

Chapter 1:
Family-School Partnerships at School Entry:
Developmental and Conceptual Frameworks for Action

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Abstract

The transition into formal schooling represents an important milestone for young children and their parents. This chapter begins with research documenting the importance of family-school partnerships as children prepare for and make the transition into elementary school. As in other key areas of development, parents influence child school adjustment and performance in unique and powerful ways because of their prominence as sources of emotional, social, and instrumental support for child development. This chapter describes the multiple aspects of family engagement that support child school success, including parent attitudes and practices at home, school and teacher attitudes toward and support for family engagement, and the quality and nature of parent-teacher partnerships. A broad conceptual framework is outlined to represent the multiple facets and features of effective family-school partnerships. One goal is to set the stage for the following chapters in this volume in which five distinct intervention models are described, each effective at fostering family engagement around the school entry transition point. A second chapter goal is to highlight a set of important conceptual and empirical questions that apply across these varied intervention approaches, including possible mechanisms of change, challenges to effective implementation, and approaches to diffusion and scaling. We conclude with a set of issues to keep in mind when considering the varied intervention approaches described in this volume that may be helpful in guiding “next steps” in areas of future research and school programming innovation.

Introduction

The transition into kindergarten represents an important developmental milestone for young children and their parents. The social-emotional and cognitive skills that children display as they enter kindergarten set the stage for their future school success, predicting their later school performance and long-term education and employment outcomes (Ryan, Fauth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006). A growing body of research suggests that family-school partnerships play a unique and critical role in supporting child readiness and adjustment as children enter formal schooling (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999; Stormshak, Kaminski, & Goodman, 2002). Family engagement appears especially helpful to children growing up in economically-disadvantaged and under-resourced families (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999), where access to early educational supports is limited and children are often exposed to adversities that reduce their school readiness. We begin this chapter by considering the various factors that contribute to effective family-school partnerships, along with evidence of their developmental importance at school entry.

Parent Engagement and Family-School Partnerships

Across studies and programs, parent engagement and family-school partnerships have been defined and operationalized in a variety of ways. The model guiding this volume recognizes the multi-dimensional nature and varied processes that contribute to effective family-school partnerships. These include processes that occur at home and processes that occur at school; roles played by parents and those played by teachers and schools; and supports that derive from behaviors and activities, attitudes and expectations, and the dynamic qualities of teacher-parent relationships (see also Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Much of the original research on this topic focused on the construct of parent involvement, identifying what parents were doing to get

involved with and support their child's schooling. More recently, the term "involvement" has been replaced with the term "engagement" in recognition of the important role that schools and teachers play in the process. That is, whereas involvement is a term that focuses on parent behaviors, engagement is a term that reflects the joint influences of parents and schools and the collaborative efforts of parents and teachers working in alignment to support child school success. The term "family-school partnerships" underscores the breadth of this domain, recognizing the contributions made by parents, teachers/schools, and the quality of their partnership and collaboration (Sheridan & Kim, 2015).

In terms of parent contributions to this partnership, past research has identified several important dimensions of parent involvement that are associated in differential ways with child school readiness and school functioning. Studying these factors in a large sample of low-income families, Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Perry (2000) identified three dimensions of parent involvement, validated cross-sectionally in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade: home-based involvement, school-based involvement, and parent-teacher conferencing. Home-based involvement included parent support for learning outside of the school setting, reflected by parent-child reading, working on learning activities at home, and parent-child conversations about school. School-based involvement included activities and behaviors that occurred at school in support of child learning, such as volunteering in the classroom, going on school trips, and attending school events. Home-school conferencing was defined by communications between parents and school personnel focused on child learning, such as talking with the teacher about school progress, problem-solving about child problems at school, and discussing parent activities that might support child learning. In a subsequent longitudinal study, Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry and Childs (2004) found that all three dimensions of parent involvement were associated

with child adjustment and performance at school, including fewer behavior problems, higher levels of social competence and motivation, and larger vocabularies. When considered together, home-based involvement emerged as the best unique predictor of reduced behavior problems, adaptive approaches to learning, and vocabulary. School-based involvement and home-school conferencing also predicted positive school outcomes, but their contributions were not significant once the association with home-based involvement was taken into account. The researchers speculated that school-based parent involvement and parent-teacher conferencing were less uniquely predictive of child outcomes because the impact of these forms of engagement may depend heavily on the quality of interactions that parents experience with teachers and at schools (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Such speculations open the door for more family-school research focusing on the quality of interpersonal dynamics between parents and teachers (i.e., how they interact) and not simply structural features of the interaction (i.e., what they do). Additional research has identified factors underlying and complementing parent involvement behaviors, including attitudes and beliefs about parental roles, motivation and self-efficacy, as well as academic expectations for child performance that contribute to the impact of parent involvement on child school success (Martini & Senechal, 2012; Whitaker, 2018).

Whereas studies of parent involvement focus on parent attitudes and behaviors, researchers have noted that these parent attitudes and behaviors are affected by features embedded in the school context, including the quality of parents' interpersonal relationships with teachers and school personnel (Fantuzzo et al., 2004) and the school practices and teacher attitudes and behaviors that invite and support parent engagement (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007). For example, among families participating in Early Head Start (serving children 0 – 3 years of age), Elicker, Wen, Kwon, and Sprague (2013) found that the

quality of teacher-parent relationships (reflecting warmth and collaboration) was a significant predictor of positive parenting and of child social competence and early learning. Broad factors such as school climate as well as specific suggestions and invitations may affect parent perceptions of opportunities for school-based engagement and parent decisions regarding participation (Green et al., 2007).

Beyond opportunities for parents to visit and support their children at school, the degree to which teachers and parents are able to work collaboratively and in alignment also appears important. Collaborative practices between parents and teachers include aligning assessments of child needs and educational goals and developing and implementing coordinated home-school plans (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). This kind of home-school coordination may be especially beneficial for children from economically-disadvantaged or culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly when school personnel make efforts to reach out and establish partnerships that respect the parent's perspective (Clarke, Wheeler, Sheridan, Sommerhalder, & Witte, 2017; Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). A strengths-based orientation that invites parents' input regarding goals and aspirations, reinforces their skills and knowledge, and respects their time and resources for involvement enhances parental self-efficacy and practices (Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2007; Green et al., 2007). Factors at the school level, such as a positive school-wide climate and welcoming attitude, along with specific invitations have emerged as important facilitators of parent engagement (Green et al., 2007).

Family-School Partnerships at the Transition into Formal Schooling

The transition into formal schooling represents an important developmental milestone for young children and their parents. Longitudinal studies document academic gains for children when parents increase their support for learning at home as children transition into and through

kindergarten (Powell, Son, File, & Froiland, 2012). Children also show higher levels of social competence and fewer behavior problems at school when their parents maintain high levels of parent involvement as they enter and continue through elementary school (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010).

The importance of strong family-school partnerships at this transition point likely reflects several factors. First, as children transition into kindergarten they are faced with an increase in behavioral and cognitive demands, creating new challenges for self-regulation, attentional focus, and interpersonal interaction (Bassok, Lathan, & Rorem, 2016). Parents can provide an invaluable source of support to help children cope with these challenges in the behavioral domain (by setting up routines, positive expectations, and using positive management strategies), the social-emotional domain (by talking with children, planning and problem-solving), and in the cognitive domain (by reinforcing skill acquisition with home reading and learning games). Second, this transition to school takes place during a period of active neurodevelopment, when the prefrontal cortex that supports self-regulation, emotion coping, and attentional control is undergoing rapid growth. Parents and schools can facilitate growth in the neural architecture supporting these competencies by providing safe, secure, predictable, and cognitively stimulating contexts for development (Blair & Raver, 2015). Third, the quality of family-school partnerships formed at school entry sets the stage for and predicts levels of parent engagement and partnership quality in future school years (Hayakawa, Englund, Warner-Richter, & Reynolds, 2013). The value of family-school partnerships at school entry is exemplified in a study by Sheridan and colleagues (cite), who found that family-school connections in pre-Kindergarten predicted children's social, behavioral, and academic (math achievement) through first grade.

Despite the value of strong family-school partnerships during this important transition period, research documents normative declines in parent engagement when children enter elementary school. Parents' active involvement in their children's learning at home declines, with rates decreasing as children move from prekindergarten into kindergarten and then decreasing more as children move from kindergarten into first grade (Powell et al., 2012). In addition, teacher-family contact decreases over time as children move from preschool into kindergarten and the nature of teacher-family communication shifts. Compared with preschool, elementary school communications are more likely to be initiated by school personnel (rather than by parents) and the communications are more frequently negative rather than informational or positive in content (Rimm-Kaufmann & Pianta, 1999).

These data reflect the major dilemma facing schools today. On the one hand, the value of engaging families at school entry is widely acknowledged; a majority of states (40) have regulations requiring schools to implement family engagement policies (USDE, 2013). Yet, on the other hand, current practices are woefully underperforming (Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2011), with family engagement identified as the weakest area of compliance for schools receiving Title I funding (USDE, 2008) and named by teachers and principals as one of the most challenging aspects of their work (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2012).

The need to strengthen family-school partnerships is most acute when schools serve a high proportion of children from low-income families. Children who grow up in poverty are at increased risk for exposure to a host of adverse events that undermine healthy development during the early years and reduce school readiness (Blair & Raver, 2015). These include heightened levels of family instability, crowded and chaotic living conditions, limited access to educational materials and high-quality early educational supports, and parenting support

diminished by chronic stress and maternal depression (Ryan et al., 2006). Harnessing the power of strong family-school partnerships represents a potentially robust and under-utilized strategy for supporting child school success; it may also represent a critical strategy for reducing the socioeconomic gap in early development and school readiness that is evident at school entry and continues through the school years (Duncan, Magnuson, Kalil, & Ziol-Guest, 2012). Consistent with this perspective, Crosnoe, Leventhal, Wirth, and Pierce (2010) followed a large sample of American children making the transition into school and demonstrated that child math and reading achievement scores in first grade reflected the cumulative quality of learning support they received across preschool and home settings, with the benefits of home learning support amplified for children from low-income families.

Implications for Effective Intervention

Clearly, new approaches are needed as schools reach out to improve family-school partnerships and more effectively engage parents in ways that will benefit their children at school entry and during the early elementary years. This volume describes five distinct intervention programs designed to promote family-school partnerships that have undergone rigorous evaluation and have demonstrated positive effects for parents and children. Interestingly, the programs are quite varied in approach, demonstrating both overlapping and unique features that emphasize different levers of change. Given the multi-dimensional nature of family-school partnerships, intervention programs may emphasize change in some dimensions more than others. As noted earlier, typologies of parent involvement have differentiated three types – school-based involvement, home-based involvement, and parent-teacher communications (Fantuzzo et al, 2000). In general, school-based involvement has not proven to be a useful focus of intervention, as it has little impact on child adjustment or attainment (see meta-analyses by

Sheridan, Smith, Kim, Beretvas, & Park, 2019; Smith, Sheridan, Kim, Park, & Beretvas, 2019). The value of intervention approaches that target home-based support for learning and parent-teacher communication and collaboration have been documented, however, and building trusting relationships between schools and parents also appears central to engaging diverse families (Sheridan et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2019). These different foci are apparent to differing degrees in the effective programs described in this volume (see Figure 1.)

Next, we briefly describe the intervention models that are featured in the following chapters, highlighting the primary and secondary areas of focus of each approach. Our goal is not to determine which approach is best, but rather to illustrate the ways in which different approaches have proven effective at supporting parents and fostering child success at school.

Two of the school-based intervention models focus primarily on the provision of outreach activities that help parents support their child's school success at home. The Family Check-Up (FCU) is a universal intervention offered to all families of incoming kindergarten children (Stormshak, Kennedy, Metcalfe, & Matulis, this volume). It begins with a three-session process, including an initial interview, brief school readiness assessment, and feedback session for families. At the feedback session, motivational interviewing strategies are used to promote parent self-reflection, help parents identify areas of strength and areas for growth, and motivate active engagement in supporting the child's development and school adjustment. Depending upon their needs and interests, additional intervention is available. In terms of process, the primary emphasis of this intervention is on fostering parent self-reflection, goal-setting, and motivation to act in behalf of child school readiness. In terms of content, the primary focus is on strengthening positive family management strategies, including the use of routines, positive support, and

parent-child interaction in order to foster child self-regulation skills, behavioral control, and social skills. A related goal is to increase home support for child reading and learning.

The Research-based, Developmentally-Informed Parent (REDI-P) program also emphasizes parent support for learning at home (Bierman, Nix, Welsh, Henrichs, Loughlin-Presnal & McDaniel, this volume). The program is delivered via a series of home visits (10 in the prekindergarten year prior to transition; 6 in kindergarten post-transition). Parents are provided with learning materials to use at home and are coached in parenting strategies that support child language and social-emotional skill development. REDI-P helps parents implement a developmentally-sequenced home learning curriculum designed to foster child self-regulation and language/literacy skills. There is a secondary focus on improving parenting practices with an emphasis on enriching parent language use and parent-child conversations, along with parent-child joint planning and problem solving.

Whereas FCU-Kindergarten and REDI-P both emphasize the promotion of parent engagement in home learning, they differ in the relative emphasis given different parenting skills (e.g., those boosting behavioral vs. cognitive support for learning) as well as in the design and delivery of the intervention process. FCU-Kindergarten takes an individualized approach, with personalized assessments/feedback and intervention components tailored to the families' needs and interests. In this way, FCU-Kindergarten can be quite efficient, adjusting the intensity of intervention support to the needs of participating families. In contrast, REDI-P is a manualized program, which delivers a standard developmentally-sequenced home learning curriculum to all families (with difficulty level adjusted based on child skills) and which presents a similar set of parenting ideas to all participating families (with personalized applications discussed in home visits). In the REDI-P logic model, the home learning curriculum is anticipated to have direct

effects boosting child school readiness, in addition to the more indirect effects on child readiness of the parenting practices targeted in the intervention. Relative to an individualized approach tailored to each family, the logic behind this kind of standard intervention is that it can more easily incorporate learning activities that follow a developmental scope and sequence and assure coverage of domains with documented importance for school success.

In contrast to these two interventions that involve individual work with families, the ParentCorps program (Dawson-McClure et al., this volume) uses a group intervention model, with families attending group sessions at their child's school. ParentCorps is designed to enrich prekindergarten programs serving children from low-income families, and to strengthen family-school partnerships and foster practices that help parents and teachers collaboratively support foundational social, emotional, and behavior regulation skills. Families of all prekindergarten children in participating schools are invited to attend a series of 14 2-hour school-based group meetings. These discussion groups are designed to create connections among parents and between parents and school staff, to increase school bonding, and to share information about positive parenting practices that support child school success. Parallel group meetings for children provide direct coaching in the social-emotional skills that foster school adjustment. In terms of content, ParentCorps focuses especially on positive family management strategies that support child self-regulation and behavioral adjustment to school, with a secondary focus on supporting child learning at home and in this way is similar to FCU-Kindergarten. During group meetings, leaders follow a manualized curriculum to present parenting ideas, and encourage group discussion and sharing regarding parent experiences and input. ParentCorps also includes separate professional learning workshops for teachers, designed to build their skills at understanding, communicating with, and collaborating with families. By holding parent group

meetings at school and working with teachers on partnership skills, ParentCorps seeks to strengthen parent's school-based engagement, increase home positive behavioral support, and improve parent-teacher partnerships.

The Getting Ready (GR) intervention is distinguished by its primary focus on strengthening the parent-teacher partnership and enhancing the degree to which parents and teachers share perspectives, plan together, and collaborate in aligned home-school programming goals and activities to support child development (Sheridan, Knoche & Boise, this volume). GR involves coaching early childhood educators to utilize a set of eight strategies designed to build parents' competencies and strengthen relationships. The logic model emphasizes the teachers' use of these partnership strategies during formal sessions with parents (home visits and conferences) as well as during more informal teacher-parent contacts. These parent-teacher communications provide the central lever of change, directly boosting parenting practices, enhancing parent-teacher relationships, and creating home/school program alignment which, in turn, may enhance child school readiness skills. Like FCU-Kindergarten, GR provides individualized support to parents rather than following a standard or manualized intervention program. Parallel to REDI-P, GR includes home visits (6 per year for two years), but in the case of GR, the teacher makes the home visits in order to support a strong partnership with each parent and provide a foundation for collaborative planning.

The Child-Parent Centers (CPC) program is a family-centered early childhood preschool model. Rather than providing a specific program or set of intervention strategies, it is distinguished from other interventions described in this volume by a focus on structural changes in school design and staffing to support programming that enhances family engagement and positive family-school partnerships. CPC programs are implemented by a collaborative team that

includes two staff members (in addition to the classroom teacher) who are focused on supporting families – a parent resource teacher and a school-community representative. The parent resource teacher provides parent workshops in 6 areas, providing information about parenting and child development, suggestions for supporting academic learning at home, descriptions of community resources, as well as information about how to be an advocate for your child. The parent resource teacher also supports parent visits to the school to promote home-school connections and align home learning support with the classroom curriculum. The school community representative makes home visits, helps families connect with appropriate community resources, and supports enrollment and attendance. Specific program activities may vary across classrooms and families, tailored by the collaborative teaching team. Parent involvement is encouraged and reinforced by contracts in which they commit to invest 2.5 hours per week to family-school partnership activities.

Cross-cutting Issues and Questions

A key goal of this volume is to illustrate the commonalities and differences that characterize these five evidence-based approaches to promoting family-school partnerships. The general descriptions of the various programs provided in this chapter do not do justice to the complexity and nuances in each of the models and the reader is directed to the subsequent chapters for more detail. However, it is helpful to recognize the broad-brush commonalities and differences in the approaches, as they highlight the need for additional research focused on understanding how different programs achieve their benefits and addressing the question of what works best for whom under what conditions. These similarities and differences in program content, process, delivery system, and focus are summarized in Table 1. Each of these programs has strong evidence of positive impact, but there may be variations across programs in the

outcomes they affect, the types of families they serve best, or the school and community contexts in which they best fit.

In all cases, the programs described in this volume represent model programs that will need adaptations to diffuse widely and scale up to broad use. A consideration of the cross-cutting issues and questions that each of these programs must face as they consider scaling up may be helpful in guiding “next steps” in the general area of future research on school-family partnerships and school programming innovation. The last two chapters of this volume provide commentary on the programs and situate this research in the larger context of programs and policies designed to reduce educational disparities and foster school success for all children. Here, we briefly raise a set of key issues to consider as we move forward to bridge the gap between current typical family-school partnership practices and the potential power evident in these more intensive and extensive model programs.

Understanding mechanisms of action. Each of the programs featured in this volume has evidence of impact; however less is known about how they each achieve this impact. Although developmental studies have identified facets of family-school engagement that are linked with child school success, these associations are not necessarily causal. In addition, even when causal links are understood, the effectiveness of various intervention strategies to change targeted constructs must be tested. Increasingly, researchers are calling for more intensive study of the potential change processes that underlie effective family-focused interventions (Patel, Fairchild, & Prinz, 2017). To do so, it is critical to have a clearly-articulated logic model that specifies the features of the intervention hypothesized to play a role in the change process, and to include measures of those features over time. This kind of framework and measurement allows for tests of questions attempting to verify the change model – for example, did the intervention increase

the intended parenting skill or improve the targeted parent-teacher relationship, and did skill or relationship improvements then lead to child skill acquisition? Methodological advances provide a basis for testing mediation (Patel et al., 2017). These kinds of models that “unpack” an intervention often involve within-group comparisons and are therefore, like developmental research, associative. Without randomization to different intervention components or processes, mediation models cannot confirm causal associations, but they can illuminate associations that are consistent with or at odds with expectations. Mediation findings can thus reinforce certain aspects of an intervention design or suggest changes in the intervention design that might strengthen impact.

Understanding variation in intervention response. Interventions may also work differently in different school/community contexts or for different families, and understanding these variations is important. A better understanding of school or community factors associated with the successful implementation of various intervention approaches and more optimal family engagement levels could inform intervention design and facilitate optimal decision-making regarding intervention options by different school districts or communities. For example, meta-analyses suggest larger effects of family-school interventions on some aspects of children’s social-emotional functioning have been found in nonurban/rural settings relative to urban settings (Sheridan et al., , 2019), suggesting that programs supporting family engagement may provide an important resource in small schools or geographically remote communities. More research pinpointing the role of contextual features on intervention uptake is necessary.

Moderation studies that identify characteristics of parents or children that improve or impede engagement in and response to different intervention approaches can provide a foundation for tailoring or personalizing interventions for different families in ways that might

increase impact. In a meta-analysis evaluating the efficacy of family-school interventions on students' social-emotional functioning, Sheridan et al. (2019) found the effects to be greatest at enhancing mental health outcomes for Black students, relative to White and Latinx children. Moderation analyses can also illuminate potential variations in the benefits different families or children experience when engaged in the same intervention or exposed to similar intervention components. For example, Mathis & Bierman (2015) found that children acquired more literacy skills in a home learning program when participating parents were high in sensitive-responsiveness at baseline; however parents participating in the same program showed greater increases in the acquisition of sensitive-responsive behavior when they were low at baseline. In other words, different families benefitted in different ways from the same program.

Moderation can also occur when children or families with certain characteristics respond differently to the same intervention. For example, Smith, Sheridan, Kim, Park and Beretvas (2019) found that the efficacy of certain components implemented in family-school partnership interventions (i.e., bi-directional communication, behavioral support) were moderated by student grade, such that they were more effective for older students. Whereas this line of work provides useful information on general family-school intervention components related to positive student outcomes, it is necessary to understand the manner in which they function within the context of specific interventions (e.g., Family Check Up, REDI-P, Getting Ready, ParentCorps).

Identifying efficacious, culturally relevant practices. A particularly important area that requires more exploration is the degree to which adaptation or tailoring of intervention approaches is necessary to respond to varying cultural norms or expectations. Research intended to establish an evidence base for family-school partnerships in the early years has recognized that there is no standard approach that is accessible or efficacious for all. Families' ethnic or cultural

experiences, values, and perspectives influence their interactions with educators and may necessitate unique approaches or actions vis à vis partnership practices. It has been long known that diverse families face significant barriers to participation (De Luigi & Martelli, 2015). For example, typical family engagement strategies that involve school events, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer opportunities (de Carvalho, 2001) are most likely to be accessible to and attract families of higher sociometric status (SES) rather than lower SES and ethnic/racial minority families (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Turney & Kao, 2009; Weiss et al., 2011). In addition to practical challenges (transportation, work schedule inflexibility), lower-SES families identify discomfort or distrust of schools, low self-efficacy regarding their capacity to help, and cultural beliefs about their role as barriers to participation to these kinds of formal school events (Bolívar & Chrispeels, 2010). Although many schools rely on formal school-based activities to engage parents, schools that use a wider array of parent engagement strategies, including opportunities to support learning at home successfully engage a larger proportion of families, especially Black and Latinx families (Marschall & Shah, 2016).

Bridging the gap from to “real world” implementation. In addition to understanding how model programs attain their gains and who benefits the most, it is important to consider factors that must be addressed to scale up model programs for wide diffusion. Currently, there is a sizeable gap between typical family engagement practices used by schools and the kinds of programming used in the model programs described here. Better understandings of the implementation and efficacy of existing practices, such as parent-teacher conferencing, volunteering opportunities, and homework support is necessary. Unfortunately, little is known about the efficacy of family engagement practices that appear to be most practical and thus common in schools. One recent large-scale meta-analysis of family-school interventions found

that two common approaches to family-school involvement (i.e., support for homework and parents' involvement at school) were minimally effective at supporting children's social-emotional functioning (Sheridan et al., 2019). Specifically, homework was not significantly related to children's gains in either social-behavioral competence or mental health, and parents' involvement at school was related to social-behavioral competence only. Other components demonstrating greater efficacy require more resources, including communication, parent-teacher collaboration, home-based involvement, and tangible behavioral supports. There is a need to better understand methods to bolster the effects of typical practices for maximal student benefit, and to adapt effective interventions to ensure fit in school-based practices.

In each of the following intervention chapters, the authors consider factors that may require modification to expand the diffusion of their intervention approaches, including reducing the intensity or dose of the intervention, simplifying the measures and methods, engaging parents in new ways (such as on-line, Stormshak et al., this volume), and streamlining professional development and training supports. Unpacking the elements of interventions that are both efficacious and feasible for school implementation may be a first step in bridging the gap from experimentation to real-world uptake. In all cases, the challenge will be to make modifications that reduce the resources needed to mount and sustain the intervention while maintaining the intervention impact.

The model programs featured in this volume demonstrate that low-income and culturally and racially diverse families are interested in helping their children succeed in school and can be effective partners in their child's education with the right intervention resources and approach.

The key question is whether and how the intensive effective programs featured here can be scaled for broad diffusion and retain their efficacy and positive impact.

Fostering institutionalization and sustainability. The commentary chapters included in this volume introduce a host of factors that are important to consider in light of the goal of scaling up and sustaining high-quality, high-impact family-school partnership interventions. These include factors such as the cost of the intervention, the resources needed for successful implementation and sustained high-quality implementation, and the development of policies and institutional supports that motivate and enable sustained programming. To reach the broad goal of improving the kinds of family engagement programming used in the “real world” and increase the participation of the low-income families who have the most to gain from this programming, it will be important to identify and implement policy-relevant research to support the scaling and broad diffusion of evidence-based family-school partnership models. This will include a consideration of the costs and resources involved, governance structures needed, professional development supports required, and implementation monitoring and continuous improvement plans needed to incorporate effective family-school partnership programs into school practice.

We hope this volume illuminates the tremendous potential of effective family-school partnership interventions to enhance the well-being of families and promote the school success of children, particularly those most vulnerable to underachievement. We also hope it identifies key areas for future intervention design and research, with the goal of moving toward wide-scale implementation of effective programming that can more effectively harness the power of family-school partnerships and thereby reduce the socioeconomic gap in educational attainment.

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Table 1.*Comparing Model Interventions Fostering Effective Family-School Partnerships*

Dimensions of Variation	<u>Intervention Program</u>				
	FCU-Kindergarten	REDI-P	ParentCorps	GR	CPC
<u>Intervention Process</u>					
Manualized program		X	X		
Individualized program	X			X	X
<u>Parenting Skill Focus</u>					
Behavioral supports	X		X	X	
Cognitive supports		X		X	
<u>Locus of Delivery</u>					
Individual visits	X	X		X	
Group meetings			X		
<u>Type of Engagement Targeted</u>					
Engagement at home	X	X	X		
Engagement at school			X		
Parent-teacher partnership			X	X	

Note: Only the **primary** emphasis of each program is shown. Many of these programs have secondary areas of focus as well. FCU-K = Family Check-up Kindergarten; REDI-P = *Research-based, Developmentally-informed* Parent program; GR = Getting Ready; CPC = Chicago Parent-Child Centers.

Figure 1

Dimensions of Family-School Partnerships Offer Multiple Intervention Opportunities

Dimensions of Family-School Partnerships Offer Multiple Opportunities for Programming Support:		
Relationships between parents and schools	Home-based support for learning	Parent-teacher communication and collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust with parents from diverse backgrounds • Support families' values and perspectives to increase opportunities for engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support parents to improve practices that increase behavioral/social-emotional support • Increase home learning opportunities and activities for cognitive and academic support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase opportunities for two-way communication during formal and informal exchanges • Engage parents in opportunities to make decisions about aligning home-school programs in support of social-emotional and academic learning