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Improving Children's Academic Performance Through Parent Engagement: Development and Initial Findings from the Your Family, Your Neighborhood Intervention

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Improving Children's Academic Performance through Parent Engagement: Development

and Initial Findings from the *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* Intervention

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ABSTRACT

Your Family, Your Neighborhood (YFYN) is an educational intervention with

families in low-income and subsidized housing communities. YFYN supports households

facing issues associated with poverty. These include supporting low-income families as

they navigate their children's experience in poor performing schools, barriers and access

to healthcare and role in addressing the challenges of living distressed neighborhoods

they live in. Through the 10-week manualized curriculum, families work on connections

that affect multiple systems in their lives with a focus on the family, school and

neighborhood. This mixed methods study describes the development and provides results

of the YFYN intervention on parental involvement and academic achievement. Utilizing

a quasi-experimental design, YFYN was delivered to four cohorts of families living in

two neighborhoods in Denver, CO. A total of 19 families completed the ten-week

intervention with a total of 11 participants in the comparison group. The effects of the

intervention on child participants were assessed using between group comparisons of

parental response scores from pre-test to post-test on indicators of academic success and

parent involvement. Participants in the treatment group demonstrated increases in parent

participation in school activities, communication with teachers and staff, the frequency of

reading to their child, and parent/child homework routines. Additionally, parents reported increases in their child's progress in school.

Interviews were conducted with nine participants at the completion of the YFYN intervention. A phenomenological approach was employed to understand participant experiences of YFYN. Participants were asked to identify aspects of YFYN that were most beneficial to their children's educational needs. Themes from the phenomenological approach revealed participation in YFYN helped participants build their confidence and find their voice, improve parent-child communication, and create a social support system. Although participation in YFYN aided parents in supporting their children's education, parents still experience barriers to school involvement. Barriers include the lack of supports for single parents or primary caregivers, undertones of racism from school professionals, and language and cultural misinterpretations between families and school personnel. Implications for practice, policy and future research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Children living in poverty are more likely to attend underperforming schools, and are less likely to have well-qualified teachers (Evans, 2004), placing them at an educational disadvantage compared to more affluent students (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Children living in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage face the added burden of overcoming under-resourced and under-performing schools in their efforts towards academic success (Evans, 2004; Fram, Miller-Cribs, & Van-Horn, 2007). Therefore, these children are more likely to have low reading abilities, score low on standardized tests and have poor grades (Evans, 2004). All of these factors increase children's risk of school failure and drop-out (Nikulina, 2011; Morrisey et al., 2013). Consequently, the drop-out rate for students living in poverty is nearly five times greater compared to peers from high-income families (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & Kewall-Ramani, 2011).

Poverty and Poor Educational Outcomes for Children

Children of all races and ethnicities experience poverty and the resulting consequences however, poverty rates are nearly doubled for children of color (Ou & Reynolds, 2008; Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012). Approximately 33% of Latino children, 37% of American Indian children and 39% of Black or African American children, live in poverty. Conversely, 14% of white children live in poverty (Kids Count Data Center, 2014). These disproportional child poverty rates are a clear indication of the association between poverty and race and ethnicity. Racial disproportionality remains

consistent when looking at poverty rates for all ages. According to the 2007–2011 American Community Survey, national poverty rates for people of all ages were a staggering 27% for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 25.8% for Blacks or African Americans and ranged from 16.2% to 26.3% for Hispanics as opposed to 11.6% for Whites (Macartney & Bishaw, 2013). Poverty rates in the United States are determined by the US Census, which uses the annual income of an individual or family (National Poverty Center, 2014). A family is considered poor if their pretax income is below the poverty threshold for their family size. For example if a family of four makes less than $23,850 they are considered poor (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).

Nearly 30% of America's poor reside in poor places, and concentrated poverty is especially high among poor African Americans (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012). Poor families are more likely to be segregated from non-poor families because affordable housing is located in geographically impoverished areas (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012). Furthermore, poor families are more likely to live in dangerous neighborhoods, where adults are less likely to have access to jobs, and children attend schools that function at far lower levels than those of the middle class (Jargowsky, 1997; Murnane, 2007). More people of color than whites live in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, contributing to "racial injustice, limited opportunities for upward social mobility, and the reproduction of poverty and inequality from one generation to the next," (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012, p.383). Research indicates that as neighborhood poverty rates increase, academic achievement decreases leading to fewer opportunities for success (Annie Casey Foundation, 2014). Children living in poverty not only attend

low-performing schools but are more likely to have inexperienced teachers (Murnane, 2007). Consequently, there is a strong correlation between poverty and poor educational outcomes for children of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2014; Herbers et al., 2012; Jurecksa et al., 2012).

Child Academic Achievement and Subsidized Housing

In the United States, there are approximately 1.2 million households (representing 2.4 million people) living in public housing units, managed by 3,300 Housing Authorities (U.S Department of Housing and Development (HUD, 2014). The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (2014) estimated the number of households eligible for rental subsidies increased by 21% between 2007 and 2011, growing from 15.9 million to 19.3 million. They also report that only 4.6 million, or just under a quarter, received assistance in 2011, leaving numerous eligible families still in need. Public housing residents are predominately ethnic and racial minorities (69%) with the largest overrepresentation from African American residents (49%) (HUD, 2014). Furthermore, public housing residents are more likely to be single, unemployed, undereducated black women (Simning, Van Wijngaarden, & Conwell 2011). The Resident Characteristics Report found nearly 24% of public housing residents are children between the ages of six and seventeen (HUD, 2014). Children living in poverty and living in public housing encounter barriers to success such as attending low-performing schools (Rosenbaum,1995). For example, on average, students living in public housing in New York City score lower on standardized tests than students who attended the same schools, but do not live in public housing (Schwartz, McCabe, Elle, & Chellman, 2010). Students living in public housing are susceptible to schools with a lack

funding, low-test scores, lower grades and high drop-out rates (Schwartz, McCabe, Ellen and Chellman, 2010). All of these factors contribute to decreased opportunities for high school completion and continuing on to post-secondary education, indicating a strong relationship between poverty and academic achievement (Malmgren, Martin, Nicola, 1996; Webley, 2011; Carranza, You, Chhuon, & Hudley, 2009; Garcia-Reid, 2007).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), individuals with higher levels of educational attainment have higher median earnings. For example, between 1995 and 2010, a young adult's median income was $21,000 for those without a high school diploma or its equivalent and $29,900 for those with a high school diploma. This pattern is consistent across gender and race/ethnic subgroups. In addition to earning higher wages, high school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children (Haveman, Wolfe, & Wilson, 2011). High school graduates are also less likely to commit crimes, rely on government health care, or use other public services such as food stamps or housing assistance (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013).

Education Increases Social Mobility

There are several different approaches to address poverty for children living in low-income communities and subsidized housing neighborhoods. However, research indicates that one of the best ways to increase an individual's social class mobility is through educational achievement (Kahlenberg, 2000; Weis, & Dolby, 2012). Parent involvement in schools is known to improve child academic outcomes (Toper et al, 2010; Cooper & Crosnoe 2007, & Garcia-Reid 2007). We know that children whose parents are involved in their education have better academic outcomes compared to children whose

parents are not as involved (Epstein, & Dauber, 1991; Toper, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010). In fact, studies have shown that economically disadvantaged youth with the most involved parents may be the most academically oriented, meaning they like going to school, believe they will get something out of it, and want to do well (Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007). Moreover, parent involvement is particularly beneficial for children and youth living in poverty, and children of color (Garcia-Reid, 2007).

Interventions Addressing Parent Involvement and Academic Achievement

Over the past several years, programs and interventions aimed at improving parent involvement and academic achievement have been developed (Jenson & Bender, 2014). Many of these programs are specifically aimed at supporting parents and not necessarily focused on supporting and engaging the whole family. Programs focus on different aspects of the parent-child relationship including: parental support (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010), increased parent engagement in schools (FAST, 2014) and children's academic achievement (Jenson, Alter, Nicotera, Anthony, &Forest-Bank, 2013). A new approach that engages the whole family is Your Family, Your Neighborhood (YFYN). YFYN is currently being tested to determine the impact of a family-centered intervention on academic achievement, health and well-being and community cohesion for families living in low-income communities and subsidized housing neighborhoods. Testing the effects of YFYN on parent involvement and child academic achievement is the focus of this dissertation.

Your Family, Your Neighborhood

YFYN is a unique intervention designed to address health and academic challenges facing families in low-income neighborhoods with a high concentration of

public housing. YFYN uses an ecological approach addressing issues at the family, school and neighborhood levels. The YFYN curriculum is unique in relation to a number of important practice areas. First, the curriculum enhances a typical after school program by using a dual generation focus. The dual generation model explicitly focuses on the parent-child bond to improve family health and children's academic outcomes. Second, the curriculum is delivered on site in low-income neighborhoods and public housing communities giving families the unique opportunity to address individual, family, school and neighborhood issues together in their neighborhood among their community's neighbors. This is in contrast to other programs that may solely focus on one aspect of a family's life and is delivered outside of the neighborhood among people whom they may have little contact. The YFYN curriculum combines this dual generation and on-site focus. It also takes on the challenge of addressing education at the individual, family, and neighborhood levels to influence multigenerational poverty through educational success. All together YFYN offers families in subsidized housing and low-income communities the opportunity to address family health and well-being and parent involvement and academic achievement in a way that had not yet been addressed in a single intervention. In addition, the use of the tools from intervention research allows for a deeper understanding of how YFYN works, for whom it works, and the ways in which intervention components can be delivered more affectively. A better understanding of ways in which family, schools, peers and neighborhoods impact parent involvement and a child's academic achievement can better inform programs and interventions. The questions addressed in this study are:

Research Question 1: Do parents who participate in *YFYN* report larger changes in parent involvement in their children's education from pre-test to post-test as compared to parents in a no treatment condition?

Research Question 2: Do parents who participate in *YFYN* report larger changes in their children's academic achievement from pre-test to post-test as compared to parents in a no treatment condition?

Research Question 3: What aspects of the YFYN intervention are most beneficial in helping parents address their children's educational needs? What changes do parents report that has led to their child's educational improvements as a result of participating in the YFYN?

Chapter Summary

Although children of all races and ethnicities experience poverty, the poverty rates are nearly double for children of color. Children living in poverty experience educational disadvantages and are more likely to live in neighborhoods with under-resourced and under-performing schools contributing to their risk of school failure and drop-out. Living in subsidized housing adds a complex layer of challenges for child academic achievement. In response to the educational challenges these children face, several different parent involvement programs and approaches have been developed (FAST, 2014; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010; Catalano, Mazza, Hirachi, Abbott, Haggerty & Fleming, 2003). These programs are specifically aimed at supporting parents and not necessarily focused on supporting and engaging the whole family. YFYN was designed with the understanding that the entire family is part of each child's educational process. The threats to the educational success of the child is not only located within the

family (i.e. financial stress, low education of parents) but as a result of neighborhood conditions (i.e., violence, drugs, lack of opportunity), and school factors (school personnel and school resources). YFYN attends to these factors and as such provides a promising family-based systems oriented approach to educational success in areas of concentrated poverty. This dual generation intervention is designed to support parents in low-income neighborhoods with their efforts to provide children with an effective and supportive educational environment within a supportive and engaged community while reducing personal fears and hesitations as they interact with school professionals.

This study examines whether an intervention, targeting parent-child communication, social support, community connections and advocacy and leadership skills, in low-income communities and specifically project-based housing increases parent involvement and child academic achievement. It also provides a deeper understanding of parents' experiences with YFYN intervention components. This understanding can be used to inform school personnel, teachers, school counselors, psychologists, community stakeholders and policy makers about ways to increase the educational outcomes of poor children by better informing and including parents living in low-income communities and subsidized housing as they engage and interact with their neighborhood schools.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a discussion on Social Ecological Theory

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings, 1995), both of

which are the guiding frameworks of this research. The chapter continues with an

explanation of parent involvement and the impact on student achievement. A review of

the most promising parent involvement practices is then provided. An overview of social

class, racial and ethnic differences in parent involvement is reviewed as involvement

differs across populations. A review of the most notable evaluations to date on parent

involvement and education are then presented. The gaps in intervention research with a

focus on parents who live in low-income and subsidized housing neighborhoods are then

discussed. The chapter concludes with a description of a new pilot intervention, *YFYN*,

which attempts to fill this gap.

Social Ecological Theory and CRT

Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested the ecological environment is a set of *five*

nested structures, *microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem,* and the

chrononsystem. In the *microsystem* relationships begin at home and are a child's first

interactions. Relationships in this system have the most impact on a child's initial

development. The *mesosystem* includes the interrelations of the microsystem. The

mesosystem includes the interrelations of the microsystem in which the individual

participates, for example interactions among family members, friends and teachers. The

exosystem are systems that impact the individual indirectly such as economic downturns and new public policies. For example, a parent's experiences at work or finding themselves unemployed may impact their child as the stress can trickle from the parent to the child. The *macrosystem* describes the overarching patterns of ideology and organization of the social institutions in an individual's culture and subculture. Some examples include social structures, societal expectations, laws, and education and housing policies. The *macrosystem* is the outermost layer in a child's life. The *chronosystem* includes life course events that may impact a child, such as the death of a parent, police violence, or deportation of a family member. Brofenbrenner (1979) noted that, like physical ecologies, human ecologies develop over time and an individual is impacted by environmental events and transitions including socio-historical events such as wars, recessions or segregation. Social ecological theory is widely used to inform research on individual development by family (Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown, 1992; Alfaro & Umaña-Taylor, 2010), school (Doterror & Lowe, 2010; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Moon & Ando, 2009), and neighborhood influences (Eamon, 2004; Whipple, Evans, Barry & Maxwell, 2010).

The addition of CRT (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995) complements social ecological theory (Brofenbrenner,1979) by providing the framework to understand how race is central to an individual's lived experience and how these experiences significantly impact parents' engagement with the schools, their children, their neighborhoods and the resulting consequence for academic achievement for students of color. When research fails to take into consideration the importance of race it does not provide a comprehensive explanation of how systems operate both at the micro- and macro-levels

impact on academic achievement for children of color. Furthermore, it fails to acknowledge how racism and discrimination has, and continues to be, "deep and enduring parts of the everyday existence of people of color" (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p.19).

CRT emerged in the mid-1970s through the work of "white neo-Marxist, new left and counter culturist intellectuals" that emerged within the legal academy (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p.12). CRT scholars believed that while this work had made some important contributions to explain how the legal system worked, it failed to address the struggles of people of color, particularly for African Americans. CRT scholars wanted to not only understand how white supremacy and oppression of people of color had been created and maintained in America, but how it could be changed. In response, CRT scholars began to use other techniques, such as chronicles, storytelling, and counter narratives to document how oppression operated in the everyday lives of people of color. CRT scholars identified the following five essential tenets of CRT: 1) the belief that racism is normal or ordinary, not aberrant, in U.S. society; 2) interest convergence or material determinism; 3) race as a social construct; 4) intersectionality and anti-essentialism; and 5) voice or counter-narrative (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2013).

Drawing on this initial work, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) began to theorize how racism operates and contributes to school inequity. In their seminal work, *Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education*, they addressed social inequality generally and specifically to school inequity. They posed that race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States. Nearly three decades later race continues to be

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an important factor in deterring educational attainment for students of color (Sólorzano, Villalpondo, & Oseguera, 2005) as students of color find themselves eliminated from the educational system through the school to prison pipeline, racial disparities in discipline, and overrepresentation in school dropout statistics even when accounting for the poverty of their white counterparts (Wilson, 2014; Skiba, Chung, Trachok., Baker, Sheya, & Hughes, 2014 & DeMathews, 2016).

Milner (2013) proposed using CRT as a framework to understand the educational experiences of African American males as they may be the most negatively impacted by distorted constructions of race and gender. Furthermore, CRT allows for the examination of systems of oppression that are present and "ingrained in the fabric of policies, practices, institutions, and systems in education" (p.1). Howard (2008) argues that "the CRT challenge in education should be centered on several fronts that may provide interventions for the state of affairs of African American males" (p.960).

Initial studies on CRT and education focused on African American students' experiences of oppression in school. However, in response to this Black/White binary, scholars recognized these gaps and began to focus on Latino/a (Moldonado & Moldonado, 2012; Solórzano, 2013; Bernal 2002 & Fernández, 2002) and Indigenous students' (Brayboy, 2005) experiences. While the initial focus of CRT was to demonstrate how white supremacy and oppression of people of color is created and maintained in America, the White/Black binary served to increase the invisibility of others and reproduced the racism and oppression faced by other students of color. Latino/a scholars responded by developing new forms of critical race theory, LatCrit that drew on the original tenets of CRT and expanded it by including factors that are

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specifically a part of the Latino/a context such as language and citizenship status. LatCrit informs ways to understand Latino/a student experiences in the context of a school system that engages in exclusionary and inclusionary practices based on race and ethnicity. The exclusionary practices are targeted at students of color and the inclusionary practices are targeted to white students (Skiba, 2014).

LatCrit draws on the strengths of CRT and incorporates issues around language, immigration status and citizenship (Moldonado & Moldonado, 2012). A LatCrit analyses in education provides the lens to examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact educational structures, process and policy discourse that affect Latina/o students (Oliva, Pérez & Parker, 2013; Fernández, 2002). Moreover, it examines experiences unique to the Latina/o community such as immigration status, language, ethnicity, and culture enabling researchers to better articulate the experiences of Latinas/os specifically through a more focused examination of the unique forms of oppression that Latinos/as encounter (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

The application of CRT in this present study demonstrates how race is central to an individual's experience and how racism and discrimination have a direct effect on parental school involvement and academic achievement.

Social ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and CRT (Ladson-Billings, 1995) theories provide a multi-dimensional approach to understand how race and social ecological factors influence parent involvement and academic achievement (see Figure 1.) Together, these theories address the three most important aspects of this study: (a) race is central to parent and child experiences (b) parent and child development is

impacted by multiple systems; and (c) interventions that address both are critical to inform education research.
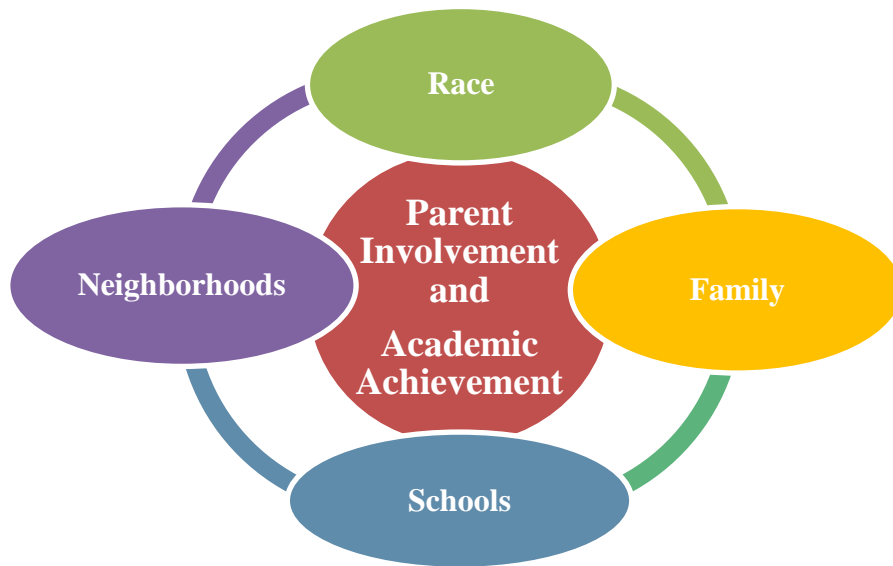
Figure 2.1. Model of influences on parent involvement and academic achievement.

Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) noted that "using an ecological approach with a focus on the multiple contexts in which youngsters live, offers promise as a foundation for future research on this important social issue" (p. 729). Therefore, social ecological theory, in conjunction with CRT, helps researchers and practitioners examine school, teacher, family, and neighborhoods influences to inform interventions (Stokols, 1996). In addition, the integration of these theories assist education researchers by facilitating an understanding of resistance to change efforts aimed at creating greater educational equity for underserved students (Pollack, 2013).

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement has been conceptualized in several different ways. In addition, the types of involvement most influential for children are often debated. Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) identified four basic types of parent involvement. Two types of

involvement occur at home, including discussing school activities and monitoring out-of-school activities and two types take place at school, including making contacts with school staff and volunteering and attending parent-teacher conferences or other school events. In support of an ecological approach, Bower and Griffin (2011) defined parental involvement as: communication with their child, involvement at school and in home learning activities, shared decision making within the school, and community partnerships. More recently, the Child Trends (2013) report defined parent involvement as a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and to the student, attending schools meetings or events and volunteering at the school or on a committee at least once in the past year. Although there are different descriptions of parent involvement, there is a general consensus among scholars that parental involvement includes parental engagement with children at multiple levels (e.g., home, school, and community). Unfortunately, parental engagement can be affected by barriers created in the community and by the school personnel as well as social policies affecting public housing.

Social ecological theory suggests family members and primarily parents have the first, before they begin school, and foremost influence on a child's development (Brofenbrenner, 1979). It is thus widely accepted that children whose parents are involved in their education benefit in multiple ways. Parents who are engaged in their children's education tend to earn higher grades and higher test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, are more likely to pass their classes, and earn course credit (National Association of Education, 2016; Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010). They also attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well

to school (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). They are more likely to graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Vanvelser & Orozco, 2007). Furthermore, children whose parents are more involved in their education have better academic outcomes than children whose parents are not involved (Epstein, & Dauber, 1991; Toper, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010).

Epstein's Model of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement and its benefits have been studied for several years prompting scholars to come to a consensus on the best practices of parent involvement and the impact it has on child academic achievement. The Epstein model (Epstein, 1987) was one of the first parent involvement models developed and is now one of the most widely used frameworks. Epstein suggests *six* critical elements schools and families need in order to enhance the education of their children. These include parent involvement at school, school communication, positive home conditions, home learning activities, shared decision making within the school, and community partnerships.

Parent involvement at school. Involvement at school includes parents who assist teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or in other areas of the school. Epstein (1987) argues involvement should include family members who come to school to support student performances, sports, or other events. Schools can improve and adjust schedules so that more families are able to participate as volunteers and as audiences. Schools can also improve recruitment and training so that volunteers are more helpful to teachers, students, and school improvement efforts. Epstein (1987) asserts schools must assist families in developing the knowledge and skills needed to understand their children at each grade level. This can be done through workshops at the school or in other

locations such as home visitors, family support programs, and in other forms of education, training, and information giving.

School communication. Schools have a responsibility to communicate with families about school programs and their child's progress. These may include memos, notices, phone calls, report cards, Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings and conferences that most schools conduct. Additionally, other innovative communication with parents is important, because schools control the frequency of communication and determine whether the information sent home can be understood by all families, as well as the location of the meeting which typically is at the school.

Positive home conditions. It is critical to build positive home environments that support school learning and behavior throughout each school year. Basic responsibilities of parents and caregivers include ensuring children's health and safety. This includes developing parenting skills and childrearing approaches that prepare children for school and maintain healthy child development across all grades.

School contribution to home learning activities. Involvement in learning activities at home is just as important as being involved at the school and supports an ecological approach to parental involvement. Teachers can guide parents to assist their children at home with learning activities that reflect what their children are doing in school. Schools can assist families by providing information on skills required of students to pass each grade. Schools can also provide information to families on how to supervise, discuss, and help with homework. Schools are encouraged to teach when and how to make decisions about school programs, activities, and opportunities at each grade level. These efforts will help students be more successful in school.

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Shared decision-making. Epstein (1987) recommends parents and others in the community be involved in decision-making, governance, and advocacy. This may be through participatory roles in the parent-teacher association/organization (PTA/PTO), advisory councils, or other committees or groups at the school, district, or state level. Parents can also be activists in independent advocacy groups in the community. The school plays a critical role by training parent leaders and representatives in decision-making skills and in ways to communicate with all of the parents they represent. Providing information needed by community groups for school improvement activities should be included in this training.

Community partnerships. Finally, in further support of applying an ecological perspective to the understanding of parental involvement, community collaboration has been identified as essential. Community collaboration is highly recommended when working with agencies, businesses, and other groups that share responsibility for children's education and future successes. This includes school programs that provide children and families access to community and support services, including after-school care, health services, and other resources that support children's learning.

Limitations to the Epstein Model

Although the Epstein model (1987) suggests using these *six* steps to increase parent involvement and improve student success, some limitations exist. First, the role of parents in the decision making process and the evaluation of parent involvement is often defined by the school and not the parents (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Second, parent involvement strategies are taken and developed from middle-class European American cultural norms (Jeynes, 2012), which may in turn fail to consider the perspectives of other

cultures regarding how families engage in children's educational experiences. Lastly, although parent engagement in schools is one effective strategy for improving their children's academic outcomes, this model takes a general approach and does not consider race, gender, or socioeconomic status (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Freeman, 2010), or housing context. Because parental involvement might look differently across specific subgroups, parental involvement strategies should therefore consider social class, housing context, and racial and ethnic differences.

Parent Involvement: Racial, Ethnic, and Social Class Differences

Consideration of race and social class in the understanding of the impact of parental involvement in children's education is necessary to help children reach their full potential. While students in schools and subsidized housing represent a variety of racial and ethnic groups, this study primarily focuses on the experiences of African American and Latino/a families. Since the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) was passed, parent involvement in schools has been a prominent issue among parents and educators. The NCLB Act states that in order for an educational agency to receive funds they must develop parent involvement programs and activities with the meaningful consultation of parents (Title I, Part A, Section 1118.) Since this act was passed, more extensive research has been conducted to determine what types of parent involvement are most beneficial for children and to understand how low-income and minority youth benefit (Jeynes 2005b; Garcia-Reid, 2007; Watson & Bogtoch, 2015).

A leading scholar in parent involvement and academic achievement found that parent involvement (e.g., communicating with the school, checking homework, encouraging outside reading, and participating in-school activities) benefited African

American and Hispanic/Latino students (Jeynes, 2003). Furthermore, parent engagement in children's education is a key component for increasing the achievement of low-income and ethnic minority students and eliminating the achievement gap between them and more advantaged students (The National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group, 2009).

Racial and Ethnic Differences

      African American students. Jeynes (2016) argues there is a limited body of knowledge that exists regarding which aspects of parental involvement impact African American students' and the components of this involvement that are most important. Bates and Pettit (2004) found African American students may benefit from parent involvement in different ways than white student as African American parents are more likely to be involved in school related activities such as, volunteering than white parents (Graves, Brown and Wright, 2011). Moreover parent support with homework is positively associated with African American children's achievement (Lee, & Bowen, 2006). Furthermore, parent involvement may also improve reading comprehension, (Banerjee, Harrell, Johnson, 2011) grades and standardized test scores (Hill & Taykore, 2004). As a whole, parent involvement is associated with better school outcomes (Jeynes, 2016).

      Latino/a students. Although research on racial and ethnic differences of parent involvement has grown in the past two decades, there is less literature on Latino/a children and youth. Recent literature has examined parent involvement in education and found it to be essential for Latino/a youths' positive education outcomes (Garcia-Reid (2007). Attempts to understand education disparities for Latino/a students prompted

researchers to examine the impact of family on academic achievement (Umaña-Taylor & Alfaro, 2010). Examining their family home environments provided insight into the complex layers of cultural systems that impact the everyday life of the family (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Latino/a parents are more likely to be involved with their child's education at home. Home-based parental support, such as giving encouragement, and monitoring student progress increases academic persistence for Latino high school students (Mena, 2011) and particularly for Mexican American youth whose parents are involved in home-based activities like helping with homework and having educational resources at home have a significant impact on middle and high school student achievement (Altschul, 2011).

Mexican American middle- and high-school students' parent involvement increases their sense of belonging to their school increasing their school success (Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). Moreover, Latino/a children benefit more from parents who are warmer, firmer and willing to make decisions together with their children (Steinberg, Dornbusch and Brown, 1992). Although recent parent involvement and academic achievement research has focused on Latino/a youth, the vast majority has focused on adolescents and not children (Durand, 2010; Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, 2011). Therefore, future studies are needed to examine effects of parent involvement on Latino/a children specifically.

Social Class

Children from ethnic minority backgrounds experience poverty disproportionally to their more economically advantaged white peers. Therefore, it is also important to

discuss challenges to parent involvement associated with social class. Although parent

involvement is a key element for children, low-income parents face multiple barriers that

prevent them from being involved with their children either at school or at home.

Socioeconomic status presents unique barriers to traditional forms of parental

involvement (Jeynes, 2005a). Low-income parents may work non-traditional hours, have

restricted transportation, or lack childcare, preventing them from attending school events

or volunteering in the school (Muller, 1995; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Low-income mothers

who work full-time or attend school full-time are less likely to be involved with their

children's schooling than mothers who work or attend school part-time (Weiss et al,

2003).When low-income parents do engage in schools it may be for informal

conversations or unscheduled visits. This attempt to engage is not what teachers would

traditionally see and therefore parents are often viewed as obtrusive by schools and

teachers (Bower & Griffin, 2011). For low-income families, the school's control of time

and "appropriate" communication retains its power in parental involvement practices

(Freeman, 2010). Furthermore, schools are cautioned against defining specific behaviors

as parental involvement because the schools' definition often results in parents feeling

disenfranchised and their efforts being unrecognized (Freeman, 2010).

Engaging Low-income and Parents of Color

Although parent engagement is an effective strategy to promote academic success

for students, schools continue to struggle with engaging minority and high-poverty

parents (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Watson & Bogtoch, 2015). Some strategies, such as

relationship building, advocacy, and efficacy of parental involvement that are effective

for people of color and low-income families are often missing from schools (Van Velsor

& Orozco, 2007; Reynolds, Crea, Medina, Degnan, & McRoy, 2014; 2015). Abrams and Gibbs (2002) found schools marginalize parents, ignoring the status differences and re-creating the dominant power relationships of race and social class reflective of the larger society. As a result, unequal relationships between teachers and parents may occur due to power differentials (O' Connor, 2001). This lack of involvement due to barriers they experience may be perceived as a lack of interest in their child's education.

Education as a Way out of Poverty

The field of parent involvement research has expanded greatly since the inception of early parent engagement research. This research has contributed to the knowledge of specific factors that benefit child academic success. The following addresses the association of poverty and academic outcomes.

Educational attainment is a key variable in combating poverty (Caniglia, 1998). Education not only mediates adverse life experiences during adolescence but also impacts an adult's socioeconomic status (Wickrama, Simons & Baltimore, 2012) and health outcomes (Center for Disease Control, 2011). Disparities in academic achievement between students living in poverty and others are well known (Herbers et al., 2012; Jurecksa et al., 2012). Children in poverty have limited opportunities to learn in group settings and exposure to information-rich environments is less available to children in poverty (Burney & Beilke, 2008). These limited opportunities place them at a disadvantage when they enter the school environment compared to more affluent classmates. Children living in poverty are more likely to attend underperforming schools and are less likely to have well-qualified teachers (Evans, 2004). These underperforming schools are a result of uneven funding provided for schools based on local taxes. Children

who live in poverty and attend underperforming schools experience severe consequences, as they are more likely than other youth to have lower IQs, poor reading skills, low standardized test scores, and low grades (Nikulina, Widom, & Czaja, 2011; Morrisey, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2013). Therefore, children in wealthy communities benefit exponentially in the form of higher resourced schools (Kenyon, 2007).

Neighborhoods and Academic Achievement

Brofenbrenner (1979) initially thought of neighborhoods as a distal influence on the individual. However more recent studies have offered an alternative explanation and indicate that neighborhoods may in fact have a proximal influence on academic achievement (Henry, Merten, Plunkett, & Sands, 2008; Marjoribanks, K., 2003). Studies focusing on the differential effects of neighborhoods on African American and Latina/o students indicated neighborhood influences were more powerful than family influences and neighborhood risks for African American junior high school students (Gonzales, Cauce, Friedman and Mason, 2001). Furthermore, even with support from family and peers, the neighborhood in which African American students live may have a more substantial impact on their academic outcomes (Grogran-Kaylor &Woolley, 2010).

Eamon (2004) examined neighborhood influences and parenting practices found neighborhoods were critical and the amount of time that Latino(a)s live in poverty impacts their reading achievement. Furthermore, their reading achievement increased when there were fewer social and environmental problems found in their neighborhoods (Eamon, 2004). Not only do types of neighborhoods impact Latino/a students but their perceptions of neighborhood risks, such as, "low education, poverty, unemployment,

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substance use, illegal acts, and violence," (Henry, Merten, Plunkett, & Sands, 2008, p.585) influence student GPAs.

Subsidized Housing and Child Academic Achievement

Living in subsidized housing adds additional challenges to the academic success of low-income and ethnic minority children. Children living in subsidized housing neighborhoods face multiple barriers including health disparities, exposure to violence and drugs, limited mobility, and the added burden of overcoming under-resourced and under-performing schools in their efforts towards academic success (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012; Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & Ramani, 2011; Varaday, & Walker, 2003; Rosenbaum, 1995; Gennetian, Sciandra, Sanbonmatsu, Ludwig, Katz, Duncan, Kling, & Kessler, 2012; Yelowitz & Currie, 2000; Schwartz, McCabe, Ellen, & Chellman 2010; Nebbit, Lombe, Lavelle-McKay, & Sinha, 2014).

In the United States, there are approximately 1.2 million households living in public housing units (U.S Department of Housing and Development, 2014a). Public housing residents are predominately ethnic and racial minorities (69%) with a further overrepresentation of African Americans (49%). According to the Residents Characteristic Report (RCR), 24% of public housing residents are children and youth between the ages of 6-17 (U.S Department of Housing and Development, 2014b). Since nearly a quarter of public housing residents are school-aged, understanding parent involvement and academic achievement among these students is critical.

To date, the *Gautreaux Program and the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Program* (MTO) projects are the most comprehensive studies to examine academic achievement and neighborhood effects among children and youth. The *Gautreaux*

Program was created in response to a suit filed by Dorothy Gautreaux against the Chicago Housing Authority which claimed the housing policy discriminated against racial minorities in their housing policies (Varaday, & Walker, 2003). In response, the housing authority provided Section 8 vouchers to over 7,500 African American families on welfare to provide opportunities to have access to better employment options, school, and neighborhoods (Rosenbaum, 1995). After some initial screening nearly two-thirds of the applicants were offered placement in private market apartment units either in suburban or urban areas. Rosenbaum and Zuberi (2010) conducted two studies to evaluate the The *Gautreaux Program* and found children who had moved out of public housing neighborhoods and into suburban neighborhoods had better academic outcomes than the children who moved within the city (Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010;Varaday, & Walker, 2003).

While the *Gautreaux Program* focused on racial integration the *Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing (MTO)* program focused on income mixing. Three study conditions existed: 1) families who received a housing voucher for a year and received supportive services and were required to move into neighborhoods with less than 10% poverty, 2) families who received a housing voucher without counseling and supportive services and were allowed to move into any neighborhood and, 3) families who did not receive a housing voucher, but were allowed to stay in public housing. Although participants in the *MTO* program saw some improvements in health and employment outcomes there were few detectable long-term effects on academic achievement and educational outcomes of the children in their study (Gennetian et al., 2012).

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Parent Involvement Interventions to Improve Academic Achievement

Since the early 90s researchers have conducted comprehensive studies of effective parent involvement programs to determine aspects of parent involvement that benefit disadvantaged children. White Taylor and Moss (1992) analyzed 172 research studies to determine the benefits attributed to involving parents in early intervention (prekindergarten) programs. In their review they found little evidence of child outcomes between parents who participate and parents who do not participate in programs or interventions. Furthermore, the effect sizes of treatment versus no-treatment studies in which parents were involved were about the same for parents who were not involved. Although these findings provided a new contribution to the literature more recent systematic reviews challenge these results.

In 2001 Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to review the literature on parent involvement programs and academic achievement. Twenty-five studies that met their inclusion criteria were reviewed for the study and two features of parent involvement were examined, *Area of Academic Achievement* and *Parental Involvement Dimension*. Two key findings of their study were revealed. First, the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement was stronger when academic achievement was represented by "global indicators" of academic achievement (e.g., school GPA), than by academic subject-specific indicator s (e.g., math grade). Second, home-based parent involvement had a weak relationship with students' academic achievement. Furthermore, parents' "aspiration/expectation" for their children's educational achievement had the strongest relationship with students' academic

achievement. Therefore, they concluded that parental involvement, as a general construct, was associated with higher academic outcomes.

In 2002, a new counterargument about the impact of parent involvement on academic achievement was asserted in a review of 41 studies focused on K-12th grade programs (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002) These results provided little support for the widespread belief that parent involvement programs were an effective means of either improving student academic achievement or changing parent, teacher, and student behavior. Additionally, Mattingly et al. (2002) argued a more rigorous data collection and evaluation were needed to determine parent involvement's impact on student academic outcomes.

In 2012, Jeynes provided the most recent meta-analysis of the efficacy of parent involvement programs for urban pre-kindergarten-12th grade students. Contrary to Mattingly's (2002) study, Jeynes (2012) asserted parent involvement programs did in fact improve academic achievement and parental support and teachers engagement was essential. Furthermore, the types of programs that yielded the most promise are programs that promote parent-child reading, homework support, and programs that are initiated by the school when added to parent support that is already in place.

These studies demonstrated mixed findings on the impact of parent involvement and academic achievement. In the initial studies parent involvement had a weak relationship with academic outcomes, however this was disputed and it was determined that involvement may indeed influence outcomes. Moreover academic achievement had a stronger relationship to school-based than home-based involvement. Further studies, argued that more rigorous evaluations were needed to determine the specific types of

parent involvement that have the most impact. Most recently, studies demonstrated parent involvement programs do improve academic achievement and activities such as parents reading to their child or helping with homework tend to have the most impact on their child's academic outcomes.

Gaps in Parent Involvement and Academic Achievement Interventions

Parent involvement and the efficacy of programs previously noted primarily focused on Epstein's (1987) *six* components of involvement. Importantly, research and practice aimed at improving parent involvement were primarily initiated by schools (White, Taylor & Moss, 1992; Mattingly, 2002, and Jeynes, 2012). An alternative approach is to consider parent involvement initiated by a community-based intervention, *YFYN*. For example, both parents and children work together through their challenges with schools to determine the best approach to hold schools accountable for their role in academic underachievement.

Programs that address parent involvement from a community-based approach are limited. Additionally, programs that focus on parent involvement for parents who live in subsidized housing neighborhoods are almost non-existent. Therefore, parent involvement programs that specifically target parents who live in subsidized housing neighborhoods are needed and should be evaluated to determine program effects. One such intervention that is attempting to address parent involvement and academic achievement from a community-based approach is the *YFYN* intervention.

Your Family, Your Neighborhood

Low-income families living in communities are particularly vulnerable to the combined risks associated with living in poverty and living in a neighborhood of

concentrated disadvantage (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan and Aber, 1997). Families living in poverty experience disparities in health and educational outcomes (Center for Disease Control, 2011). Health care access is often compromised (Kirby & Kaneda, 2005) and schools often perform well-below national standards (McLoyd, 1998). Therefore, programs designed for families living in low-income communities should be based on empirical evidence of individual, family, and community-level factors associated with health and educational disparities.

YFYN uses knowledge of scientific findings at the individual, family, and community levels to address health and educational outcomes for families living in subsidized housing communities. The structure of the curriculum provides opportunities to support the child-parent bond and to develop socially cohesive relationships in the community. The practice-based curriculum itself provides children with academic support and provides parents with practical tools to address family health, and their child's education. Parents have the opportunity to practice skills they learn in the sessions and apply them to their personal situations. For example, in one session they learn about the School Choice enrollment process in Denver (Denver Public Schools, 2016). The School Choice process allows parents to enroll their children in their highest preference school with available space. This gives parents the opportunity to withdraw their child from their current under-performing school and enroll them in a high-performing school.

Figure 1 illustrates the pathways through which *YFYN* seeks to address the health, well-being, and academic success among children and families residing in subsidized housing communities. Although *YFYN* seeks to address the health and well-being among children and families residing in low-income and subsidized housing communities the

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primary focus of this study is to understand the impact *YFYN* has on parent involvement and child academic achievement for intervention participants.
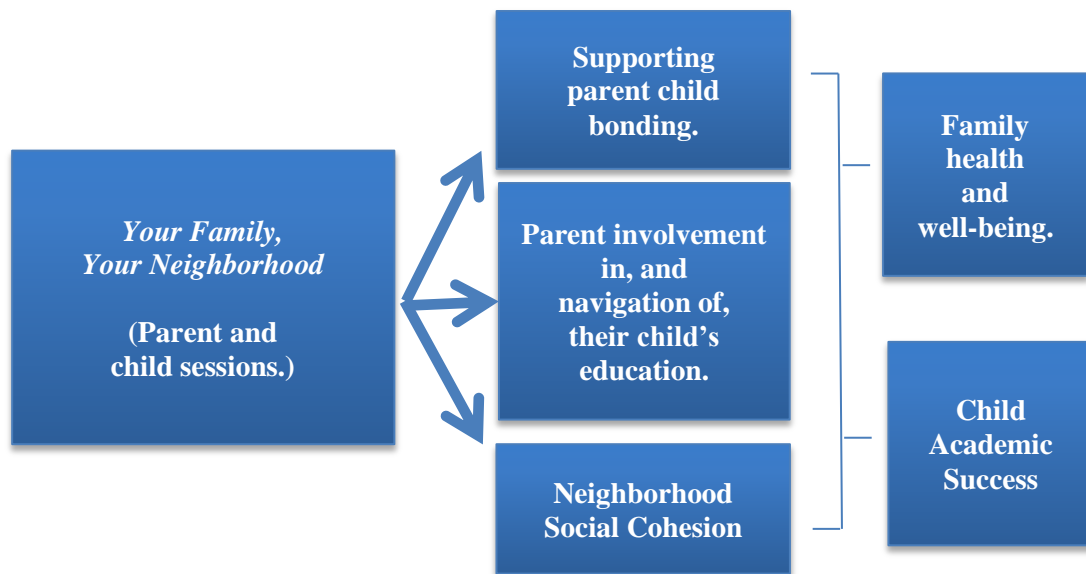
Figure 2.2. *YFYN* conceptual framework.

Supporting Parent Child Bonding

Research indicates that strong child-parent bonds are positively related to health and well-being for children (CDC, 2012); child-parent bonds are also important factors in increasing children's academic success (Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007; Garcia-Reid 2007). Children whose parents are more involved in their lives are less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, become pregnant, be physically inactive, and be emotionally distressed than other youth (CDC, 2012). To develop the parent child bond, each *YFYN* curriculum session starts with sharing a meal as a family and spending time with each other to talk and reflect on their day. Studies have found family meals help promote healthy outcomes for children and promote literacy, learning and healthy behavior (Larson, 2008; Larson, Branscbomb, Wiley, 2006). Studies have found that the frequency

of shared family meals is associated with child academic and behavioral outcomes (Miller, Waldfogel, & Han, 2012). In the *YFYN* curriculum, once dinner is finished the children participate in a session where they receive academic support, including homework help and skill-based activities. At the same time, a parent-only group takes place. At the conclusion of the parent-only and child-only groups, parents and children come together and are encouraged to share the skills, activities, and conversations they had in their separate groups. Providing parents and children the opportunity to hear about each other's work strengthens bonding between children and parents.

Parent Involvement in, and Navigation of, Child's Education

Research indicates a positive association between parent involvement in their child's education and academic outcomes (Topor et al, 2010; Cooper & Crosnoe 2007, & Garcia-Ried 2007). Parent involvement does not only refer to a two-parent household, but other caretakers that may take on this role. Furthermore, children whose parents are more involved in their education have better academic outcomes than children whose parents are not as involved (Epstein, & Dauber, 1991; Toper, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010). Parent involvement is significantly related to academic performance above and beyond the impact of a child's intelligence (Toper, et al, 2010).

Neighborhood social cohesion. The high correlation between poverty and race and ethnicity is well-documented (Ou & Reynolds, 2008). Poverty rates for African Americans, American Indians and Hispanics are twice as high as poverty rates for Whites. According to the 2007–2011 American Community Survey, national poverty rates were a staggering 27% for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 25.8% for Blacks or African Americans and ranged from 16.2% to 26.3% for Hispanics as opposed to

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11.6% for Whites who represent 67% of the population (American Survey Briefs, U.S. Census Data, 2013). Nearly 30% of America's poor reside in poor places, and concentrated poverty is especially high among poor African Americans (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012). The role of neighborhoods and the roles of race and ethnicity add a level of complication to the associations between poverty, family health and well-being, and academic achievement (Malmgren, Martin, Nicola, 1996; Webley, 2011; Carranza, You, Chhuon, & Hudley, 2009; Garcia-Reid, 2007). When working with low-income families in subsidized housing one needs to address barriers faced by families of color.

A second critical aim of *YFYN* is to address adverse neighborhood conditions in public housing settings. Neighborhood social cohesion is defined as an individual's neighborhood network of trusting and cohesive relationships (Brisson & Usher 2007). Cohesion is an important mediator for a wide range of outcomes including health, well-being and academic success (Sampson, 2013). Neighborhood social cohesion is demonstrated to provide a supportive resource for low-income families to help them to overcome the low-resourced and sometimes isolating conditions that challenge families from low-income neighborhoods (Brisson & Usher, 2007).

Research has shown a link between neighborhood social cohesion and mental health (Brisson, Lopez & Yoder, 2014), obesity (Cohen, Finch, Bower, & Sastry, 2006), and self-rated health (Kim, Subramanian & Kawachi, 2006). Studies have also demonstrated the importance of social cohesion for school attachment (Wentzel, 1998) and academic achievement (Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless, 2001). Based on this evidence, neighborhood social cohesion is an important mediator and intervention element of *YFYN*.

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The structure of the *YFYN* is designed to build social cohesion among families (see Appendix C for full curriculum). First, each curriculum session starts with a dinner and social time where neighbors share a meal and get to know each other. Then, parents participate in a parent-only group and children participate in a child-only group. Group work builds connections between neighborhood residents. Then, each session concludes with group sharing between children and parents. This sharing allows families to get to know one another, their struggles and successes, more deeply. Through this sharing, it is hypothesized that inter-family trust and cohesion will develop. Also, the final three sessions of the curriculum are explicitly focused on neighborhood families developing a community project together. During *YFYN,* families collectively identify a neighborhood issue and then plan and carry out a neighborhood activity designed to address the issue. This active engagement in the community develops social cohesion within *YFYN* participants and possibly in the greater neighborhood.

Chapter Summary

Social ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and CRT (Ladson-Billings, 1995) theories provide the guiding framework to understand parent involvement and academic achievement among children of color in low-income neighborhoods. The ecological factors that impact academic achievement and examined the intersections of race and social class on parent involvement and student achievement are addressed. The literature review highlights on parent involvement and the benefits for their children's education, although findings on parent involvement and the types of involvement that matter most for children are mixed. It also addresses the role neighborhoods play in a child's academic achievement and particularly the challenges of living in subsidized housing.

The chapter concludes with a discussion on current parent involvement interventions and a new intervention, *YFYN*, which uses a community-based approach to address parent involvement and academic achievement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This chapter begins with a brief history of the development and initial test of the

YFYN intervention. A description of the intervention, including, session goals and

objectives are presented. Next, the study methods are provided including an overview of

the three study settings, intervention procedures, and embedded research design. The

sample descriptions for both the quantitative and qualitative are reviewed. The chapter

concludes with a discussion of the measures used in the study and a description of the

data analysis conducted.

History of Your Family, Your Neighborhood

In 2011, Stephanie Lechuga-Peña, MSW and Daniel Brisson, MSW, PhD,

developed and began testing the *YFYN* intervention for families in low-income and

subsidized housing communities (Lechuga-Peña & Brisson, 2012). *YFYN* addresses

issues at the family, school and neighborhood levels to support households who face

challenges associated with poverty and distressed neighborhoods. In this innovative 10-

week curriculum family members work on improving connections across the multiple

systems that influence their daily lives. *YFYN* identified family-level strategies as a gap in

the afterschool prevention services being offered to children in low-income and public

housing communities. *YFYN* provides an opportunity for families to strengthen their

family relationships, address parent involvement and school engagement, and build on

neighborhood strengths. The *YFYN* approach embodies social work values in addressing

family's needs as they are situated in their living environment, in this case low-income and subsidized housing communities.

In 2013, an initial pilot test of the *YFYN* curriculum was conducted with eight families in public housing. Results from the pilot study show families improved on academic outcomes, parent child- bonding, child behavior, school engagement, and community connections. The *YFYN* curriculum was revised based on a program evaluation from pilot study processes and outcomes. In addition to testing pilot program results, semi-structured interviews with program participants yielded information to guide improvements to the curriculum. Participants noted that program goals and objectives needed to be transparent during the initial stages of the intervention so that families were better informed about the goals they were working towards. Also, program participants noted that more time was needed for the parent group portion of the sessions to build group rapport and engage in meaningful dialogue. Finally, program participants noted that the curriculum should be delivered in ten consecutive weeks to address scheduling constraints and increase family commitment and group momentum. Subsequently, the curriculum tested in the current study consists of 10 two-hour sessions delivered weekly (see Table 1). The full curriculum can be found in *Appendix C*.

Table 1

YFYN Session Number, Title, Purpose and Goals

Session	Title	Purpose	Goals
1	Introduction to *YFYN*	This session is intended to introduce the purpose of *YFYN* to the families and begin the group forming/group cohesion process.	Provide the theoretical background-The Parent Child Bond (Bowlby, 1976), and research on the importance of the Parent Child Bond.
			Explain the purpose of the *YFYN* program and what will be achieved over the next 10 sessions.
			Give parents a chance to "break the ice," and get to know each other.
			Begin a discussion about their child's education
2	Your Family and Education: The Benefits and Barriers to School Involvement	This session is intended to begin the process of forming the group and to begin a discussion about the parent's experience with their own education as well as their role in their child's education.	Help parents remember and identify their feelings and experiences in their own education.
			Begin a discussion about their child's education.
			Have parent's share their role in their child' education.
			Parents will identify their "Hopes and Dreams" for their children.
			Children will complete a "My Hopes and Dreams" collage
3	The Importance of Parent Child Bonding	This session is intended to provide the theoretical background of the parent-child bond and give parents the opportunity to practice emotional communication.	Provide the theoretical background of the parent-child bond (Bowlby, 1976), and research on the importance of the parent child bond.
			Give parents the opportunity to practice the skills they have learned about emotional communication with their children

Session	Title	Purpose	Goals
4	Systemic Oppression in Education	This session is intended to help parents understand systemic oppression in education, the educational pipeline, correlation between education and life-time earnings and the importance of parental involvement in their child's education.	Parents will have a basic understanding of systemic oppression in education. Parents will have a beginning understanding of "school choice" and the education options for their children. Parents will be exposed to the educational pipeline. Parents will discuss the successes and challenges to parental involvement in education.
5	How is My Health Important for My Child's Future?	This session is intended to introduce the topic of health and barriers to health that families may face.	Parents will share their experiences they have had with their family's health. Parents will identify concerns and needs they have regarding their family's health.
6	Getting Covered: My Family's Healthcare	This session is intended to help families' access healthcare and learn more about how the new healthcare reform may impact them.	Parents will be able to apply for health insurance if they meet the requirements and visit the healthcare portal. Parents will learn about the healthcare system from a professional healthcare social worker.
7	What Does My Community Mean to Me?	This session is intended to help families identify the positive aspects and challenges of their neighborhood.	Identify strengths and challenges of their neighborhood. Identify what their neighborhood means to them. Identify who is in their community. Identify their priorities for change in their neighborhoods.
8	Connecting With Your Community	This session is intended to begin the planning of the community project.	Brainstorm and create a list of community projects. Provide a budget for the project. Determine the project. Begin a discussion with the children on leadership

Session	Title	Purpose	Goals
9	Leadership in a Community Event	This session is intended to plan the community project.	Continue planning the community project Create task groups Finish the Action Plan
10	Leading by Working with Others	This session is intended to plan the community project.	The goals of this session are to wrap up the 10-sessions and celebrate the families' accomplishments in the sessions.
Booster Session 1	Your Neighborhood	At the beginning of summer at the end of the school year.	Plan a community event. Check in with families during their event planning and be available for support. Attend event!
Booster Session 2	Attachment to School	At the beginning of fall around the time children go back to school.	Back to school event. Organize a *YFYN* meeting and provide families the opportunities to talk about the hopes and fears for the school year. Give them the opportunity to share ways that they are going to be involved at school.
Booster Session 3	The Parent Child Bond	After the holidays in mid-winter	Meet to reengage with your children. Organize a *YFYN* session where parents and kids split into a parent group and a child group and get to talk about life at home. Bring the children and parents back together to discuss a commitment to being involved in each other's lives.

Description of the *YFYN* Intervention

YFYN is a dual generation curriculum designed to improve academic success and enhance the health and well-being of children and parents living in low-income and subsidized housing communities. *YFYN* is a manualized curriculum delivered to parents and children between 7 and 12-years-old in two low-income communities in Denver, one of which is in a subsidized housing development. Ten curriculum sessions aim to enhance attachment between children and parents, improve parent involvement in schools, improve academic outcomes for children, develop trusting relationships in the

community, and promote the health and well-being of family members. Parents and children participate in sessions on school involvement, healthcare access, community building, and life skills training. The curriculum is designed to strengthen bonds between children and parents and build social cohesion among residents in low-income and subsidized housing communities.

Families living in subsidized housing communities face unique barriers to health and academic success, largely based on the concentration of poverty in their community and the transitional nature of their housing. The *YFYN* approach has an explicit focus on individual, family, and neighborhood challenges facing families living in subsidized housing. Some of these challenges are parent engagement in schools, healthcare access and social isolation. The *YFYN* approach addresses these challenges across individual, family and neighborhood levels, and allows families to develop solutions that are unique to their particular life circumstances and community. The specific aims of *YFYN* are:

1. To strengthen bonds between children and parents through participation in a dual generation ten-week structured intervention.

2. To build a socially cohesive community of residents living in a low-income or subsidized housing community.

3. To improve family health outcomes through participation in a ten-week curriculum that provides practical tools for accessing and understanding health insurance options, local health care providers, and evidence-based health promotion practices and programs.

4. To improve the educational outcomes of child participants through educational support for children, parent engagement in their child's academic

progress, and increased parent attachment with schools. (*The current study assesses this aim*).

YFYN works closely with three main community partners that include the Denver Housing Authority (DHA), Denver Public Schools (DPS), and Denver Human Services (DHS). DHA owns and operates over 3,900 public housing units subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHA, 2015). DPS serves residents of the city and county of Denver. DPS consists of 185 schools, including traditional, magnet, charter and pathways schools, with a current total enrollment of 87,398 students. Currently the school district's enrollment is 57.5% Hispanic, 21.2% Caucasian, and 14.1% African American (DPS, 2015). Approximately, 71% of the district's students qualify for free and reduced lunch (DPS, 2015). DHS provides assistance programs to eligible Denver residents in financial need and includes federal food, cash and medical benefits, as well as child care, child support, energy, rental and burial assistance (DHS, 2016).

Study Settings

Three study sites, in three Denver neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty, were included in this study. In *Neighborhood 1* the study sites included a community center and school in a subsidized housing development. All participants in *Neighborhood 1* received a housing subsidy and lived in the housing development. In *Neighborhood 2* the study site was at a public elementary school. Participants at this site lived in a low-income apartment building in the neighborhood. Both neighborhoods presented significant need for an intervention to support families and the community. The third study site was located at a subsidized housing development in *Neighborhood 3* and

served as the comparison site. This site was selected based on similar demographics and characteristics of *Neighborhood 1*.

Neighborhood 1

In *Neighborhood 1* nearly 87% of children under 18 live in poverty compared to16% in the Denver metro and is one of the state's poorest neighborhoods (Piton Foundation, 2014). Approximately, 64% of households are families with children and children make up 54% of the population (Piton Foundation, 2014). It is the only Denver neighborhood where minors outnumber adults (City-Data, 2016). Nearly 94% of residents reside in subsidized housing, while only about 5% live in owner occupied units (DHA, 2015). Approximately 48% of residents are Latino/a, followed by 23% of residents who are African American (Piton Foundation, 2014). The elementary school that serves children in this neighborhood has the lowest rating for a school in Denver Public Schools, "accredited in probation (DPS, 2014a)." This rating is based on student progress over time, student engagement and satisfaction, student achievement, enrollment and parent engagement and satisfaction. In a recent newspaper article residents in this community stated "they are the stepchildren of the city, overlooked and neglected" (The Denver Post, 2010).

Neighborhood 2

In *Neighborhood 2* nearly 56% of households are families with children and children make up 37% of the population (Piton Foundation, 2014). Furthermore, nearly 40% of the children who are under 18 live in poverty (Piton Foundation, 2014). Approximately 60% of the residents are Latino, followed by 26% of residents who are African American (Piton Foundation, 2014). The elementary school that most of children

in this neighborhood attend has an overall rating of "meets expectations" in Denver

Public Schools, (DPS, 2014b). However, ratings for student achievement and parent

engagement and satisfaction have a score of "does not meet expectations."

Neighborhood 3 (Comparison Site)

Neighborhood 3 is adjacent to Neighborhood 1separated by a major boulevard

and city park. Neighborhood 3 is part of the larger West Colfax neighborhood (DHA,

2015; Piton Foundation, 2014). Nearly 27% of households are families with children and

children make up 24% of the population (Piton Foundation, 2014). Nearly 54% of

children under 18 live in poverty (Piton Foundation, 2014). Approximately 55% of the

residents are Latino, followed by 7% of residents who are African American (Piton

Foundation, 2014). The elementary school in this neighborhood has an overall rating of

"accredited on probation" in Denver Public Schools, (DPS, 2014c). Ratings for student

achievement, student engagement and satisfaction, enrollment and parent engagement

and satisfaction have a score of "does not meet expectations."

<div align="center">Intervention Procedures</div>

Four cohorts of families participated in YFYN at four different time points; cohort

1 in the fall of 2014, cohort 2 in the winter of 2014, cohort 3 in the spring of 2015 and

cohort 4 in the fall of 2015. The YFYN co-investigators intentionally chose not to

administer sessions in the summer as the intervention is designed to work with families

during the school year. Participants in cohorts 1, 2 and 3 lived in Neighborhood 1and

participants in cohort 4 lived in Neighborhood 2. The YFYN intervention was held at the

local community center for cohorts 1 and 2 and for cohorts 3 and 4 at participants' local

elementary school.

Five different parent facilitators and two child facilitators facilitated the sessions for each of the 4 cohorts. All of the facilitators received a two-hour training on the *YFYN* intervention. I conducted the first four sessions of the parent group for cohort 1. I hold an MSW degree and am a doctoral student in social work. I have over 15 years of experience in group facilitation. The second parent facilitator conducted the last six sessions of the parent group for cohort 1. She is a doctoral student in communications studies and had some previous experience with group facilitation. This was the only cohort that had two different parent facilitators. The parent facilitator for cohort 2 had some college education and several years of experience facilitating groups with low-income communities. The parent facilitator for cohort 3 was a second year MSW student with more than three years of group facilitation. The fifth parent facilitator had some college education with over 20 years of group facilitation. The child facilitator for cohorts 1, 2 and 3 was a first-year MSW student and had over five years of experience facilitating groups. The child facilitator for cohort 4 was a graduate student in education and had three years of experience facilitating groups.

Participants attended ten curriculum sessions, each lasting two hours. The sessions included dinner (dinner and parent-child bonding) for 45 minutes, followed by the parent curriculum and separate child curricula. The last 15 minutes included a parent/child reflection and sharing (parent and child working together). For cohorts 1 and 2 curriculum sessions were held on Wednesdays from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. For cohorts 3 and 4, sessions were held on Wednesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the session's schedule was adjusted to meet the needs of the families and the study sites. The schedule for these sessions was flipped. It included the parent curriculum and separate child

curricula for the first hour, followed by dinner (dinner and parent-child bonding) for 45 minutes. The last 15 minutes included a parent/child reflection and sharing (parent and child working together).

Sessions for cohorts 1 and 2 were held in a neighborhood community center in the main community room. The dinner portion was held in the main room and during the parent and children's group, parents moved to a space in the hallway and the children stayed in the main room. This was intentional to allow parents to have a deeper dialogue with each other. Sessions for cohorts 3 and 4 were held at their local elementary school in *Neighborhoods 1* and *2*. The dinner portions were held in the school library. The parent and children's groups were held separately, parents moved to classrooms down the hall and the children stayed in the library.

Incentives were critical in the recruitment and retention of families in the study. For treatment group participants, incentives occurred at three time points. First, weekly incentives for participants were provided at each *YFYN* curriculum session using a random drawing for a gift card or gift basket valued at $25. This incentive was designed to support attendance at individual curriculum sessions. Second, program completion incentives were provided to each participant. Families who completed the pre-test and post-test survey received a $50 gift card. Finally, participants who agreed to be interviewed for the qualitative study received a $25 gift card.

Embedded Research Design

The current study utilized an embedded research design to assess effects of the *YFYN* intervention on parent involvement and academic achievement of child participants. An embedded design implies that a researcher collects and analyzes both

quantitative and qualitative data within a traditional quantitative or qualitative design

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This was the most appropriate design as the purpose of

the study was to understand the effectiveness of the *YFYN* intervention and utilizing both

qualitative and quantitative research provides the opportunity to examine several different

aspects of the participant's experiences. Additionally, an embedded design allowed the

inclusion of qualitative data to answer the third research question. Moreover, it provided

the means to understand and interpret the reactions of participants in the intervention.

Figure 3 provides a flowchart of the procedure used to implement the embedded design.
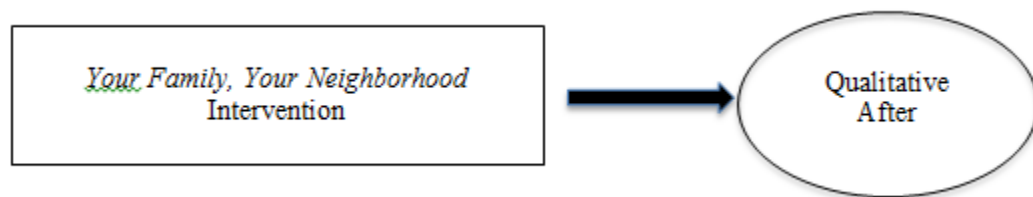
Figure 3.1. Flowchart of the basic procedures in implementing an Embedded Design.

The quantitative approach involved the comparison of treatment and comparison

group scores from pre-test to post-test on indicators of parent involvement and academic

achievement (research questions #1 and #2). The qualitative component complemented

the quantitative method, by providing an in-depth understanding of treatment group

participant's experience of *YFYN* and how they responded to their child's educational

needs. A phenomenological approach was employed to conduct in-depth interviews with

participants post-treatment and captured participant narratives on the effects of *YFYN* for

parent involvement and educational success. The in-depth interviews also captured

participant narratives on strategies parents use to engage in the educational experiences of

their children as a result of *YFYN* (research question #3).

<center>**Sample**</center>

Recruitment for the *YFYN* pilot study began in the summer of 2014 and was conducted in several ways. First Dr. Brisson (*YFYN* co-principal investigator) and I attended school and community outreach events in the targeted neighborhoods to build rapport with community members. Second, we created a recruitment brochure and distributed it at the schools in the target sites and during community events. We also posted the brochures on the community center's bulletin board. Lastly, we relied on the staff and program administrators at the study sites to recruit and refer participants. Parents or caregivers who had at least one child between the ages of 7 to12-year-olds and lived in the targeted neighborhoods were invited to participate in the intervention.

Thirty families were recruited for the *YFYN* study in 2014 and 2015. Nineteen families were recruited for the treatment group and 11 families were recruited for the comparison group. Four cohorts of families in *Neighborhoods 1* and *2* received the treatment at one community center and two school sites. Participants were not randomly assigned to the treatment or comparison group.

Sample Characteristics for the Quantitative Study

To assess group comparability t-tests and chi-squares were ran on each of the sample characteristics. All non-parametrics tests were not significant, with one exception, participants who lived with their spouse or co-habitating partner had higher statistical significance. Descriptions of the characteristics are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Participants in the treatment group were predominately female and primarily identified as Latina and Black/not Latina. Their current mean years of residency were 5.7

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and a little more than half of the participants lived with their spouse or co-habitating partner. Approximately half of the participants had some high school or less and the other half had a high school degree or equivalent or more. The participant mean age was 38.3 years (range: 24 to 55) and the focal child mean age was 9.1 years (range: 6 to 12). Nearly 63% of the child participants were female and 37% were male.

Participants in the comparison group were predominately female and primarily identified as Latina and Black/not Latina. Their current mean years of residency were 5.5. However, unlike the participants in the treatment group, the majority of participants in the comparison group did not live with their spouse or co-habitating partner. Approximately 37% of the participants had some high school or less and 63% had a high school degree or equivalent or more. The participant mean age was 40.4 (range 30 to 59) years and the focal child mean age was 9.6 years (range 8 to 12). Half of the child participants were female and half were male. The treatment and comparison groups appeared comparable based on participant demographic variables. Sample characteristics for the full, treatment, and comparison groups are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Characteristics for Full Sample, Treatment, and Comparison Groups

Characteristic	Full Sample (*n*=30)	Treatment Group (*n*=19)	Comparison Group (*n*=11)
Participant gender			
Female	93%	95%	91%
Male	7%	5%	9%
Ethnicity			
White/not Latino	18%	12%	27%
Black/not Latino	25%	29%	18%
Latino	51%	53%	46%
Asian	3%	6%	0%
Multi-ethnic	0%	0%	0%
Other	3%	0%	9%
Years of current residency	5.8 (5.0)	5.7 (5.6)	5.5 (4.7)
Live with spouse or cohabitating partner?			
Yes	43%	59%	18%
No	57%	41%	82%
Level of education			
Did not attend high school	14%	17%	10%
Some high school	31%	33%	27%
HS degree or equivalent	24%	22%	27%
Some college	28%	28%	27%
Bachelor's degree or higher	3%	0%	9%
Mean age of respondent (SD)	39 (8.9)	38.3 (8.1)	40.4 (10.4)
Mean focal child age (SD)	9.3 (1.9)	9.3 (2.1)	9.6 (1.4)
Focal child gender			
Female	57%	63%	50%
Male	43%	37%	50%

Procedures for the Quantitative Study

Quantitative data were collected by the *YFYN* PIs via a pre-test and post-test

parent survey. Data were collected during the first and tenth curriculum sessions. The

survey assessed basic demographic characteristics, parent involvement in school, child

academic success, mental health and well-being, and strength of the parent child bond.

Only the parent involvement and child academic success measures were used for this

study. A copy of the survey is provided in *Appendix A*. After completing the pre-test

survey, parents in the treatment group received the ten-week *YFYN* curriculum and at the conclusion of the curriculum a post-test survey was administered to the parents.

In January 2015, Dr. Brisson and I met with DHA administrators to plan for the comparison group data collection. Parents or caregivers who had at least one child between the ages of seven and twelve and lived in *Neighborhood 3* were invited to participate in the comparison group. Participants in the comparison group received a $10 gift card as incentive for completing the pre-test survey and a $15 gift card as incentive for completing the post-test survey approximately ten weeks later. To recruit participants for the comparison groups Dr. Brisson and I attended community meetings and events. Additionally, I walked the neighborhood and provided flyers inviting residents to participate in the study. The study was approved by the University of Denver's Institutional Review Board in two separate protocols. One protocol is approved for the quasi-experimental intervention testing (IRB 472280-4), and one protocol is approved for the in-depth qualitative interviews (IRB 728115-1).

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Procedures for Qualitative Interviews

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Design of Interview Protocol

The questions for the qualitative interview protocol were developed from a review of research evaluating the effectiveness of school engagement strategies with low-income parents (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007; Vanvelser & Orozco, 2007). Additionally, Dr. Debora Ortega, a qualitative scholar provided her expertise and guidance in the development of the interview questions in the protocol (see *Appendix B*).

Sampling and Recruitment

At the conclusion of each of the first three cohorts of the *YFYN* administration I

asked participants if they would like to be interviewed for the qualitative portion of the

study. Participants in cohorts 1, 2 and 3 were selected for in-depth interviews post-

intervention. All of the participants were given the option to be interviewed and were

assured that it would not impact their current participation in the *YFYN* program.

Although all of the participants in these three cohorts were asked to participate, only nine

of the seventeen participants were interviewed. Effort was made to contact all

participants post-intervention for the interviews, but they were either unavailable or their

phone numbers were disconnected. If a participant agreed to be interviewed they were

asked to provide a day and time to conduct the interview.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted within four weeks of their completion

of the *YFYN* intervention in order to a gain a fresh perspective of their experience.

Participants were given the option to be interviewed at the location of the *YFYN* program,

or in their home if they felt more comfortable. All participants chose to be interviewed in

their home. When possible, interviews were conducted while their children were at

school or out of the house to ensure privacy and prevent interruption. However, on some

occasions interviews were conducted while their children were present. This posed a

challenge for some of the interviews, as the parents were often distracted and the

interviews took longer.

Participants were asked to sign an informed consent and were provided a copy of

the six-question interview protocol (see *Appendix B*). Eight of the interviews were

conducted in English and one was conducted in the participant's preferred language,

French. I conducted all nine interviews. However for the interview in French a certified translator who held an MSW degree assisted me. Prior to the interview I met with the translator to train them in the delivery of the interview and to familiarize them with the interview protocol. During the interview I asked the participant a question and then the translator asked the participant the question. The participant replied and the translator paraphrased the participant's response. Some of the questions were asked twice to ensure clarity.

Participants were given an in-depth explanation of the study and its purpose. They were informed that they could discontinue the interview at any point during the interview and were given the option to skip a question or refuse to answer. The interviews lasted between twenty-five minutes and two hours. All interviews were audio-recorded. Interviews conducted in English were transcribed by a first-year MSW student and the interview in French was translated and transcribed by the translator who conducted the interview with me. Data were kept in a secure, locked location accessed only by myself. All identifying information was kept separate from the interview data.

Sample Description

Nine of the nineteen participants in the treatment group participated in the qualitative interviews and all of the participants were mothers. All of the participants lived in *Neighborhood 1.* Four of the mothers identified as Latina, three identified as Black/not Latina, and two identified as Other: African. Seven of the participants were born in the United States, one was born in Rwanda and one was born in Central Africa. The mean age of the participants was 38 years (range: 30 to 47) and all participants had two or more children. Their mean years of residency were 2.5 years. One of the

participants did not attend high school, three participants had some high school, one of the participants had graduated from high school or had a GED and four of the participants had some college. All participants had at least one child between the ages of 7 and 12 that participated in the *YFYN* program.

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Measures

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Demographic Variables

Survey data collection provided information about basic demographic information including, ethnicity, sex, length of current neighborhood residency, country /place of birth, if they were currently living with a spouse or cohabitating partner, level of education, child/ren's age and sex.

Independent Variable

The primary predictor in the study was participation in the *YFYN* intervention, treatment group or the comparison group.

Dependent Variables (Research Question 1)

Parent involvement in education. Parent involvement in their child's education was measured by five single item indicators. The indicators were assessed through a survey at pre-test and at post-test. These items are from the Family Routines Inventory (FRI) (Jensen, James, Boyce &Hartnett, 1983). The FRI measures 28 "strength-promoting family routines (p.201)." These are based on behaviors between two or more family members that occur on a daily basis. The FRI has been found to be reliable and valid. The three reliability coefficients for the FRI were in acceptable range (raw score α =.74, weighted score α =.75 and frequency score α =.79). The construct validity of the

FRI was validated and correlated positively with the Family Environment Scale (Moos, lnsel, Humphrey, & Farnil, 1974).

The first two indicators can be found in the *Parent Involvement in Schools* section, questions, 1 and 2. The last three indicators can be found in the *Parent-Child Bonding* section, questions 1 and 5 and the *Family Practices and Activities* subsection question 2 in *Appendix A*. The items included:

1. *"How often would you say you participate in activities at 'your child's' school?"* Responses include: Once a week or more (1), Once or twice a month (2), A few times a year (3), I don't usually participate in my child's school (4).

2. "*How often do you communicate with a teacher or principal at 'your child's' school?"* Responses include: Once a week or more (1), Once or twice a month (2), A few times a year (3), I don't usually communicate with a teacher or principal at my child's school (4).

3. *How often do you and 'your child' talk about what is happening at school?"* Responses include: Less than once a week (1), Once or twice a week (2), Two or three times a week (3), Four or five times a week (4), Almost every day (5)

4. *"How often do you read stories to "your child?"* Responses include: Never (1), A few times a year (2), About once a month (3), A few times a month (3), About once a week (5), A few times a week (6) and Every day (7).

5. *"When in school, children do their homework at the same time of day or night. (Is this a routine your family does)."* Responses include: Almost Never (1), Sometimes (2), Usually (3), Always (4). Parent report of these indicators was collected at pre-test/post-test.

Dependent Variables (Research Question 2)

      Academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured by a single item indicator, child progress in school. This item can be found in the *Child's Academic Success* section, question 2 in *Appendix A*.

1. "Overall, how would you say your child is doing in school," responses included: Very well (1), Well (2), Average (3), Below average (4), Not well at all (5).

Data Analysis

Researcher Positionality

      As the co-developer of *YFYN* I had to be as objective as possible when conducting this research. To aid in this process, several measures were taken to promote the trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study's findings (Padgett, 2012). The first measure used to promote trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability involved weekly discussion and dialogue about the project with my co-principal investigator, Dr. Daniel Brisson. He helped with the development of the study's research questions provided feedback on the data analysis and provided critical feedback throughout the research project. For the qualitative component I sought the expertise of my advisor and dissertation committee member, Dr. Debora Ortega. She served as a de-briefer, consistently probing my findings for alternative explanations and themes. In sum, I believe that these measures represented a rigorous and pragmatic means of addressing my positionality and the trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study's findings.

Quantitative Analysis

To analyze the quantitative data, three of the dependent variables were first reverse coded. These included participation in their child's school activities, communication with school (teacher or staff) and parent report of child's progress in school. Next descriptive statistics were ran to examine pre-test and post-test data to differences and to detect outliers. Mean scores and standard deviations were then calculated to demonstrate that the non-equivalent groups, treatment and comparison, were similar based on demographic and baseline measures.

Change scores on the dependent variables from pre-test to post-test were then analyzed with independent samples t-tests. T-tests assessed differences in change scores between treatment and comparison groups.

Qualitative Analysis

To analyze the qualitative data, a phenomenological analysis approach was used to examine participant's experiences, context and setting and summary of the study's major themes (Padget, 2012). Both first and second cycle coding methods were employed using Atlas.ti software. First cycle coding methods occurred during the initial coding of the data and then second cycle coding methods were used to develop themes, and a conceptual organization from the first cycle codes (Saldaña, 2013). The In Vivo first cycle coding method included words and short phrases from the participant's responses in the transcript as codes to capture the participants' experiences in their own words. These codes were then generated from the language and terms provided in the interviews (Coffey, & Atkinson, 1996). This coding method provided more familiarization with the data and identified initial codes for the remaining transcripts.

The next method used was Initial Coding. This coding strategy broke down the data into small parts, and allowed a closer examination of similarities or differences in the data (Saldaña, 2013). This type of coding was helpful in identifying nuances of the data that occurred across transcripts. The In Vivo codes were then refined creating thematic codes of the transcripts. After all transcripts were coded using first cycle coding methods, In Vivo and Initial Coding, one second cycle coding method, Axial coding, was employed (Saldaña, 2013).

Axial coding "relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2006)." Axial coding helped determine the dominant codes and the less important codes. If codes were similar, they were merged into the dominant code to decrease the large amount of codes and to sort them into conceptual categories. After using second cycle coding the emerging themes of the data were concluded.

Chapter Summary

YFYN is an intervention for families in low-income and subsidized housing communities that address family, school and neighborhood barriers to health and academic success. This study utilized an embedded design, analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, to assess effects of the *YFYN* intervention on parent involvement and academic achievement of child participants. Three study sites located in two low-income neighborhoods in Denver were included in the study. Thirty families were recruited into the treatment (*n*=19) and comparison (*n*=11) groups. Quantitative analyses assessed parent involvement and academic achievement measures between treatment and

comparison groups. Qualitative analyses examined participant's experiences to provide a deeper understanding of participant's experience in *YFYN* and changes they've made to address their children's educational needs.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The first set of results in this chapter includes the quantitative data that answers
Research Question 1: Do parents who participate in *YFYN* report larger changes in parent
involvement in their children's education from pre-test to post-test compared to parents in
a no treatment condition? and *Research Question 2*: Do parents who participate in *YFYN*
report larger changes in their children's academic achievement from pre-test to post-test
compared to parents in a no treatment condition? The second set of results in this chapter
includes the qualitative data and answers *Research Question 3*: What aspects of the *YFYN*
intervention are most beneficial in helping parents address their children's educational
needs? What do parents report has changed that has led to educational improvements in
their child's life, as a result of participating in the *YFYN* intervention?

Comparison of Treatment and Comparison Group at Pre-Test

Pre-test and post-test scores were available for 19 participants in the treatment
group and 11 in the comparison group. Table 3 displays key outcome variables between
the treatment group and comparison group at pre-test. There were no differences
observed at pre-test for all outcome variables. This demonstrates general group
equivalency on outcomes measures at pre-tests. Regarding parent involvement at school,
parents in both treatment and comparison groups reported participating in activities and
communicating with their child's school about once or twice a month. In regards to

parent involvement at home, parents in both treatment and comparison groups reported talking to their child about four or five times a week. However, parents in the treatment group reported reading to their child a few times a month, while parents in the comparison group reported reading stories to their child a few times a week. Additionally, parents in both treatment and comparison groups reported they "usually" have an established homework routine when their child is in school. Finally in regards to child academic achievement, parents in both treatment and comparison groups reported their child was doing well in school.

Table 3

Differences on Outcome Measures between Treatment and Comparison Groups at Pre-test, t and p Values

Outcome	Mean Pre-test (*SD*)	*T*	*p*
Parent Involvement			
Participation in school activities			
Treatment(*n*=17)	2.6 (1.1)	.15	.88
Comparison (*n*=11)	2.6 (1.2)	.15	.89
Communication with school			
Treatment (*n*=18)	3.2 (1.0)	-1.1	.25
Comparison (*n*=10)	3.6 (.7)	-1.3	.20
Talk about school			
Treatment (*n*=18)	4.4 (1.1)	-.85	.40
Comparison (*n*=10)	4.7 (.48)	-1.0	.31
Read stories to child			
Treatment (*n*=15)	4.4 (2.2)	-1.5	.15
Comparison (*n*=10)	5.6 (1.5)	-1.6	.12
Homework routine			
Treatment (*n*=18)	3.0 (1.1)	-.80	.43
Comparison (*n*=10)	3.3 (.68)	-.90	.38
Academic Achievement			
Child progress in school			
Treatment (*n*=17)	4.0 (1.1)	.24	.81
Comparison (*n*=10)	3.9 (.88)	.26	.80

Research Question 1 stated: "Do parents who participate in *YFYN* report larger changes in parent involvement in their children's education from pre-test to post-test compared to parents in a no treatment condition?"

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the change scores of parent participation in their child's school activities, parent communication with teachers and staff at their child's school, frequency of parent and child conversations about school, frequency of parents reading to their child, and frequency of parent/child homework routine when their child is in school for treatment and comparison groups. Findings are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Change Scores of Outcome Measures from Pre-test to Post-test Treatment and Comparison Groups

Outcome	Group						Mean Difference	95% CI for Mean Difference		
	Treatment			**Comparison**						
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*			*t*	pη^2
Participate in school activities	.18	1.01	17	.55	1.5	11	-.37	-.61, 1.35	.78	.02
Communicate with schools	.22	1.1	18	-.50	1.1	10	.72	-1.59, .14	-1.7*	.10
Talk about school	-.11	1.6	18	-.40	.9	10	.29	-1.42, .84	-.53	.01
Read to child	.70	1.8	15	-.73	2.2	10	1.43	-3.15, .28	-1.7*	.12
Homework routine	.53	1.1	17	.10	.6	10	.43	-1.22, .36	-1.1	.05

Note: n = sample size; *M*=Means, *SD* = Standard Deviations; CI = 95% Confidence Interval
*p<.10 [1]

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[1] p values are reported at the .10 level to demonstrate approaching statistical significance due to the small sample size.

School-Based Parent Involvement

Participation in their child's school activities. There was no statistically significant difference between the intervention and comparison group on parents' reports of participation in their child's school activities. Both groups demonstrated increases in parent participation in activities at their child's school at post-test. Interestingly, parents in the treatment group demonstrated a smaller increase in parent participation in activities at their child's school from pre-test to post-test compared to the comparison group.

Communication with school (teacher or staff). Although there was no statistically significant difference between the intervention and comparison group with regard to communication with school staff, parents in the treatment group demonstrated an increase and parents in the comparison group demonstrated a *decrease* in communication with a teacher or principal at their child's school from pre-test to post-test.

Talk about school. There was also no statistically significant effect found between the intervention and comparison group on parents report of talking to their child about school and both the treatment and the comparison groups demonstrated a small decrease in talking about school from pre-test to post-test. However, parents in the comparison group reported a larger decrease than parents in the treatment group.

Home-Based Parent involvement

Read stories to child. There was no statistically significant difference between the intervention and comparison group on parents reading stories to their children. However, parents in the treatment group demonstrated increases in reading stories to their

child from pre-test to post-test and the comparison group experienced *decreases* in reading stories to their child.

Homework routine. Lastly, there was no statistically significant effect found between the intervention and comparison group with regard to having a homework routine. However, parents in the treatment group demonstrated larger increases in having a homework routine from pre-test to post-test, compared to the comparison group.

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Research Question 2

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Research Question 2 stated: " Do parents who participate in *YFYN* report larger changes in their children's academic achievement from pre-test to post-test compared to parents in a no treatment condition?"

An independent samples t-test was conducted on change scores to compare parent report of their child's progress in school for treatment and comparison groups. Complete results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of T-test and Descriptive Statistics of Parents Report of Child's Progress in School by Treatment and Comparison Groups

Outcome	Group						95% CI for Mean Difference		
	Treatment			Comparison					
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*		*t*	pη^2
Progress in school	.41	.80	17	.10	1.30	10	-1.10,.48	-.82	.03

Note: n = sample size; *M*=Means, *SD* = Standard Deviations; CI = 95% Confidence Interval
$p < .10^2$

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[2] *p* values are reported at the .10 level to demonstrate approaching statistical significance due to the small sample size.

Progress in school. There was no statistically significant difference between the intervention and comparison group on progress in school. Furthermore, both groups demonstrated increases in parent report of child's progress in school from pre-test to post-test. However, it is promising to note that parents in the treatment group demonstrated greater increases in their reports of child's progress in school from pre-test to post-test, when compared to parents in the comparison group.

Research Question 3: Guiding Qualitative Research Questions

The next section in this chapter provides the qualitative strand in the embedded research design in this study. A brief synopsis of each participant is provided to give a greater context for understanding the qualitative findings used to answer *Research Question 3*. All of the parents who participated in the qualitative interviews lived in the subsidized housing development in *Neighborhood 1* at the time of the interviews. Furthermore, several of the participants live in multi-generational households.

The following questions provide the guidance to understand the aspects of *YFYN* that helped parent participants support their child in their education. The first set of results answers *Qualitative Question A*: What aspects of the *YFYN* intervention are most beneficial in helping parents address their children's educational needs? The second set of results answer *Qualitative Question B*: What changes do parents report that has led to their child's educational improvements as a result of participating in the *YFYN*? Participant responses and common themes are discussed in each of the narratives provided.

Participant Synopses

      Tianna. Tianna is a 39-year-old Black female born in Denver, Colorado. She is a single parent and lives with her mother and five children. At the time of the study she lived in the housing development for four years. She graduated from high school and attended college but did not finish. She has five children and her two oldest children are twin boys who are 13-years-old, followed by her 8-year-old son (the focal child for this study), 5-year-old daughter and 11- month-old son. During her participation in *YFYN* she was pregnant with her fifth child and at the time of the interview had just given birth to her son.

      Maya. Maya is a 47-year-old Latina born and raised in Denver, Colorado. She grew up in one of the Latino enclaves in Denver and lived in the housing development for one-and-a half years at the time of the study. She is a single parent and raises her son alone. She graduated from high school and attended college for one year. Here son is 8-years-old (the focal child for this study) and does not attend the elementary school that is zoned to the housing development. She "choiced" her son into a higher performing school in a higher-income neighborhood in Denver. They travel 45 minutes each way by bus to get to and from school each day. She stated she wanted to provide him with the best educational opportunity and chose to make this sacrifice to ensure he attends a "good" school.

      Diana. Diana is a 49-year-old Latina born and raised in Denver. She lives with her husband, daughter, and grandchildren. Her oldest grand child is a 7-year-old girl (the focal child for this study), followed by her 5-year-old granddaughter and 22-month-old grandson. When they started participating in *YFYN* they recently moved into the housing

development from a transitional housing program. This program assisted families, at risk of becoming homeless, with finding permanent long-term housing. Diana attended high school in Denver and graduated, but did not continue on to postsecondary.

Carolina. Carolina is a 31-year-old Latina female born in Denver, Colorado. She lives with her mother and three children. Her oldest daughter is 7-years-old (the focal child for this study), followed by her 5-year-old daughter and youngest son who is 22-months-old. She attended high school but did not graduate. She recently moved into the housing development with her mother and children and was excited to find a "permanent home." She relied on support from her mother and they chose to raise her children together. They both participated in *YFYN* together.

Jessica. Jessica is a 49-year-old Latina female born and raised in Denver, Colorado. She is a single parent and takes pride in raising her 13-year-old daughter (the focal child for this study) alone. At the time of the study she had lived in housing for six years. She attended high school but did not graduate.

Aliyah. Aliyah is a 37-year-old Black female born and raised in Denver, Colorado. She is a single mother and has seven children. Her oldest child is her 16-year-old daughter, followed by her 12-year-old daughter, 9-year-old daughter, 8-year-old son (the focal child for this study) 6-year-old son, 2-year-old son and a youngest daughter who is 9- months-old. She graduated from high school and attended college for a brief amount of time. Aliyah had recently moved into the housing neighborhood and lived there for one month with her mother when she participated in *YFYN*. While she lived in the development and participated in *YFYN* she was selected to receive a housing choice voucher and moved out of the development at the end of the sessions. She was very

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excited to move to a new neighborhood but wanted to be interviewed to provide her feedback about her experience in *YFYN*. The interview was conducted at her new residence.

Reine. Reine is a single 45-year-old Black female born in Central Africa. Her family came to the United States as refugees and was provided housing in the development. She had lived there for six years when she began participating in *YFYN*. She attended high school but did not graduate. She has seven children, her oldest daughter is 18-years-old, followed by her 16-year-old daughter, 12-year-old daughter, 9-year-old son (the focal child for this study), 7-year-old daughter, 2-year-old daughter and youngest daughter who is 6-months-old. Her oldest daughter attends college at a local university and she often stated how "proud" she was of this major accomplishment. Although English was not her first language she participated in *YFYN* and could understand the language better than she could speak it. Her interview was conducted in French with a translator.

Rhianna. Rhianna is a single 30-year-old Black female born in the United States. When she began participating in *YFYN*, she had just moved to the neighborhood and had been living there for 3 months. She heard about *YFYN* from her daughter's school and wanted to participate to get to know other parents in the school and to spend more time with her daughters. She has two daughters; her oldest is 9-years-old (the focal child for this study) and her youngest is four years old.

Josiane. Josiane is a 32-year-old Black female born in Rwanda. She lives with her husband and four children. Her oldest daughter is 8-years-old (the focal child for this study), followed by her 5-year-old daughter, 3-year-old daughter and her youngest

daughter who is 1-years-old. During the study she had lived in the housing development for 2 ½ years. Although she attended high school, she did not graduate.

Qualitative Question A

Qualitative Question A asked, "What aspects of the *YFYN* intervention are most beneficial in helping parents address their children's educational needs?"

Parents were eager to share their experiences of the program and ways they benefited from participating in *YFYN*. There were three themes that emerged across all participants. *YFYN* helped participants: (a) build their confidence and find their voice; (b) increase their parent/child communication, and (d) find a new social support system.

Confidence and Finding Their Voice

Parents felt that by participating in *YFYN* their confidence grew and they found their voice to advocate for their child in their education. They learned new effective ways to talk to their children's teachers and felt more empowered to ask questions that clarified information about their child's school performance. Prior to *YFYN,* parents described their negative interaction with the school as fueled by their experiences with the educational system and feeling intimidated by the school professionals. Ultimately, they felt as if their knowledge about their own children held little value. After participating in *YFYN* parents reported gaining self-confidence and utilizing new skills to advocate for their child.

For instance, Maya described her own behavior change as a result of *YFYN*. Before participating in *YFYN* she would sit passively during the meetings about her son's Individual Education Plan (IEP) as the educational professionals reported on the

development of and changes to the IEP. After participating in *YFYN* she began to ask more questions of the educational professionals. She explained,

> It's kind of like a transition through it. I think I opened up and asked a few more questions. When we had his IEP meeting, you know, I asked a little bit more. I was a little more comfortable about asking them how it was going to go and what were the major changes to it. They just added twenty minutes on to one and then ten minutes onto the other. And I go, how's that going to happen? They go, well, it gives him more time with this, but his actual curriculum during that time is going to change, the way we're working with him. It's going to change. It will be more intense. It's going to be more one on one, than a group setting. Okay. You know? So I…I got more of the facts out of them than before, I would just listen, be, okay. You know, I was there. I've always been there, but I'm not always comfortable with asking questions, so I was a little bit more open to asking the questions and finding out what was happening.

Jessica also provided an example of how her interactions with her daughter's school changed after participating in *YFYN*. Jessica's new confidence was now centered on building trust with her child's teacher:

> So, now I am able to go into the school and knowing different things. I feel safe with the teacher and have that bond you can trust the person teaching your child and you could go in there with confidence and um have like no fear and just have a nice conversation to where if I leave I understand what's happening. So definitely my confidence.

The following exchange is another example of one parent's increased confidence in her English language skills after participating in the *YFYN* intervention. *YFYN* provided a space for her to practice writing and speaking in English in a non-threatening environment. This helped her build her confidence and she began to engage with her children's school more. Reine shared:

Interpeter: Mais pour le moment pour moi, quand je part la bas-la, j'apprendais a parler l'angalis aussi. *Translation: But for the moment, for me, when I go there, I also learned to speak English there also.*

Interpreter: Ok.

Reine: et comprendre… *Translation: And to understand.*

Interpreter: Ok. Ca vous aide. *Translation: Ok, that helps you.*

Reine*:* Ca m'aide a comprendre l'anglais et je, j'essaye d'ecrire aussi.

Translation: It helps me to understand English, and I try to write, also.

Lastly, one parent struggled to be heard in their child's school. Aliyah shared that *YFYN* helped her find her voice and after participating in *YFYN* felt more comfortable speaking her mind.

After participating in *YFYN* I just think, again, it just opened up more of a knowing that you have to communicate everything that you do. Not to say that I didn't know that before, but it just gives you even more of a yes, communicate. Talk to people. Speak on your problems. Speak on your injuries. Speak on your triumphs. You know, but communicate and let it out.

Improvements in Parent/Child Communication

YFYN provides structured time for the whole family during dinner and parent-child sharing activities at the close of each session to help families increase their parent-child communication. After participating in *YFYN* parents shared these structured activities contributed to their improved family communication. Parents reported they practiced this communication with their children during their participation in *YFYN*. Josiane shared,. "I think for four or five weeks, the things they learn there [at *YFYN*], when we came at home, she ask me, mom, can you tell me first what you learned, and then I'm going to tell you what I learned. (laughs)."

By increasing their communication during *YFYN* activities, their relationships with their children grew. Some parents indicated that they now practiced "just listening" to what their children had to say.

Maya shared how the lines of communication were opened with her son during this parent-child sharing time.

> I think the positive thing that I see [after participating in YFYN], I would say that he's open more. He talks more. It's easier to get information out of him. It's still kind of hard sometimes, but it's easier to get information out of him. He'll talk. He'll conversate, if I ask him a question about his day sometimes, he'll be like…but, you know, if he has issues, he's more open to tell me about them. He knows how to voice them. Yeah. He knows how to voice issues, voice things that are happening to him.

During one of these conversations Maya had with her son she learned he was being bullied.

I guess I would say that my eyes are opened a little bit more. I mean, I think in life you learn things. I mean, it's not so much…there's things that we went over that I knew about, but there were things that I opened up to. Actually [child's name]…the things he brought up at the playground, you know, the bullying, the pushing, and what not, that wasn't so apparent to me before the class [*YFYN*] as it is to me now.

Jessica, also found the designated time *YFYN* provided for parents to talk to their children during each session was something she looked forward to every week. She noted, "I liked knowing that we could have a clean and safe relationship type thing and I liked not only eating meals but like having conversations about you know what's happening in the day and any issues coming up."

Social Support

Interviews revealed parents felt support from their peers and staff as a result of participating in *YFYN*. As the curriculum sessions progressed participants became more open with one another and they became more willing to share their experiences. Sharing in the group is an integral part of the intervention as participants expressed that they often felt isolated in their neighborhood or school prior to participating in *YFYN*. Participants shared how *YFYN* facilitated connections to parents they had seen before but with whom they did not previously engage. This "social support" extended to the child group as parents noted their children also made new friends as a result of attending *YFYN*. Finally, parents expressed appreciation for the support they received from the *YFYN* staff. Parents shared the *YFYN* staff made them feel welcomed and cared for.

Reine felt nervous and overwhelmed when she moved to the United Stated from her country of origin. Initially she felt isolated with few connections to others in her neighborhood. However, over time she began to build connections with other parents in *YFYN* and began to see them as family:

What I like about the program is that, we are all, you know, we are all like a kind of, I don't know…family. We know each other here. Sometimes if we go somewhere, we see each other there and it's like my friends, it's like a family.

Another parent, Rihanna, also talked about how exhausting it was to spend all day with her younger children and no adults. Rhianna saw *YFYN* as an outlet and a place where she could talk to other adults about similar concerns and struggles. Although *YFYN* was only held once a week she was excited and looked forward to going to the sessions:

During *YFYN* the interactions with the other parents that were in the group was a lot for me because I don't have a lot of interactions with adults, it's just me and my kids… So being able to interact with other parents trying to think the same as me was a good thing. I liked that because it's like, I need people on the same level as me. So it was good to be able to talk to parents that also cared.

Jessica shared the same sentiment as Rhianna. She found support from the other parents in *YFYN* and realized she was not the only parent who experienced challenges as a parent. "Just telling like other parents that we're probably in the same situation gave me a boost, like they voiced their voice and I felt comfortable and confident that we could do that also."

The children made friends in YFYN. Rhianna shared how challenging it was for her and her children to live in the housing development as she felt neighborhood

conflict was always present. She shared her belief that residents did not respect each other which in turn made the children distrustful of each other. As a result, it was hard for her son to make friends with other children in the neighborhood. However, by participating in *YFYN* her son let his guard down when they attended the *YFYN* sessions:

> When we came to the program it's just like the positivity was flowing. It was positiveness, you know. I had noticed on the playground some of the kids saying cussing, hitting, smacking at them. But, you know, once they got to the meetings, it was positive, positive, positive, positive… I think I liked all the people coming together, you know, and speaking, and talking, and kids interacting with each other in a positive way.

Reine shared similar observations about her child making friends at *YFYN* meetings. As refugees and new comers to the United States, it took some time for her son to trust others and make friends. She shared that *YFYN* helped her son grow because of his newly formed friendships.

> **Interviewer**: C'est bien. Mais si c'est bien, c'est bien a cause de….? Comment est ce qu'on peut definir "bien, c'est bien?" *Translation:* [*YFYN*] *It's good. But if it's good, why is it good? What caused it? How can we define "good, it's good."*
>
> **Reine**: Ce qui est bien, parce que, si les enfants partent la-bas, il y a d'autres uns qui viennent, s'est fait connaissance et des, des, des amis. *Translation: it's good because, if the children go there, there are others who come, and that makes acquaintances and friends.*
>
> **Interviewer**: Ce sont les benefices sociales, quoi? *Translation: There are social benefits, in other words?*

Reine: Oui.

Interviewer: Il a des amis? *Translation: He has friends?*

Reine: On a des amis! *Translation: We have friends!*

YFYN staff as social support. The *YFYN* staff was integral to the intervention's success. Parents reported feeling welcomed and supported. Maya felt the staff made a difference for her and her son as they were invested in getting to know her family and the challenges they faced on a daily basis. *YFYN* staff took the time to build rapport with each family and made them feel important:

> You made us all feel welcome. There were issues that came up, and you were really supported with that. You understood. You know what everybody's going through and what not. I loved the fact that all the staff got to know each of the parents. We were all treated equally. You made us all feel welcome. I think that for myself, for sure." You know, but I…just interacting with the staff, and everybody who's there. And being known, and being recognized. You know? Even Daniel would see me walking down the street. He'd be like, hey! …One day he was like, hey! And I was like, who are you? And he's like, oh, okay (laughs).

Jessica also shared the same feelings as Maya. She felt the *YFYN* staff made a difference for her and committed to attending each session because of the relationships she developed with the staff:

> I'm just grateful you guys came to this community where I live at, knowing that I feel safe in your program. But like my daughter really liked your program and we got to know other families that live around us.

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Rhianna also felt the staff was an important part of her experience and helped her feel comfortable:

I definitely loved that Thursdays I can count on dinner. (laughter) That was always a wonderful thing for me when I went to the grocery store, oh, I don't have to worry about Thursday, definitely..and just the interaction with the volunteers and everybody that worked there was great. Everyone is just so warm and loving and fun and it's like you feel really comfortable in the program, in the group. I looked forward to the group.

Qualitative Question B:

Qualitive Question B asked, "What changes do parents report that has led to their child's educational improvements as a result of participating in the *YFYN* intervention?"

Another aim of this study is to determine which aspects of the *YFYN* intervention helped parents make changes to help improve their child's education. There were three themes that emerged across all participants. After participating in *YFYN* parents: (1) established homework routines for their children; (2) volunteered at their child's school; and (3) believed they played an important role in their child's education.

Established Homework Routines

Diana shared she learned the importance of homework routines while participating in *YFYN*. During each weekly session, time was provided for the children to work on their homework and receive help from the *YFYN* staff. Diana noted that *YFYN* helped her establish regular homework routines for her grandchildren and this contributed to the increase in their reading levels. When asked what educational changes she made for her grandchildren after participating in *YFYN*, she noted:

Just being more consistent with their homework, um, making sure it gets done, making sure they get to it right after school rather than waiting, you know being on top of it, making sure they stay at that level or higher in their studies…their reading levels, I mean it's all about their reading levels because every time [their mom] talks to their teachers, they always talk about how they've grown in their reading levels and they've gotten to a higher level and they've gotten really good.

Carolina, who is Diana's daughter, confirmed what her mother said regarding her children's homework routine:

Well afterschool they have to do their homework right away and then they can go out and play and then with [daughter's name] she's got soccer practice three days out of the week so she has to do her homework right after school because of that.

Volunteered at Their Child's School

Several of the parents noted that by participating in *YFYN* they learned the importance of being involved in their child's school and the impact it makes on their education. By participating in *YFYN* they changed their perspective on volunteering and made it a priority to get involved in the school. Two of the parents shared their stories of ways they approached the school to start this process. Tiana explained how she chose to volunteer after participating in *YFYN*:

My plan was to do the PTSA…Just as far as reaching out…I was able to reach out to them and to tell them that I wanted to volunteer, so I was able to volunteer. So I reached out to them... And there's a paper…volunteer paperwork that you fill out. So….I didn't used to really fill that out. So I fill those out now.

Rhianna also shared that after participating in *YFYN* she began to volunteer at her daughter's school. By volunteering it not only had an impact on her child and the other children at the school, but she learned from this experience and benefited from it as well:

It made me want to be more into the school. Like volunteer, you know. I just wanted to be part of the school, cause you see, you know, some kids don't have that support. Even to this day I see kids from the school say Hi Ms. Rhianna now. (laughs). That's so wonderful! So it…I took from it the more they see, the more they, you know, they accept you and they learn from you. You know, me being there to volunteer at the school was a learning experience for me too.

The Important Role Parents Play in Their Child's Education

Parents shared how they began to understand the important role they play in their child's education and began to value their own contributions. They noted before participating in *YFYN* they were not very involved with their child's school because of barriers they experienced (which are discussed in the next section), they didn't know the various ways they could be involved or they believed the ways they were currently involved were not valued. After participating in *YFYN* they realized the impact they had on their children and their educational success. Carolina shared *YFYN* helped her understand the value in the support she offered to her child's education. Furthermore, by participating in *YFYN* she began to value her own expertise of her children and felt she could influence their educational trajectory:

I now talk to their teachers on a daily basis and if for some reason I can't go my dad will go. It's really pushing me more to be the way they want to be, not the way I want them to be. But I want them to succeed. Because they're bright girls,

they're really, really intelligent and I don't want them to have to struggle the way I did and I want them to be able to further their education and not to live in housing but to own their own house.

Rhianna also shared how *YFYN* helped her change her perspective on her role in her child's education. Additionally, she was not only concerned about her own children but she wanted to support the other children at the school:

It kind of just made me want to be more, you know, into it. It made me want to…*YFYN* made me want to try to interact more with other parents and help them, you know, interact with their children better and it just helped me to understand that my kid's education is important, very important, and if I don't help them with their education, what are they going to do?

Jessica talked about how *YFYN* helped her change the way she thought about parent involvement. Before *YFYN* she rarely interacted with the school and felt the school held the sole responsibility for educating her child. After *YFYN* she began to believe she played an important role in her daughter's school success:

Before I was always the type of person who was shy or wasn't as involved as I should have been as a parent and um, I just looked at it as sending my child to school until, I don't know like, until I got introduced to your program it made me introduce myself as a parent and say hey I am very interested in my child's school and is there any alternatives for us and I would like to get to know the school more better and like the students and staff better and have that bonding.

Additional Findings: Barriers to Parent Involvement in School

The themes highlighted thus far address *Research Question 3*.However, an additional and critical theme emerged; parents experienced and continue to experience significant barriers that impact their involvement in their child's education regardless of participating in*YFYN*. There were four barriers participants experienced: (a) caring for multiple children alone or being the primary caregiver, which limited the time they had for their other children; (b) undertones of racism from their child's school, (c) language and communication, and (d) cultural misinterpretations.

These qualitative interviews revealed barriers that low-income parents living in subsidized housing face and demonstrate how these barriers impact school involvement and their children's educational success. Although all parents experience challenges to parent involvement, these parents face additional factors that prevent them from participating in their child's education. This lack of school involvement due to barriers they experience is sometimes perceived as a lack of interest in their child's education.

Multiple Children and Primary Caregiver

The parents noted how challenging it is to be as single parent or the primary caregiver for their children. They also shared how much they "love all of their children," but could not provide adequate attention to all of them at the same time. The following exchange with Josiana demonstrates how challenging it is for her to be responsive to her older children when her time is occupied by her younger children:

> **Josiana:** Actual [child's name], when I know for [child's name], when she ask
> me something to do for her, I say, no, I don't understand. I don't know this. She's
> sad. Why mom, every time I ask you to do this, you don't help me? I tell her, go

ask your dad. Yeah? So many things from school, [child's name] has had dad to help her. But for me, I think busy with other little children…

Interviewer: Yeah, you've got the little ones.

Josiana: Yeah. So time to…actual here, okay, but outside…she ask me to go to play with other kids, I say no, you going to stay here. So, she don't feel good. She say, why all the time when I ask you to take us to the park you say no, you don't have time. So when you going to have time to take us to the park? So, actual, for me, I don't know. Maybe…yeah. I don't help her too much. Yeah, but, at home, okay. Because I'm like, I don't have time all the time, I don't know.

Tianna struggled to provide the same attention to each of her children. In this example she shared how she wanted to participate in both of her children's field trips but could not because she was at the "end of her pregnancy." She was conflicted about the choice she made to go with her daughter and not with her son. She felt guilty because her son was upset by her choice:

Tianna: I think they kind of feel bad when they see the other parents attend things, and then their parents don't.

Interviewer: Have they ever shared that with you? That they feel bad?

Tianna: Yes..[son's name].

Interviewer: Were you able to talk with him about that and how you wanted to be more involved now?

Tianna: Yeah. I got to…I got to go on…I went on [daughter's name], like, the camping trip, I was pregnant. And I was…I couldn't do….like, I couldn't do [son's name] camping trip, but I did [daughter's name] camping trip because his

was outside…hers was in a cabin, his was outdoors. So I couldn't do his, so he felt bad about that, but I think he still had fun.

Interviewer: But you were able to do [daughter's name]?

Tianna: Yeah. And then I felt bad because I told him I would, you know, go up there, and I couldn't make it up there. To, you know, go at least eat with him.

Interviewer: That's probably hard, because you were pregnant.

Tianna: Yeah. and it was, you know, the end. I mean, if it was earlier, of course I would have did it. But I was at the end of it, so I was like, I can't do it. But I got to do her hike, which is hard, but I made it.

Undertones of Racism

Parents spoke about the undertones of racism they experienced and how these undertones impacted their children. Maya shared her story of the treatment she received from her son's school. In the first part of the exchange Maya observed parents of color being treated differently. It wasn't apparent to her until she began to be treated a similar way. She noticed she was treated different after she legally changed her married name back to her maiden name. Her maiden name was a common Latino/a last name. The second part of the exchange is an example of how she believes students are treated at her son's school based on the color of their skin:

Interviewer: You said you noticed how some of the staff, or the teachers were treating parents, mostly…not the white parents, but the parents of color, what did they do? What were they doing?

Maya: Being sharp with them. Not as friendly. I mean, it's like, it's like everybody's labeled in a certain status.

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Interviewer: At the school?

Maya: Yeah, and if you're not up here, and you're down here, it's not so much attention and it's really quick, really brief. Not so friendly sometimes.

Interviewer: What do you think is different about the way they treat you?

Maya: Cause I acted white! Well, in the beginning, I was Ryan.

Interviewer: That's right. Your last name was Ryan.

Maya: I wasn't Romero. So they knew me as Ryan. I don't know if they saw me as a white broad, or what, but I was Ryan. I wasn't…I wasn't Romero. And I changed my name back to Romero and I'm all proud of it, I can kind of see the difference in the way they talk to me.

Interviewer: Really? Oh, that's interesting.

Maya: It shouldn't be like that.

Interviewer: No, it shouldn't. Do you think the kids are treated differently because of what they look like, what their last names are?

Maya: I hope not. I don't think so. I see them very friendly. However, my son has told me that the, I don't know what it was…I can't say, because I wasn't in the office when such and such is happening. But he's told me that he's gotten snapped at by the lady in the office. So and so was mean to him or what not, but I can't really. You can't say nothing because you don't know. You weren't in the office.

Aliyah shared the following story about her daughter's experience of undertones of racism from her teacher. In this example, she believed her daughter received unfair treatment because her daughter is African American.

Aliyah: Like with my oldest daughter…she was one of the hardest working students in the class and he tried to give her an F. And she turned in everything, but this teacher wanted this one final thing. And because her sister had gotten into an argument with another student and they had called her down to talk to her, and talk to her sister. You know? Cause I told every class, every school that my children have attended, they're brothers and sisters, and if they need each other, then you'll allow them to speak to each other. Don't keep my kids on check. You know? Because they do the same thing at home. So don't treat them different here. So just cause she went to talk to her sister, to calm her sister down with this incident, he walked out the school and like, oh, I'm not letting you.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Aliyah: I came right up to that school. Oh, you're going to let her and you're not going to fail my baby on one incident.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Aliyah: Everybody in this class, including her principal and everyone else knows me. So either you fix it or I'm not leaving the school until you fix it.

Interviewer: How did he respond?

Aliyah: Oh, he didn't want to do it. But he fixed it, that next day, he fixed it. He allowed my baby to come in there and do her final. And she passed that class with a perfect A, that she would have had from the gates. You know? So that's why I stay involved. Because human beings are human beings.

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Language and Communication

Parents also experienced barriers with language and communication with the school. For some *YFYN* participants English is not their first language. This made it particularly difficult to communicate with the school and help their children with homework.

In this exchange Josiana experienced a language barrier when trying to communicate with her daughter's school. She believed she didn't speak English well and was nervous to engage with the school:

Interviewer: With [School Name] what has been has been hard, or difficult, before you participated in our group?

Josiane: Actual, you know, if you…you don't speak really English, you're scared. You say, maybe when I speak this they're going to say, eee, what is that kind of English? So, like, I'm scared to talk with people or teacher. Yeah. I'm scared. Yeah. So when I go to [school name]. Maybe when I go to school to learn English, okay. But for that, I'm going home.

Cultural Misinterpretations

Reine shared the cultural differences she encountered around school expectations. It is evident from her example that she was not aware of school expectations in the United States. A cultural misinterpretation occurred when her son's teacher made an assumption about his work ethic. In this exchange, she described the interaction between her son and his teacher when he first started school. At the beginning of the school year her son was very quiet in class and scared to participate. The teacher assumed her son was being "lazy" and failed to recognize the possibility that her son had not yet learned

the cultural norms of schools in the United States. Additionally, the teacher failed to recognize the experiences he may have had as a refugee that impacted the way he responds to others. As a result he may have had trust issues and did not feel safe participating. This exchange provides a good example of cultural differences and distrust that occur between students and teachers, who are not from the United States. These factors can have a on a student:

> **Interpreter:** Vous voulez que je traduise? Elle a dit, elle a demande un petit plus de detaille, uh, parce que vous avez dit, vous avez note, uh, quelques resultats positifs du programme. On veut savoir un peu avant le programme, uh, comment avez vous reussit dans le soutien de votre enfant dans l'ecole. Ca peut etre avec les devoirs ou avec d'autres choses associees avec l'education. *Translation: She said, she asked for a little more detail, uh, because you said, you had noted some positive results from the program. We would like to know a little-before the program, uh, how did you succeed in supporting your child in school? That could be with homework or other things associated with his education.)*
>
> **Reine**: Bon, a l'ecole, eh, moi je sais que mon enfant, c'est un enfant qui a beaucoup peur. Quand il part a l'ecole, il ne dit rien, meme si les autres lui tousent, il a peur toujours, il reste tranquille. *Translation: Ok, at school, I know that my child, he's a fearful child. When he goes to school, he didn't say anything, even if the other children engaged him, he always is fearful and shy.*
>
> **Interpreter:** Toujours le maître m'appelle et dit que 'ton enfant-la, il vient ici, il ne parle pas, seulement comme c a il doit etre fainéant…ils parlaient comme ca. Mais apres les, les, la reunion-la, il commence a jouer avec les enfants ici-la, il

commence a parler, peu a peu a l'ecole. *Translation: The school teacher always called me to say your child comes here, he doesn't talk, just like that, he must be lazy…the teacher talked like that. But after the meetings, he started to play with children here and there, he started to talk, little by little, at school.*

Interpreter: Ok, ca c'est utile. Merci pour avoir partage ca. Et pour vous meme, avant le programme, votre enfant, il avait peur, il etait un peu timide, et il avait aussi tous ces defis de travaille a l'ecole, comment vous, comme mere, comment vous etiez engage avec lui? Est ce que vous avez eu des success, des reussits, en lui aidant de, de s'etablir dans l'ecole? *Translation: Ok, that is useful. Thank you for sharing that. And for yourself, before the program, your child, he was fearful, he was a bit shy, he also had a few challenges in school…how did you, as a mother, engage with him? Did you have successes in helping him to establish himself in school?*

Reine: Yah, je lui dit toujours que si tu part a l'ecole-mais je ne veux pas que tu joues avec les …dans l'ecole, mais tu doit regarder ce que le maître te dit, tu repondes, meme si tu ne connais pas soulever ta main, et tu, le maître va te demander, tu tu, tu donnes les reponses. Si ce n'est pas bien il va te corriger. C'est la ou tu vas commencer a ouvrir ta bouche a parler. Mais si tu restes seulement comme ca sans parler, tu vas toujours rester comme ca. tu ne peux pas evoluer. *Translation: Yes, I always said to him, " if you go to school, don't play around in school, but you must do what the teacher says, you respond, even if you are scared to raise your hand and if the teacher asks you questions you give the response. If it's not right, the teacher will correct you. It's there where you must*

start to open your mouth and talk, but if you stay like this without talking you are

always going to be like this and you will never evolve.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides results of the *YFYN* intervention on parent involvement and

academic achievement. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the

change scores on parent involvement and academic outcomes. Although no statistically

significant differences at the p<.05 level were found between the treatment and

comparison groups, results showed parents participating in *YFYN* experienced greater

increases in parent participation in their child's school activities, communication with

their child's school, reading stories to their child, and homework routines, compared to a

group of parents that did not participate in *YFYN*. Increases were also found in parent's

report of their child's progress in school for parents in the treatment group.

Qualitative interviews revealed four themes that helped *YFYN* participants

respond to and support their children in their education. *YFYN* helped parents; (a) build

their confidence and find their voice; (b) increase their parent/child communication, and

(d) find a new social support system. Participants also shared the aspects of *YFYN* that

helped support their child's improvement in their education. These included: (a) creating

an established homework routines; (b) volunteering at school, and (c) understanding their

role as an important aspect of their child's of education. Although *YFYN* aided parents in

supporting their children's education, qualitative interviews revealed they continue to

experience multiple barriers to parent involvement and school engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative results of the *YFYN* intervention on parent involvement and academic achievement. Contributions from this study and the benefits children receive from parent involvement are noted. Next, barriers parents experience preventing them from being involved in their child's education are discussed. Then, lessons learned from the test of *YFYN* and implications for practice, policy, research and theory are provided. The chapter concludes with the study limitations and suggestions for future research.

Parent Involvement

Results from this study are mixed with a trend that suggests *YFYN* may have some impact on parent involvement and academic achievement. Findings indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in levels of parent involvement between treatment and comparison group participants at the end of the study. However, for parents in the treatment group positive trends were seen in several of the parent involvement measures and the academic achievement measure.

Prior to participating in *YFYN* parents were involved in their child's activities at school only a few times a year, and after participating in *YFYN* parents were involved almost once or twice a month. Also, before participating in *YFYN* parents communicated with their child's teacher or principal only once or twice a month and after *YFYN* they

communicated with them almost once a week or more. Moreover, participants in the comparison group *decreased* their communication with their child's school.

Parents in the treatment group also reported being more involved in educational home-based activities. Prior to participating in *YFYN* parents in the treatment group read to their children a few times a month, however following participation in *YFYN* they read to their children about once a week. Interestingly, participants in the comparison group *decreased* the amount of time they read to their child from about once a week to a few times a month. Parents in the treatment group also established a more frequent parent/child homework routine, prior to participating in *YFYN* parents "usually" had an established parent/child homework routine and after participating in *YFYN* they "always" had an established routine.

YFYN and Parent Involvement

One goal of *YFYN* is to improve parent involvement in their child's education for families living in low-income and subsidized housing communities. Results from this study indicate that *YFYN* parents are indeed involved in their child's education but it appears to be in more subtle ways, such as helping their children with their homework and establishing a homework routine when their child is in school. Much of the support parents provide occurs at home due to the barriers they experience from the school and the lack of confidence they have in their abilities to make an impact on their children's education. Often schools and teachers do not recognize the efforts parents make to support their children and it creates a tension between parents and the school. Therefore, this tension sets a negative tone for the relationship between parents and the school.

As a result of this relationship with the school, *YFYN* parents sought ways outside of their child's school to support their children in their education by participating in *YFYN*. Furthermore, parents felt less anxious about being involved with their child's education away from the school and were more open to participating in a community-based program. The goal of *YFYN* is to provide a space for families to spend time with each other, grow parent-child bonds and strengthen family communication. *YFYN* provided a place where parents could discuss different issues with their child's school and their neighborhood. Moreover, *YFYN* offered the opportunity for parents to share similar experiences around school challenges and gave them the opportunity to find their own solutions together.

Academic Achievement

Results are also mixed on the impact of *YFYN* on academic achievement with parents in the treatment group showing higher scores on their child's progress in school. Although, the scores did not reach a level of statistical significance for *YFYN* participants, parents in the treatment group reported their children were doing "well" in school and at the conclusion of *YFYN* parents reported their children were doing "very well."

YFYN and Academic Achievement

Another goal of *YFYN* is to improve child academic outcomes. Although parents reported their children were doing better in school it is challenging to measure the immediate impact *YFYN* has on academic achievement as it is only a 10-week intervention. Thus, a 10-week program may not be enough time to see changes in academic achievement, such as grades and attendance. However, *YFYN* does contribute

to academic achievement by supporting parents while they support their children in their education. It provides information and resources for parents to use when advocating for their child in school. Additionally, *YFYN* supports children with, homework help, skill-building and leadership training.

These findings suggest parent involvement interventions should work with parents from a community-based approach, with a focus on engaging the whole family. Furthermore, parents may feel more comfortable participating in interventions that are offered outside of the school and in their neighborhood because of the distrust and disconnection they feel from the school. *YFYN*'s focus on parents and valuing their experience and expertise is important. Therefore, it is critical for interventions to use these strategies to support parents in their efforts be more involved in their child's education and to support academic achievement.

YFYN and the Qualitative Themes

The qualitative results provide a glimpse into the intervention components that help parents support their children in their education and indicate changes parents made to help their children improve in school. These changes included parents increased confidence and finding their voice, increased communication and social support from their *YFYN* peers and the intervention staff. Despite the gains attributed to participation in *YFYN*, parents still experience significant barriers to parent involvement. In fact it is unrealistic to think that the relatively brief 10-week intervention will address all of the parent involvement and educational barriers faced by low-income families living in low-income and subsidized housing developments. Furthermore, although many of these

barriers are similar to those that many middle-class and white parents experience, parents living in these communities have fewer resources to overcome these barriers.

Parent Assessment of Barriers to their Children's Educational Needs

Parents are often caring for younger children alone limiting the time they have for their older children and for school involvement. The time they do spend with their children is at home and is limited as many of them have multiple children and cannot provide their full attention to them all at once. This leads to their feelings of guilt which come from their children and sometimes from their school. Furthermore, these parents experience undertones of racism from teachers and other school staff. These experiences are common in their lives and it is often difficult for parents and children to decipher if the treatment they are receiving is based on their race or if the person is just "having a bad day." The parents never used the word "racism" but felt they were being treated different because of the color of their skin. The parents were able to recognize this treatment but the children had a harder time. However, the children did recognize that something was off based on how they and other students were treated.

Because English is not the first language of some of the parents, they struggled to connect with their child's school. The often felt embarrassed and did not approach the school when they had questions or concerns about their children. They also faced challenges with helping their children with homework because they could not read and understand the directions. Finally, parents experienced cross-cultural misinterpretations when they moved to the United States. The cultural norms in the classroom were not understood by their children and the parents. In their country of origin, students attend class, and listen to the teacher. When they arrived in the United States, this was a major

cultural difference. This cross-cultural misinterpretation provided the perfect opportunity for the teacher to make negative assumptions about their child's work ethic, which led to their school disengagement.

These insights into parents' perspectives on the barriers they experience are important for a number of reasons. First, families in low-income communities face multiple barriers to parent involvement, as is evident from the findings of this study, and the barriers they face are not fully understood. Second, when these barriers are understood schools can be more responsive and work towards ways to better engage them. Finally, when these barriers are decreased and ultimately removed parents can begin to be more engaged and support their children in their education.

Lessons Learned

Several lessons were learned during the development and testing of the *YFYN* intervention. First, community partners are key to the success of the program. These community partners encouraged families to participate in *YFYN* and provided the space for program sessions. Therefore, it is important to take the time to build relationships with staff and nurture them throughout the partnership. This can be done by providing program updates, small tokens of appreciation such as thank you cards and acknowledgement in public platforms.

Second, it is critical to spend time in the communities to build rapport with participants and be clear about the purpose of your program. Residents were very skeptical and distrustful of outsiders as programs that are offered in these communities are usually short-term and participants are left disappointed when they end. Furthermore, they are often asked to participate in studies and rarely see the benefits from their input.

Related to the importance of building rapport, although significant effort was made to recruit participants at community events and through agency and school contacts, word of mouth and participant referrals provided the best means for participation. Furthermore, it is essential to find the gatekeepers in the community to help with recruitment.

Next, staff that reflects characteristics of the population served is critical as the most effective programs address cultural considerations (Jenson & Bender, 2014). The *YFYN* staff was not only ethnically diverse but many were parents themselves. Having shared identities and experiences may help participants let their guard down and be open to the process. Also, dinner and incentives were an integral component of the program. Providing small incentives to participants demonstrates their time and input is appreciated and valued. Next, providing childcare is essential to a family-based intervention. It is important to reduce barriers like childcare to succeed with family-based interventions. Also, despite all the effort made by *YFYN* staff and community partners recruitment is challenging as families have other commitments that require their time. Starting recruitment early and often is essential.

Finally, *YFYN* focuses solely on parents and children and not the school system, although the literature suggests the school should be held accountable and should hold the same responsibility as parents, if not more responsibility for the success of students.

Implications for Practice, Policy, Theory and Research

Practice

The Grand Challenges for Social Work is a recent initiative *launched by the* American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2016). Several of the Grand Challenges initiatives are applicable

to this study. The initiative, "advancing long and productive lives," includes fuller engagement in education and paid and unpaid productive activities that can increase health and well-being, greater financial security, and a more vital society. This study supports this initiative and demonstrates educational interventions like *YFYN* are needed to promote parent involvement to increase academic achievement.

The initiative, "eradicating social isolation," refers to creating social connections and social networks to prevent feelings of isolation. Many of the participants felt isolated in their communities and disconnected from their children's schools. Furthermore, before participating in *YFYN* participants were distrustful of their neighbors, other parents in the school, teachers and staff. Social workers can help connect parents in these isolated communities and break down barriers to school involvement. Building rapport is a foundational practice in social work and as practitioners we can draw on the lessons learned in this study to eradicate isolation for families living in low-income and subsidized housing neighborhoods. In this study relationships were crucial to parent participation. At the conclusion of the *YFYN* intervention many participants expressed a desire to continue the intervention. The *YFYN* staff encouraged participants to continue meeting on their own, and that the end of the ten week curriculum did not mean that the relationships they built during the intervention needed to end. Social workers can support clients by helping them recognize their own value and contribution.

The initiative, "create social responses to a changing environment," refers to the ways in which we inadequately respond to the resources needed for communities where poor and marginalized groups often live. The participants often felt they were overlooked and forgotten because they live in subsidized housing communities. Social workers can

work with individuals who live in communities like these by creating a platform for their voices to be heard and concerns addressed.

The initiative, "reduce extreme economic inequality," may be the most important challenge for *YFYN*. Most of the parents participating in *YFYN* were unemployed, could not afford childcare and relied on their housing subsidy, food and healthcare assistance. For many of these parents these were the same struggles their parents faced. Social workers and community providers should work together to offer support to families to access resources such as childcare food, housing and healthcare assistance for families living in subsidized housing.

Finally, the initiative "achieve equal opportunity and justice," refers to members of societally marginalized and disenfranchised groups who experience several social disadvantages and a loss of opportunities throughout life (Goldbach, Amaro, Vega, & Walter, 2016). Young (2000) defines marginalization as being shut out of opportunities to participate in social capacities (employment, education, etc.) because of lack of skills, access, experiences, or abilities. All of the participants experience this on a daily basis because of their low education levels, the neighborhoods they live in, and health barriers. Social workers should work with communities to continue to fight for equality at the individual and systemic level.

Education Policy

Findings from this study indicate parents experience numerous and significant barriers when trying to help their children succeed in school. Although the primary focus of this study relied on perspectives from and experiences of parents, schools play a key role in parent engagement. Schools sometimes make assumptions that parents don't care

or are not willing to put in the time when they do not see their student's parents involved at the school. However many low- income parents experience numerous barriers that prevent them from being as involved as other parents. Schools may blame parents for their child's academic failure and other consequences that occur because of school failure. Findings from this study suggest low-income parents are involved with their child's education and want to support them. However, they experience barriers that prevent them from being involved and the type of involvement they do have looks different then what schools may expect. Furthermore, their involvement tends to happen at home or in programs outside of the school, such as *YFYN*. Social workers can help facilitate the dialogue between parents, teachers, and students in order to break down the misperceptions around parent involvement. Additionally schools should be held more accountable for their role in the lack of parent engagement and poor student performance. Schools should work with community-based programs, such as *YFYN* to support parents and their students.

Housing Policy

Housing policy plays a critical role in academic achievement among children living in subsidized housing and further supports the concentration of families living in poverty. Children living in housing often attend underperforming and under-resourced schools which contribute to their low achievement and failure in school. Because property taxes fund schools and schools in these neighborhoods do not receive adequate funding from these taxes, schools do not have the resources needed to support their students effectively. Suggestions for policy reform include providing additional services and resources beyond housing to families, such as programs like *YFYN* that support

parent and school engagement. Furthermore, children in subsidized housing need academic support during out of school time, both after-school and during the summer.

Implications for Theory: Social Ecological, CRT and Parent Involvement Social Ecological Theory

Social ecological theory proposes that parent involvement in any of these key social contexts--home, neighborhood, or school--could be shaped by factors at various ecological levels (e.g., child, family, and center/school) (Hindman, Miller, Froyen, & Skibbe, 2012). Ecological approaches can help researchers and practitioners examine both individual and community factors to inform interventions (Stokols, 1996). Having a better understanding of ways in which family, schools, peers and neighborhoods impact a child's academic achievement can help inform how we intervene and support students.

CRT

Three of CRT's main tenets can be applied to this study. First, the widely held belief that race is a social construct and an individual's race is given assigned meanings is evident for these parents and children. For example, schools assign meaning to parental school involvement based on their perceptions of what parent involvement should entail. Because these parents were not as involved as other parents at the school or in the ways that the schools defined parent involvement, assumptions were made about the parents of color in this study. This included, they were uninterested and uninvolved in their children's education further marginalizing parents and allowing schools to place the burden on the parents for their children's school failure.

Furthermore, when the parents were interviewed and asked about their parent involvement, they did not identify it as "parent involvement," because what they were

doing was not what the dominant consensus defines as involvement. However, this study demonstrated that they are indeed involved but it tends to occur at home or in their community, in this case a parent involvement intervention, where schools do not see it. This involvement included talking to their children about school, providing homework support, reading to their children and attending *YFYN*. Unfortunately, it was not recognized by the school and many of these parents began to believe the dominant negative school narrative that they are not involved, because they are not spending their time at the school, volunteering or serving on parent school committees.

Second, this study illustrates racism is a normal and ordinary experience in the lives of parents and students of color. In this study, both the parents and children experienced racism and negative consequences of racism in the school office and in the classroom. In the classroom a teacher made assumptions about one of the participant's sons and his work ethic. For another participant's daughter, she was treated unfairly by her teacher and given a low grade. Both of these examples demonstrate the meanings that the teachers assigned to these students based on their behaviors. Both of the children experienced detrimental consequences from these assigned meanings, the son was labeled a "lazy" student and the daughter was given a low grade in the class. Another example includes the way a participant, who racializes as white, was treated when she changed her last name. The school staff assigned a negative meaning to what parents with similar last names represent and therefore was treated "differently."

These are only a few examples of what parents and students of color experience on a daily basis and as the parents shared their experiences it was clear that this treatment happens so frequently and is so common they have a hard time recognizing it as racism.

Finally, this study demonstrates how story-telling and counter-narratives allow for better insight into the experiences of school involvement for parents who live in low-income and subsidized housing developments. These new insights illustrate the challenges these parents face while trying to support their children in their educational pursuits. This study provides an example of counter-storytelling (from parent interviews) and the ways we can use their stories to recreate the negative master narrative of low parent involvement for low-income parents of color. Furthermore, the language we use to describe the problem of lack of parent involvement and their children's low school achievement should be changed and a new narrative should be written which states low-income parents of color and parents who live in subsidized housing are involved with their children's education, despite what the literature indicates. Furthermore, we need to recognize that involvement looks different than the dominant definitions as it occurs with their children at home or away from the school in community-based parent involvement interventions. Thus, their narratives may better inform educational research to offer support for new research paradigms on parent involvement.

Given that CRT provides an analytical framework that addresses epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical approaches to the study of everyday inequalities for people of color, this framework can be applied to demonstrate race as a social construct with meaning constantly being assigned, race is central to an individual's lived experience, racism is ordinary and common and counter-narratives are essential to better understand the challenges of parent involvement and academic achievement. Furthermore, it is critical to help low-income parents of color understand the value in

their role on their child's education and help parents understand the contributions they make, as these contributions may have the most impact on their children.

Parent Involvement Models

The Epstein Model continues to be one of the most widely used frameworks to address parent involvement in schools (Epstein, 1987). The six elements identified by Epstein (1987) were found to be integral to the increases in parent involvement and child academic outcomes in this study. The six critical elements are: positive home conditions; communication; involvement at school; home learning activities; shared decision making within the school; and community partnerships. Although these six components increase parent involvement and improve student success, some limitations do exist. First, parental involvement and the definition of what parent involvement should look like is often defined by the school and not the parents. Second, although parent engagement in schools is one effective strategy for improving the academic outcomes for children, this model takes a general approach and does not consider race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Parent involvement strategies are taken from and developed from middle-class European American cultural norms (Bower, & Griffin, 2011, & Freeman, 2010). Therefore, parent involvement strategies should consider racial and ethnic difference since research has shown differences in parent involvement among African American, Latino and White families (Hill et al., 2004).

Socioeconomic status also presents unique barriers to traditional forms of parental involvement. Parents living in poverty may lack childcare, preventing them from attending school events or volunteering in the school. Parents living in poverty also do not have disposable income to donate to schools in the form fundraisers and other

financial support, which are traditional indicators of school involvement. These factors should be considered when trying to engage parents from low-income and subsidized housing neighborhoods as these parents do the best they can to provide for their children and to be as involved as they can be in their education.

Limitations

This study provides an assessment of the effects of the *YFYN* intervention on the academic success of low-income families. However, the study has a number of limitations that are important to consider. Although modest increases were revealed in parent involvement and child academic achievement the small sample size may have contributed to the lack of statistically significant differences between groups. One goal for the *YFYN* intervention is to acquire a larger sample size with which statistically significant effects of the intervention can be more reliably assessed.

Several limitations exist related to the qualitative interviews. First, not all of the 19 participants had the opportunity to be interviewed. Several attempts were made to contact all participants but many had disconnected phone numbers and could not be reached. Therefore, not all participant input was included in the qualitative analyses which may have influenced the themes that emerged in the study.

The measures used in the study are another significant limitation. The single item indicators of parental involvement may not fully capture the concepts of parental engagement at the home and school levels. Further research should be conducted to find more appropriate and thorough measures. Additionally, the time between pre-and post-test responses may have been inadequate considering the response sets for the single item indicators. For example, for one of the questions, *"How often would you say you*

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participate in activities at 'your child's' school," responses included: Once a week or more (4), Once or twice a month (3), A few times a year (2), I don't usually participate in my child's school (1). Participants were asked to respond by circling one response at pre-test and one response at post-test. Future measures should contain shorter quantities of time to capture change over the ten week period.

Another limitation was the measure of academic achievement during a ten-week period. It is unlikely that measures such as grades and attendance will significantly change in this small amount of time. Future studies would benefit by reviewing grades via report cards, test scores and school attendance records to further determine the impact of the intervention on academic achievement over time. Assessing these measures over time might reveal a better understanding of academic success.

Having non-equivalent groups was another limitation in this study. T-tests and chi-squares were conducted on the sample characteristics and all the non-parametric tests were non-significant, with one exception, participant report of living with spouse or cohabitating partner. Although several measures were assessed to demonstrate group equivalency, including the selection of a comparison neighborhood adjacent to one of the treatment neighborhoods, the only way to insure equivalence of treatment and comparison groups is through random selection. Taking this point further, participants self-selected in the treatment group and as a result of this selection bias may have had a higher likelihood of increasing parent involvement regardless of their participation in *YFYN*. This "creaming" effect may have contributed to the increases seen in the outcomes for participants who received the *YFYN* treatment.

Having the co-principal investigator and developer of *YFYN* conduct qualitative interviews and qualitative analysis may have biased the qualitative results. There may have been misinterpretations of participant experiences of the intervention during the qualitative interviews. After conducting the interviews and analyzing the interviews participants were not asked to review the themes and results. This level of member checking should be included in future studies. Additionally, one of the interviews was conducted with an interpreter in French. Although, a trained interpreter was used to interview the participant the information may not have been translated accurately and responses may not accurately reflect the participant's experiences. This limitation also speaks to the need to solicit member checks from participants.

Future Research

Methodological Approaches

Several current methodologies used to examine academic achievement among low-income students and particularly students living in public housing have relied on quantitative methods. For example, Jurecska et al. (2012) used the Welshcer Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV) and the SE Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C) along with school measures (SES, GPA) to examine the association between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. Additionally, Nikulina, Widom, and Czaja (2010) used questionnaires, and school level data to study the roles of childhood neglect and childhood poverty (family and neighborhood) in predicting academic achievement. Similar studies have relied on school level data to answer their research questions and determine how poverty impacts academic achievement (Herebers et al., Masten et al., 2012; Eamon, 2004). This methodological approach is appealing to researchers because

of the access to available data; however a quantitative method alone fails to capture the stories and voices of students and families who are directly impacted by these academic disparities. A mixed-methods approach not only provides data to demonstrate increases in parent involvement and academic achievement but the qualitative data can provide a better understanding of participant experiences to inform and improve parent and education interventions.

Explore Barriers to Parent Involvement

This study identified that despite participating in a ten week intervention parents still experience significant barriers to parent involvement which impacts their children's education. Future studies should further explore the barriers they indicated in this study. Some of the barriers these parents experienced were childcare, language, misinterpretations in cross-cultural interactions and undertones of racism. These all impact their ability to be involved with their child at school and at home. By exploring these barriers further, we can determine the best ways to respond to their needs.

Multiple Stakeholder Perspectives

This study explored parent report of child outcomes and parent experiences of *YFYN*. The *YFYN* intervention will benefit from future studies that capture the children's experience of the intervention and barriers they experience at school that prevent school engagement. Additionally, as the co-developer of *YFYN* I often received positive feedback from the school and community liaisons about the impact *YFYN* had on the participants. Although, this study focused on parent perspectives of parent engagement and academic achievement, future research should focus on understanding the perspective from school and community stakeholders.

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Multi-Site Group Randomized Trial

Findings from this pilot study of *YFYN* are positive. Feasibility of the intervention has been demonstrated, results are trending in the anticipated direction, and parent interviews suggest that the intervention was meaningful. The next step that should be pursued is a multi-site group randomized trial to provide a more rigorous test of the intervention on parent involvement and academic achievement. The multi-site group randomized trial should include a larger sample size to better detect statistically significant effects of the intervention.

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Conclusion

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This study offers preliminary findings regarding the effects of the *YFYN* intervention on parent involvement and the academic success for participating children. These results support a family-based intervention approach to engage parents in low-income and subsidized housing communities in their children's education. Results also suggest that an intervention that uses a social ecological approach to address multiple systems simultaneously shows promise in improving parent involvement and academic achievement in a space where families may feel most comfortable, their neighborhood. *YFYN* families have the opportunity to address their own concerns in a non-judgmental space, where they are considered the experts of their families and their neighborhoods.

The parents that participated in the *YFYN* study are often overlooked, silenced and discounted because of where they live and what society has decided their value to be. Like most parents, they want the best for themselves and their children. They have hopes and dreams for their children and want to expose them to rich opportunities. However, they may not have the confidence or they may lack the resources and skills to provide

these rich opportunities. *YFYN* helped parents believe in their abilities by valuing who they are and their perspective. As a result of participating in *YFYN* parents felt more confident in their ability to support and advocate for their child. They became more vocal, and asked questions of their child's school to ensure critical needs were being addressed.

These families have shown resilience in the face of obstacles, such as low parental education levels, inadequate schools for their children, and distressed neighborhoods. When parents are valued and begin to believe in themselves they are able to support their children and their educational pursuits.

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APPENDIX A: YOUR FAMILY, YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Directions:

If there is a blank space beside the question or statement please print the most appropriate response for you. If you are given a list of choices please circle the best response for you. If you have any questions please ask the administrator of the survey.

Demographics

Name:_____

Date:_____

Address:_____

Phone Number: Home _____

Cell:_____

Email:_____

Emergency Contact: Name_____

Number:_____

Sex (Check one): ☐ Male   ☐ Female   **Date of**

Birth:_____

How long have you lived at your current residence?

　　　　Years:_____

　　　　Months:_____

Country/Province/City you were born in:_____

Do you currently live with a spouse or cohabiting partner? ☐ Yes (1)   ☐ No (2)

How would you describe your ethnicity?

☐　　White/not Latino

☐　　Black/not Latino

☐ Latino

☐ American Indian

☐ Asian

☐ Multi-ethnic (please specify all)_____

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Please check the highest level of education you have completed:

☐ Did not attend high school (1)

☐ Some high school (2)

☐ High school degree or equivalent (3)

☐ Some college (4)

☐ Bachelor's degree or higher (5)

In the box below, please list the names, ages, and the relationship to you (e.g., son, daughter) of all the people that live in your home full-time. Please circle the name and age of your oldest child between the ages of seven and twelve. *This should be the child attending Parents and Children Bonding with you.* **We would like you to think about this child when responding to questions about "your child"**

Name	Age	Relationship to you
1.		
2.		
3.		
Name (Continued)	**Age**	**Relationship to you**
4.		
5.		

6		
7.		
8.		

In order to understand the effectiveness of the *Parents and Children Bonding* intervention we will ask several questions about you and one of your children. When questions refer to "your child", please think of your oldest child between the ages of seven and twelve. This is the child that attending Parents and Children Bonding sessions with you. If you are not sure which child to choose, please ask the administrator of the survey for help.

Family Health and Well-Being
Health Insurance & Overall Welfare

Please check either "yes" or "no" to the following questions	Yes (1)	No (2)
1. Are you currently covered by health insurance?		
2. Are you covered by any type of health insurance plan or program that pays for at least some of your medical expenses?		
3. In the past 12 months, was there any time when you were not covered by any health insurance program?		
4. Did you sign up for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act? *Also known as Obamacare*		
5. Is "your child" covered by any type of health insurance plan or program that pays for at least some of his/her medical expenses?		
6. In the past 12 months, was there any time when "your child" was not covered by any health insurance program?		
7. In the past 12 months, was there any time when you needed medical care but did not get it because you could not afford it?		
8. In the past 12 months, was there any time when "your child" needed medical care but did not get it because you could not afford it?		
9. Does an ongoing physical or mental health problem or disability limit you in any way in any activities?		

Family Health and Well-Being
(Continued)

Let's talk about your health. Please circle the answer that best describes your general health:

Excellent (1)   Very Good (2)   Good (3)   Fair (4)   Poor (5)

If you are currently covered by health insurance, please write the name of your provider below:

_____

Child Positive Behaviors

Please check the box with the statement that best describes "your child"

1. "Your child" is usually in a good mood. Would you say this is:

□not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

2. "Your child" is helpful and cooperative. Would you say this is:

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2)□somewhat like your child(3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

3.   "Your child" helps other kids. Would you say this is:

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2)□somewhat like your child(3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

4.   "Your child" helps adults. Would you say this is:

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

5.   "Your child" sets goals and accomplishes them. Would you say this is:

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child(3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

6.   "Your child" has friends that are on his/her side. Would you say this is:

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□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

7. **"Your child" is easy to get along with. Would you say this is:**

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2)□somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

8. **Adults are nice to "your child". Would you say this is:**

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

9. **"Your child" asks adults when he/she needs help. Would you say this is:**

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

10. **"Your child" likes who they are. Would you say this is:**

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

11. **"Your child" is proud of himself/herself. Would you say this is:**

□ not at all like your child (1) □a little like your child (2) □somewhat like your child (3)

□ a lot like this child (4)   □ completely like this child (5)

Child Risky Behaviors

Please check the box with the statement that best describes "your child"

1. **"Your child" has smoked cigarettes**

□ Never (1) □ Once or twice (2) □ Once in a while but not regularly (3)

□ Regularly in the past (4)   □ Regularly now (5)

2. **"Your child" has tried beer or wine:**

□ Never (1) □ Once or twice (2) □ Once in a while but not regularly (3)

□ Regularly in the past (4)   □ Regularly now (5)

3. **"Your child" has been suspended from school:**

□ Never (1) □ Once or twice (2) □ Once in a while but not regularly (3)

□ Regularly in the past (4)   □ Regularly now (5)

4. **"Your child" has been arrested:**

□ Never (1) □ Once or twice (2) □ Once in a while but not regularly (3)

□ Regularly in the past (4)   □ Regularly now (5)

5. **"Your child" has stolen something:**

□ Never (1) □ Once or twice (2) □ Once in a while but not regularly (3)

□ Regularly in the past (4)   □ Regularly now (5)

6. **"Your child" has been in a fight:**

□ Never (1) □ Once or twice (2) □ Once in a while but not regularly (3)

□ Regularly in the past (4)   □ Regularly now (5)

Mental Health

Self-esteem and Self-efficacy subscales (CEST)

Please respond to each of the statements about yourself by circling the number in the box to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each one. Mark only one choice for each statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Agree Strongly
You have little control over the things that happen to you.	1	2	3	4	5
You have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4	5
What happens to you in the future mostly depends on you.	1	2	3	4	5
There is little you can do to change many of the important things in your life.	1	2	3	4	5
There is really no way you can solve some of the problems you have.	1	2	3	4	5
You feel like a failure.	1	2	3	4	5
You wish you had more respect for yourself.	1	2	3	4	5
You feel you are basically no good.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, you are satisfied with yourself.	1	2	3	4	5
You can do just about anything you really set your mind to do.	1	2	3	4	5
You feel you are unimportant to others.	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes you feel that you are being pushed around in life.	1	2	3	4	5
You often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.	1	2	3	4	5

Neighborhood Social Cohesion

For each of the questions below, please circle the answer that best describes yours and "your child's" neighborhood experiences

1. **How likely is it that your neighbors would do something about children who were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner? Would you say:**

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Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	A 50-50 chance	Somewhat likely	Very likely
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

2. **How likely is it that your neighbors would do something about children who were spray-painting graffiti on a local building? Would you say:**

Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	A 50-50 chance	Somewhat likely	Very likely
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3. **How likely is it that your neighbors would do something about children who were showing disrespect to an adult? Would you say:**

Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	A 50-50 chance	Somewhat likely	Very likely
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

4. **How likely is it that your neighbors would do something about a fight that broke out in front of their house? Would you say:**

Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	A 50-50 chance	Somewhat likely	Very likely
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

5. **How likely is it that your neighbors would do something if the fire station closest to their home was threatened with budget cuts? Would you say:**

Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	A 50-50 chance	Somewhat likely	Very likely
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

6. **This neighborhood is a good place to raise kids. Do you:**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

7. **People around here are willing to help neighbors. Do you:**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

8. **This is a close-knit neighborhood. Do you:**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

9. **People in this neighborhood can be trusted. Do you**:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

<u>Connections to the community</u>

For each of the questions below, please circle the answer that best describes yours and "your child's" neighborhood experiences

1. **Sometimes a person needs the support of people around them. When you need someone to listen to your problems when you're feeling low, are there...**

Enough people you can count on	Too few people	No one you can count on
(1)	(2)	(3)

2. **When you need someone to take care of your child(ren) when you aren't around, are there...**

Enough people you can count on	Too few people	No one you can count on
(1)	(2)	(3)

3. **When you need someone to loan you money in an emergency, are there...**

Enough people you can count on	Too few people	No one you can count on
(1)	(2)	(3)

4. **When you need help with small favors, are there…**

Enough people you can count on	Too few people	No one you can count on
(1)	(2)	(3)

<u>Parent Involvement in Schools</u>

Please check the box with the statement that best describes your involvement in "your child's" school:

1. How often would you say you participate in activities at "your child's" school?

☐ Once a week or more (1)

☐ Once or twice a month (2)

☐ A few times a year (3)

☐ I don't usually participate in my child's school (4)

2. How often do you communicate with a teacher or principal at "your child's" school?

☐ Once a week or more (1)

☐ Once or twice a month (2)

☐ A few times a year (3)

☐ I don't usually communicate with a teacher or principal at my child's   school (4)

<u>Child's Academic Success</u>
1. The last time "your child" got a report card, what were [his/her] grades?

☐ Mostly A's (1)   ☐ Mostly C's and D's (6)

☐ Mostly A's and B's (2)   ☐ Mostly D's (7)

☐ Mostly B's (3)   ☐ Mostly Failing (8)

☐ Mostly B' and C's (4)   ☐ School does not give letter grades (-9)

☐ Mostly C's (5)   ☐ I don't know (-1)

2. Overall, how would you say your child is doing in school?

☐ Very well (1)

☐ Well (2)

☐ Average (3)

☐ Below average (4)

☐ Not well at all (5)

3. How many days of school did your child miss last academic school year?

☐ 0   ☐ 11-15

☐ 1-5   ☐ 16-20

☐ 6-10   ☐ 21 or more

Parent-Child Bonding

The next series of questions are about "your child's" home environment. Please circle the answer that best describes each question.

1. **How often do you read stories to "your child?"**

Never	A few times a year	About once a month	A few times a month
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

About once a week	A few times a week	Every day
(5)	(6)	(7)

2. **About how often do you or another family member get a chance to take "your child" on an outing, such as shopping, the park, or a picnic?**

Never	A few times a year	Once a month	Few times a month	Once a week
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

A few times a week	Everyday
(6)	(7)

3. **When your family watches TV together, do you or another adult discuss the TV programs with "your child"?**

Never	A few times a year	Once a month	Few times a month	Once a week
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

A few times a week	Everyday
(6)	(7)

4. **How many days a week do you and "your child" eat dinner together**

- ☐ 0 days
- ☐ 1 day
- ☐ 2 days
- ☐ 3 days
- ☐ 4 days
- ☐ 5 days
- ☐ 6 days
- ☐ 7 days

5. **How often do you and "your child" talk about what is happening at school?**

Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Two or three times a week
(1)	(2)	(3)

Four or five times a week	Almost everyday
(4)	(5)

These questions are about raising "your child". Please circle whether each statement is definitely true, sort of true, sort of false or definitely false in regards to you and "your child".

1. **I try to show that I understand my child's feelings when I punish [him/her] for misbehaving. Would you say this is...**

Definitely True (1)   Sort of true (2)   Sort of false (3)   Definitely false (4)

2. **I avoid dealing with my child. Would you say this is…**

Definitely True (1)   Sort of true (2)   Sort of false (3)   Definitely false (4)

3. **I have so much on my mind, I don't have much time for my child. Would you say this is...**

Definitely True (1)   Sort of true (2)   Sort of false (3)   Definitely false (4)

4. **I know most of my child's friends and playmates. Would you say this is…**

Definitely True (1)   Sort of true (2)   Sort of false (3)   Definitely false (4)

5. **I don't talk with my child very much. Would you say this is…**

Definitely True (1)   Sort of true (2)   Sort of false (3)   Definitely false (4)

6. **I feel very involved in my child's life. Would you say this is…**

Definitely True (1)   Sort of true (2)   Sort of false (3)   Definitely false (4)

Families have different practices and activities that they do regularly in their household. I would like you to tell me how much each of these things is a routine in your family, that is, something that you do regularly. Please circle the answer that best fits your family

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1. **Your family has a time during the day or evening when everyone talks or plays quietly. Is this a routine your family does...**

Almost Never (1) Sometimes (2) Usually (3) Always (4)

2. **When in school, children do their homework at the same time of day or night. (Is this a routine your family does...**

Almost Never (1) Sometimes (2) Usually (3) Always (4)

These next questions are just about your relationship with your child. Please respond by circling how much you disagree or agree with each statement.

1. **I feel very close to my child**

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

2. **My child shares his/her thoughts and feelings with me**

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

3. **My child has lots of chances to do fun things with me**

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

Challenges to Parenting

These next statements are about how you feel about being a parent. Please circle whether you strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree or agree, agree or strongly agree with each statement.

1. **I get more satisfaction out of being a parent than I thought I would. Would you say that you…**

Strongly Disagree (1)   Disagree (2)   Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4)   Strongly Agree (5)

2. Being a parent is one of the best parts of my life. Would you say that you…

Strongly Disagree (1)   Disagree (2)   Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4)   Strongly Agree (5)

APPENDIX B: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Before participating in the Parents and Children Bonding program can you talk about the way you thought about your child's education and your involvement?

2. Before PCB in which ways did you try to impact your child's education?...in which ways were you successful?

3. What strategies from PCB, did you use/learn?

4. In which ways has your thinking about your child's education changed after participating in PCB? Describe the ways that your change in thinking has changed your interaction with your child or school.

5. After participating in PCB, how have you interacted:

    a. With your child's school?

    b. With your child outside of school?

6. How has your experience with the school been hard or gratifying before PCB ….and then after PCB?

Your Family, Your Neighborhood:

A 10-Week Practice-Based Curriculum for the Health, Well-Being
and Academic Success of Families Living in Low-Income and
Subsidized Housing Communities

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
Table of Contents

What is *Your Family, Your Neighborhood*?

  Your Family, Your Neighborhood is a dual generation curriculum designed to improve academic success and enhance the health and well-being of children and parents living in subsidized housing communities. *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* is a structured curriculum delivered to parents and their children, who are ages 7 to 12-years-old, in local public housing communities. Ten curriculum sessions aim to enhance bonds between children and parents, create parental attachment to schools, improve academic outcomes for children, develop trusting relationships in the community, and promote the health and well-being of family members. Parents participate in sessions on school involvement, healthcare access, and community building. Child sessions focus on academic support and life skills training. The structure of the curriculum sessions is designed to strengthen bonds between children and parents and build social cohesion in subsidized housing communities.

  Figure 1 illustrates the pathways through which *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* seeks to address the health, well-being, and academic success among children and families residing in subsidized housing communities.

Your Family, Your Neighborhood: A Practice-Based Curriculum for Health and Well-Being and Academic Success for Families Living in Subsidized Housing Communities
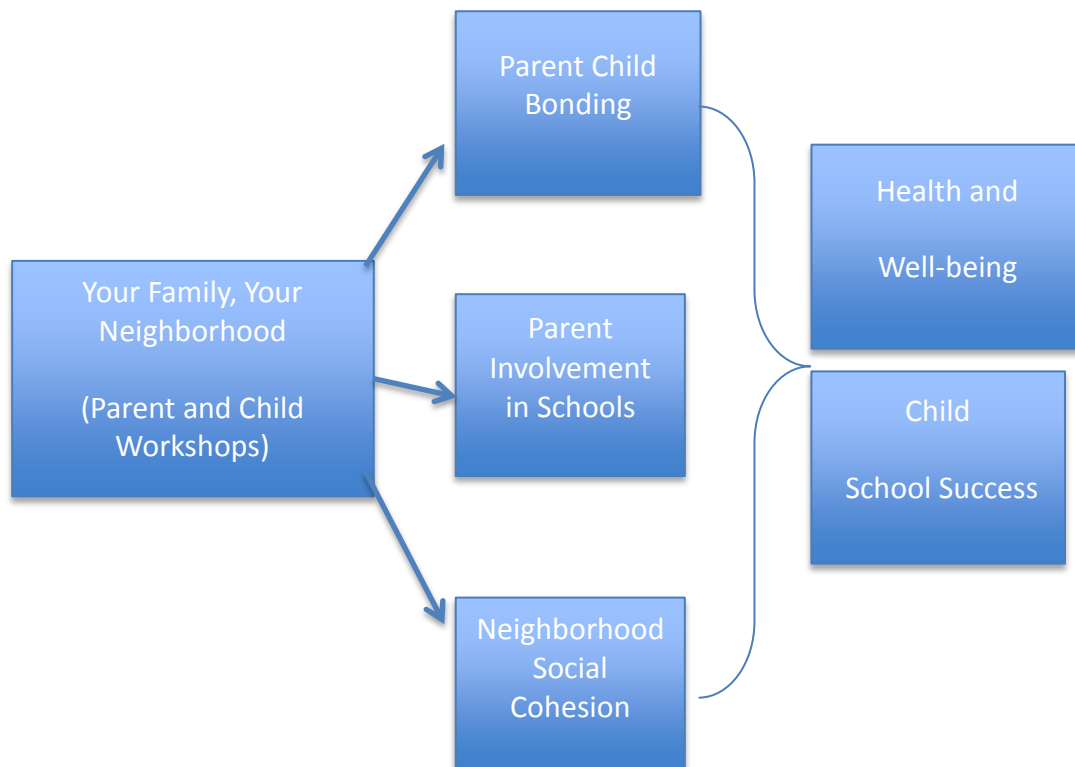

Figure 1. Your Family, Your Neighborhood Conceptual Framework

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Families living in subsidized housing communities face unique barriers to health and academic success, largely based on the concentration of poverty in their community and the transitional nature of their housing. The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* approach has an explicit focus on individual, family, and neighborhood issues facing families living in subsidized housing. The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* approach addresses concerns and issues across individual, family and neighborhood levels, and allows families to develop solutions that are unique to their particular life circumstances and community.

Specific Aims

1. To strengthen bonds between children and parents through participation in a dual generation ten-week structured curriculum.

2. To build a socially cohesive community of residents living in a low-income or subsidized housing community.

3. To improve family health outcomes through participation in a ten-week curriculum that provides practical tools for accessing and understanding health insurance options, local health care providers, and evidence-based health promotion practices and programs.

4. To improve the educational outcomes of child participants through educational support for children, parent engagement in their child's academic progress, and increased parent attachment with schools.

Background

Disparities in health and educational outcomes for families living in poverty are well documented (Center for Disease Control, 2011). Health and educational disparities are exacerbated when a family lives in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan and Aber, 1997) where health care access is often compromised (Kirby & Kaneda, 2005) and schools often perform well-below national standards (McLoyd, 1998). Low-income families living in communities dominated by subsidized housing are particularly vulnerable to the combined risks associated with living in poverty and living in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage. Therefore, programs designed for families living in subsidized housing should be based on empirical evidence of the individual, family, and community level factors that are associated with health and educational disparities.

The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum uses knowledge of scientific findings at the individual, family, and community levels to address health and educational outcomes for families living in subsidized housing communities. The structure of the curriculum is designed to increase child-parent bonds and to develop socially cohesive relationships in the community. The practice-based curriculum itself provides children with academic support and provides parents with practical tools to address family health, and engagement and attachment with their child's school.

Family Health, Well-Being and Poverty

There are considerable disparities between the health and well-being of families living in poverty compared to families with higher income (Center for Disease Control, 2011). For example, individuals who live in poverty (and women) are more likely to indicate they have serious psychological distress (CDC, 2007, para. 5). Low-income families experience mental health issues at much higher rates than higher income families (Bassuk, Buckner, Perloff, & Bassuk, 1998). Additionally, the 12 month and life time prevalence of anxiety disorders in public housing residents are 1.8 and 1.5 times greater than the levels in non-public housing residents (Simning, Van Wijngaarden, & Conwell 2011). African-American public housing residents have a 1.7 times higher 12-month, and 1.5 times higher lifetime, prevalence of mental illness (consisting of anxiety, mood, and substance use disorders) than African-Americans not living in public housing (Simning, Van Wijngaarden, & Conwell 2011). Studies also reveal a disproportionate number of low-income families are obese (Hofferth & Curtin, 2005), despite evidence suggesting that low-income families face hunger at a much higher rate than other families (Beverly, 2001).

Investigators have also found that conditions in low-income neighborhoods, above and beyond an individual's poverty status, contribute to the range of health disparities experienced by low-income families (Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). With such a wide range of health issues attributable to neighborhood effects, programs designed to address the health and well-being of low-income families must consider intervening mechanisms at the neighborhood level.

Academic Achievement and Poverty

Educational attainment is a key variable in combating poverty (Caniglia, 1998). Education not only mediates adverse life experiences during adolescence but also impacts an adult's socioeconomic status (Wickrama, Simons & Baltimore, 2012). Disparities in academic achievement between students living in poverty and others are well known (Herbers et al.,2012; Jurecksa et al., 2012). Children in poverty have limited opportunities to learn in group settings and exposure to information-rich environments has been found to be less available to children in poverty (Burney & Beilke, 2008). This places them at a disadvantage compared to more affluent classmates when they enter the school environment. Children living in poverty are also more likely than other youth to have lower IQ's, poor reading skills, low standardized test scores, and low grades (Nikulina, Widom, & Czaja, 2011; Morrisey, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2013).

The drop-out rate for students living in low-income families is almost five times greater than the rate of students from high income families (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & Ramani, 2011). There is a clear gap when comparing drop-out rates for students living in poverty when compared to more affluent students. For example, in 2011 high school dropout rates among persons 16 through 24-years-old were 13% for students whose families fell in the lowest quartile for family income, as opposed to 2.3% for students whose families fell in the highest quartile for family income (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Children living in poverty are more likely to attend an underperforming school and are less likely to have well-qualified teachers than other children (Evans, 2004 because funding for schools is a result of local taxes children in wealthy communities benefit exponentially in the form of higher resourced schools (Kenyon, 2007. Children living in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage face the added burden of overcoming under-resourced and under-performing schools in their efforts towards academic success.

Complications of Race and Ethnicity and Neighborhoods

The high correlation between poverty and race and ethnicity is well-documented (Ou & Reynolds, 2008). Poverty rates for African Americans, American Indians and Hispanics are twice as high as poverty rates for Whites. According to the 2007–2011 American Community Survey, national poverty rates were a staggering 27% for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 25.8% for Blacks or African Americans and ranged from 16.2% to 26.3% for Hispanics as opposed to 11.6% for Whites (American Survey Briefs, U.S. Census Data, 2013). Nearly 30% of America's poor reside in poor places, and concentrated poverty is especially high among poor African Americans (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino, 2012). The role of neighborhoods and the roles of race and ethnicity add a level of complication to the associations between poverty, family health and well-being, and academic achievement (Malmgren, Martin, Nicola, 1996; Webley, 2011; Carranza, You, Chhuon, & Hudley, 2009; Garcia-Reid, 2007). When working with low-income families in subsidized housing one needs to address barriers faced by families of color.

Mediating Mechanisms for Family Health, Well-Being, and Academic Success

Parent Child Bond

One of the primary aims of *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* is to develop the child parent bond for participating families. A parent or caretaker has a significant influence on a child's development based on how they are treated. Bowlby (1988) explains attachment as the primary status and biological function of intimate emotional bonds between individuals. The pattern of attachment that an individual develops during infancy, childhood and adolescence is profoundly influenced by the way her parents or caretaker treats her. Therefore, children who have parents who are sensitive and responsive are likely to be better equipped to make healthy decisions than other young people.

Research indicates that strong child-parent bonds are positively related to health and well-being for children (CDC, 2012); child-parent bonds are also important factors in increasing children's academic success (Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007; Garcia-Reid 2007). Children whose parents are more involved in their lives are less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, become pregnant, be physically inactive, and be emotionally distressed than other youth (CDC, 2012)

To develop the parent child bond, each *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum session starts with sharing a meal as a family and spending time with each other to talk and reflect on their day. Studies have found family meals help promote

healthy outcomes for children and promote literacy, learning and healthy behavior (Larson, 2008; Larson, Branscbomb, Wiley, 2006). Studies have found that the frequency of shared family meals is associated with child academic and behavioral outcomes (Miller, Waldfogel, & Han, 2012). In the *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum, once dinner is finished the children participate in a session where they receive academic support, including homework help and skill-based activities. At the same time, parents participate in their own session with other parents. After being split into separate sessions, parents and children come together and are encouraged to share their work. Providing parents and children the opportunity to hear about each other's work also strengthens bonding between children and parents.

Neighborhood Social Cohesion

A second critical aim of *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* is to address adverse neighborhood conditions in public housing settings. Neighborhood social cohesion is defined as an individual's neighborhood network of trusting and cohesive relationships (Brisson, 2007). Cohesion is an important mediator for a wide range of outcomes including health, well-being and academic success (Sampson, 2013). Neighborhood social cohesion has been demonstrated to provide a supportive resource for low-income families to help them to overcome the low-resourced and sometimes isolating conditions that challenge families from low-income neighborhoods (Brisson, Under Review).

Research has shown a link between neighborhood social cohesion and mental health (Brisson, Lopez & Yoder, 2014), obesity (Cohen, Finch, Bower, & Sastry, 2006), and self-rated health (Kim, Subramanian & Kawachi, 2006). Studies have also demonstrated the importance of social cohesion for school attachment (Wentzel, 1998) and academic achievement (Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless, 2001). Based on this evidence, neighborhood social cohesion is an important mediator and intervention element of *Parents and Children Bonding*.

The structure of the *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum is designed to build social cohesion among families engaged in the curriculum in specific ways. First, each curriculum session starts with a parent prepared dinner and social time where neighbors share a meal and get to know each other. Then, each session concludes with group sharing—both adults and kids. This sharing allows families to get to know one another—their struggles and successes—a little better. Through this sharing, it is hypothesized that inter-family trust and cohesion will develop. Last, the final 3 sessions of the curriculum are explicitly focused on neighborhood families developing a community project together. During *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* families collectively identify a neighborhood issue and then plan and carry out a neighborhood activity designed to address the issue. This active engagement in the community develops social cohesion within *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* participants—and possibly in the greater neighborhood.

Parent Involvement in Schools

Parental involvement in children's education is a key component of increasing the achievement of low-income and ethnic minority students and eliminating the

achievement gap between them and more advantaged students (The National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group, 2009). Children whose parents are more involved in their child's education have better academic outcomes than children whose parents are not involved (Epstein, & Dauber, 1991; Toper, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010). Specifically, Toper et al. (2010) found that increased parent involvement is significantly associated with increased academic performance, including standardized tests and teacher ratings of the child's classroom academic performance.

Lessons in the *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* educational process and local school.

During the first curriculum session parents explore their hopes and dreams for their children's academic careers. Then, during the second curriculum session parents learn about national research that overwhelmingly demonstrates the benefits of academic achievement. In this same session, parents work in groups to identify ways to be more involved in their local schools. Then, as homework, parents are asked to participate in some form of communication with their child's school during the upcoming week. The third curriculum session builds on the second by bringing local educational resources to families during the curriculum sessions so as to facilitate the use of resources designed to build school attachment and education achievement.

Assessing the Effects of Your Family, Your Neighborhood

Setting

Your Family, Your Neighborhood occurs in project-based subsidized housing sites and other high poverty neighborhoods. *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* consists of 10 two hour curriculum sessions delivered to caregivers and their children during the evening hours. Each curriculum session includes a dinner, a parent curriculum, a child curriculum (parent and child curricula are delivered separately), and a family bond and debrief. The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* goals and objectives of each session are communicated every week to ensure treatment receipt. A lead facilitator conducts the family and parent groups and a co-facilitator leads the children's groups. The curriculum is framed as parent engagement sessions where parents are offered the opportunity to build relationships with other parents involved in their community.

The Curriculum

The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum addresses community and school issues through parent's participation in education and advocacy sessions which include: 1) the ongoing needs of their families individual health; 2) the issues surrounding their children's educational environment; and 3) current community level issues. Curriculum sessions include content on: parent involvement in schools, school choice, communication with school personnel, academic achievement, child and school advocacy, health barriers and access, substance use prevention and creating healthy neighborhoods.

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Research Design

Your Family, Your Neighborhood will use a quasi-experimental longitudinal design to assess intervention effects. All participating parents complete a pre-test survey that assesses basic demographic characteristics, health and well-being, relationships, and educational outcomes. At the conclusion of the curriculum all parents again complete the survey. Follow-up survey administration occurs for all families at 6 months, one year, and two years post intervention. Surveys are analyzed to assess changes in the family bond, school attachment, neighborhood social cohesion, family health, and academic outcomes post intervention. Semi-structured interviews with parents and children will also be administered at two points during the program to assess the delivery and content of the curriculum.

Innovation

Your Family, Your Neighborhood is unique in that it is designed to address health and academic challenges facing families in neighborhoods with a high concentration of public housing, and a high concentration of families living in poverty. Researchers have examined many of the dynamic factors influencing family health and well-being and academic achievement. We know that factors effecting family health and well-being and academic success are complex and influenced by individual, family and community characteristics. We know individual actions, family bonds, and neighborhood social cohesion can improve health and academic outcomes. Our approach builds on what we know and applies this knowledge to low-income families in concentrated public housing communities. Families in concentrated public housing communities face unique challenges related to individual poverty and concentrated disadvantage. Parents and Children Bonding seeks to address these challenges by using efficacious mechanisms for success at multiple levels of intervention.

The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum is unique in relation to a number of important practice areas. First the curriculum adds innovation to typical after school programs by using a dual generation focus. The dual generation model explicitly focuses on the parent child bond to improve family health and children's academic outcomes. The second innovation is that the curriculum is delivered on site at public housing communities giving families the unique opportunity to address individual, family, school and neighborhood issues on their own "turf". This is in contrast to other programs that occur at the school, a clinical office, or at a local non-profit organization. The *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum combines this dual generation and on-site focus and also takes on the challenge of addressing poverty at the individual, family, and neighborhood levels. All together *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* offers families in subsidized housing the opportunity to address family health and well-being and academic achievement in a way that has not been possible before.

Conclusion

Parents and children living in subsidized housing and other high poverty neighborhoods face significant barriers to health, well-being, and academic success. Like all parents, adults in subsidized housing and other high poverty neighborhoods want the

best for themselves and their children. Parents have hopes and dreams for their children and want to expose them to rich opportunities. The goal of *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* is to work with housing providers, schools, and social service providers to support parents in their efforts to engage in their children's school, overcome health barriers and to work together to create a safe and cohesive community. This increased engagement at the school and community level, along with support to build the bond between parents and their children are pathways that will allow families to achieve improved health, and improved academic outcomes for children.

Curriculum Structure

- 10 weekly sessions.
- Duration: 2 hours
- Time: 5:00-7:00 p.m. (this can vary based on family availability)
    - 5:00-5:45 pm: Dinner (dinner and social engagement, check-in on HW)
    - 5:45-6:45pm: Parent curriculum/Child curriculum
    - 6:45-7:00 pm: Parent/Child reflection and sharing (parent and child working together) Gift Basket Drawing
- 2 Facilitators: The primary facilitator will run the *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* curriculum sessions and work with the parents during breakout sessions. The primary facilitator is also referred to as the "parent facilitator" in this curriculum. Two secondary facilitators will be available to assist the primary facilitator and then work with the kids during breakout sessions. These secondary facilitators are also referred to as the "child facilitator" throughout the curriculum.

Session 1

Introduction to Your Family, Your Neighborhood

Purpose

This session is intended to introduce the purpose of *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* to the families and begin the group forming/group cohesion process.

Goals

The goals of this session are to:
1. Provide the theoretical background-The Parent Child Bond (Bowlby, 1976), and research on the importance of the Parent Child Bond.
2. Explain the purpose of the *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* program and what we want to achieve over the next 10 sessions.
3. Give parents a chance to "break the ice," and get to know each other.
4. Begin a discussion about their child's education.

Survey items related to the Parent Child Bond

What will you need for Session 1?

1. Welcome folders
2. Program calendar
3. Prewritten norms
4. Ice breaker materials
5. Session 1 homework handout
6. Markers
7. Flip chart paper

What will you do in Session 1?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. Introduce *Your Family, Your Neighborhood*
2. Provide calendar of sessions to families
3. Family Introductions
4. Expectations of the family dinners
5. Group norms
6. Dinner norms
7. Parent child reflection norms
8. Parent portion of the night norms

Parent Facilitator Guide:

➢ The primary goal of the facilitators during the dinner session is to introduce *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* and to establish norms for the program. Start by introducing yourself and having participants introduce their families.
➢ Dinners are meant to be informal. Parent portions of the curriculum are essential and are considered the central focus of the curriculum.
➢ Remember, this is only a 45-minute dinner so keep this content light.

**CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL
NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP**

The Parent Facilitator will incorporate the icebreaker activity: *Where did I come from? How did I get here?*

1. The facilitator explains the icebreaker, by asking each person to answer the following questions: 1) Where did I come from? 2) How did I get here?
   The facilitator will answer the two questions about themselves as an example of how to answer the questions.
2. When the activity is over, the facilitator and the parents should process the activity, *Where did I come from? How did I get here?* as a group.
   ➢ What did you notice you had in common with the other group members?
   ➢ What differences are there?
   ➢ Was there anything that was surprising?
   ➢ What does this mean as we move forward these next 10 weeks?
3. The facilitator will now review the introduction to *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* and all the sessions prior to beginning the next activity. The facilitator should use the conceptual framework to acquaint participants with the program and tell them about what will happen in each of the ten-session curriculum.
   The facilitator should introduce the structure of the curriculum. First, there will be a forty-five minute social dinner and check-in. Then, an hour-long parent curriculum, while children are engaged in fun educational activities with the other facilitators. Each session will conclude with a 15 minute sharing and reflection where children and parents are together in the larger group. This last 15-minute session is designed to strengthen the bond between parent and child, the bond between community members participating in the program, and a chance to address any questions or issues.
4. Facilitate a discussion among parents about their hopes and fears of participating in this program. Use open-ended questions to facilitate a dialogue and help members participate in a safe and respectful way. Questions to facilitate this dialogue could be:
   o What do you hope to get out of this program?
   o Why have you decided to attend this program?
   o What would be ideal for you in this program?

- o What worries you about coming to this program?
- o What don't you want to do during this program?

Let the parents know we will review their responses during week five in order to check-in and see if we are on track with what they want and do not want out of this program.

5. Next, the facilitator will introduce the expected norms for each part of the structure. Parents will also participate and contribute to the norms they would like to have established for the group. Some of these norms include:
  - ➢ **Confidentiality**-What is talked about in the parent group should be kept in the group.
  - ➢ **Respect Each Other and Each Other's Ideas**-Since everyone brings their own experience and opinions, it's okay to disagree with each other.
  - ➢ **Group Commitment**-Every parent/caregiver agrees to commit to the process, the group and each other during the program.

PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE PARENTS BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 1?

1. *Where did I come from? How did I get here?* activity
2. Session 1 homework handout
3. Markers
4. Crayons, colored pencils, pencils
5. Scissors
6. Glue or glue sticks
7. Board games

What will the children do in Session 1?

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
1. *Where did I come from? How did I get here?* activity
2. Group process of *Where did I come from? How did I get here?* activity
3. Weekly check-out
4. Homework time and free time

Child Facilitator Guide:

The facilitator will incorporate the *Where did I come from? How did I get here?* activity
1. When the activity is over, the facilitator and the participants should process the *Where did I come from? How did I get here?* activity as a group.
   - ➢ What did you notice you had in common with the other children?

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> ➢ What differences are there?
> ➢ Was there anything that was surprising?
> ➢ What does this mean as we move forward these next 10 weeks?

2. The facilitator should then introduce the structure of the curriculum. First, a forty-five minute social dinner and check-in. Then, there will be an hour-long parent curriculum while children are engaged in fun educational activities with the other facilitators. Each session will conclude with a 15 minute sharing and reflection where children and parents are together in the larger group. This last 15-minute session is designed to strengthen the bond between parent and child, the bond between community members participating in the program, and a chance to address any questions or issues.

3. Next, the facilitator will introduce the expected norms for each part of the structure. Children will also participate and contribute to the norms they would like to have established for the group. Some of these norms include:
   o **Respect Each Other and Each Other's Ideas**-Since everyone brings their own experience and opinions. It's okay to disagree with each other.
   o **Group Commitment-**Children agree to commit to the process, the group and each other during the program.
   o **Participate**-Children agree to try all the activities.

After the icebreaker activity is over and you have written your group norms, allow the group to work on homework, play board games or have some free time. Finally, bring the group back together during the last 5 minutes. Ask them to say one thing they liked and one thing they would change about tonight's group.

CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What the Parent Facilitator will do to end Session 1:

Parent/Child reflection and sharing (Last 15 minutes)
   o Give this time for parents and their children to reflect and share what they did in their group. This is an opportunity for families to have a bonding experience.
   o

Parent Facilitator Guide:

The facilitator should bring the families together and explain the goals of the parent/child reflection and sharing. Let families know we will end each session with reflection and sharing. One of the goals of this time is to allow children and parents to bond over the work they completed in each session. A second goal is to make room for any questions, insights and sharing.

Next, the facilitator should turn the session over to families. Ask parents and their children to share something they found out about someone else. The facilitator can ask if

anyone has any questions or if they have any information they would like to share. If the sharing needs a boost, the facilitator can use the "I liked, I learned, I wish" exercise. During this exercise, the facilitator asks if there was anything participants liked during the session. Next, ask if there was anything they learned. Finally, the facilitator can ask if there was anything the participants wished would have happened differently.

The facilitator should take notes on any questions that participants have so they can be researched and answered at the next session.

End by explaining their homework and conducting the gift basket drawing.

<div align="center">**IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME**</div>

Homework
- o By the second session, ask them to try and know each other's names.
- o As a family, tell them to make a list of 3 hopes or dreams they have for their child's education.

<u>Purpose</u>
This session is intended to begin the process of forming the group and to begin a discussion about the parent's experience with their own education as well as their role in their child's education.

<u>Goals</u>
The goals of this session are to:
1. Help parents remember and identify their feelings and experiences in their own education.
2. Begin a discussion about their child's education.
3. Have parent's share their role in their child' education.
4. Parents will identify their "Hopes and Dreams" for their children.
5. Children will complete a "My Hopes and Dreams" collage.

<u>Survey items related to this session include Well-Being and School Engagement</u>

What will you need for Session 2?

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1. Program calendar
2. Prewritten norms
3. Ice breaker materials
4. Session 2 homework handout
5. Markers
6. Flip chart paper
7. Parent Child Bond handout

What will you do in Session 2?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. See who can remember the most names from last week. Ask at least one parent and one child to volunteer. If more want to volunteer, that's okay.
2. Homework check-in about the three hopes or dreams they have for their child's education. Did families get a chance to talk about these together?
3. Family time with each other

Parent Facilitator Guide:

- ➢ The primary goal of the facilitators during the dinner session is to re-introduce families to each other, remind them about the purpose of Your Family, Your Neighborhood, continue to establish norms for the program and check-in about homework.
- ➢ Start by re-introducing yourself and having participants try to name everyone in the room. Then, check in with the families about their homework. Allow families to share if they feel comfortable.
- ➢ Dinners are meant to be informal. Parent portions of the curriculum are essential and considered the central focus of the curriculum.
- ➢ Remember, this is only a 45-minute dinner so keep this content light.

<h2 style="color:red; text-align:center">CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL
NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP</h2>

Parent Curriculum (1 hour)

Welcome everyone back and review the norms for the group as well as the structure of the sessions.

- ➢ **Confidentiality**-What is talked about in the parent group should be kept in the group.
- ➢ **Respect Each Other and Each Other's Ideas-**since everyone brings their own experience and opinions. It's okay to disagree with each other.
- ➢ **Group Commitment**-Every parent/caregiver agrees to commit to the process, the group and each other during the program.

1. The facilitator will lead a "Story Circle" on their feelings about their own education and schools they attended. Since this may be hard for some parents to talk about, just focus on a feelings session that builds relationships among community members.

- ➢ Have parents share feelings about their *own* education, *child's* education and the school systems.
- ➢ Have parents share their facilitators and barriers. (These can be drawing exercises.)
- ➢ The facilitator will then lead a discussion on the parent's hopes and dreams for their child's education.

<h3 style="text-align:center"><u>What is a Story Circle?</u></h3>

A story circle is a way for families to gather in a safe environment and tell their own stories. As such, it is important that everyone understands and follows basic rules. Everyone is given the opportunity to speak and participants should all practice listening during any one person's story. Save comments and feedback on the story until after the

speaker is finished. It is usually necessary to establish basic time guidelines for a story circle so that everyone has an equal chance to tell their stories.

- o To facilitate the story circle, simply ask participants to take turns sharing their experiences with their own education followed by their hopes and dreams for their children in school. It is usually a good idea to write down what you have asked people to share so they can refer to it while telling their story. Then, conduct an exercise where parents are given five minutes of time to themselves to draw any images they want to express as their barriers related to their child's education and schooling. Ask each parent to share their drawing and narrate their illustration.

PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE PARENTS BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 2?

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1. Magazines
2. Poster board
3. Markers, crayons, colored pencils, pencils
4. Scissors
5. An example of a "My Hopes and Dreams" collage
6. Glue or glue sticks

What the children will do in Session 2?

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Weekly check-in
2. Ice breaker/group activity
3. Complete a "My Hopes and Dreams" collage using magazines. It will illustrate what they hope for when they get older, and what they want to be when they get older.
4. Inform students they will be given the opportunity to share their collages with their parents and the larger group if they would like to.
5. Give students a chance to share with each other before they share with the larger group.
6. Weekly check-out
7. Homework time and free time

Child Facilitator Guide:

1. Welcome the children back and begin a check-in about how their day was.
2. You can use the check-in that asks them to say what floor they are on if they were in an elevator. Floor 5 is, "had an awesome day", floor 3 is, "an average day" and floor 1 is, "a very hard day". They can say the floor they are on and talk about why they are on that floor. You can also choose a different check-in as long as it is the same one each week.
3. Next, introduce the topic "My Hopes and Dreams." Students will brainstorm careers as a group. Students will begin to create a collage using magazines about what they hope for when they get older, and what they want to be when they get older. Show the children your hopes and dreams collage. Talk about what is important for you and some ways to achieve those goals.   Remind them that as part of their homework, students were supposed to identify three hopes or dreams and ways to accomplish them. Have students add this to their collage. If they don't complete their collage by the end of the group, they can finish it at home with their parents. Let students know that they will be sharing these with their parents during the parent/child reflection.
4. Finally, bring the group back together during the last five minutes of the session. Ask them to say one thing they liked about the group and one thing they would change about group today.

CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What the Parent Facilitator will do to end Session 2:

Parent/Child reflection and sharing (Last 15 minutes)
- o During this reflection the children will be sharing their collages with their parents. Encourage the children to talk about their hopes and dreams with their parents, while parents reflect back what they heard.
- o This will take most of the time, but make sure all of the children have the opportunity to share.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

End by explaining their homework and conducting the gift basket drawing.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME

Homework

- o Now that both parents and children have determined at least three hopes and dreams, what are three things parents can do to make sure their children achieve them and what are three things children can do to achieve them.

Gift Basket/Card Drawing

(Fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

Session 3

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
The Importance of the Parent Child Bond

Purpose

This session is intended to provide the theoretical background of the Parent Child Bond and give parents the opportunity to practice emotional communication.

Goals

The goals of this session are to:

1. Provide the theoretical background The Parent Child Bond (Bowlby, 1976), and research on the importance of the Parent Child Bond.
2. Give parents the opportunity to practice the skills they have learned about emotional communication with their children.

Survey items related to this session include Academic Achievement Measures

What will you need in Session 3?

1. Written group norms from the previous session
2. Program calendar
3. CDC handouts
4. Session 3 homework handout
5. Markers
6. Flip chart paper

What will you do in Session 3?

Dinner (45 minutes)

1. Check-in with parents and children about their thoughts on how to achieve hopes and dreams. See if anyone wrote them down and wants to share.
2. Family time with each other

CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL
NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Welcome everyone back and remind the group about their agreed norms along with these predetermined norms.

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> **Confidentiality**-What is talked about in the parent group should be kept to the group.
> **Respect Each Other and Each Other's Ideas-**since everyone brings their own experience and opinions. It's okay to disagree with each other.
> **Group Commitment**-Every parent/caregiver agrees to commit to the process, the group and each other during the program.

Parent Curriculum (1 hour)

1. Reflection activity on the parent child bond:
   > Find a partner and discuss the following: 1) How important do you think the parent child bond/relationship is for your child's development? Why do you feel that way? 2) What was your experience of bonding with your parents? 3) What have you done to build the bond/relationship with your child? 4) What do you want to do better to build the bond with your child?
2. What aspects of the parent child bond do scientists find are the most important? Talk through the CDC handouts on positive parenting tips.
3. Pick a partner and identify three questions you can ask your child to help them think about their feelings. Questions can include things like: how did you feel at school today? How did you feel when you were doing your homework?
4. Then, role-play with your partner by asking them at least one question. Concentrate on reflecting back to your partner what they said and listening. Pick one question to ask your child when they return to the group.
5. Remind parents that listening and reflecting back to their children will take practice. They will get more opportunities to try it at home.

PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE PARENTS BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 3?

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1. Poster Board
2. Markers
3. Crayons, colored pencils, pencils
4. Scissors
5. Glue or glue sticks
6. Worksheets
7. Books
8. An example of an "Ideal School"

What will the children do in Session 3?

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Weekly check-in
2. Create a poster of their school. On one side, they will draw and/or write the things they like about their school and on the other side they will draw and/or write the things they would change about their school
   - ➢ Have a group discussion with the children. What does their school look like? What are the teachers and students like? What do they like about their school? If they could change one thing about their school, what would it be? How can you be a leader in your school? What can you do to make your school a better place?
   - ➢ Students get into pairs or groups of three.
   - ➢ Students describe and create in detail what's important to them for their school.
   - ➢ They will present their posters to the larger group at the end of the session.
3. Weekly check-out
4. Homework time and free time

Child Facilitator Guide:

Be sure the facilitators have materials to conduct this exercise with kids. **The facilitators should have an example they made to show the group what the school poster could look like.**

During the last 15 minutes, talk to the children about how to talk to their parents about what they are doing at school.

Some ideas to talk to your parents about school (note that parents are talking about these same questions in their session):
1. When you are together, like in the car, or during dinner, be sure to tell your parents: What you have been doing at school. Who your favorite teacher is. What your least favorite part of school is. What your favorite part of school is.
2. You can show your parents your backpack so they can see what's been happening at school and what projects you are working on, or the homework you got back from the teacher.
3. Bring the group back together and do the weekly check-out.

CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 3?

Parent/child reflection and sharing (Last 15 minutes)
- o Both parents and children share what they learned.
- o Children will present their posters to the group.
- o Everyone gets applauded for their posters.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Use the instructions from the first session to guide your work during the parent/child reflection and sharing. This is mostly a chance for children to share their work with their parents.

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME</p>

Homework/To Do List/Hand out:
- o Parents ask the child the one question they practiced.
- o Then practice listening and reflecting back what they hear from their child.
- o Parents can tell children what they learned about emotional communication skills.

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(Fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

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Session 4

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
Systemic Oppression in Education

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Purpose

This session is intended to help parents understand systemic oppression in education, the educational pipeline, correlation between education and life-time earnings and the importance of parental involvement in their child's education.

Goals

The goals of this session:

1. Parents will have a basic understanding of systemic oppression in education.
2. Parents will have a beginning understanding of "school choice" and the education options for their children.
3. Parents will be exposed to the educational pipeline.
4. Parents will discuss the successes and challenges to parental involvement in education.

Survey items related to this session include Parent Engagement in Schools and School Success.

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What will you need in Session 4?

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1. Written group norms
2. Program calendar
3. Session 4 homework handout
4. Markers
5. Flip chart paper
6. Questions about schools parents had from the previous session

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What will you do in Session 4?

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Dinner (45 minutes)

1. Family time with each other.
2. Welcome everyone back and check in on their homework. Did parents do something this week to get more involved at school? Do they all have the name and contact information of their child's teacher pasted on their refrigerator? Did you contact your child's teacher? What happened?

CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL

Parent Facilitator Guide:

In this session, you will provide parents with basic research on systemic oppression in schools, the importance of education for their child's long-term success, and provide some research on the benefits of parent involvement in schools. You will conduct a few exercises that will allow parents to discover ways to get involved in their child's school.

Parent Curriculum (1hour)

1. Begin a discussion on systemic oppression in systems of education.
2. Discuss School Choice briefly as one form of systemic oppression.
   (a) School Choice (may leave this out if the timing is inappropriate here)
   (b) What is School Choice? Is it really a choice?
   (c) Who is School Choice open to?
   (d) What are the benefits and concerns with "choicing" out of your school?
   (e) Some of these include transportation, fears and uncertainty about a new school. Rebuilding your school network.
   (f) How do you open enroll your child into a new school?
   (g) Understanding Education Options. School Choice-Public school, charter school, home school and parochial-religious vs. non-religious, on-line school. Public vs. Private Education. Affordable education, voucher/scholarship programs-ACE.
3. Next show them the U.S. Educational Pipeline Figures 1 and 2 (Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Ask them to find themselves on the educational pipeline and where they would like to see their children on the pipeline.
   (a) Ask parents to find themselves on Figure 1 first, then on Figure 2. (They don't have to share this with others).
   (b) Now ask them to find their child/ren on Figures 1 and 2. Ask them to find the place on the figure they would like to see their child get to. If anyone would like to share they can.
4. Now share with them the correlation between education and lifetime earnings.
   1. Start by asking if parents can tell each other the single best predictor of how much money someone makes as an adult?
   2. That's right, it is education! Pass out hand out for parents to view.
   3. The following graph shows the correlation of education and earnings.
      Q: Ask parents who makes the most? Those with a professional degree.
      Q: Who makes the least? Those with a 9- 12 grade education

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Q: Ask parents to find themselves on the graph and think about what they want for their children. They don't have to disclose this information.

5. Finally, begin a conversation about parent involvement in schools and how it provides lots of benefits. Ask: How are you involved in your child's school? Some parents may not recognize the ways they are involved. Some examples are:
   o Going to Back to School Night
   o Attending parent teacher conferences
   o Attending their child's extracurricular activities
   o Participating in fundraisers

Next, ask parents to share the successes and struggles they have had getting involved in their child's school. First, have them share two experiences, or two ways they have been involved in their child's school. Then, share two frustrations, or barriers that you face in getting involved in your child's school. Give about ten minutes or so for families to share.

Then, ask families to share their list of ways they have been involved. Write these down on shop paper and suggest how this list is a kind of brainstorm and others can use the good ideas they see and use them. Ask for volunteers and see if the group can discuss the challenges that group members face in getting involved in schools. The facilitator should write down any major barriers so they can be used in the final weeks of the curriculum as possible advocacy engagement activities for the group to take on once the sessions are complete.

Some ways parents can get involved at school: PTA, call their child's teacher, attend a school board meeting, introduce yourself to the principal or other administrator, volunteer in their child's classroom, and e-mail correspondence with the teacher. These are often recognized as traditional ways to get involved, however, there may be challenges to this. Begin a discussion about the barriers to this level of involvement. In the past, parents have shared the following:
➢ Their schedule does not permit, either because of work or because they have to care for younger children.
➢ They do not feel welcome at school.
➢ They are not sure how to start to get involved.

Let parents know they may choose something they discussed as possible advocacy engagement activities that the group can take on after the curriculum is complete.

PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE PARENTS BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

1. Markers
2. Crayons, colored pencils, pencils
3. Scissors
4. Glue or glue sticks
5. Worksheets
6. Books
7. Back-up activities

Child Curriculum (1 hour)

1. Weekly check-in
2. Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av8TWFZw94w
3. Discussion on Educational Systemic Oppression
4. Weekly check-out
5. Homework time and free time

> **Child Facilitator Guide:**

1. Begin a discussion with the children about their experience in school
   - o Do they ever feel excluded by the teacher or other staff?
   - o Do they feel like they are treated different from the other kids?
   - o Do they ever see other kids treated better or worse than they are treated?
   - o What do they think is happening and why?
   - ➤ When this happens, who can they talk to?
     - o Parents
     - o An adult they trust

CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

> **What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 4?**

Parent/child reflection and sharing (Last 15 minutes)

- o Both parents and children share what they learned.
- o

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Follow instructions from the first session on how to facilitate the parent child reflection session.

Start with children and parents sharing what they talked about. Remind parents about homework and do the gift basket drawing. Let parents know they will be shifting to the Health Education portion of the program at the next session.

<div align="center">**IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME**</div>

Homework:
- o Call the school or look online to learn what their child's school report says in regards to educational levels and how they compare to other schools in their district.

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(Fixed drawing for each family to win at least once

Session 5

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
How is My Health Important for My Child's Future?

Purpose
This session is intended to introduce the topic of health and the barriers families may face.

Goals
The goals of this session:
1. Parents will share their experiences they have had with their family's health.
2. Parents will identify concerns and needs they have regarding their family's health.

Survey items related to this session include Health Access and Coverage Items

What will you need in Session 5?

1. Written group norms
2. Program calendar
3. Session 5 homework handout
4. Markers
5. Flip chart paper

What will you do in Session 5?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. Homework check-in.
2. Did anyone call the school or look online to learn what their child's school report says in regards to educational levels and how they compare to other schools in their district?
3. Introduce new topic area-Health Education

**CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL
NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP**

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Check in on homework. What does their school report card look like and how does it compare to other schools in their district.

Remind them we will be shifting gears from schools to health. We will be spending the next two weeks talking about their health and the health of their children.

Parent Curriculum (1 hour)
1. What are three ways you are active as a family?
   ➢ What are three challenges to being active?
2. What do you do as a family to incorporate healthier options in your meals?
   ➢ What are the challenges to including healthier options?
3. Check-in to see if the group is on track with what they did and did not want to get out of this program.
   o What do you hope to get out of this program?
   o Why have you decided to attend this program?
   o What would be ideal for you in this program?
   o What worries you about coming to this program?
   o What don't you want to do during this program?
4. Finally, let them know there will be a guest speaker next week that will be talking about Medicaid and CHP+ options. They will be able to answer initial questions about eligibility and will be available for individual consults.

To introduce the concept of health, we will dedicate today to your stories of successes and struggles with health in your family, including struggles with incorporating and maintaining activity as a family and finding healthier food options for your family. Your health, as well as struggles and successes can be a very emotional topic, so let's all be sure to remember the norms of the group and respect whomever is talking and their story. We all have stories to tell, but let's let everyone tell their own story. We will use your stories to guide our work for the next few weeks as we try to come up with a community project to address a community need. Some issues may include access to grocery stores, healthy food options, community health clinics, insurance programs for you and your children, and programs that will support you in your effort to lead you and your family in a healthy lifestyle.

This exercise should be done by breaking into pairs and allowing everyone to share. Ask parents to try to identify three activities they do as a family and three ways they try to incorporate healthier food options. They will then share the challenges they have to doing this. It is important for the facilitator to write down all of the challenges families face with their health so we can bring resources in for the future to help them with their needs.

Spend the whole session sharing stories of health (broadly defined).

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What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 5?

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1. Markers
2. Crayons, colored pencils, pencils
3. Scissors
4. Glue or glue sticks
5. Worksheets
6. Books
7. Back-up activities

What will the children do in Session 5?

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Weekly check-in
    2. Introduce new topic area-Health and Nutrition
    3. Present "My Plate"
    4. Activity to create a healthy plate-**"My Plate" coloring activity**
    5. Identify a food they like in each of the sections of the plate
    6. Provide "10 tips for making healthy foods fun for kids" handout to the kids to give to their parents**. http://pinterest.com/pin/262616221990656799/**
    7. Weekly check-out
    8. Homework time and free time

Goodbye, pyramid. Hello, plate. The Food Guide Pyramid was the model for healthy eating in the United States. Maybe you had to memorize its rainbow stripes in school. But the USDA, the agency in charge of nutrition, has switched to a new symbol: a colorful plate —called MyPlate — with some of the same messages:

Eat a variety of foods. Eat less of some foods and more of others.

The pyramid had six vertical stripes to represent the five food groups, plus oils. The plate features four sections (vegetables, fruits, grains, and protein) plus a side order of dairy in blue. The big message is that fruits and vegetables take up half the plate, with the vegetable portion being a little bigger than the fruit section. And just like the pyramid where stripes were different widths, the plate has been divided so that the grain section is bigger than the protein section. Why? Because nutrition experts recommend you eat more vegetables than fruit and more grains than protein foods. The divided plate also aims to discourage super-big portions, which can cause weight gain.
(http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html#)

Child Facilitator Guide:

1. Give each student a blank plate and ask them to create a "healthy plate" based on the My Plate guidelines. Be sure the facilitators have materials to conduct the exercise with the children. The facilitator should have an example they made to show the group what the "My Plate" might look like.
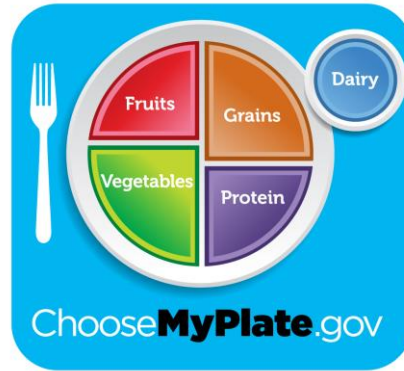
2. Each child will make a fruit kabob and yogurt parfait:
   - See http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Fruit-Kabob
   - See http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Yogurt-Parfait

CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 5?

Parent/child reflection and sharing (Last 15 minutes)
- Parents will make healthy yogurt parfaits. This will be in place of the dessert for dinner.
- Both parents and children share what they learned. Children share their "My Plate" activity they did.
- Parents and kids share items from their plates.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Note that the facilitator will have quite a bit of work to do over the next week bringing in resources for the health issues the families have brought up.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME

Homework:
- Try one way to incorporate more activity as a family before the next meeting,

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- o Try to incorporate one healthier option in a family meal.
- o Bring resources they know about that help families be more active and incorporate healthier options in their meals. Tell the families that they will be going on a Scavenger Hunt this week. Their goal is to find resources for families, adults or children, at the different places they happen to go. For example: the convenience store, the doctor's office, or their child's school. Any place they happen to be may have information, grab it and bring it to share or make a note of it. The family who brings back the most resources will win a prize. We want the children to participate in this as well.

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(Fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

Session 6
Your Family, Your Neighborhood
Getting Covered: My Family's Health Care

Purpose
This session is intended to help families' access healthcare and learn more about how the new healthcare reform may impact them.

Goals
The goals of this session:
1. Parents will be able to apply for health insurance if they meet the requirements and visit the healthcare portal.
2. Parents will learn about the healthcare system from a professional healthcare social worker.

Survey items related to this session include Parent and Child Health Issues, Access to Healthcare and Mental Health Barriers.

What will you need in Session 6?

1. Written group norms
2. Program calendar
3. Session 6 homework handout
4. Markers
5. Flip chart paper

What will you do in session 6?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. Homework check-in
2. How did families incorporate more activity and healthier food options this past week?
3. Which family found the most resources for families?
   ➢ The family with the most resources wins the prize.

CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Nothing is really different about this dinner. Be sure that families share the work they did for homework.

What will the parents will do in Session 6?

Parent Curriculum (1 hour)

Facilitator brings resources that are common to the community (context, community specific, e.g. Medicaid/CHP+ access, application process and recertification, choosing a physician, coverage, trust and providers and trusted list).
**Note, this will take some work by the facilitator that has not yet been inserted into the curriculum.

Bring in the community Healthcare Social Worker to explain the Medicaid/CHP+ process. They should be a very informed source and some families may already know them.

After helping families apply for CHP+ or Medicaid, address the list of struggles that families have brought up (this curriculum area addresses the context and cultural specific needs of the group, and therefore has somewhat limited content in the curriculum).

Parent Facilitator Guide:

It will be important for the facilitator to check with group members prior to this week to assess if everyone already has access to these programs, in which case there will be no point in spending the session applying for these programs.

In the case where all families have already applied for CHP+ and Medicaid, bring in a guest speaker doing health awareness in the community. Have them share the story of their organization, how their organization can serve families and discuss other health related EBPs that parents can access.

EBP programs include:
- Nurse Family Partnership, http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org
- Colorado Dept. of human services provides a list of EBP providers. The facilitator can call providers on this list to see if someone from the organization will come speak to the PARENTS AND CHILDREN BONDING group. A child or adult mental health provider would probably be a good speaker.

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PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE PARENTS BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 6?

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1. Markers
2. Crayons, colored pencils, pencils
3. Scissors
4. Glue or glue sticks
5. Worksheets
6. Books
7. Can goods and box labels.
   a. Drink labels
   b. Energy drinks
   c. Candy bar labels
   d. Back-up activities

What will the children do in Session 6?

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Weekly check-in
   2. Children will be introduced to the importance of eating healthy.
   3. They will learn how to read labels and identify how much sugar and fat there is in food and drink items.
   4. Read the Reading Food labels worksheet together and work through the examples and exercises.
   5. Weekly check-out
   6. Homework time and free time

CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 6?

Parent/Child reflection (Last 15 minutes)
   o Focus on sharing about health and the importance of their family's health. Children will share what they learned about reading nutrition labels.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Follow guidance from earlier reflections. Allow kids and parents to share their health concerns together. Be open to the possibility that families may need more time for this. Take notes on any family health issues that need more time and build time into future sessions to be sure that there is a plan to start to address the family's most immediate health needs.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;font-weight:bold">IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME</p>

Homework

o Have one dinner together as a family, without any distractions, phone, TV, etc.

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(Fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

Session 7

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
What Does My Community Mean to Me?

Purpose

This session is intended to help families identify the positive aspects and challenges of their neighborhood.

Goals

The goals of this session:
1. Identify strengths and challenges of their neighborhoods.
2. Identify what their neighborhood means to them.
3. Identify who is in their community.
4. Identify their priorities for change in their neighborhoods.

Survey items related to this session include Neighborhood Cohesion Measures

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What will you need in Session 7?

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1. Written group norms
2. Asset Mapping sheets
3. Program calendar
4. Session 7 homework handout
5. Markers
6. Flip chart paper

What will you do in session 7?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. Homework check-in: Have one dinner together as a family, without any distractions, phone, TV, etc. What was challenging about this and what was rewarding?
2. Family time with each other.

CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP

Check-in on the homework from last week: Have one dinner together as a family, without any distractions, phone, TV, etc. What was challenging about this and what was rewarding?

Remind families that we will be shifting to the community engagement portion of the program and we are excited that they have committed to coming to the program thus far. There are only three sessions left after tonight and we want to encourage them to finish the program. They have four sessions, including this one to plan their community event.

What will the parents do in Session 7?

       Parent Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Asset Mapping
2. Literature on what we know works for successful communities.
➢ Feeling connected and trusting one another.
➢ Social ties, just talking to more people.
➢ Readiness or acceptance of the community
➢ Ready to make changes, like school reform.
3. Planning a community event to promote trust and cohesion in the community.

Tell parents that you would like them to explore their feelings about their neighborhood. We know neighborhoods can be important for facilitating healthy successful family development. To facilitate this exercise, we are going to use an Asset Map of the neighborhood. An Asset Map is a way to think through all of the positive aspects of the neighborhood.

Hand out Asset Map sheets. Explain that assets can be identified at the individual, associational, organizational and institutional levels.

Take some time to write down the things that you feel are assets in the community. Then, we will discuss what you have written.

During the discussion, the facilitator should help parents think deeply about the assets in their community, and provide lots of space for the parents to think about neighborhood assets.

Have the parents nominate one parent to summarize the assets discussion to the kids group.

End the parent group ten or fifteen minutes early today so that parents and kids each have a chance to share their discussion on assets in the neighborhood.

PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE PARENTS BACK TO THE LARGER GROUP

What the Child Facilitator will need in Session 7:

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1. Asset Mapping handout
2. Poster board
3. Markers, pencils, pens
4. Materials for the models (TBD)
5. Coloring sheets for backup plan
6. Board games
7. Pre-made example of the asset poster

What will the children do in Session 7?

Map the assets of the neighborhood.

Child Facilitator Guide:

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
   a) Weekly check-in
   b) Neighborhood discussion
   c) Asset Map poster activity
   d) Weekly check-out
   e) Homework time and free time

1. Begin a brief discussion on what their neighborhood looks like.
   ➢ What are the great things about it?
   ➢ If they could change one thing, what would it be?
2. Introduce this topic by saying that we have talked about what you like about school and some challenges there are in your school. We have also talked about your health and the importance of eating healthy foods. The third part of our program is to think about the community or neighborhood and understand that living in a healthy, safe, supportive neighborhood helps kids do well in school.
3. Then, give them the Asset Map; explain what an asset map is used for. Provide them with a poster board so they can create an Asset Map in small groups.
   ➢ An Asset Map is a way to think through all of the positive aspects of the neighborhood. Explain that assets can be identified at the individual, associational, organizational and institutional levels.

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> ➢ Take some time to write down or draw the things that you feel are assets in the community. Then, we will discuss what you have written.

4. After the kids have written and drawn the assets in their neighborhood, have them share what they have come up with. Choose one child to share with the parents the assets that the children identified when parents and kids come back together.

Parents will rejoin the group ten to fifteen minutes early today to provide time for both parents and children to discuss the assets they see in the neighborhood.

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 7?

Parent/child reflection and sharing (Last 15 minutes)
- o Parents and children share their Asset Maps/posters and have a discussion about the assets in the neighborhood.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Tell the whole group they completed the same asset mapping exercise today, so let's listen to the assets that both groups identified. Have the parent representative present the parent discussion. Let any questions or discussions begin. Then, have the child representative present the assets that were discussed in the child's group. Again, let any discussion ensue.

Homework:
- o We will choose a community project together next week. For your homework, we would like each family to bring three ideas for a community project**.**

IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

Session 8

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
Connecting With Your Community

Purpose

This session is intended to begin the planning of the community project.

Goals

The goals of this session:
1. Brainstorm and create a list of community projects
2. Provide a budget for the project
3. Determine the project
4. Begin a discussion with the children on leadership

Survey items related to this session include Neighborhood Cohesion and PYD items.

What will you need in Session 8?

1. Written group norms
2. Program calendar
3. Session 8 homework handout
4. Markers
5. Flip chart paper
6. Ball for group share out
7. Sticker dots

What will you do in session 8?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. Check-in on homework. For your homework, we asked each family to bring <u>three</u> ideas for a community project**.** We won't share them now, but we will have time to talk about them later.
2. Family time with each other

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Allow families to bond and enjoy each other over a meal.

**This is an old video and it will be replaced
http://nyti.ms/WEQDRm

Ask parents and children how they felt when they watched the video? Do you have any similar stories in your neighborhood?

Provide a short lecture on feeling connected. This means talking with everyone. Reaching out to people like you and people you don't think are like you. It means including older adults, kids, and working families. It means including people from different ethnic backgrounds, with different cultural values and experiences. We know it is important to trust one another and find common values. The only way to build this is to get together and share with each other. We have to try our best to care about each other and the community.

**CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL
NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP**

What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 8?

1. Markers, crayons, colored pencils, pencils
2. Scissors
3. Back-up activities

What the children will do in Session 8?

Child Curriculum (1 hour)

1. Weekly check-in
2. Leadership discussion
3. Weekly check-out
4. Homework time and free time *once they have met as a larger group*

Child Facilitator Guide:

1. Begin a discussion about leadership.
2. Ask them to talk about what makes someone a leader?
3. What does not make them a leader?
4. Who are the leaders in their school, neighborhood and at home?

5. Let them know they are going to be leaders along with their parents and they get to help choose and plan a community project.

Bring in the NY Times article on the Chicago resilient neighborhood. Read it aloud as a group and get feedback from them about what they think. Remember, parents and kids are all together during this.

Article: *Saving Chatham*
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/08/science/lessons-in-community-from-chicagos-south-side.html?ref=science

THIS PORTION OF THE CURRICULUM IS FOR BOTH PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Remind them about the community project they will plan over the next three sessions. Explain that their family and them are responsible for making a healthy neighborhood. They are the leaders in this community. They need to be the leaders because if they don't choose to be, then who will?

Brainstorm on a community project.

Consider the assets in this community and consider your hopes and dreams, academic realities and health. I want you to think critically about a community project that you can organize.

Tell them the parameters for the community project:
> How much money is available? $200
> How much time (one to two community sessions)
> What are their community goals?

Provide some examples of community projects.

Give examples about projects groups have done in the past: community kickball game, community dinner, health fair, assist with a community party, invite local school board or council person to learn about *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* and the work they have been doing over the past six weeks. Talk about the planning it will take, the role they have, and your role as the facilitator.

Now that we know this, we need to plan a community event to bring people from the community together. Use issues that we have discussed throughout the curriculum to focus the community event.
> Do we want it to involve schools? We could invite the administrators and teachers from the schools to an event. We could host a school choice event,

where we could hold a literacy and education fair and invite local service providers. Any other ideas or issues that have come up that they want to address?
- ➢ It could be about health. Are there health issues that involve everyone in the community? Does the built environment need fixing because of sidewalks or lights? Do we need a grocery store nearby, or an affordable health clinic? Is the neighborhood unsafe and we need to take back the night to address the stress caused by the lack of safety?
- ➢ Do we just want to have a celebration?
- ➢ Is there an existing event that we can attach ourselves to? It is often not necessary to start from scratch, but it is good to build coalitions of existing groups who already have some structure and momentum.

Facilitate a brainstorming session for them. What are their goals for the community? What can they realistically accomplish? Will this be fun? What resources are available in the community already?

Have the parent facilitator and the child facilitator share this brainstorming session and make sure that both parents and kids are contributing in the brainstorming. Parents and children will divide into small groups. Make sure the groups are intentionally divided to include the same amount in each group with both parents and children.

After brainstorming in small groups, bring them all back together to share out. Each person will have an opportunity to share when the ball is passed to him or her.

After the brainstorm, compile a list of the ideas for the community project.

Nominate their community project.

Tell parents and kids the three vote nominating process and get official buy-in that everyone agrees to this method to choose the community event.

Next, give each participant (child and parent), three sticky dots. Everyone gets three votes for the final community project. You can put your dots on different projects or on the same project. After everyone has placed their dots, we will count to see which community project we will work on.

Count the dots and that will be the community project.

Homework: or if there is time left do it during the session.

Bring in ideas for what tasks need to be accomplished to accomplish this community project.

Spend the rest of the session beginning to plan this event. Let, the parents take this process over and be empowered to plan the event. They can also have time in the next

session to plan the event. Suggest they form committees since this can be an overwhelming process.

Some pieces that should be discussed and if possible settled:
1. What will the event be?
2. What will be the date of the event?
3. What will we do at the event?
4. What is the budget for the event?
5. What tasks will need to be accomplished to put the event on?
6. Who among the group members will be in charge of the different parts of the event that need to get finished?
7. What role will the children take in the planning and carrying out the event? What responsibilities do they want to carry?

PARENT FACILITATOR WILL NOW END THE SESSION

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 8?

Parent/Child reflection (Last 15 minutes)

- o   Use this as an opportunity to reflect and critique their ideas. Do they like what they have come up with? Is it addressing an important community issue? Does the event allow them to build relationships with everyone in the neighborhood?

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Facilitate a critique of what they have done. Let them critique their own ideas.

Homework
- o   Everyone must talk to at least one neighbor or parent from their school to tell them about the event. Each child will tell their teacher about the event.
- o   Try to talk to at least one person that you don't know to invite them to the event.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

Session 9

Your Family, Your Neighborhood
Leadership in a Community Event

Purpose

This session is intended to plan the community project.

Goals
The goals of this session:
1. Continue planning the community project
2. Create task groups
3. Finish the Action Plan

Survey items related to this session include Community Cohesion and PYD items

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What will you need in Session 9?

1. Written group norms
2. Program calendar
3. Session 9 homework handout
4. Markers
5. Flip chart paper
6. Notes from previous session on event brainstorming session

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What will you do in session 9?

Dinner (45 minutes)

Did everyone talk to at least one neighbor or parent from their school to tell them about the event? Did each child tell their teacher about the event? Family time with each other

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Parent Facilitator Guide:

Check in on event planning. Also, have them report on the people they talked to about the event and who they talked to that they didn't know.

> **What will you need in Session 9?**

1. Paper
2. Markers, pencils, pens

**CHILD FACILITATOR AND CHILDREN WILL
NOW LEAVE TO THEIR GROUP**

> **What will the Children do in Session 9?**

Child Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Community Event Planning
2. The children will meet as a separate group and plan their activity for the community project.

> **Child Facilitator Guide:**

1. The children will meet to work on planning the activity they chose in the last session.
2. Remind them that they are all leaders and it will take everyone's help to make sure the project is a success.
3. Follow the Action Planning steps to plan their activity.

**CHILD FACILITATOR WILL NOW END AND BRING THE CHILDREN BACK
TO THE LARGER GROUP**

> **What will the Parents do in Session 9?**

Parent Curriculum (1 hour)
1. Review what has been done to prepare for the final event
2. Work session to prepare for the final event
3. Prepare resources to advertise the event

> **Parent Facilitator Guide:**

This session is intended to provide parents and children time to prepare their final community engagement/advocacy event. Remind them about their Action Plan and see what progress they have made on it.

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Action Planning

Action plans are the other vital element of personal development planning, and are all about planning what you want to do in the future. You may want to plan something new, build on an existing project or work that needs to be improved.

1. Set 'objectives' for the project – i.e. the 'bottom line' of what it is you want to achieve.
   ➢ Reflect on what you've learned about yourself, each other and your community
   ➢ Be realistic! Think about what is feasible to achieve.
   ➢ Ensure they are clearly worded, realistic and achievable.
2. Define your success criteria – i.e. How will you know whether you've achieved a given objective?
   ➢ Identify your success criteria before decisions are made on the actions to be taken.
3. Identify and pinpoint individual responsibility for actions – What you are actually planning to do?
   ➢ Identify exactly what is to be done.
   ➢ Who can support this project?
   ➢ Are there others outside of this group who can support you?
   ➢ Ensure your actions are realistic and achievable within the resources available.
4. Resources - What you will need in order to ensure your actions are successful.
   ➢ Think about space, time and other requirements.
   ➢ Think about the appropriateness of resources you're planning to use.

During the parent session, the facilitator wants to facilitate a process where the parents plan the event themselves. Some leadership and roles should be sorted out. The facilitator needs to work hard to allow this to be the parents' event. The goal is that this is supposed to be an opportunity for parents to put on a sustainable advocacy event that they could organize again in the future.

Some activities that might need to occur during this session include:
➢ Someone might need to manage the event and coordinate all of the pieces.
➢ A marketing plan may need to be developed with a list of contacts and advertising materials.
➢ Collaborators may need to be contacted.
➢ Logistics of the event may need to be finalized.

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 9?

Parent/Child reflection (last 15 minutes)

- o Parents and children should share their plans for the event.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

Facilitate this process and note anything that might need to be coordinated between the children and the parents. Celebrate the parents that have committed to *Your Family, Your Neighborhood* these last 9 weeks. Remind them that next week is the last week and that they will receive their $50 gift card for completing the survey.

Homework
- o Homework is to complete any remaining tasks related to the activity they have planned.

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">**IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME**</p>

Gift Basket/Card Drawing
(fixed drawing for each family to win at least once)

Purpose
This session is intended to …

Goals
The goals of this session are to:
   1.

<u>Purpose</u>
This session is intended to plan the community project.

<u>Goals</u>
The goals of this session are to wrap up the 10-sessions and celebrate the families accomplishments in the sessions.

<u>Survey items related to this session</u> <u>include Community Cohesion and PYD items</u>

What will you need in Session 10?

1. Written group norms
2. Markers
3. Flip chart paper
4. Detailed notes from the event they have been planning

What will you do in session 10?

Dinner (45 minutes)
1. Go over details of the event. Check in on any work that still needs to be accomplished.
2. Borrowing from MOPs one-on-ones have everyone commit to inviting one person to their event.
3. Family time with each other

Go over the event details and have everyone identify one person or family they are going to commit to inviting. Tell them this is a common community organizing strategy to gain community participation.

What will the Child Facilitator need in Session 10?

1. Paper
2. Markers, pencils, pens

What will the children will do in Session 10?

Child Curriculum (**45 minutes. Note the time change**)
The children will either meet separately or with the parent group to discuss and plan last minute details of the community event.

Child Facilitator Guide:

Follow the lead of the parent facilitator. You can decide before this session if you want to meet as one group or separately.

What will the parents do in Session 10?

Parent Curriculum (**45 minutes, Note the time change**)
1. Bring in community representatives so we can share out the event. Examples could include:
   ➢ A principal
   ➢ The President of the Local Resident Council
   ➢ A community officer
   ➢ A local city councilwoman
   ➢ A community panel
   Have this be a way for them to start to be more engaged in their community
   (**This might be too much, need to decide if this is appropriate**)
2. This is the last session, so the group needs to build in time to debrief and do some exit work in order to discuss how they can continue this without the curriculum.

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3. Put a data collection piece in here. We want to give them the post version of the survey during this session.

Parent Facilitator Guide:

If a community panel is going to be available, the facilitator will have to do a good deal of work leading up to this session by inviting community members to a half hour info session about the community event. Bridge for Families parents will also have to be prepared to provide a half hour announcement about the event.

Then, there will be a debrief session on the entire curriculum. The facilitator can use the I liked, I learned, I wished exercise to give families the chance to debrief about their progress, successes, and struggles with the curriculum. This session should be videotaped so that parents responses during the debrief can be used to do some formative evaluation of the curriculum.

After the debrief exercise, give the families the post-test survey to fill out so that the data collection is complete.

***This group is shortened to allow more time for the FINAL parent/child reflections**

What will the Parent Facilitator do to end Session 10?

Parent/Child reflection (Last 30 minutes, Note the time change)
  o Use this time to allow families (children and parents) to share what they gained from the program.   Also, give them time to celebrate their successes and say goodbyes. Pass out family certificates of completion, i.e. "Martinez family, Terry family." This shows that it was a family effort and commitment. Also, pass out $50 gift cards. Make sure we take lots of photos to capture their accomplishments!

Parent Facilitator Guide:

The facilitator should take careful notes, and probably get permission to record this sharing to use in the evaluation of the program. Acknowledge the staff and facilitators that helped make this program possible.

Homework:
  o What are you going to do to continue to be involved with your child's education, increase your family's healthy activity and healthier food options and improve your community?

o   Commit to something. Attend a community, school board or district council meeting.

<p style="text-align:center">IT IS IMPORTANT TO END ON TIME</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Good Job!</p>

Booster Session 1:
Your Neighborhood

Timing: At the beginning of summer at the end of the school year.

Plan a community event. Check in with families during their event planning and be available for support. Attend event!

Booster Session 2:
Attachment to School

Timing: At the beginning of fall around the time children go back to school

Back to school event. Organize a YFYN meeting and provide families the opportunities to talk about the hopes and and fears for the school year. Give them the opportunity to share ways that they are going to be involved at school.

Booster Session 3:
The Parent Child Bond

Timing: After the holidays in mid-winter

Meet to reengage with your children. Organize a YFYN session where parents and kids split into a parent group and a kid group and get to talk about life at home. Bring the children and parents back together to discuss a commitment to being involved in each other's lives.