

**Mother and Father Involvement in a Culturally Diverse Head Start Center:  
An Investigation Using Multi-Level Modeling**  
Christine M. McWayne, New York University

Family involvement in children's learning and educational experiences has been recognized as a vital component of early childhood education for decades (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992) and has been identified as a key protective factor for low-income, ethnic minority children and youth (Jeynes, 2003; National Center for Children in Poverty, 2002). The following study employed a multidimensional measure of family involvement and investigated the family involvement practices of 160 Latino and Polish immigrant mothers and fathers in relation to measures of children's school readiness. Multi-level modeling (via SAS PROC MIXED) was employed to determine the function of demographic predictors and level of satisfaction with contact as determinants for overall family involvement. Findings from the multi-level modeling analyses revealed parent gender and satisfaction with school contact to be significant predictors of family involvement behaviors across the three dimensions (i.e., Home-Based Involvement, School-Based Involvement, and Home-School Conferencing). These findings indicated that on average, mothers reported higher levels of involvement than fathers. In addition, mothers' and fathers' level of satisfaction with school contact was positively associated with all three forms of involvement, relatively more so with respect to home-school conferencing. Family-level demographic predictors in this study (i.e., child gender, mothers' employment, marital status, and primary language) did not relate to family involvement dimensions, indicating that other family-level factors not included in the models may account for family to family variation. Bivariate correlational analyses with the child outcome measures revealed small, but statistically significant relationships between mother and father involvement in home-school conferencing and children's oppositional behavior and general school readiness.