

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: A GENERATIONAL CASE STUDY WITH
FAMILIES OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

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ABSTRACT

“No topic about school improvement has created more rhetoric than “parent involvement.”

Joyce Epstein, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships

The purpose of this study was to continue investigating the findings on parental involvement by looking at generational differences and diversity of families from the voice of grandparents, children and grandchildren over the age of 18. The researcher viewed the study through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence for school-family-community partnerships. The overarching questions guiding this investigation centered on what parental involvement is and whether parental involvement really matters in the success of children.

The study population consisted of one African American family, one Hispanic family and one Caucasian family. Each family was represented by grandparent(s), children, and grandchildren over the age of 18. Data collection methods included face to face interviews with grandparents, children, and grandchildren over the age of 18. These data methods assisted the researcher in the triangulation of the data. Findings from the research indicate that parental involvement is still as important today as it was for parents ten to twenty year ago. Another finding is the concept of partnership with the home, school, and community gives all families more equal opportunities to become involve in their children’s education. These findings support the theory of overlapping spheres of influence and are linked to the success of children. The implications of this inquiry for school leaders could impact K-12 institutions and higher education institutions as leaders continue to address the issues of parental involvement and make a connection with the family, school, and community partnership.