read before they start school.	1	2	3	4
30. When my child was in preschool, they were too young to learn about reading.	1	2	3	4
31. When we read, I have my child point out different letters or numbers that are printed in the book.	1	2	3	4
32. I try to make the story more real to my child by relating the story to his or her life.	1	2	3	4
33. Stories help build my child's imagination.	1	2	3	4

34. My child learns lessons and morals from the stories we read.	1	2	3	4
35. Reading helps children learn about things they never see in real life (like Eskimos and Polar Bears).	1	2	3	4
36. My child learns important life skills from books (like how to follow a cooking recipe, how to protect themselves from strangers).	1	2	3	4
37. Even if I would like to, I'm just too busy and too tired to read with my child.	1	2	3	4
38. I don't read with my child because we have nothing to read.	1	2	3	4
39. I don't read with my child because there is no room and no quiet place in the house.	1	2	3	4
40. I don't read with my child because I have other, more important things to do as a parent.	1	2	3	4
41. Some children are natural talkers, others are silent. Parents do not have much influence over this.	1	2	3	4
42. Children inherit their language ability from their parents, it's in their genes.	1	2	3	4

*Modified Version of the Parent Reading Belief Inventory (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994). Note: Written permission from Barbara DeBaryshe is required to use this instrument.

APPENDIX D

CODING GLOSSARY

Code	Brief Definition	Full Definition	Example(s)
HLE	home learning environment	Activities or routines that support academic achievement	See minor codes below
HLE-LA	literacy promoting activities	Activities that promote or are intended to promote literacy development	See codes below
HLE-LAC	child initiated literacy activities	Literacy promoting activities that the child requests or initiates	“Whenever they bring me a book I read them.”
HLE-LAP	parent initiated literacy activities	Literacy promoting activities that the parent implements or initiates	“I let him know that we have to do some reading”
HLE-LA-PCR	parent and child reading together	Anytime that a parent and child are reading together. The parent and/or child may be reading the story aloud.	“I try to read to them, out of seven days maybe four days a week”
HLE-LA-JR	child and another person (not parent) reading together	Anytime that a child and another individual are reading together. The child and/or the other individual may be reading the story aloud.	“it’s getting to the point now where [the older sister] is reading to [the younger one].”
HLE-LA-CR	child reading independently	The child is reading independently without an adult or another individual participating in the activity.	“During the school night, he’s reading”
HLE-LA-PR	parent reading independently	The parent expresses an interest in reading or discusses their independent reading in the home.	“I am an avid reader”
HLE-LA-TV	watching television shows that promote literacy or with the intent to promote literacy	Literacy promoting television shows or watching television with the intent to promote literacy development.	“Like I’ll put the closed captioning on in the TV so she can see the words people are talking and she’ll go, ‘Oh

			that's a star word.' Oh that's you know, 'has'. 'That's a star word!'"
HLE-LA-GAM	playing board/card games that promote literacy	Literacy promoting board and/or card games. Any non-electronic game that involves early literacy skills or literacy skills.	"Once a week I have him sit down here and I have him make up a story about going to the store, or a loaf of bread, or the table, or something he might find amusing"
HLE-LA-VGAM	playing video/computer games that promote literacy	Literacy promoting electronic games. These activities may include video games, computer games, or some other use of interactive media.	"There's a program called Star Fall and ... Lucy picks out the words that correspond to what the object is"
HLE-LA-ART	visual or performing art activities that promote literacy	Visual art (e.g. drawing, photography, ceramics) or performing art (e.g. singing, dance, instrumental) with literacy building components. These activities may include singing songs, listening to songs, writing letters or words while drawing.	"he has choir rehearsal"
HLE-FR	family routines	Activities that occur regularly with multiple members of the family. Regularly may be as frequent as each day, weekly, monthly, or every summer.	See codes below
HLE-FRC	child initiated family routines	Routines that the child requests or initiates.	"Yah, I do because if I don't eat they'll ask 'What's wrong? You're not eating today.' I don't want them to think just because I'm not eating with them something is going to" always be wrong, because they always ask me if I don't eat. "What's wrong with you? You're not eating dinner with us." I made a habit out of I eat with them.

HLE-FRP	parent initiated family routines	Routines that the parent implements or initiates.	“I let them just have a break. Because were on such a routine during the week.”
HLE-FR-AH	parent assists with homework	Parents provide assistance with homework. This may be as little as check for errors and having the child make corrections or reviewing concepts and working through the assignment with them.	“I’ll usually help my little one cause he, he gets frustrated so easily. “
HLE-FR-SH	parent supervises homework	Parents monitor homework time and completion. They have a set time for homework completion and check for completeness but do not provide assistance.	“I don’t usually even have to check it but I sometimes will because I know [my oldest daughter] already probably checked it and made sure she’s done it.”
HLE-FR-HF	homework completed as soon as you come home	The family has a routine of completing homework as soon as they come home. A snack or meal may be provided when the child comes home but no “down” time or leisure time prior to homework completion.	“as soon as you come home you do your homework immediately.”
HLE-FR-DTF	homework completed after a little down time	The family has a routine of completing homework after some “down” time or relaxation. Children are able to watch television or play prior to completing homework.	“They’ll come in and we’ll let them relax for a little while, like watch one of their favorite shows or whatever.”
HLE-FR-CH	family members complete chores	The family has a routine of completing chores. Children and adults participate in this activity.	“At night I make them clean up all their mess”
HLE-FR-MT	family members eat together	The family has a routine of eating together. At least one parent and one child eating together.	“every day we eat dinner together as a family”
HLE-FR-SPE	family members attend sporting events	The family has a routine of attending sporting events (e.g. physical activity or competition) together.	“If we don’t do anything, we do get dressed and go to karate for like an hour.”

HLE-FR-RA	family members attend religious activities	The family has a routine of attending religious activities or services together.	“Sunday’s is usually, you know, when we go to church”
HLE-FR-ART	family members engage in visual and performing art activities	Visual art (e.g. drawing, photography, ceramics) or performing art (e.g. theater, dance) without literacy components.	“we paint, uh we make hand molds and put them on the window”
HLE-FR-TV	family members watch television or go to the movies	The family has a routine of watching television together or watching a movie.	“I let them watch TV for a little bit”
HLE-FR-GAM	family members play card and/or board games	The family has a routine of playing card or board games together. This includes all games that are not electronic.	“my kids play a lot of board games with their older siblings”
HLE-FR-VGAM	family members play video games	The family has a routine of playing electronic or internet based games together.	“They want to play Playstation games, I mean I play with them”
PI	parent involvement	Interactions between the parent and the school.	See minor codes below
PI-P	parent initiated involvement (proactive)	Parent initiated involvement in the school. This would also include parent involvement prompted or requested by the child or someone from the social support network.	“I called her just to call her to make sure Joe is doing good. ‘Is he in any trouble today? Is there any tantrums today?’”
PI-R	school/teacher initiated involvement (reactive)	Parent involvement that is prompted, initiated, or requested by the school or teacher(s).	“when he had his little down days, [the teacher] would call me and I would get on the phone with him”
PI-COM	communication between home and school	Communication that occurs between the parent and the school	See codes below
PI-COMP	phone communication	Communication specified as phone contact	“the head teacher called me”
PI-COME	email communication	Communication specified as email contact	“[The teacher and I] email each other.”
PI-COMW	written communication	Communication specified as written contact	“they were sendin’ home a weekly report, and keepin’ me informed on stuff.”

PI-COMIP	in-person communication outside of school	Communication specified as in-person outside of the school. Teachers or school personnel may live in the area or have contact with parents outside of the school setting.	“[the teacher] just knows a lot of our other family members or. ... we’ll just call each other by our first names”
PI-COMPTC	school wide parent-teacher conference meeting	School wide scheduled parent-teacher conference meeting(s). This is a meeting that the school has planned for all parents and teachers.	“they have the parent-teacher meeting. I went to that.”
PI-COMCFM	meeting to discuss issues related to student	Meetings in school to discuss issues related to the student. This may include an IEP meeting or any other meeting with a focus on the student.	“[the teacher pulled] me to the side ...and she said she was going to call [me] but [she] didn’t want to call [me, she] wanted to do it face to face.”
PI-COMOTH	any in school meeting not specifically focused on student	Any school meeting that is not intended to focus on one child. These may include meetings to review curriculum, school progress, or school changes. PTA or PTO meetings will also receive this code.	“we had been to like a PTA meeting”
PI-SE	Attending a school event	An event or activity held at the school where parents, students, and families are able to attend. This may include an awards assembly, performances, or a family night.	“we’ve gone to plays there, different events”
PI-ISV	Volunteering in the school	Volunteering your time in the school	See sub-codes below
PI-ISV-FUND	Participation in a school fundraiser	Any mention of participating in a school fundraiser.	None reported
PI-ISVCL	Volunteering in the classroom	Volunteering your time in school specified as in the classroom. If the parent is in the classroom at all for an extended period of time then this code is provided. The parent may be reading to the children or simply providing additional adult support in the room.	“I’ve gone in to read for Dr. Seuss’ birthday week because our favorite Dr. Seuss book is Oh the Places You’ll Go.”

PI-ISVADM	Volunteering to complete administrative tasks	Volunteering your time in the school specified as for the completion of administrative tasks. If the parent reports copying papers, filing papers, making workbooks, or reviewing documents these would be considered administrative tasks.	None reported
PI-ISVEV	Volunteering at a school event	Volunteering your time at a school event which may include managing a station for an activity night or setting up chairs for a performance.	“I did the Santa workshop this year”
PI-ISVFT	Volunteering on field trips	Volunteering your time as a chaperone on field trips.	“I went when they went on their field trip.”
PI-OSV	Volunteering outside of school	Volunteering your time outside of the school (e.g. sports teams, afterschool program, school board) with organizations or groups attempting to support academic success	“we went to that parent board that school board meeting”
PBE	Parent beliefs and expectations	Parents’ beliefs and expectations for the home and school	See minor codes below
PBE-EB	Parent beliefs about education	Parents’ beliefs specifically concerning education	See codes below
PBE-EB-TDCAR	Teachers don’t care about students	Teachers are described as not caring about students. The parent may also refer to their own educational experience when discussing issues around teachers care or concern for students.	“[The teacher is] young, she don’t care”
PBE-EB-ECON	Education leads to economic benefits	Academic achievement or educational attainment leads to economic benefits (e.g. higher salary, occupational prestige).	“Bottom point that I’m trying to say is that education is the only way for your future...the only way for you to support yourself in the near future.”
PBE-EB-FOU	Education provides a foundation for children	Attending school and performing well in school provides a strong foundation. Foundation described as a core or base upon which	“education is important. You know, and it’s another

		positive human characteristics are built up.	foundation. You need education”
PBE-EB-JOB	Education/going to school is your job as a child	Attending school and completing schoolwork is similar to having a job. School is described as your primary responsibility during childhood and adolescence.	“Your job is to go to school and learn things and at the end of the day you’re more educated.”
PBE-EB-PRIVB	Private/charter/magnet schools are better	Any reference to private, charter, or public magnet schools as being “better” than public schools. They may explicitly state that they are better or describe the school as being more rigorous, teachers are more effective, or the parents are more invested.	“I’m like I don’t want my kids to go to public school and be stupid.”
PBE-TEP	Teacher expectations for parents	Expectations that the teacher(s) or school personnel have for the parents	See codes below
PBE-TEP-AH	Assist with homework completion	Parents provide assistance with homework. This may be as little as check for errors and having the child make corrections or reviewing concepts and working through the assignment with them.	“She expects that we are going over that homework with the kids every night.”
PBE-TEP-SH	Supervise homework completion	Parents monitor homework time and completion. They have a set time for homework completion and check for completeness but do not provide assistance.	“make sure their homework is done”
PBE-TEP-HTM	Teach children morals and values	Parents teach their children acceptable behavior in society and important aspects of life. This is not school rules but more general behavior such as how to address an adult (e.g. Mr., Mrs., ma’am, sir) or interact with peers. This may also include identifying important aspects of life (e.g. friendship, family, education).	None reported

PBE-TEP-HTA	Assist in developing academic skills and learning	Parents are also teachers. At home the parent should reinforce the lessons being learned in school and/or supplement the school curriculum with additional information at home.	“reinforce you know what they learned in school.”
PBE-TEP-DISC	Train your child to follow rules	Parents train their children to follow rules in school	“that they would follow the school rules”
PBE-TEP-COM	Communicate concerns, student needs and respond to requests	Parents communicate their concerns, the needs for their child, and respond to teacher requests	“they ask you to sign different documents and send them back, different homework’s and tests that the children may have.”
PBE-TEP-REV	Review all documents, forms, newsletters, & websites	Review all materials sent home or provided in an electronic format	“a weekly curriculum that she sends home so we know what’s going on for that week”
PBE-TEP-ISV	Volunteer in school	Teachers expect parents to volunteer inside the school. This may include classroom activities, administrative tasks, school events, fundraisers, or meetings.	“...they do expect you to be involved with fundraisers...just being involved at the different things that happen at the school – the programs, the fundraisers, etc.”
PBE-TEP-OSV	Volunteer outside of school	Teachers expect parents to volunteer outside of the school. This may include school board meetings or other meetings in the community related to the goals of the school.	None reported
PBE-PET	Parent expectations for Teacher(s)/School	Expectations that the parent has for the teacher(s) and/or the school personnel	See codes below
PBE-PET-COM	Communicate concerns, student needs, daily activities, and respond to requests	Communicate with parents when there are concerns, respond to parent requests, or just to provide an update of daily activities.	“I expect there to a dialogue between the two of us, I mean whether it be the principal or her teacher or what have you.”
PBE-PET-FUN	Keep students engaged, interested, and motivate them to learn	Create a “fun” learning environment. Keep the students interested and engaged in the curriculum.	“As far as her teaching she makes it fun to learn. It’s not boring and even I’d be interested.”
PBE-PET-EFF	Provide effective teaching	Students are learning and being challenged. Students are being prepared for the	“I expect her to help Anthony to go from one level to the

		next grade or step in life (e.g. college).	next. Go through the kindergarten process. Master the things that are necessary in the curriculum for kindergarten and to help him gradually get ready for first grade.”
PBE-PET-SAFE	keep students safe	Students are safe in the classroom and/or in the school	“So first and foremost, even above the educational element of it, I expect them to keep my child safe.”
PBE-PET-CMAN	manage classroom behaviors effectively	Teachers maintain order and structure in their classroom	“To have control over the classroom, to have control of all of the students. To have some type of structure in there.”
GHET	Use of the term ghetto or description of “ghetto” behavior	Use of the term “ghetto” or description of the following behaviors: loud, disruptive, use of foul language, aggressive, unprofessional dress or language.	“I didn’t want them to be in the projects, the ghetto, the bad neighborhood.”

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