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# Parenting Style, Home-Based Involvement, and Educational Expectations of Black Parents: Their Roles in the Development of Pre-literacy Readiness of Black Children

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Parenting Style, Home-Based Involvement, and Educational Expectations of Black Parents:  
Their Roles in the Development of Pre-literacy Readiness of Black Children

by

Iravonia Rawls

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Education Specialist  
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Parenting Style, Home-Based Involvement, and Educational Expectations of Black Parents: Their Roles in the Development of Pre-Literacy Readiness of Black Children

Iravonia S. Rawls

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of parenting style, home-based involvement, parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness. Sixty-two preschool children and his or her parent or guardian participated in this study of: 1) The relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs; 2) The relationship between parents' educational expectations of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs and pre-literacy readiness; 3) The relationship between home-based involvement of Black parents and levels of pre-literacy readiness of their children enrolled in Head Start programs; and 4) The relationship between the predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs. Data were obtained from a Parent Survey that was administered to parents of children who attended Head Start Centers. Child participants were also administered pre-literacy assessments.

A series of correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to answer the four research questions in this study. Overall, all correlation and multiple regression analyses lacked significant results. None of the predictor variables had more of an influence on pre-literacy readiness variables.

Despite the lack of significance, the results of this study contributes to the literature that supports that Black parents do have high expectations for their children and are engaging in activities at home with their children, whether it's the primary caregiver (e.g., mother) or another person in the immediate or extended family (e.g., father, grandparents, uncle, boyfriend).

These results further support the notion that Baumrind's parenting style constructs may not generalize across other cultural and economical contexts. Future research is needed to determine the generalizability of these parenting style constructs across other ethnic minority and cultural groups. Practical implications of this study suggest that prevention and early intervention practices are two essential components in improving the learning outcomes of young minority children from less privileged backgrounds.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Research has shown that parent involvement in children's schooling is associated with positive outcomes for adolescents (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Epstein, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). However, few studies have linked parent involvement to preschool children's outcomes, specifically at-risk groups such as low-SES minority children (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Perry, 1999). Recent federal government legislative efforts such as Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001) have identified kindergarten readiness and parental involvement as critical goals for enhancing learning in U.S. public schools (Abdul-Adil & Framer, 2006). More specifically, Goal 1, "school readiness," states that "all children will start school ready to learn" (National Educational Goals Panel, 1997, p. XV) and Goal 8, "parental participation," states that "every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (National Educational Goals Panel, 1997, p. xvii).

Recent national statistics indicate that key demographic factors (i.e., economic disadvantage, minority status, low maternal educational attainment, and being raised in a single-parent family) put minority students at risk for poor performance on school readiness measures (Department of Education, 2000; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). In addition to the key demographic variables, the lack of quality childcare and preschools, insufficient family support, and less effective parenting also pose significant threats to

early developmental school readiness of minority children (Children's Defense Fund, 1998). Thus, it is no surprise that a combination of these factors increases the likelihood that young minority children will face difficulties over the course of their school years, including behavioral and emotional problems, poor school performance, grade retention, and dropping out (McLoyd, 1998). Future interventions are needed to address how schools can best work with parents in supporting the cognitive and developmental needs of children at home (Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Seking, 2004).

### *Rationale for the Study*

Parental school-based involvement, as well as parenting style, and parental educational expectations have all been well established in the literature as important factors that influence the educational outcomes of adolescent children (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Griffith, 1996; Grolnick, et al., 1997; Halle, Kurtz-Costas, & Mahoney, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). To date, however, few studies exist that have investigated the roles of the aforementioned variables among young children and school readiness outcomes (Dickson & DeTemple, 1998; Fantuzzo, et al., 1999; Hill, 2001; Mantzicopoulos, 1997). Therefore, to completely understand why some children are more prepared for school than others professional educators need to understand how specific variables such as parenting style, parental home- involvement activities and parents' educational expectation relate to children's development of kindergarten readiness. It is important to understand how parents influence the school readiness skills of their children to help educators develop appropriate interventions to support the process of what parents are doing at home with their children. Fortunately, Head Start programs are in the position to help facilitate this process by being a readily available resource to parents, such

as providing parent training programs, educational materials, and other services to help parents create a positive, proactive, and supportive home learning environment for their children. The current study will attempt to identify those parenting behaviors (i.e., parenting style, parental-home based involvement, and parental expectations) that are most likely to enhance school readiness outcomes of Head Start children.

### *Purpose of Study*

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship among parenting style, parental educational expectations, and the types of parental home-based activities that Black Head Start parents use to foster the development of Kindergarten readiness. This study will replicate Fantuzzo, McWayne, and Perry's (2004) use of the home-based involvement portion of the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) measure with low-SES Black parents of children enrolled in Head Start programs. This study will also seek to contribute to the literature base of the few and inconsistent findings of Baumrind's (1967; 1972) parenting style typologies with the parenting behaviors of Black parents.

In addition, findings of the current study will be discussed using a strengths (what are parents doing) based approach versus "fixing families" or a deficit based approach (what they are not doing or what they are lacking) to demonstrate the types of positive behaviors that Black parents engage in with their children at home to promote academic success (Maton, Schellenbach, Leadbeater, & Solarz, 2004).

### *Definitions of the Terms*

For the present study, the terms are defined in the following manner.

*Home-Based involvement.* Epstein (1995) defined home-based involvement as specific concrete tasks that parents undertake to establish a positive learning environment

with their children. For example for this study, this category includes providing learning materials (i.e., educational books, ABC flash cards, computer assisted learning programs) setting aside space for learning activities (e.g., providing a desk or place in room for learning) and participating in learning activities with children (e.g., reading books, practicing ABC's, counting numbers, teaching/reviewing colors, watching educational television shows or movies) .

*Parenting style.* Baumrind (1967) defined the following three types of parenting typologies: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative style is characterized by high levels of parental nurturance, involvement, sensitivity, reasoning, control, and encouragement of autonomy; (b) authoritarian parenting, consisted of high levels of restrictive, punitive, rejecting, and power-assertive behaviors; and (c) permissive parenting, characterized by high levels of warmth and acceptance but low levels of involvement and control.

*Educational Expectations.* Hill (2001) defined parental educational expectations as parental expectations and goals for future educational attainment specifically relating to making good grades and attending college.

*School Readiness.* Shepard and Smith (1996) defined school readiness as a combination of academic, social, and physical skills of the child that are deemed necessary to function adequately in the classroom. Pre-literacy readiness, which is considered a component of school readiness, is defined by a child's development of key processes that underlie early reading development (e.g., phonological awareness, concepts about print, and oral language development).

*Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)*. McConnell, Priest, Davis, and McEvoy (2002) developed IGDIs as a general outcome measure (GOM) designed to assess early literacy skills, including expressive language and phonological awareness of preschool children 30-66 months. IGDIs include the following expressive language and phonological awareness measures: Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Phoneme Blending. IGDIs also include measures that assess social interaction, motor, and adaptive functioning of preschool children.

### *Research Questions*

In this study, the researcher will address the following four research questions:

1. What is the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?
2. What is the relationship between parents' educational expectations of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs and pre-literacy readiness?
3. What is the relationship between home-based involvement of Black parents and levels of pre-literacy readiness of their children enrolled in Head Start programs?
4. What is the relationship between the predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?

### *Hypotheses*

Based on the research questions for the current study, the researcher has the following hypotheses:

1. There is a relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs.

2. There is a relationship between home-based involvement of Black parents and levels of pre-literacy readiness of Black children.
3. There is a relationship between parents' educational expectations of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs and pre-literacy readiness.

### *Significance of Study*

It was hoped that the results of this study will provide information on the type of parent-child relationship most beneficial for influencing learning outcomes.

Collaborating with parents to promote children's school readiness is especially critical with low-income minority families. Research supports that economic and cultural differences between families and educators often results in significant discontinuities between home and school context (Slaughter-Defoe, 1995).

Low-income Black parents and children were the primary sample in this study because parents from this group have been exposed to high levels of discrimination and oppressed in this county (Coll et al., 1996), and they have been faced with raising their children in at-risk environments characterized by poverty, crime, high rates of teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and poor schooling (Bos, Huston, Granger, Duncun, Brock, & McLoyd, 1999; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealand, 1993; McDermott & Spencer, 1997; Weiss & Fantuzzo, 2001). Thus, to examine the relationship among variables that influence the home-learning environment such as parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and educational expectations is essential for improving the educational outcomes of Black children. This study will contribute to the scant literature base on exploring parenting variables that influence kindergarten readiness.

The remaining chapters are organized in the following manner. Chapter 2, entitled “Literature Review,” includes an examination of the existing literature on parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parental educational expectations as it relates to pre-literacy readiness. Chapter 3, entitled “Methods,” includes a description of the design and procedures of this study to determine if parenting style, parental home based involvement, and parental educational expectations are associated with pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs. In addition, Chapter 4 entitled “Results,” will report the results of the current study, and Chapter 5, entitled “Discussion,” will provide a discuss of the results and the implications of the findings.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### *Overview*

Parental involvement is linked to positive academic outcomes for children (Englund, Luckner, Whaley, Egeland, 2004; Grolnick, et al., 1997). Therefore, the National Educational Goals Panel (1997) have identified two components to target for intervention to enhance learning opportunities of all children. These two components are school readiness and parental involvement (National Educational Goals Panel, 1997, p. xvii). In addition, studies have found that parenting practices that consist of high levels of warmth and discipline (authoritative parenting) are related to school achievement (Baumrind, 1991; Hetherington, Henderson, & Reiss, 1999). However, these studies focus primarily on the academic outcomes of adolescents (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Griffith, 1996; Gronlnick, et al., 1997; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). To date, few studies have examined the relationship between parenting behaviors and school performance among young children (Fantuzzo, et al., 1999); even fewer have examined this relationship among Black children (Baumrind, 1972; Coolahan, 2002).

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the literature on parenting style, parental educational expectations, and home-based involvement in relation to kindergarten readiness. Specifically, this literature will predominantly focus on studies with Black participants. This literature review is divided into four sections. The first section will review the theory of school readiness and factors that may influence school readiness. The second section reviews the literature on the relationship between parenting

style and school outcomes. The third section reviews the literature on the relationship between parental educational expectations and school readiness. The fourth section reviews the literature on the relationship between home-based involvement and school readiness.

### *Theories of Kindergarten Readiness*

The definition of kindergarten readiness often depends on how a parent, school, or community defines readiness, which may influence a child's ability to transition to school. Many people believe that kindergarten readiness is a combination of academic, social, motor and psychological skills necessary to function adequately in school, but a common definition of school readiness is unspecified. Typically, in the literature there are four predominant theories of readiness: idealist/nativist, empiricist/environmental, social constructivist, and interactionist (Meisels, 1999). However, overall research literature lacks of consensus in the definition of school readiness, as well as how to measure it.

The first view, the idealist/nativist view, asserts that school readiness is a maturational process, and cannot be influenced by external variables. In contrast, the empiricist/environmental view, asserts that a child is ready when he or she has acquired the specific skills necessary for school success (e.g., knowing colors, shapes, how to spell ones name, etc.). The third view of readiness is the social constructivist view. This view identifies readiness in social and cultural terms. According to this view, readiness is constructed from social meanings as a result of values and expectations of the family, community, and schools. As a result, being ready for school could have many different meanings depending on the context in which the school exists. The fourth and final

conception of readiness is the interactionist view. This view takes into consideration both the child and the educational environment influencing the development of readiness. Thus, it is not only the skills the child possesses, but also how the school defines readiness (Miesels, 1999).

### *Factors that Influence School Readiness*

A review of the literature shows that there are several factors that influence school readiness. Some of these include preschool experience, socioeconomic status, marital status of the parent, and educational level of the parent. This section will briefly review each of these factors.

#### *Preschool*

Preschool is often considered a common experience and prerequisite in preparing children for kindergarten (Cheever & Ryder, 1986; Featherstone, 1986). Brand and Welch (1989) investigated the importance of preschool on acquisitions of readiness skills. Results of this study indicated that preschool was instrumental in developing vocabulary, language comprehension, mathematics, visual memory, and perceptual organization skills when compared to those children who stayed at home during preschool years.

Gullo and Burton (1992) also found that children's scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test were higher if they attended preschool versus those who did not attend preschool. Preschool attendance was attributed to a significant amount of variance of the outcome variable school readiness. The results of this study also showed that children who attended two years of preschool scored higher on the Metropolitan test than children who only attended one year. These differences were not significant, however, they do support the notion that preschool is important in developing child's academic skills.

Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Bezruczko, and Hagemann (1996) also found that pre-school participation has positive learning outcomes. Participants of this study were 95% Black children. Results of the study found that children who participate in preschool programs at ages 3 and 4 had significantly higher reading and math scores in the sixth grade. Lower retention rates were also found among this group. Reynolds et al. (1996) also found that parental involvement mediated the effects of pre-school program, further enhancing the outcomes of preschool. Since other studies had not demonstrated these results, Reynolds et al. (1996) suggest that parental involvement was associated with the long-lasting results of preschool.

#### *Socioeconomic Status*

Studies have shown that children from low-SES families demonstrate higher level of both externalizing and internalizing behavior (Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994) and also demonstrate lower academic performance (Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994). In addition, Poresky and Morris (1993) noted significant differences between families of lower and higher SES on demographic factors, home learning environment, and cognitive development, however, once family income and educational levels peaked, the influence of these factors on children's development was reduced. It is also important to note that parents of lower socioeconomic status experience a combination of factors such as low levels of education, low levels of income, and high levels of stress which contributes to their lower levels of involvement in their children's schooling. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) concluded that many parents of lower socioeconomic status in the United States have positive views of their role in their children's education and work to carryout those beliefs.

### *Single Parent families*

When research discusses the relationship of kindergarten readiness with the marital status of parents, it often concludes that children of single parent homes are often at risk for academic difficulties (Ricciuti, 1999). The absence of a partner makes it difficult for the single parent to deal with typical childcare responsibilities and other day to day stressors (i.e., work, financial strain, etc.). While research has demonstrated that those children that come from single family homes often have poor developmental outcomes in adolescence, this relationship has not been well defined with preschool children (Patterson, Kupersmidt, & Vaden, 1990). Ricciuti (1999) found that children from single parents were not at greater risk for school readiness in a sample of White, Black, and Hispanic 6-7 year old children. Interestingly, research has also found that it is not necessarily the single parent environment that is associated with negative outcomes, but the experience of marital distress that is related to internalizing and externalization of behavior problems and the financial strain and economic instability that accompanies single-parent families (Ricciuti, 1999).

### *Ethnicity*

Research suggests that ethnicity is associated with school achievement, such that Black children are associated with higher risk for behavioral problems and lower levels of academic achievement (Patterson, Kupersmidt & Vadan, 1990). However, other studies have found that ethnicity plays a very small role (if any) in externalizing problems at school entry, and that SES mediates these effects (Greenberg, Coie, Lengua, & Pinderhughes, 1999). Others argue that the reason ethnicity is related to academic

difficulties is because of the cumulative effects of racial discrimination and prejudice (Spencer, 1990), rather than ethnicity itself.

### *Parental Education Level*

Several studies have shown that education level of parents is related to academic success of their children (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Becker-Klein, 1999). Christian, Morrison, and Bryant (1998) have also found that maternal education is related to academic success, however, when mothers with lower educational levels provided literacy in the home, their children outperformed those children with mothers with higher educational levels who did not provide literacy activities in the home. The researchers concluded that parenting activities in the home moderated some of the effects of parent education.

Stevenson and Baker (1987) stated that the educational level of parents is associated with the parents' experience and knowledge of the ways one can successfully move through the educational system. Results indicated that the involvement of a more educated mother in the school career of children may be more effective than the involvement of a less educated mother. For instance, the involvement of a mother who has knowledge of and is familiar with the college admission process and college experience will be more familiar with helping their children with the process and applying to various colleges and universities. This parent may also be helpful in assisting the child with choosing a college major and finding financial support.

### *Summary*

Research suggested that there are many factors associated with children's readiness for school. A number of studies suggest that these factors play a significant role

in predicting academic success, while other studies found that parenting factors mediate the effects of these factors on academic performance. The next two sections will review other factors that influence school readiness: parenting style, parental expectations, and parental home-based activities.

### *Parenting Style*

Research supports that parenting style may differ across ethnic groups and other environmental characteristics (Hill, 2001). However, these results have been mixed and less consistent among Black families. Of these studies, the majority focus on the relationship between parenting style and adolescent outcomes (Dornbusch, et al., 1987; Griffith, 1996; Gronlnick, et al., 1997). Few studies have examined parenting style as it relates to preschool outcomes of Black children (Baumrind, 1972; Coolahan, et. al., 2002). Furthermore, most of the studies examining parenting style and Black families use a deficit approach in examining the problems these families and youths have such as teenage pregnancy, drug use, and criminal involvement (Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990). Taylor et al. (1990) suggest that further research is needed on the positive interactions of Black youth versus focusing primarily on social maladjustments. This section of the literature review will provide an overview of environmental variables (i.e., community, economic hardships) that can influence the quality of parenting children receive, in addition to how different parenting styles influence school success.

Despite the dearth of research on parenting style and minority populations within the past decade, there has been an abundance of studies on family-school connection that have explored the influence of different types of parenting styles (e.g., typologies characterized by responsiveness and demandingness) and specific parental practices (e.g.,

helping with home-work, attending parent-teacher conferences) on children's school outcomes (Spera, 2005). Of these studies researchers have often used parenting practices and parenting styles interchangeably (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). However, Darling and Steinberg (1993) suggest that to better understand the socialization of children within families it is important to distinguish between parenting style and parenting practices.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting practices as specific behaviors that parents use to socialize their children. For example, when a parent is socializing their children for school they may designate a time and place for child to complete homework and assist and monitor child upon completion. In contrast, Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting style as the emotional climate in which parents raise their child. Therefore, parenting style can be considered a "contextual variable that moderates the relationship between specific parenting practices and specific developmental outcomes of children" (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Historically, parenting style has been defined by "parental demandness" and "responsiveness" of children (Baumrind, 1991). In the section that follows, Baumrind's (1967, 1991) four types of parenting style typologies are reviewed.

The most empirical work undertaken in the area of parenting style has been Baumrind's (1967) identification of the three main parenting styles: (a) authoritative parenting, characterized by high levels of parental nurturance, involvement, sensitivity, reasoning, control, and encouragement of autonomy; (b) authoritarian parenting, consisted of high levels of restrictive, punitive, rejecting, and power-assertive behaviors; and (c) permissive parenting, characterized by high levels of warmth and acceptance but low levels of involvement and control. Maccoby and Martin (1983) extended the work of

Baumrind's typology by creating an additional category described as neglecting or uninvolved. Therefore, expanding Baumrind's parenting dimensions to authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglecting or uninvolved.

According to Baumrind (1967), children whose parents used authoritative parenting style were confident in their ability to acquire and master new skills, exhibited a happy mood, and demonstrated self-controlled behavior (e.g., less disruptive in the classroom). However, authoritarian parents are demanding of their children (i.e., have high expectations for children to conform to the parents' values) and yet unresponsive to the rights and needs of their children (e.g., expect children to obey rules without question). Baumrind (1967, 1971) has found that children whose parents used an authoritarian parenting style were described as anxious, withdrawn, and unhappy, and they interacted with peers in a hostile manner. Adolescents whose parents were authoritarian in their parenting style were not as well-adjusted as those with authoritative parents; however, their academic achievement was not as poor as adolescents whose parents were not demanding (i.e., permissive or uninvolved parents) (Steinburg, Lamborn, Darling, & Dornbusch, 1992).

The permissive style of parenting is responsive and nurturing; however, there are no demands or rules imposed on the child. The uninvolved style consists of no demands and a lack of responsiveness (i.e., the parents has very little commitment to the child-rearing process). Children whose parents are either permissive or uninvolved typically perform more poorly in school than children of authoritative or authoritarian parents (Baumrind, 1991; Kurdek & Fines, 1994; Lamborn Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbursch, 1991).

### *Parenting Style and Young Children*

As previously mentioned, Baumrind (1967, 1971) was one of the first to explore the relationship between parenting style and pre-school children. Although these studies have occurred decades ago, they have paved the road for subsequent research in the areas of parenting styles and children outcomes. Baumrind's research shows that certain parental behaviors are associated with specific preschool outcomes (Baumrind, 1967, 1971). In Baumrind's (1971) first preschool study, three groups of "normal" children were identified according to their social and emotional behavior. Then the behaviors of children and parents were observed and compared.

The results indicated that children who were most self-reliant, self-controlled, and explorative and content were of parents who were controlling, demanding, and warm, rational, and responsive to their child's needs and demands. Children who were discontent, withdrawn, and distrusting had parents who were characterized as detached, controlling, and less warm. The last finding of this study showed that children who were characterized as the least self-reliant, explorative, and self-controlling had parents who were non-controlling, and non-demanding, but were warm (Baumrind, 1967). These three findings are consistent with Baumrind's authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles previously described. A replication of this study further supported the earlier findings that authoritative parenting is linked to children who are responsible, autonomous, and self-assertive (Baumrind & Black, 1967).

Other studies have found that parenting style may be linked to cognitive and behavioral development of children (Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, & Holloway, 1987; Kahen, & Gottman, 1994). Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, and Holloway (1987) found that parents who

exhibited warmth, acceptance, responsiveness, and flexibility during an observed parent-child interaction task were, associated with preschool children's task persistence, initiation of new activities, and decision to pursue challenging tasks. In addition, research has linked authoritative parenting practices with aggressive and disruptive peer play interactions (Kahen, Katz, & Gottman, 1994).

Heller, Baker, Henker, and Hinshaw (1996) found that authoritarian parenting style was the stronger predictor of the preschool to first grade child's externalizing behavior, such as aggression and noncompliant behavior, even when the mother's education, child behavior problems were controlled for. These researchers theorized that authoritarian parenting might lead to conflicts between parental expectations and child's predisposition to exhibit externalizing behaviors. The child's behaviors, plus the parenting styles confounded each other. The researchers theorized that externalizing behavior would interfere with learning and depress IQ, the results did not support this hypothesis. Although externalizing behavior did not interfere with cognitive functioning of preschoolers and first graders, it is possible that if externalizing behavior exist for long periods of time it may interfere with learning and cognitive functioning. Another hypothesis suggested by these researchers was that it may be that these parents exhibited a specific parenting involvement or activity that in combination with authoritative parenting was sort of detrimental to primary school children's learning.

Carlton and Winsler (1999) found in a study of 24 parents and their 3 year old children that parents classified as authoritative provided more effective tutoring styles, such as scaffolding. Scaffolding can be defined as a nondirective teaching style that provides a high degree of support for children's autonomy and self-regulation (Carlton &

Winsler, 1999). These parents were shown to be more structured, responsive, and warm to their children. They also were not easily angered or frustrated by the child and set limits for the child. Results indicated that children who received this type of authoritative parenting and the scaffolding type tutoring were more successful than those children who did not receive this type of parenting and tutoring.

Another study by Pratt, Green, MacVicar, and Bountrogianni (1992) examined parenting style, tutoring behaviors, and children's acquisition of academic skills found that for fifth graders, academic performance was influenced when authoritative parenting style was paired with parental tutoring. These researchers felt that authoritative parenting moderated the practice of tutoring, making tutoring more effective when paired with different types of parenting styles.

#### *Parenting Style and Black Families*

*Young Children.* To date, few studies have examined the relationship between parenting style and preschool outcomes of Black children (Baumrind, 1972; Coolahan, et. al., 2002). Baumrind's (1971) original study examined the patterns of parental authority on preschool children's behavior; however, the participants of this study were majority white middle-to upper class parents and children.

As a result, Baumrind (1972) decided to separately analyze the data of the 16 black children and families to explore if differences in parenting style exist when these black families were compared to white parenting norms (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). Results of this study found that black children, specifically black girls appeared to benefit more from an authoritarian type of parenting style. These results suggested that authoritarian child-rearing practices- characterized by the use of

disciplinary, forceful control to gain compliance or to reprimand inappropriate behavior by the parent- were associated with competence in daughters. Such findings often portray Black families as expecting unrealistic levels of obedience, engaging in high levels of power assertion, expressing low levels of reasoning, and having low tolerance for child input. Furthermore, its important to note that these results contradict the parenting style literature that suggests that authoritative parenting is associated with positive child outcomes.

Coolahan et al., (2002) examined the construct validity of the Parenting Behavior Questionnaire (PBQ) with Baumrind's three types of parental typologies with 465 low income Black parents and children enrolled in Head Start programs. Factor analyses indicated three slightly different parenting style dimensions emerged: active-responsive (warmth, responsiveness to children's needs, respect for children needs, respect for autonomy, and limit setting with explanation or authoritative parenting construct), passive-permissive (lack of warmth and follow through with directiveness and no clear guideline for behavioral guidelines for child), and active-restrictive (excessive demands and use of criticism during discipline or authoritarian parenting construct). However, a Pearson product moment correlation analyses indicated that two dimensions, active-responsive and active-restrictive measured by the PBQ were significantly positively correlated with Baumrind's authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. Results showed that passive-resistance parenting differs significantly from Baumrind's permissive parenting construct. The researchers theorized that these differences exist because Baumrind's permissive parenting style construct is defined as lack of boundary setting but adequate levels of warmth. For the population of this study passive-

permissive was characterized as low parental restriction or low levels of parental attentiveness and parental actions. This finding was similar to Maccoby and Martin's (1983) indifferent-uninvolved construct that supports the characteristics found in this study that permissive parents are completely detached emotionally and uninvolved with their children.

Although this is an inconsistent finding in the literature, this study also supports the relationship between financial distress and parenting styles. Results indicated that parents with less financial support and resources reported the highest levels of passive-permissive and active-resistance parenting. Of this sample, these parents were more likely to be single and have less than a high school education. On the other hand, active-responsive parents were more likely to have achieved a higher level education.

*Adolescents.* To date only two studies have used predominantly minority populations to examine family influences on academic achievement (Attaway & Bry, 2004; Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996). To explore how family variables (parenting behaviors) influence academic outcomes, Dornbush, Ritter, Leider, Roberts, and Fraleigh (1987) developed parenting style scales from a questionnaire that had been administered to several thousand high school students in the San Francisco area. Overall, they found that academic achievement was associated with students' reports of parents' authoritative parenting style. However, these results were not consistent with the Black student population. Among black students parenting style was not a valid indicator of grades at all.

Steinburg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) reexamined this relationship with a population of Wisconsin students and found the same results, that parenting style

was a good indicator of academic achievement of most youth, but not for Black students. However, it is important to note that in both of these studies the populations of black students were fewer than 12%, which could have confounded the research findings.

Radziszewska et al. (1996) found that in a diverse sample of 3,993 ninth graders from Los Angeles and San Diego counties with more than 50% of the population Hispanic and Black that authoritative parenting style was indeed associated with achievement among Black youth. Attaway and Bry (2004) replicated this study with 59 black mother and female adolescents to examine the relationship between maternal beliefs in control and responsiveness and adolescent academic outcomes. Results of this study indicated that higher maternal beliefs in control were significantly correlated with low grade point averages. No other significant relationships were found between other parenting and demographic variables and adolescent academic achievement.

In summary, aforementioned research on parenting style influences on Black adolescent achievement is limited. Most of the studies that examine the influences of parenting style on adolescent outcomes focus on outcomes such as independence, organization, behavior, and reasoning and problem-solving (Crum, Enminger, & McCord, 1998; Mason, Cauce, Gonzales, & Hiraga, 1996). Thus, additional research is warranted in the area of how different parenting styles influence academic outcome of Black youth.

#### *Parenting Style and Environmental Factors*

Parenting style among Black families has been largely understudied (Graham, 1992), as well as within group differences in parenting style among Black parents (Abell, Clawson, Washington, Bost, & Vaughn, 1996). Several factors have been

associated with the quality of parenting behaviors exhibited by Black parents such as SES, community environment, and poverty (BlueStone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Elder, Eccles, Ardel, & Lord, 1995; McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, & Borquez, 1994). Research has shown that poverty and stressors related to community violence, inadequate healthcare, and insufficient housing significantly impact the quality of parenting children receive (Osofsky, 1995).

Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, and Zelli (2000) found that these environmental factors are associated with the lack of quality family support and ineffective parenting practices.

In addition, research has linked other risk factors to environmental factors such as poverty to lower education level and single-parent households to dimensions of parenting style (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Kelly, Sanchez-Hucles and Walker (1993) found that low levels of parental education are associated with high levels of parental restrictiveness, furthermore, lower parental education has been associated with lower level of parental involvement (Fantuzzo et. al, 2000). However, although these studies suggest that parents living in impoverished environments employ less adaptive parenting behaviors, there is currently very little research on how income level and culture, are expressed within styles of parenting.

Past studies have found that a relationship exist between parenting style and SES and race (Pinderhughes et al., 2000). As previously mentioned, such findings compare parenting styles of Black parents to those of white middle to high SES children and parents, which as a result have led to a limited and inaccurate picture of minority parenting. Investigators have found that SES and race often confound each other when

compared to parenting behaviors. However, more recent studies have concluded that parenting style is more related to SES than race or culture variables, with both White and minority low income parents (Pinderhughes et al., 2000).

McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, and Borquez, (1994) investigated the impact of parenting practices in a group of single, Black mothers. They found that unemployment and financial strain contributed to increased levels of maternal depression, which in turn predicted greater punitiveness toward their adolescent children. In addition, mother perception of perceived support decreases their levels of depression, their negativity about being a mother, and their tendency to exert harsh punishment with children.

Elder, Eccles, Ardelt, and Lord (1995) examined the effects of economic hardships on both emotional distress and parenting behaviors of Black and Euro-American parents of adolescents. They found that unstable work environments and low-income were associated with increased emotional distress and negative parenting behaviors. Since low-income Black families had fewer economic resources to begin with, they were more directly affected by economic hardships than were Euro-American families. These findings suggest that the relationship between sociodemographic factors and parenting behaviors depends on the specific ethnic group variable being examined.

BlueStone and Tamis-LeMonda (1999) examined the relationship between parenting and discipline practices of 114 working and middle class Black mothers and children using the Parent Dimension Inventory. Results of this study conclude that a range of parenting styles exist among middle-working class Black parents. The researchers found that most mothers engaged in child-oriented approaches to disciplining children such as addressing child's needs, allowing child to participate in the

establishment of family rules, and engaging in inductive reasoning when disciplining children. These findings challenge the literature base that characterize Black parents as primarily “power assertive”, a view that is part a result of focusing on single household status and dysfunctions of Black families. The researchers in this study found that the parenting strategy most commonly used was reasoning, a strategy characteristic of authoritative parenting. Physical punishment, a major component of power-assertiveness styles, was reported infrequently. In addition, mother’s who were less educated and from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds were more likely to “let things go” with children. However, mother’s who were more depressed and reported more negativity and less warmth were less likely to reason with their children. Education and socioeconomic status were not related to the use of the strategy of reasoning. This study contributes to the literature base on the strengths of Black families in relation to supporting children’s school success and provides further information on the factors that contribute to the outcomes of diverse types of parenting.

This concludes this section of the literature review on influences of parenting styles on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of children. As previously mentioned, there is limited research on the influences of parenting style and preschool outcomes. Of these studies with Black populations, the majority of them focus on parenting behaviors that influence adolescent outcomes. Research supports that several ecological variables such as SES, less perceived financial and emotional support, unstable work environment, and economic hardship can influence parent-child relationships of Black families. Additional research is warranted to further explore this relationship among young Black children and achievement outcomes.

### *Educational expectations*

Researchers have also documented a positive relationship between parental educational expectations and children's learning outcomes (Englund, Luckner, Whaley, and Egeland, 2004; Gronlick et al., 1997; Halle, Kurtz-Costas, & Mahoney, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lareau, 1989). For example, Halle et al. (1997) found that parental educational expectation for future educational attainment was related to child's current school achievement. This study examined the influence of parental beliefs and expectations about math and reading achievement on children's actual obtained grades in math and reading in a sample of Black elementary school students. Using an unstructured interview format the researchers assessed parents' expectations concerning the likelihood that their child would complete Grades, 6, 9, and 12, 2 years of college, and 4 years of college. They also assessed parental beliefs about normal child development of academic skills such as naming the president. Their results show that parental expectations concerning future academic achievement were associated with academic attainment.

Hill (2001) examined the relationship among parenting and children's school readiness with socioeconomically similar Black kindergarten children, mothers, and teachers. In addition, the moderating variables family income and ethnicity were examined among parenting behaviors, parental educational expectations, and school involvement and children's school readiness performance.

Participants of this study were 103 Black (n=54) and Euro-American (n=49) mothers of kindergarten children. These two groups were similar in socioeconomic status. In this study parental involvement was measured using the Parent-Teacher-

Involvement Questionnaire (PTIQ), which contained three types of parental involvement school involvement, home-involvement, and parent-teacher relationship. Two subscales of The Metropolitan Readiness Test (prereading and premath) were used to assess children's readiness at the end of kindergarten. Parental expectations were assessed using three questions developed by the researchers for this specific study. To assess expected grades, mothers were asked the following three questions: "Knowing your child as you do, what grades do you expect him/her to receive in school? How far do you think he or she will go in school? What type of job do you expect him or her to have?" In-home interviews were conducted with families at their convenience and surveys were completed by teachers.

Results of this study showed that the relationship between parental expectations for expected grades and future occupation was positively associated with prereading scores. In addition, family income was a moderator variable to parenting and school performance. Parenting had a much stronger relationship with prereading performance for lower income families than for those of higher income. This study suggests that parents may be able to better indicate children's capabilities with reading and writing tasks than math-related tasks. Furthermore, parents of children who read and write well at home may develop higher future occupation expectations for their children than those parents whose reading is not as developed. Alternatively, parents with higher occupational goals for their children may engage in more reading related activities with their children.

Sukhdeep and Reynolds (1999) found similar results that investigated the relationship between parental educational expectations and school achievement of Black

children. Participants of this study were 712 children from an inner city Chicago area. A path analysis was used to test the processes of influence from parents' and teachers' expectations of sixth grade students. Results of this study indicate that third grade achievement was mediated by sociodemographic variables, which in turn influenced parent and teacher expectations. Teacher and parent expectations had a significant influence on math achievement, whereby only teacher expectations were associated with reading achievement. Prior achievement, however, served as the most powerful influential variable relating to academic outcomes above and beyond sociodemographic variables. The researchers suggest that future research should examine the home environment in which parents convey their expectations to children that may give valuable information about this process. Furthermore, interventions should be developed to enhance or change parental educational expectations to help parents foster a supportive home-learning environment for children.

The more parents believe they play a critical role in their children's education the more likely they will be to facilitate a teaching-learning process. When taking into account parents' beliefs about their roles in their children's education, Lareau (1989) found that working class parents believed their roles involved basic preparation for school such as ensuring school attendance or and good manners. On the other hand, parents also believed that it is the school's responsibility to make decisions relating to educational progress (i.e., retention or special education placement). These parents were described as having an interconnected relationship with the school. Their parent roles involved an active monitoring of their child's academic progress and intervening in school decisions when necessary.

In addition, parents who believe that educational attainment is the key to upward social mobility are more likely to invest in their children's education (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993). When considering parents' beliefs about their roles in their child's education, Lareau (1989) found that working-class parents tended to believe that their roles involved basic preparation for school such as getting them to school on time or ensuring their children have good manners. Lareau (1989) found that these parents tended to believe that it was the school's responsibility to make decisions about educational progress (i.e., retention or special education). Conversely, the researcher also found the upper-middle-class parents to believe differently. These parents' views of the home and school seemed to be "interconnected" (Lareau, 1989). Their parent roles involved an active monitoring of their child's academic progress and intervening in school decisions when necessary.

In addition, research supports that when parents have the view that education is a necessary tool for social mobility or status maintenance, then the motivation for involvement is more likely to be apparent (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). However, this is significantly influenced by the amount of resources available to families. For example, a parent may choose to invest in their children's education by paying for private education, investing in a tutor, joining parent-teacher associations, or just verbally communicating to their child educational expectations (Muller & Kerbow, 1993).

In summary, parents' beliefs and expectations concerning their children's progression in school is considered an important factor in improving student outcomes. Thus, targeting low-income families with prevention and intervention strategies to enhance parent-child relationships (i.e., communicating educational expectations) could

in turn improve student academic outcomes. Review of the literature suggests that further research is needed in this area, especially with younger children from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds.

### *Parental Home-Based Involvement*

Research shows that children's whose parents are more involved in school is associated with higher academic performance (Epstein, 1996), in addition, higher levels of home-based involvement (e.g., supervision and monitoring, daily conversations about school) have been associated with higher scores in reading, writing as well as higher report card grades (Epstein, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998). However, researchers are still trying to identify the most effective types of parental involvement activities (home and school) that influence children's academic and behavioral outcomes (Fantuzzo et. al, 2004). Parents from ethnically diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds have often been criticized for the lack of involvement in their children's education and coined "hard to reach" parents (e.g., low socioeconomic status, ethnic minority parents, those with limited education, single parents) (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). However, it is important to note that while many of these parents are not considered involved under the traditional school-based definition of parental involvement (i.e., attending school related activities), these parents may be involved in more "behind the scenes" ways at home not fully captured by the literature. Although, research has consistently found a significant relationship between parents' status variables and parents' involvements in children's schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). It is also important to note there is mutual agreement that process

variables (“what parents do”) are more important in predicting student academic achievement (Kellaghan et al., 1993).

Furthermore, because “parental involvement” is such a multidimensional concept (involving multiple behaviors, attitudes, and activities), research lacks a consensus definition (Fantuzzo, et al., 2000; Epstein, 1992). Based on this notion, Abdul-Adil and Framer (2006) defined parental involvement as “parental attitudes, behaviors, styles, or activities that occur within or outside the school setting to support children’s academic and/or behavioral success in their currently enrolled school.” Thus, this section of the literature review will first review Epstein’s (1996) six multiple types of parental involvement and then specifically discusses home-based involvement, which is the focus of the current study.

Epstein (1996) based her six typology of parental involvement on Comer and Haynes (1996) parenting program model. Epstein (1996) identified six ways school personnel can work with families and communities to foster parental involvement in children’s education: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community . The first type of involvement refers to basic obligations of parents, and requires schools to assist families in providing for children’s health and safety, developing parenting skills and positive home conditions that support learning and behavior appropriate for school.

Second, parents actively participate in all communication between the school and home regarding school programs and student academic progress (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, report cards, phone calls).

The third type of involvement identified by the literature is school-based involvement. School based involvement included parents becoming volunteers who assist teachers in the classroom or in the school setting, attending school functions and/or by promoting shared responsibility between parents and schools. For example, a parent may participate in the classroom setting as a “parent tutor” or helper for the teacher. In addition, parents may decide to become involved in the classroom by chaperoning field trips or being a guest speaker during “Career Day”.

Fourth, parents facilitate learning activities at home (e.g., helping with homework, providing necessary supplies). This also included school personnel providing parents with ways they can assist their children at home in learning, in addition to ways that align with children’s school work. In addition, the school can provide parents information on the requirements and skills necessary for their children to be successful in school (i.e., meeting benchmarks). Schools may also assist families in ways that they can monitor, discuss, and help with homework assignments as well as how and when to make decisions about specific school programs, activities, and opportunities at specific grade levels (i.e., to enroll your child in college preparatory courses).

Fifth, parents actively assist in making decisions within the schools (e.g., P.T.A., school government) at the school, district, or state level, contributing to the shared responsibility of educating children. Schools can train parents to serve as leaders and representatives in decision-making and communication skills to assist as liaisons for schools in interacting with other parents. Also, schools can provide parents information needed to assist in school improvement activities.

The sixth type of involvement reviewed in the literature is school-community-family involvement, which schools coordinate access to community resources for families and students (e.g., after school programs, mentoring programs, counseling, etc.).

In the current study the focus will be on home-involvement, one type of parental involvement defined by Epstein (1996). Home involvement is one type of involvement described that provides parents the opportunity to become involved in different ways. Providing academic assistance is often seen as the most common type of parent involvement. It includes activities such as providing assistance with homework (including direct instruction, encouraging and modeling reading, structuring a working environment in the home (i.e., providing an appropriate space to work with proper lighting) providing necessary academic material (e.g., books, writing utensils, etc.), and implementing a structure for learning and monitoring (Christenson et al., 1992). Another means of home-based parental involvement is parents providing their children with outside experiences and exposure to learning opportunities (i.e., watching television together and discussing programs, playing games; participating in hobbies; providing exposure to different types of music and art, visiting libraries, museums, zoos, and attending cultural events (Kelloghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

Few studies have explored parental home-based involvement in relation to school readiness of preschool children of low-income families (Dickson & Temple, 1998; Mantzicopoulos, 1997; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple, & Peay, 1999). Research has shown that parental involvement programs focusing on improving the home learning environment (through parent education and provision of materials, etc.) is associated with increased outcomes such as children's motivation and self-efficacy (Mantzicopoulos,

1997). In addition, those studies that have investigated the relation between parental involvement and preschool outcomes tend to mainly focus on the quality of language stimulation provided in the home or parental use of explicit literacy-promoting behaviors (Christian, Bachnan & Morrison, 2001).

Fantuzzo, McWayne, and Perry (2004) examined the relation between family involvement dimensions and end of the year outcomes to learning, conduct problems, and receptive vocabulary. To date, this is only the second study that has examined the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) dimension and preschool outcomes (i.e., learning, conduct problems, and receptive vocabulary) (Fantuzzo et al., 1999). Participants of this study were 144 urban Head Start children. Parent report of parental involvement was assessed using the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ), which is a multidimensional rating scale that asks primary care providers of young children to report the nature of their involvement in their children's education. In addition, the Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale was used to measure approaches to learning, the Conner's Teacher' Rating Scale (short-form) was used to measure behavioral problems, and the Peabody picture vocabulary was used to assess receptive vocabulary skills. The three types of involvement examined in this study were school-base involvement, home-based involvement, and home-school conferencing. To measure the relationship between the types of parental involvement and the three outcome measures, the FIQ was given to parents at the beginning of the year and the other three measures were assessed at the end of the year.

Results of the study showed that home-based involvement was the strongest predictor of later preschool competence. In addition, higher levels of home-based involvement were

associated with lower levels of classroom behavior problems. Of note, these results show that not only is home-based involvement important, but that it is the leading variable in influencing preschool competence in head start children.

Most studies have focused on school-based involvement of parents in relation to developmental outcomes of preschool children (Macron, 1999, Slaughter-Doe & Brown, 1998). Macron (1999) documented the importance of family-school collaboration within a sample of 708 predominantly Black parents of preschool children. The preschoolers in this sample were 51% female and 95% Black. The type of parental involvement measured was parent-teacher conference, home-visits, extended class visits, and helping with a class activity in relation to young children development. Teacher ratings were used to identify the extent of parental involvement in this sample of children. Also, measures of adaptive rating scales and basic school skills were included. A four category checklist was used to record the number of times the teacher had contact with a child's parents during the school year. To measure adaptive behavior, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale was used to measure each child's performance in the four domains (i.e., communication, daily living scales, socialization, and motor development). In addition, basic school skills was assessed by using the school district's Early Progress Report, which measures preschoolers' classroom performance with the district's expectations of skills mastery.

Results of this study showed that more types of active school involvement were associated with an increased level of positive development and academic development. In addition, further interesting results was that girls outperformed the boys in all areas of the Vineland Adaptive domains (expressive language, domestic skills, play and leisure, and

gross motor skills); however, increased parental involvement was associated especially with increased academic outcomes for boys.

### *Barriers to Parental Involvement in Preschool*

Research has well-documented that home-school collaboration benefits all children (Raffaele & Knoff 1999). However few studies have examined this relationship among economically disadvantaged, ethnically diverse families of preschool children (Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Harris, & Hamrick, 1987). Raffaele and Knoff (1999) suggest that better facilitation of home-school collaboration is needed among diverse and low SES populations of families, especially during the preschool years when children are learning the foundations of reading, writing, and math skills required to for school success.

It has been well-established that status variables such as socioeconomic status, education level, marital status, and ethnicity play significant mediating factors in parents' involvement of children's schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Greenwood and Hickman (1991) examined the following four barriers which are considered parent related: (a) attitudes of parents, (b) parents abilities', (c) parental work demands, and (d) parents' health. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) suggest that some parents simply do not value education of their children, while others may feel that they have no influence over their children's school outcomes. Some parents have had negative experiences with schooling during their own years and thus assume that their children will have similar experiences or they believe that the teachers do not have the best interest for their children (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). It is also supported that some parents feel that they lack the skills necessary to be involved in their children's school (volunteering at

school), while others believe that it is not their responsibility (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Additionally, Greenwood & Hicks (1991) found that parents' inconvenient work demands and poor health created additional barriers to parental involvement.

Although research reports many barriers to parental involvement, many studies have also found that the majority of minority parents do want to be involved in their children's education and desire the best future outcomes for their children, but other factors such as scheduling conflicts and time availability influence active school-based involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). It is also important to note, that the examination of family process barriers such as "what families do" have been less investigated and less-established in the parental involvement literature, however, many of the school-based barriers aforementioned can be applied to barriers to home-based involvement. Sandell (1998) noted that the recognition of having parents as active participants in their children's schooling at home is becoming an increasingly more supported and investigated factor.

Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, and Efreo (2005) investigated predictors of parental involvement among 159 economically disadvantaged Black parents from an urban community setting. The children of the participants in this study ranged from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with 65% of the participants in elementary school and 35% in high school. Results of this study show that parent demographics, attitudes about education, and community engagement behaviors were the most important predictors of parental involvement. School receptivity, however, was considered the strongest predictor for school involvement among parents. In addition, results showed that high parental educational expectations and parents who were actively involved in the

community were significant predictors of school involvement for elementary, middle and high school parents. The majority of research studies discuss ways to improve school-based involvement of parents through strategic home-school collaboration efforts (Raffaella & Knoff, 1999), but few recommend ways to help parents improve the learning environment of children in the home.

In summary, few studies have examined the influence of home-involvement of Black parents of preschool children in relation to school readiness outcomes (Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Harris, & Hamrick, 1987). Parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that is operationally defined in various ways. However, the literature base on home-involvement in relation to school readiness outcomes is limited. Fantuzzo et. al. (2004) was one of the few studies to find home-involvement as a primarily influential factor in competence development of head start children. Future research is needed in these areas to better inform the types of services and programs needed to assist parents and children of this targeted population to improve overall student academic outcomes.

#### *Overview of the current Study*

To date, few studies have attempted to examine the relationship between parenting style, home-based involvement, and educational expectations with academic outcomes of young children. Thus, the current study will seek to expand the literature base on these variables. Specifically, this study will contribute to existing literature on factors that influence school readiness outcomes of Black children. This study will replicate Fantuzzo et al. (2004) use of the measure FIQ with low-SES Black parents of children enrolled in Head Start programs. Additionally, this study will also seek to contribute to the few and inconsistent findings of the parenting style literature base,

specifically focusing on the type of parenting style associated with school readiness of Black head start children.

## Chapter Three

### Methods

The present study explored the relationship between the predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and levels of pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start Programs. This chapter describes the specifics of the predictor and outcome variables that were used in the present study, to include the measures and methods for data analysis. The procedure for conducting the survey and the assessment of preschool children also will be discussed. The last section of this chapter will summarize the possible threats to validity in this study.

#### *Participants*

The sampling frame consisted of 1,312 children enrolled in 24 Head Start programs in Hillsborough County, Florida during 2005-2006 school year (Hillsborough County Head Start District Office, 2006). Of these, 85 African American parent-child dyads from 6 different Head Start Centers were invited to participate in the study (those who met the study criteria). There were a total of 62 participants (72.9%) that completed all portions of the study. It is important to note, that Hillsborough County Head Start programs are year around and children who will plan to transition to kindergarten in the Fall can attend school until the third week of July.

To determine the required number of participants for this study to yield significant results, a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation power analysis was conducted at .80 power, with a medium effect size of .30, and a .05 significance level (Cohen, 1992). The

results of this analysis suggest that at least 85 participants were needed to yield significant results.

### *Selection of Participants*

Based on the sampling frame, of 1,312 children enrolled in Head Start programs in Hillsborough County, 85 parent–child dyads were selected based on the following three study criteria: (a) both parent and child of African descent, (b) child enrollment in a Head Start program, and (c) child eligible to enroll in kindergarten in Fall 2006. Those parent-child dyads not meeting these criteria were not included in the study.

A list of all Head Start Programs was generated. A Hillsborough County Head Start District Manager contacted Head Start supervisors at each of the six Head Start center about the possibility of conducting this study at their site. Participation in this study was voluntary. Upon consent, a Head Start District Manager created a list of possible Black participants at his or her Head Start center (based on the study criteria). The researcher obtained a list of participants at each site and assigned a number to each student's name. The selection-eligibility requirements included only parent-child dyads that met the study criteria and are willing to sign consent.

### *Ethical Considerations*

The researcher was required to obtain approval from the University South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) for this study because the participants are human (i.e., children and parents). Once IRB approval was granted, informed consents were given to parents to obtain both parent and child consent for participation. All information was kept completely confidential, by not requiring participants to give any identifying information for this study (e.g., name, social security number). All participants were

given a random identification number for data collection and analysis purposes. In addition, permission from the Hillsborough County Head Start District Office was granted, before the researcher was able to collect data at the targeted Head Start sites.

### *Variables*

The five predictor variables in this study are parenting style (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive), parental home-based involvement (home-based involvement reported by parent), and educational expectations of Black parents (expectations in school reported by parent). For all five predictor variables the outcome variable is the level of pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs. The three school readiness outcome measures in this study are Picture Naming IGDI, Rhyming IGDI, and Alliteration IGDI. In addition, an average of these three subtests was computed to create a total “Combined School Readiness Score”, which served as another pre-literacy readiness outcome variable.

### *Measures*

There are three pre-literacy measures used in this study.

#### *Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)*

The first instrument used in this study is the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs), which is a General outcome measure (GOM) designed to assess the pre-literacy skills of preschool children (McConnell, Priest, Davis, & McEvoy, 2002). General outcome measures (GOMs) are categories of assessments that are based on direct assessment of a child’s performance on standard task, with a common measurement of performance in which data can be collected across an extended period of time (Fuchs & Deno, 1991). Similar to other GOM’s, such as Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy

Skills (DIBELS) and Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA), IGDIs are standardized and individually administered assessments of early literacy skills, including expressive language and phonological awareness. IGDIs also include measures that assess social interactions, motor, and adaptive functioning of preschool children.

For the purpose of this study, IGDIs was preferable to other school readiness measures because it is sensitive to changes in students' skills over short periods of time, it can be used to produce data to monitor the effects of an intervention in a problem solving or response to intervention model (RtI), it is easy to administer, and it is time efficient and cost effective (McConnell, et al. 2004). In addition, IGDIs is suitable for preschool children 30–66 months (McConnell, et al., 2004). The Picture Naming, Rhyming, and Alliteration measures of IGDIs will be used in this study. These three measures have strong empirical support and are most associated with early literacy and language development outcomes of preschool children (McConnell, at el., 2004).

#### *Picture Naming Fluency IGD I*

Picture Naming Fluency IGD I requires students to name as many pictures as possible in one minute (McConnell, et al., 2004). Students are presented with a random set of colored pictures of objects found in natural environments, including the home (e.g., cake, sink), classroom (e.g., glue, book) and community (rabbit, train). Each picture is printed on an 8 x 5 inch index card. The total score is the number of pictures a student names correctly in one minute. If a student does not know a picture, after three seconds, the examiner gives a prompt by saying “What’s that?” or “Do you know what this is?” and the student is allowed two additional seconds to respond before the examiner proceeds to the next card.

The 1-month, alternative-form reliability of Picture Naming is .44 to .78 and test-retest reliability across three weeks is .67 for a sample of 29 preschoolers (McConnell et al., 2004). Picture Naming has been shown to correlate with other language development measures such as the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Third Edition (PPVT-3; Dunn & Dunn, 1997) and the Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-3; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 1992), with correlations ranging from .47 to .69 (Priest, Davis, McConnell, McEvoy, & Shin, 1999). Concurrent validity had also been established with the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Kaminiski & Good, 1996) measure of Letter Naming Fluency (LNF; .32 to .37) and Onset Recognition Fluency (.44 to .49; McConnell et al., 2002; Missall, 2002) using a sample of 84 preschool-age children.

Picture Naming Fluency has also been shown to account for growth of preschoolers' expressive language skills over time (preschooler 53 months), with significant correlations between children's scores and chronological age (.41 in a longitudinal study and .60 in a cross-sectional study), including typically developing children (.63), children enrolled in Head Start (.32), and children with disabilities receiving services in early childhood education classrooms (.48) (McConnell, et al., 2004).

An average Picture Naming score is 16.97 for typical developing children, 16.51 for low income children, 14.13 for children with identified speech and language disabilities, and 2.64 for Spanish speaking children learning English (Missal & McConnell, 2004).

### *Rhyming IGDI*

Rhyming IGDI requires students to identify a picture that rhymes with the stimulus picture (McConnell, et al., 2004). Students are presented with a series of cards. Each card has four pictures. The stimulus picture (e.g., hat) is at the top of the card and the other three pictures are in a row at the bottom of the card. The row of cards below the stimulus picture has one correct (e.g., hat) and one incorrect response (e.g., house and shoe). The examiner points to each card and says the name of each picture and tells the child to, "Point to the picture that sounds the same as the top picture." The examiner shows a random selection of cards to the student for 2 minutes. A student's score is the total number of rhyming words identified correctly in 2 minutes (McConnell, et al., 2004).

Test-retest reliability in a three week period is .83 to .89 for a sample of 42 preschoolers. McConnell, et al., (2004) found in a longitudinal study with 90 children (including children with disabilities and those living in poverty), that Rhyming IGDI was positively correlated with PPVT-3 (.56 to .62), Concepts About Print (CAP; Clay, 1985; .54 to .64) and Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA; Torgeson & Bryant, 1994; .44 to .62). Concurrent Validity was demonstrated with the same participants with moderate to high correlations between Picture Naming Fluency IGDI (.46 to .63) and Alliteration IGDI (.43) (Missall, 2002). Concurrent validity has also been established with DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency (LNF; .48 to .59) and Onset Recognition Fluency (ORF; .44 to .68) for children in preschool (McConnell et al., 2002; Missall, 2002).

An average Rhyming score is 6.29 for typical developing children, 1.66 for low income children, 1.68 for children with identified speech and language disabilities, and .79 for Spanish speaking children learning English (Missal & McConnell, 2004).

#### *Alliteration IGDI*

Alliteration is similar to the other two IGDI assessments previously discussed, such that a stimulus card is presented and the student's total score is the number of items correct in one minute. The student is presented with a stimulus card with four pictures, the stimulus picture is at the top and the other three pictures are at the bottom (1 correct and two incorrect responses) (McConnell, et al., 2004). The student is instructed to "Look at the pictures and find the ones that start with the same sound." The examiner names all the pictures on the stimulus card for the student. The stimulus cards are presented in random order for two minutes, and the total score is the number correct within this time period (McConnell, et al., 2004)

Alliteration test-retest reliability score over three weeks for a sample of 42 preschool-aged children is .46 to .80. In a longitudinal study McConnell, et al., (2004) found that Alliteration correlates with PPVT-3 (.40 to .57), TOPA (.75 to .79) and CAP (.34 to .55). Concurrent validity has also been demonstrated with DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency (.39 to .71) (McConnell et al., 2002; Missall, 2002).

An average Alliteration score is 5.19 for typical developing children, 1.09 for low income children, .94 for children with speech and language disabilities, and .71 for Spanish speaking children learning English (Missal & McConnell, 2004).

## *Parent Survey*

### *Family Involvement Questionnaire*

The second instrument used in this study is the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). The Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) was developed by Fantuzzo et al. (2000) to represent the categories of parental involvement created by Epstein (1995). This instrument is a multidimensional rating scale that asks primary care givers of young children (i.e., parents, other family members, or legal guardians) to indicate the nature or extent of their involvement in their child's early educational experiences (school-based involvement, home-based involvement, and home-school conferencing).

According to Fantuzzo et al. (2000), the FIQ was developed in partnership with parents and teachers in a large urban school district in the northeastern United States, and is composed of 42 Likert-type items (Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always). Parents are required to report on the frequency of specific involvement behaviors. The FIQ measures three parent involvement dimensions: School Based involvement, Home-Based Involvement, and Home-School Conferencing. A series of factor analyses revealed that each construct was shown to be highly reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$  for School-based involvement,  $.85$  for home-based involvement, and  $.81$  for home-school conferencing). However, for the purpose of this study the FIQ will be modified to only include the home-based involvement items (13-items). In addition, the researcher developed an open-ended response question asking parents about other individuals (e.g., sister, grandmother, aunt) in the household that may engage in different educational activities with the

preschooler (e.g., working on reading and writing skills, take child to museum, etc.) at the end of this section of the survey.

The researcher chose this questionnaire because this measure was used on a diverse sample of Head Start, kindergarten, and first-grade children and parents. Fantuzzo et al. (2000) reported that there were 649 participants on whom this measure was conducted. Respondents range in age from 19 to 72 years and were predominantly female (94%). In addition, 57% of the respondents were Black, 29% Caucasian, and 11% of other ethnic backgrounds. Of the sample, 32% were employed full-time, 25% were employed part-time, and 43% were unemployed. Almost one-half of the participants (47%) reported being single, 40% were married, and 13% widowed, separated, or divorced. Of the parents invited to participate, 77% were Head Start parents, 56% of Child Development Center parents, 66% of kindergarten parents, and 60% of first-grade parents.

Multivariate analyses of demographic and parental involvement constructs revealed the following information: Parents with higher levels of education engaged in higher levels of school-based involvement and home-conferencing than parents with less than high school education. In addition, higher levels of home-school conferencing and home-based involvement were found in two parent family households (compared to single family households), and surprisingly, parents with children enrolled in Head Start (versus kindergarten or first-grade) showed the highest level of school-based involvement.

### *Educational Expectations*

In addition, the following three items developed by Hill (2001) which assesses parental educational expectations were included on the survey for the present study. To assess expected grades, parents were asked the following questions: "Knowing your child as you do, what grades do you expect him/her to receive in school?" Parents responded using a 5 point Likert-type scale from 5 (*All A's*) to 1 (*All F's*). To assess how far parents expect their children to go in school, parents were asked, "Knowing your child as you do, how far do you think he/she will go in school." Parents responded using a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (0-5<sup>th</sup> grade) to 5 (4 or more years of college). Finally, parents were asked about expected future occupations, "What type of occupation do you expect him/her to have?" on a 3 point scale ranging from 0 (*service*) to 3 (*professional*).

### *Parent Behavior Questionnaire-Head Start*

The third instrument that used in this study is the Parenting Behavior Questionnaire Revised (PBQ-HS) 40 item scale (Coolahan, McWayne, Fantuzzo, & Grim, 2002). The original PBQ is an 62 item scale that measures parenting style based on Baumrind's three main styles of parenting: (a) authoritative, (b) authoritarian, and (c) permissive. The original PBQ was normed on 1,251 parents, 32% of whom were parents of children enrolled in a local university Head Start Program. Coolahan et al. (2002) revised the original PBQ measure explicitly for the use with low-income African-American caregivers of pre-school children. This sample included 465 caregivers of Black children. The primary caregivers of this sample ranged from 19 to 73 years of age ( $M = 31.54$ ,  $SD = 9.17$ ). Seventy-nine percent of caregivers were mothers, 9% were fathers, and 12% were other relatives or foster parents. Seventy-two percent of caregivers

reported being single. Fifty-two percent reported being unemployed, with 36% having less than a high school diploma, 30% holding a high school diploma or equivalent, and 24% reporting having some college experience. The children of the caregivers in this study ranged in age from 44.8 to 76.0 months ( $M=59.7$ ,  $SD=5.9$ ). There were approximately equal numbers of boys and girls (49% female and 51% male).

Coolahan et al. (2002) modified the PBQ-HS to assure comprehensibility and cultural sensitivity for their targeted population (Black preschool children and parents). For example, the item, “I withhold scolding and/or criticism even when child acts contrary to our wishes,” was deemed problematic by the investigators because the purpose and meaning of the wording is unclear and this phrase contains language that is not common verbiage for this population. The item was changed to read “I scold and/or criticize my child when he doesn’t do what he’s told.” Other items about physical punishment or items suggesting excessive/potential abuse (e.g., I explode in anger towards my child) that were deemed offensive by the investigators were removed from the item pool as well. The PBQ-HS (Coolahan et al., 2002) used in this study consisted of 40 items reflecting three dimensions similar to the original scales: Authoritative (16 items), Authoritarian (11 items), and Permissive constructs (13 items). Respondents were rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale how often they performed various parenting behaviors (i.e., Almost Never, Sometime, Often, Almost Always).

The results of this study found that three dimensions similar to Baumrind’s parenting style constructs emerged for this population of Black, low-income caregivers: authoritative dimension (active-responsive) consists of 16 items with internal consistency of .87. The Permissive parenting dimension (passive-permissive) consists of 11 parenting

item with an internal consistency of .77. The authoritarian dimension (active restrictive) consists of 12-items with an internal constancy of .74. Factor analyses revealed that 39 out of 40 of the items (97.5%) loaded significantly on only one dimension; the remaining item i.e., “I am afraid that disciplining my child will cause my child to dislike me” did not load significantly on any these three factors.

### *Procedures*

Two possible data collection procedures will be described in this section: (1) providing parents the opportunity to take Parent Surveys home to complete, and (2) providing parents the opportunity to complete surveys at Head Start Centers. However, as standard data collection procedures for both options, the researcher gave IRB Informed consents to all parent-child dyads selected to participate in the study and a letter attached for parents explaining the purpose and procedures of the study, as well as a place for parents to indicate whether they would like to complete the survey at home or at their child’s Head Start Center (see Appendix B). This letter also informed parents about the possibility to win a \$100 gift certificate to a local retail store/grocery store for completing all components of this study (i.e., both questionnaires and child participation) (see Appendix B & E). Once the researcher received all IRB Informed consents, a master list of child and parent participates was created. This master list will only be accessible to the researcher and will be kept in a private file in a locked filing cabinet.

### *Completing Parent Survey at Home*

The researchers gave Head Start parents packets that contained a cover letter, IRB Informed consents (child and parent), and a Parent survey. Parents who chose to participate in the current study returned completed consent forms and Parent Survey to

their child's Head Start teacher; the researcher obtained all forms from Head Start teachers. The Parent Survey was administered one time. However, for parents who did not respond to surveys sent home or took home to complete, a follow-up effort was made at Head Start Centers (e.g., asking a parent the next day for surveys and/or consents or asking teachers to ask teachers to remind parents). Follow-up letters were only sent home to the parents of children who did not complete the child assessment portion of the study (see Appendix D). This survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to be completed. The next section describes the procedures for data collection at Head Start Centers.

#### *Data Collection at Head Start Centers*

The same standard data collection previously discussed was used. In addition, parents completed surveys when they pickup their children from Head Start. Research team members explained the purpose of the study, procedure, IRB Informed consent, confidentiality, and data collection procedures (see Appendix C). Upon informed consent, research team members administered one survey (including demographic survey) to parent or primary caregiver (where caregiver is defined as the adult that the child lives with and has sole responsibility for the child) per family. Parents were asked to complete the survey at this time (see Appendix A). Upon request, research team members provided assistance to parents who had difficulty completing the survey (e.g., read items aloud, record responses). For parents who indicated they could not complete the survey at this time, they were permitted to take the survey home to complete and returned to their child's classroom teachers, or schedule a time to complete survey during a follow-up day at the Head Center. The goal of this procedure was to maximize the response rate of the survey, as well as to provide additional support to parents who

otherwise may have been unable to complete the survey due to other reason (i.e., low level of literacy).

### *Assessment of Children*

Data collectors were school psychology students trained in the administration of IGDIs. Therefore, once inter-rater reliability of 80% was obtained on the Picture Naming, Rhyming, and Alliteration tests, the researcher and eight other school psychology students began data collection. Each data collector administered the Picture Naming, Rhyming, and Alliteration test individually to students. The approximate assessment time needed per students was 10 to 15 minutes. Upon the return of children's IGDIs protocols, the researcher blocked out (with a black permanent marker) participants' identifying information and it was replaced with their assigned ID number (matched with parent ID number). Data was collected over a two-week period.

### *Data Analysis*

Once the parent surveys were completed by the participants and returned to the researcher, the data was scored and entered into an Excel database. Each student's IGDIs scores (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration) were entered into an Excel (2003) database. Then data were converted and analyzed by the researcher using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software Package (SPSS, 1999). The following section describes the statistical analysis method that was employed to answer each research question. The following are the three outcome variables used in all four research questions to measure pre-literacy readiness: Picture Naming, Rhyming, and Alliteration.

Question 1. What is the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start Programs?

Statistical Method. To answer this question, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analyses were employed using a significance level of .05 to determine the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness. Correlation analyses are used to determine if a relationship exists between one quantitative predictor variable and one quantitative outcome variable (Johnson & Christenson, 2004). A total of twelve correlations were conducted to determine the relationship between each of the three parenting styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive) constructs and the four pre-literacy readiness measures (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness).

Question 2. What is the relationship between parents' educational expectations of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs and pre-literacy readiness?

Statistical Method. To answer this question, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analyses were employed using a significance level of .05 to determine the relationship between parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness. Correlation analyses are used to determine if a relationship exists between one quantitative predictor variable and one quantitative outcome variable (Johnson & Christenson, 2004). Four correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between parents' educational expectations and each of the pre-literacy readiness outcome measures (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness).

Question 3. What is the relationship between home-based involvement of Black parents and the levels of pre-literacy readiness of their children enrolled in Head Start programs?

Statistical Method. To answer this question, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analyses were employed using a significance level of .05 to determine the relationship between parental home-based involvement and pre-literacy readiness. Correlation analyses are used to determine if a relationship exist between one quantitative predictor variable and one quantitative outcome variable (Johnson & Christenson, 2004). Four correlation analyses will be employed to examine the relationship between parental home-based involvement and each of the pre-literacy readiness outcome measures (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness).

Question 4. What is the relationship between the predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?

Statistical Method. To answer this research question, four multiple regression analyses were employed to examine the relationship between predictor variables (the three types of parenting styles, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and each of the outcome variables of pre-literacy readiness (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). The first multiple regression will explore the relationship between the predictor variables (the three types of parenting styles, parental home-based involvement and parents' educational expectations) and the outcome variable Picture Naming IGDI. The second multiple regression analysis will examine the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome measure Rhyming IGDI. The third multiple regression analysis will explore the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable Alliteration IGDI. In addition, a fourth multiple regression analysis will be conducted to

determine the relationship between the five predictor variables (the three types of parenting styles, home-based involvement, and parents' education expectations) and the outcome variable "Combined Literacy Readiness" (average of Picture Naming, Rhyming, and Alliteration scores). Multiple regression is most appropriate because analyses are used to explain or predict the values of an outcome variable (pre-literacy readiness), based on two or more predictor variables (parenting style, home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) (Johnson & Christenson, 2004). Specifically, multiple regression analyses were used to demonstrate the significance and magnitude of the predictor variables on the various outcome variables.

In addition, demographic information (i.e., education level, marital status, employment status, etc.) were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., means, range, standard deviations).

## Chapter Four

### Results

The present study investigated the relationship between several predictor variables (parenting style, educational expectations, and home-based involvement) and the outcome variable literacy readiness (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). First, this chapter will discuss the descriptive statistics related to the studies demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and educational level) and predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, educational expectations, and home-based involvement). Then the results of correlation and multiple regression analyses will be discussed and used to answer the four research questions in this study.

#### *Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables*

The sampling frame consisted of 1,312 children enrolled in 24 Head Start programs in Hillsborough County, Florida during 2005-2006 school year (Hillsborough County Head Start District Office, 2006). Of these children, 85 African American parent-child dyads from 6 different Head Start Centers were invited to participate in the current study (those who met the studies criteria and were currently enrolled in Head Start at the time of the study). It is important to note, that Hillsborough County Head Start programs are year around and children who will attend kindergarten in the Fall can attend school until the third week of July.

There were a total of 62 participants (72.9%) that completed all portions of the study, 2.4% (N=2) refused to participate in the study, and 23.5% (N=20) were unable to complete all portions of the study (e.g. signed consent forms but did not return survey or child assessment portion was not completed). In addition, 4 out of 10 parents responded

to the follow-up letter mailed home (one time mailing to home address) to schedule a time to meet at the library for their child to participate in the pre-literacy assessment portion of the study. To protect the confidentiality of all participants (e.g., their personal address), a Head Start District Manager mailed follow-up letters home to parents.

The frequencies and percentages for the parent demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, and ethnicity) are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3. These results indicate that most of the parent participants in this study were African American (77%), female (92%), and between the ages 20 and 30 (68%). Of note, the data in Table 3 indicate that there is one missing parent response to the ethnicity question (N=61).

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Parent Demographic Variables (Gender)*

Parent Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Parent Gender (N=62)		
Male	5	8
Female	57	92

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Parent Demographic Variables (Age)*

Parent Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Parent Age (N=62)		
Under 20	1	2
20-30	42	68
31-45	17	27
Over 45	2	3

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Parent Demographic Variable (Ethnicity)*

Parent Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity (N=61)		
African American	47	77
Caribbean decent	7	12
African	1	2
Black Hispanic	4	7
Other	2	3

Table 4, indicates that most of the parent participants in this study had at least a high school diploma/GED or an education beyond the high school level (95%; N=62).

Table 4 also indicates that 60% of participants indicated that there are at least 1 to 2 children living in their home; there was one missing response for this questions (N=61).

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Educational Level and Number of Children in Household*

Study Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Parents' Educational Level (N=62)		
High School and Above	36	58
High School or GED	23	37
Less than high school	3	5
Number of Children in Household (N=61)		
1-2 children	37	60
2-3 children	14	23
4-5 children	9	15
5 or more children	1	2

Table 5

*Respondents Relationship with Preschooler*

Study Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents Relationship to Preschooler (N=61)		
Mother	54	87
Father	5	8
Grandmother	2	5

In addition, results indicate that 94% of the respondents of the Parent Survey were the primary caregiver of the preschooler. Of these respondents, 87% indicated that they were the mother of the preschooler, 8% the father, and 5% the grandmother (see Table 5).

According to Table 6, of the 62 child participants in this study, 37% were males and 63% were females. Eighty-six percent of child participants were at least 5-years old (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Child Demographic Information*

Child Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Child Gender (N=62)</i>		
Male	23	37
Female	39	63
<i>Child Age (N=62)</i>		
4 years	7	11
5 years	53	86
6 years	2	3

*Descriptive Statistics for Marital Status and Employment Status.* Fifty-seven percent of the survey respondents indicated that they were single (N=61), 28% were married, and 15% were separated, divorced, or widowed. The majority of participants (77%) worked full-time, 8% worked part-time, 8% indicated irregular employment, and 7% were unemployed (N=62).

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Year's Child was Enrolled in Head Start.* Forty-nine percent of respondents indicated that their children were enrolled in a Head Start program for at least 2 years, 26% indicated for 1 year, 9% for 3 years, and 3% for 4 years. A correlation analyses was conducted to examine the relationship between the number of years a child was enrolled in Head Start and pre-literacy readiness. According

to the data in Table 7, no significant relationship exists between the number of years a child was enrolled in Head Start and pre-literacy Readiness.

Table 7

*Number of Years Enrolled in Head Start and Pre-literacy Readiness*

	Picture Naming	Rhyming	Alliteration	Combined Literacy Readiness
Number of Years Enrolled in Head Start	.162	.150	-.059	.126

*Descriptive Statistics for Predictor Variables*

*Parental Home-Based Involvement.* Thirteen items were grouped together to form this variable (with each item rated on a scale 1= Rarely, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Always). The mean rating was 3.17 (N=62, SD=.532). The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly negatively skewed (sk=-.853). This means that a majority of parents' ratings on this item falls above the mean (3.17). This suggests that on average parents do believe that they engage in home-based educational activities with their children.

*Parents' Educational Expectations.* Three items were grouped together to form this variable. For item 1, "Knowing your child as you do, what grades do you expect him/her to receive in school?" the mean rating was 4.34 (N=62) (with each item rated on a scale 5=All A's, A's and B's=4, All C's =3, All B's and C's=2, All F's=1), suggesting that on average most parents expect their children to make at least A's and B's in school.

For item 2, "Knowing your child as you do, how far do you think he/she will go in school?" mean rating was 4.45 (N=62) (with each item rated on a scale K-5<sup>th</sup>=1, 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>=2, 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>=3, 12<sup>th</sup> with some college=4, 4 or more years of college=5), suggesting

that average most parents expect their children to graduate from high school and pursue some level of college.

For item 3, "Knowing your child as you do, what type of job do you expect him/her to have?" mean rating was 2.90 (N=61) (with each item rated on a scale 1=service, 2= Laborer, 3=Professional), suggesting that on average most parents expect their children to have a professional career in the future.

The overall mean rating for the combined three educational expectations items was 3.91 (N=62, SD=.406). The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly negatively skewed (sk=-.825), meaning that a majority of parents' rating on this item fell above the mean (3.91). This suggests that on average the majority of parent/primary caregivers in this study believe they have high expectations for their children.

### *Parenting Style*

The following scale was used for each parenting style item (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive): 1=Almost Never, 2=Sometime, 3=Often, and 4=Almost Always.

*Authoritative Parenting Style.* Sixteen items were grouped together to form this variable (with each item rated on a scale 1=Almost Never, 2=Sometime, 3=Often, and 4=Almost Always). The mean rating for this variable was 3.61 (N=62, SD=.454). The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly negatively skewed (sk=-1.92), meaning that a majority of the parents' ratings on this item fell above the mean (3.61). This suggests that most parents believe that they engage in authoritative type parenting which is characterized by high levels of parental nurturance, involvement, sensitivity, reasoning, control, and encouragement of autonomy.

*Authoritarian Parenting Style.* Twelve items were grouped together to form this variable (with each item rated on a scale 1=Almost Never, 2=Sometime, 3=Often, and 4=Almost Always). The mean rating for this variable was 1.85 (N=62, SD=.457). The distribution of scores for this variable was positively skewed ( $sk=+.721$ ). The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly positively skewed ( $sk=+.721$ ), meaning that a majority of the parents' ratings on this item fell above the mean (1.85). This suggests that on average parents believe that they almost never engage in authoritarian type parenting which is characterized by high levels of restrictive, punitive, rejecting, and power-assertive behaviors.

*Permissive Parenting Style.* Twelve items were grouped together to form this variable (with each item rated on a scale 1=Almost Never, 2=Sometime, 3=Often, and 4=Almost Always). The mean rating for this variable was 1.71 (N=62, SD=.461). The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly positively skewed ( $sk=+1.33$ ), meaning that a majority of the parents' ratings on this item fell above the mean (1.71). This suggests that on average parents believe that they almost never engage in permissive type parenting, which is characterized by high levels of warmth and acceptance but low levels of involvement and control.

*Parenting Style and Gender.* Data was also examined to determine if differences exist among child gender and the types of parenting style exhibited by Head Start parents. A T-test was conducted to determine if mean differences exist among child gender and parenting styles. The mean rating for authoritarian parenting was 1.58 for males (N=5; SD=.282) and 1.87 for females (N=57; SD=.463). The mean rating for authoritative parenting was 3.81 for males (N=5; SD=.044) and 3.59 for females (N=57; SD=.469).

The mean rating for permissive type parenting was 1.63 for males (N=5; SD=.045) and 1.71 for females (N=57; SD=.479). Results indicate that no significant mean differences exist among child gender and parenting styles. In addition, these results are supported by previous findings, specifically that most of these Head Start parents reported engaging in authoritative type parenting, regardless of the gender of his or her child.

#### *Literacy Assessments*

*Picture Naming (IGDIs)*. This variable was comprised of the average score on the picture naming measure. The mean score for this variable was 21.1 (N=62, SD=5.73), which is considered above the mean of 16.51 for low income children (Missal & McConnell, 2004). The range for the number of pictures correctly named in 1 minute was 8 to 35 (e.g., rabbit, train, glue, and book). The distribution of scores for this variable was slightly negatively skewed (sk=-.040).

*Rhyming (IGDIs)*. This variable was comprised of the average score on the rhyming measure. The mean score for this variable was 4.98 (N=62, SD=5.43), which is considered above the mean of 1.66 for low income children (Missal & McConnell, 2004). The range for the number of rhyming pictures matched correctly in two minutes was 0 to 18. The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly positively skewed (sk=+.923).

*Alliteration (IGDIs)*. This variable was comprised of the average score on the alliteration measure. The mean score for this variable was 3.03 (N=62, SD=4.43), which is considered above the mean of 1.09 for low income children (Missal & McConnell, 2004). The range for the number of pictures that begin with same sound matched

correctly in two minutes was 0 to 20. The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly positively skewed ( $sk=+2.35$ ).

*Combined Literacy Readiness Score (IGDIs).* This variable is comprised of the average score of the three IGDI measures (i.e., picture naming, rhyming, and alliteration). The mean score for this variable was 9.71 (N=62, SD=3.90). The range for combined literacy readiness score was 11 to 65. The distribution of scores for this variable was significantly positively skewed ( $sk=+1.36$ ).

Table 8

*IGDI Assessments*

Study Variables (N=62)	Standard deviation	Range	Mean Number Correct
Picture Naming	5.7	8 – 35	21.1
Rhyming	5.4	0 – 18	4.9
Alliteration	4.4	0 – 20	3.0
Combined (Total)	11.7	11 – 65	29.1

*Research Questions*

1. *What is the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black Children enrolled in Head Start programs?* A Pearson’s Product Moment analysis was employed to examine the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs. A total of twelve correlations (3 x 4 matrix) were conducted to determine the relationship between each of the three parenting styles (Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive) constructs and each of the four outcome variables (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). According to the finding in Table 9, there were no

statistically significant relationships among parenting style (Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive) and the outcome variable pre-literacy readiness (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness).

Table 9

*Correlations for Parenting Style and Pre-Literacy Readiness*

	Picture Naming	Rhyming	Alliteration	Combined Literacy Readiness
Authoritative	-.011	.196	.074	.114
Authoritarian	.019	-.022	-.007	-.003
Permissive	.150	.184	.045	.176

2. *What is the relationship between home-based involvement of African American parents and levels of pre-literacy readiness of their children enrolled in Head Start programs?* A Pearson's Product Moment analysis was employed to examine the relationship between home-base involvement and literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs. A total of four correlations (1 x 4 matrix) were conducted to determine the relationship between parental home-based involvement and each of the four outcome variables (Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). According to the findings in Table 10, there were no statistically significant relationships among home-based involvement and the outcome variable pre-literacy readiness.

Table 10

*Correlations for Home-based Involvement and Pre-Literacy Readiness*

	Picture Naming	Rhyming	Alliteration	Combined Literacy Readiness
Home-based Involvement	-.112	.044	.082	-.003

3. *What is the relationship between parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?* A Pearson's Product Moment analysis was employed to examine the relationship between parents' educational expectations and literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs. A total of four correlations (1 x 4 matrix) were conducted to determine the relationship between parents' educational expectations and each of the four pre-literacy readiness outcome variables (i.e., Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). According to the findings in Table 11, there were no statistically significant relationships among parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness (i.e., Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness).

Table 11

*Correlations for Parents' Educational Expectations and Pre-Literacy Readiness*

	Picture Naming	Rhyming	Alliteration	Combined Literacy Readiness
Educational Expectations	.036	-.109	.056	.003

4. *What is the relationship between the predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?* Four multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which each of the five predictor variables (i.e., three types of parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive; home-based involvement and educational expectations) predicted pre-literacy readiness (i.e., Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy

Readiness). Each of “Pre-Literacy Readiness” measures were used as a dependent variable in this study.

*Picture Naming IGDI Multiple Regression Analysis.* A multiple regression was used. Picture Naming IGDI was the outcome variable for this series of analyses. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) used to predict all the variables simultaneously was .22 (R =.22) and it was not statistically significant. No Beta weights were statistically significant. Results indicate that 4.9% of the variance in Picture Naming can be accounted for by the five predictor variables (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, parental home-based Involvement, and parents’ educational expectations) in this regression, which is considered relatively small (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Multiple Regression with Picture Naming IGDI as Dependent Variable*

Multiple Regression with Picturing Naming IGDI as Dependent Variable		
Predictor Variables	Beta Weights	Significance
Authoritative	.028	.865
Authoritarian	-.041	.778
Permissive	.189	.201
Home-based Involvement	-.162	.318
Educational Expectations	.116	.427
R <sup>2</sup>	.049	
Standard Error of the Estimate	5.82	

*Rhyming IGDI Multiple Regression Analysis.* A multiple regression was used. Rhyming IGDI was the outcome variable for this series of analyses. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) used to predict all the variables simultaneously was .283 (R =.283) and it was not statistically significant. No Beta weights were statistically significant. Results indicate that 8.0 % of the variance in Rhyming can be accounted for by the five predictor variables (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, parental home-based Involvement, and parents' educational expectations), which is considered relatively small (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Multiple Regression with Rhyming as Dependent Variable*

Multiple Regression with Rhyming as Dependent Variable		
Predictor Variables	Beta Weights	Significance
Authoritative	.210	.203
Authoritarian	-.055	.699
Permissive	.208	.154
Home-based Involvement	-.095	.548
Educational Expectations	.063	.659
R <sup>2</sup>	.080	
Standard Error of the Estimate	5.43	

*Alliteration IGDI Multiple Regression Analysis.* A multiple regression was used. Alliteration IGDI was the outcome variable for this series of analyses. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) used to predict all the variables simultaneously was .173 (R =.173) and it was not statistically significant. No Beta weights were statistically

significant. Results indicate that 3.0 % of the variance in Alliteration can be accounted for by the five predictor variables (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, parental home-based Involvement, and parents’ educational expectations), which is considered relatively small (see Table 14).

Table 14

*Multiple Regression with Alliteration as Dependent Variable*

Multiple Regression with Alliteration as Dependent Variable		
Predictor Variables	Beta Weights	Significance
Authoritative	.068	.686
Authoritarian	-.020	.893
Permissive	.010	.944
Home-based Involvement	.087	.592
Educational Expectations	-.157	.287
R <sup>2</sup>	.030	
Standard Error of the Estimate	4.55	

*Combined Literacy Readiness Multiple Regression Analysis.* A multiple regression was used. Combined Literacy Readiness was the outcome variable for this series of analyses. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) used to predict all the variables simultaneously was .224 (R =.224) and it was not statistically significant. No Beta weights were statistically significant. Results indicate that 5.0 % of the variance in “Combined Literacy Readiness” can be accounted for by the five predictor variables (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, parental home-based Involvement, and parents’ educational expectations), which is considered relatively small (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Multiple Regression with Combined Literacy Readiness as Dependent Variable*

Multiple Regression with Combined Literacy Readiness as Dependent Variable		
Predictor Variables	Beta Weights	Significance
Authoritative	.137	.411
Authoritarian	-.053	.714
Permissive	.193	.191
Home-based Involvement	-.091	.575
Educational Expectations	.027	.855
R <sup>2</sup>	.224	
Standard Error of the Estimate	3.96	

*Correlation Matrix of Predictor Variables*

To further examine the relationship among the five predictor variables (authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, home-based involvement, educational expectations), a correlation matrix was created. For these variables, Pearson's R correlation values and level of significance are reported in the correlation matrix in Table 16. Moderate correlations were found among several of the predictor variables at the .01 level and .05 significance levels.

Table 16

*Correlation Matrix for Predictor Variables*

	Home-based Involvement	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Educational Expectations
Home-based Involvement	1	-.129	.569**	-.027	.293*
Authoritarian		1	-.203	.370**	-.215
Authoritative			1	.048	.304*
Permissive				1	-.261*
Educational Expectations					1

\* Indicates significance at the  $p < .05$

\*\*Indicates significance at the  $p < .01$

*Home-based Involvement Qualitative Data*

One qualitative question about parental home-based involvement was included in this study. Forty-two participants responded to the following question on the Parent Survey, “Is there anyone else in the household that does these kinds of activities with your child? If so, who?” Results indicate that a majority of respondents reported that either their child’s father (30%) or a sibling (sister-24%; brother-16%) helps his/her child at home (see Table 17).

Table 17

*Percentage of Others that Assist in Child's Learning at Home*

Study Variables (N=41)	Frequency	Percentage
Others that Assist in Child's Learning in the Home		
Mother	2	4
Father	13	30
Sister	11	24
Brother	7	16
Stepfather	4	9
Boyfriend	1	2
Uncle	1	2
Aunt	2	4

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between parenting style, home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness. The four research questions included in this study were:

- (1) What is the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start Programs?
- (2) What is the relationship between parental home-based involvement of Black children and levels of pre-literacy readiness of their children enrolled in Head Start programs?
- (3) What is the relationship between parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?
- (4) What is the relationship between the predictor variables (i.e., parenting style, parental home-based involvement, and parents' educational expectations) and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs?

#### *Overview*

There were four research questions in this study. Correlational analyses were used to answer the first 3 research questions. Multiple regression analyses were used to answer the fourth research question. The study's participants included 62 Black parents and their children who were currently enrolled in a Head Start Program. This chapter will summarize the results in the previous chapter, discuss limitation of the study, and conclude with implications for future research.

### *Demographics*

When examining the demographic variables in this study, it was seen that most of the parent participants in this study were single, African American, females; between the ages 20 and 30; had at least a high school diploma/GED or beyond; at least 1 to 2 children living in their home; and were the primary caregiver's of the preschooler and were employed full-time.

The demographic composition of the parent participants in this study is similar to the national proportions for inner city Head Start Programs and other studies that have been conducted with the targeted population (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). However, the participants in the current study reported having fewer children and working more hours than parents in previous studies (Fantuzzo et al., 1999; Fantuzzo et al., 2004). This could speak to the fact that perhaps, the composition of the types of parents with children enrolled in Head Start programs are changing (for the better) due to Head Start program requirements (e.g., parents have the option to either work full-time or enroll in school full-time) and more parents taking advantage of the supports and services available (e.g., educational support, childcare, etc.).

### *The Relationship between Parenting Style and Pre-Literacy Readiness*

When examining the relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness, correlational analyses showed that there was no significant relationship between parenting style and pre-literacy readiness of Head Start children. Specifically, this means parenting behaviors (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) did not have a significant impact on a child's overall development of early reading skills (e.g., child being able to match rhyming pictures, identify pictures that begin with the same

sound, and identify common objects in home/school environment) prior to entering kindergarten, regardless of the gender of the child.. However, although not significant, parents who indicated that they engaged in permissive parenting style and authoritarian behaviors (i.e., the permissive style of parenting is described as responsive and nurturing however, there are no rules imposed on the child) and the authoritative style is described by parents who are supportive, nurturing, and promote autonomy) had children who performed higher on overall pre-literacy readiness scores (Combined Literacy Readiness scores). This finding suggests that parent who create a warm and supportive home environment (with or without rules or boundary setting) for their children are more likely to have children who perform better on pre-literacy reading assessments.

#### *The Relationship between Home-based Involvement and Pre-literacy Readiness*

When examining the relationship between home-based involvement and pre-literacy readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start programs, surprisingly, results indicate no statistically significant relationships among home-based involvement and the outcome variable pre-literacy readiness. These findings are not supported by research. There is a plethora of research that supports the notion that more parental involvement increases the likelihood of academic and behavioral success. However, researchers are still trying to identify the most effective types of parental involvement activities that influence children's academic outcomes (Fantuzzo et. al, 2004). Thus, the lack of significant results maybe attributed to the fact that the definition of "parental home-based involvement" is on such a broad continuum that all the activities were not captured on the survey used. In addition, although not statistically significant, the relationship between parental home-based involvement was stronger on the two assessments that measured

basic phonological awareness (e.g., Alliteration and Rhyming). This is interesting because of the fourteen parental home-based involvement items included on the survey, none specifically targeted phonological awareness. Therefore, it is suggested that the home-based involvement items on the survey under-represents the critical areas measured by two of IGDI's assessments (Alliteration and Rhyming assessments).

Alternatively, one could also argue that these results indicate that these parents focus more on teaching easier or basic pre-academic skills to their children (e.g., identifying common objects in the home environment) versus more time consuming and higher skills (e.g., providing tutoring, reading to their children at home, teaching letters and letter sounds). To specifically support this argument, results showed that these children scored higher on the IGDI Picture Naming assessment (which measures expressive language) than the other two IGDI assessments (which measures phonological awareness).

It is also important to note that the results of this study showed at least 70% of respondents reported that someone else other than themselves [either their child's father (30%) or a sibling (sister-24%; brother-16%)] helps his/her child at home. Thus, this further supports the fact that more research is needed in the area of developing a better way to not only measure parental involvement, but to also measure the various ways individuals in the family, extended family, and community provide supports to these families. With 70% of respondents indicating that someone else in the home helps his or her child with schooling, one could question whether the person completing the survey has an accurate view of the types of activities and learning environment created for the child.

*The Relationship between Parents' Educational Expectations and Pre-Literacy Readiness*

Results indicate that there were no statistically significant relationships among parents' educational expectations and pre-literacy readiness (i.e., Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). These results are not supported by research literature. Most studies conducted found that parents with higher educational expectations typically have children who perform better on math and reading measures (Gronlick et al., 1997; Halle, Kurtz-Costas, & Mahoney, 1997). These insignificant results may be attributed to the fact that there were only three questions used to assess this area, making reliability of the questions questionable. The majority of participants indicated on the survey that he/she expects his/her child to make at least A's and B's in school, graduate high school and pursue some form of college education, and pursue a professional career.

Results suggest that there appears to be a significant "gap" between the high expectations parents have for their children and their children's actual performance on the pre-literacy measures (i.e., these expectations did not impact children's overall performance on pre-literacy measures). It is supported in research literature that most black parents have high educational expectations for their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997); however it remains unclear how "actions" (behavior) and "words" (communication) are tied to academic outcomes of these expectations.

*The Relationship between the Predictor Variables and Pre-Literacy Readiness of Black children enrolled in Head Start Programs*

To answer the primary research questions, four multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which each of the five predictor variables (i.e., three types of parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive; home-based involvement and educational expectations) predicted pre-literacy readiness (i.e., Picture Naming, Rhyming, Alliteration, and Combined Literacy Readiness). Overall, all multiple regression analyses lacked significant results. None of the predictor variables had more of an influence on pre-literacy readiness variables (outcome variables).

There are several possible explanations for these findings. Specifically, in relation to parental home-based involvement, the fact that a large number of participants (70%) indicated that others in the immediate/extended family engaged in home-based involvement activities with his or her child, suggests that the FIQ measure used may not have assessed the more complex dynamic aspects of parental involvement in Black families. This is supported by the fact that research literature lacks a consensus definition of “parental involvement” because this concept is multidimensional in nature and is difficult to measure (Adil & Framer, 2006; Epstein, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Furthermore, with regards to the potential power of the predictor variable, parental home-based involvement perhaps more time between measures is needed to have a significant impact on children’s pre-literacy achievement.

To further examine the relationship among the five predictor variables (authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, home-based involvement, educational expectations), a correlation matrix was created. The relationship between variables all

made sense intuitively and conceptually, except for the relationship between permissive and authoritarian constructs. As mentioned previously, these findings further support the suggestion that suggests that Baumrind's euro-centric parenting style constructs are invalid measures to use with minority populations. The significant relationship between authoritarian and permissive constructs may indicate that (specifically, with this population of parents) these two constructs have an unclear and undistinguishable relationship with each other (Coolahan et al., 2002). In other words, perhaps if further explored a slightly different parenting dimension may emerge from these two dimensions (authoritarian and permissive). These results further support the notion that Baumrind's parenting style constructs may not generalize across other cultural and economical contexts.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

There are several limitations in the present study that must be discussed. First, the most obvious is the small sample size. Due to the small sample size results (N=62), the required number of participants for this study to yield significant results (N=85) was not met. Second, the fact that a correlational research design was used, enabled the investigation of relationships only, and did not allow for any exploration of cause-and-effect relationships between variables. Third is the extent to which results of this study generalizes to other populations. The sample population of the present study included only Black parents and their children who were enrolled in Head Start programs. Thus, these results may not generalize to other ethnic/racial groups (e.g., White, Hispanic, Asian, etc.). Another limitation is ecological validity. It refers to the generalizability of the results of the study across settings (Johnson & Christenson, 2004). This study was conducted throughout

various Head Start programs in the central Florida; therefore, results may not generalize across different rural and/or urban settings. Another limitation to this study is the fact, that no normative data exist for the pre-literacy outcome variable used in this study, thus the child participant scores in this study could not be compared to other Head Start children. One of the last limitations noted is content-validity, which is the extent that the measure reflects the full domain of the concept being measured” (Neuendorf, 2002). Because parental involvement is such a multidimensional construct, it is difficult to determine if the FIQ accurately measured home-based involvement.

The final limitation of this study is related to the fact the since Head Start promotes “parental involvement” as a core philosophy of its overall early intervention/prevention program for low-income and at-risk children and families, it is likely that most of the parent participants of this study were those parents who already create a stimulating home learning environment for their children. Furthermore, due to the poor timing of the study (all data was collected the last two weeks of Head Start) and lack of random sampling (due to convenience sampling-participants were parents and children available to participate), perhaps these parent participants were parents who are already highly involved with their children at home and chose to have their children attended Head Start for the entire summer to learn as much as possible before attending kindergarten in the Fall.

### *Future Research*

First, future research should seek to replicate this study using a larger sample size. Second, future research should also examine the home environment in which parents convey their expectations to children because this may give valuable information about this process. Third, to help researchers operationally define “home-based parental

involvement”, the use of qualitative methodology (e.g., focus groups and direct observations) may be key in accurately defining these concepts. For example, focus groups consisting of immediate and extended family members to discuss the primary roles each play in creating an optimal home learning environment for children and direct observations in the home could lend further information about the small things parents do at home that may not be captured through self-report survey measures or in other ways. Fourth, the few and inconsistent findings of how parenting style relates to school performance of young children (as supported by the findings of this study), also reflects the complex and dynamic nature of parenting behaviors, and the difficulty of applying Euro-centric measures to the study of other ethnic groups. Thus, future research is needed to determine the generalizability of these parenting styles constructs across other ethnic minority and cultural groups. In addition, other qualitative measures (e.g., focus groups and direct observations) may be warranted to develop more reliable and valid measures to examine parenting behaviors of ethnic minority groups.

### *Conclusion*

In general, the results of this study are supported by the literature (Gronlick et al., 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Steinburg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling; 1992) and this study demonstrates that Black Head Start parents demonstrate the following strengths: (1) Black Head Start parents have high educational expectations for their children, specifically, they are highly involved in the early learning process of their children (especially in the areas of vocabulary development); (2) they engaging in more authoritative parenting behaviors (e.g., parenting behaviors that consist of high levels of warmth and discipline); and (3) they have extremely high expectations for their children

(e.g., graduation from high school and completing college, maintaining at least A's and B's in school, and pursuing a professional career in the future) . However, these results also show that Head Start parents could use additional support and or trainings in the areas of teaching or helping their children in the area of phonological awareness, specifically because these tasks were challenging for the child participants in this study. It is important to note, that several limitations of this study (e.g., small sample and sensitivity of measure used) contributed to this study's overall lack of significant results. However, despite the lack of significance, the results of this study contributes to the literature that supports that Black parents are engaging in activities at home with their children, whether it's the primary caregiver (e.g., mother) or another person in the immediate or extended family (e.g., father, grandparents, uncle, boyfriend). These are considered strengths of the black community and more attention should be paid to supporting and building on the strengths. Abdul-Adil and Framer (2006) suggested three strategies for increasing parental involvement of inner city African American parents: (1) *empowerment*- offering parents the training or skills that will support increased involvement; (2) *outreach*- make services and supports readily available in the community and design programs that will meet parents "where they are" and take them "where they need to go"; and (3) *indigenous resources*- utilize programs that use a parent-oriented focus within the family and community settings. Future research should build upon these promising strategies to facilitate increased parental involvement of Black parents, especially in the area of phonological awareness.

In response to the statement that "all children will start school ready to learn" (National Educational Goals Panel, 1997, p. XV), specifically children from less

privileged backgrounds, prevention and early intervention practices are two essential components in promoting future academic and learning outcomes. It is important to understand the significance of identifying and utilizing the resources and supports available in the black community. These are essential components in facilitating the pre-literacy growth of black children in the home environment (such as specifically in the area of phonological awareness), as well as the school environment and targeting the “achievement gap” that arguably starts during early childhood years. The results of this study further supports this view as well as the continued need for extensive and focused research in this area.

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## Appendices

Appendix A



Parent Survey

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY. THIS IS NOT A TEST.**

All information will be kept private. Please be as honest as you can. Try to answer all questions. Skip any questions you don't want to answer. If you are unsure of an answer, please place a check (✓) on the line you feel most appropriate. Thank you for your time.

**Part I. Demographic Information**

Please answer the following questions by placing a check (✓) on the appropriate line. Please check only one item.

**Your gender**

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

**Your age**

Under 20 \_\_\_\_\_

20-30 \_\_\_\_\_

31-45 \_\_\_\_\_

Over 45 \_\_\_\_\_

**Marital status**

Married \_\_\_\_\_

Single \_\_\_\_\_

Separated, divorced, or widowed \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethnicity**

Black \_\_\_\_\_

Caribbean descent \_\_\_\_\_

African \_\_\_\_\_

Black Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Status**

Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_

Irregular employment \_\_\_\_\_

Regular, part-time employment \_\_\_\_\_

Regular, full-time employment \_\_\_\_\_

**Education Level**

High School and above \_\_\_\_\_

High School Diploma or GED \_\_\_\_\_

Less than high school \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you the primary caregiver of the preschooler?**

No

\_\_\_\_\_

Yes

\_\_\_\_\_

**How many children live in your home?**

1-2

4-5

2-3

5 or more

**What is your relationship with the preschooler (circle)?**

Mother          Sister          Cousin          Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Father          Brother          Grandparent

Please answer the following questions about your **child** by placing a check (✓) on the appropriate line.

Please check only one item.

**Child Gender**

Male

Female

**Child Age**

4 years

6 years

5 years

**How many years has your child attended Head Start/Early Head?**

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Part II.** Please carefully read each statement about the types of activities you do at home with your child.

Place a check (✓) on the appropriate line. Please check only one item.

1. I spend time working with my child on number skills  
Rarely           Sometimes           Often           Always
2. I spend time working with my child on reading/writing skills  
Rarely           Sometimes           Often           Always
3. I talk to my child about how much I love learning new things  
Rarely           Sometimes           Often           Always
4. I bring home learning materials for my child (videos, etc.)  
Rarely           Sometimes           Often           Always
5. I spend time with my child working on creative activities  
Rarely           Sometimes           Often           Always

6. I share stories with my child about when I was in school  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
7. I see that my child has a place for books and school materials  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
8. I take my child places in the community to learn special things (i.e., zoo, museum)  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
9. I maintain clear rules at my home that my child should obey.  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
10. I talk about my child's learning efforts in front of relatives  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
11. I review my child's school work  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
12. I keep a regular morning bedtime schedule for my child  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
13. I praise my child for school work in front of the teachers  
Rarely \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Always \_\_\_\_
14. Is there any one else in the household that does these kinds of activities with the child? If so, who?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from Fantuzzo et al. 2004, Family Involvement Survey (FIQ)

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**Part III.**

Please read each statement and place a check (✓) on the appropriate line that best describes your educational goals for your child. Please check only one item.

1. Knowing your child as you do, what grades do you expect him/her to receive in school?  
All A's \_\_\_\_ A's and B's \_\_\_\_ All C's \_\_\_\_ All B's and C's \_\_\_\_  
All F's \_\_\_\_

2. Knowing your child as you do, how far do you think he/she will go in school?  
 K -5<sup>th</sup> grade \_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_ 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_ 12<sup>th</sup> with some college \_\_\_\_  
 4 or more years of college \_\_\_\_
3. Knowing your child as you do, what type of job do you expect him/her to have?  
 Service \_\_\_\_ Laborer \_\_\_\_ Professional \_\_\_\_

Adapted from Hill (2001), Educational Expectations Questions

**Part IV.**

Please carefully read each statement about how often you do this behavior with your child. Place a check (✓) on the appropriate line. Please check only one item on for each statement.

1. I respond to my child's feelings or needs  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
2. When my child and I disagree, I tell my child to keep quiet  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
3. My family says that I spoil my child  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
4. I explain to my child why misbehavior is wrong  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
5. I tell my child I'll punish but don't  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
6. I demand that my child do/does things  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
7. I explain the consequences of my child's behavior  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
8. When my child and I fight, I discipline first, and ask questions later  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_
9. I spank my child when he/she is disobedient  
 Almost Never \_\_\_\_ Sometime \_\_\_\_ Often \_\_\_\_ Almost Always \_\_\_\_

10. I tell my child I'm proud when he/she tries to be good  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
11. When I want my child to stop doing something, I ask him/her many times  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
12. I threaten to punish my child more than I do it  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
13. I scold or criticize my child  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
14. I have a hard time saying "no" to my child  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
15. I tell my child reasons to obey rules  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
16. I express affection towards my child by hugging, kissing, etc.  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
17. I encourage my child to express opinions  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
18. When my child acts up in public, I don't know what to do  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
19. I give praise to my child when he/she is good  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
20. I punish more effective than reasoning  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
21. I show sympathy when my child is hurt  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
22. I encourage my child to think about consequences  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
23. I apologize to my child when I make a mistake  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_

24. I am affectionate with my child  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
25. When my child doesn't do what I asked, I let it go or do it myself  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
26. I emphasize reasons for rules with my child  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
27. I encourage my child to talk about feelings  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
28. I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
29. I am afraid that disciplining my child will cause her/him to dislike me  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
30. I tell my child how I want them to behave  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
31. I find it difficult to discipline my child  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
32. If my child resists going to bed, I let them stay up  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
33. I give in when my child causes commotion  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
34. I am unsure how to change my child's behavior  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
35. When my child misbehaves, I say things I regret  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
36. When my child acts up, I get visibly upset  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
37. I use physical punishment with my child  
 Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_

38. When my child asks why I must do something, I say, "Because I said so"  
Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
39. I yell or shout when my child misbehaves  
Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_
40. I get upset with my child when he/she spills something  
Almost Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always\_\_\_\_\_

Adopted from Coolahan, et al. (2002) Parenting Style Questionnaire-Head Start (PSQ-HS)

Appendix B

Letter to Parents

Code \_\_\_\_\_



# Head Start Parents



**Dear Parent,**

Hi! My name is Iravonia Rawls and I am an African American graduate student at the University of South Florida. The purpose of this letter is to invite you and your child to participate in a research project that looks at how Black Head Start parents help prepare their children for kindergarten at home.

If you would like to participate in this project, and you are the **parent** or the **adult that the child lives with** and you **have primary responsibility for the child** (e.g., grandparent, aunt, cousin), then please complete the consent forms and Parent Survey found in this packet. Completing the survey will take about 15– 20 minutes. If you give permission for your child to participate in this project, he or she will be asked to do the following activities with myself or a member of my research team: provide the names of different pictures (e.g., cake, book, rabbit), match pictures that rhyme (e.g., cat and mat), and match pictures that begin with the same sound (e.g., hat and house). The total time that it will take for your child to do these activities will be 5–7 minutes. As a participant of this study you will not be required to provide any identifying information (e.g., name, social security number, address).

As a token of appreciation for your time and help (for completing the survey and giving permission for your child to participate in this project) you will be entered into a \$100 raffle to win a gift certificate to University Mall or a local grocery store.

Please (✓) check the appropriate box below:

- Yes, I want to participate. I will complete forms and Parent Survey and return them to my child's classroom Head Start teacher.
- Yes, I want to participate but I prefer to complete forms when I pick up my child from Head Start. My research team and I will be at your Head Start Center to help you complete all forms.
- No, I don't want to participate. Please send this form back to your child's Head Start teacher.

Appendix B (Continued)

**Who do I contact if I have questions?**

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at 813-830-8666 or my major professor Harold Keller, Ph.D. at 813-974-6709. For a Head Start representative, please contact Jennifer Marshall, General Manager, at 813-272-5140 ext. 3114.

Thank you,  
Iravonia Rawls, M.A.  
USF School Psychology Program

## Appendix C

### \*Script and Helpful Tips: Helping Parents

#### Introduction:

Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a student at the University of South Florida. I am also a member of the research team for this project. We are interested in learning more about the ways Black (minority) parents help prepare their children for kindergarten, and would like you and your child to participate. If you would like to participate in this project, then first please read and sign these forms (hand parent consent forms) giving permission for you and your child to participate. When you are finish let me know and I will give you a survey to complete. It will take you approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. Participation in this project is completely up to you and you will not be required to provide any identifying information (e.g., name, address, social security number). If you have any questions about the information on the forms or survey I am here to help you. Thank you for your time.

#### Frequently Asked Questions:

*Q1: How long will it take me to complete the survey?*

A: It will take you approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the survey.

*Q2: What does my child have to do?*

A: A member of our research team will ask your child to name various pictures in the environment for 1 minute (e.g., cake, book, rabbit), match pictures that rhyme (e.g., cat and bat), and match pictures that begin with the same sound (e.g., bee and ball).

*Q3: Do I have to give any personal information?*

A: No identifying information is required.

*Q4: Will I know the results of my child's assessment?*

A: Unfortunately individual scores will not be available, but if you would like the researcher can provide you with a summary of the overall research project findings when available.

*Q5: Who is going to see this information?*

A: The results of this study will be shared with the Director of Hillsborough County Head program.

Appendix C (Continued)

*Q6: How do I win the \$100 gift certificate?*

A: Sign consent forms (parent and child), complete Parent Survey, make sure child participates

*Q7: When will I know if I won the \$100 gift certificate?*

A: You will find out no later Aug.1, 2006 if you won the \$100 gift certificate. A Head Start manager will contact you.

Appendix D

Follow-up Letter



# Head Start Parent



Dear Parent,

Thank you for your recent participation in the research project that examines how Black parents prepare their children for kindergarten. I really appreciate that you took the time out of your busy schedule to complete the Parent Survey. I am contacting you because my research team and I were unable to complete the pre-reading assessment with your child before he/she exited Head Start. This pre-reading assessment is an **important** second part of this project. Both the Parent Survey and the child pre-reading assessment must be complete for me to be able to use this information for my project. I was hoping to schedule a time that I can do this 5-8 minute assessment with your child. Your child will be asked to do the following activities: name pictures, match pictures that rhyme, and match pictures that sound the same. Please contact me at **813-830-8666** to schedule a time within the next two weeks that I can do this assessment with your child. I am very flexible and can meet you and your child anytime and any place (e.g., head start center, library, or home). I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Iravonia Rawls

Appendix E

Survey Advertisement



By completing the survey in this packet and returning it to your child's Head Start teacher, you will be entered into a raffle to win a \$100 gift certificate to University Mall or a local grocery store! Don't miss this opportunity!

For more information contact: Iravonia Rawls at 813-866-5329 or Head Start Manager, Jennifer Marshall, at 813-272-5140.