

COPARENTING AND PARENTAL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

by

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B.A., Abilene Christian University, 2000
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Family Studies and Human Services
College of Human Ecology

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

Parental school involvement is associated with positive social, psychological, and academic child outcomes. Beyond school, demographic, and individual influences, research is limited regarding the link between family-level processes and parental school involvement. Guided by family systems theory, this study used data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study ($n = 1,896$) to examine the link between coparenting support and mothers' and fathers' home-based school involvement and school-based school involvement when the child was nine years-old. Additionally, this study tested if parental union transitions (e.g., parental union dissolution; parental union formation; stably coresident relationship) significantly moderated these relationships. Latent variable structural equation modeling results revealed that higher levels of coparenting support was associated with higher levels of mothers' and fathers' home-based school involvement, and higher levels of mothers' and fathers' school-based involvement. Union transition was not a significant moderator between coparenting support and mother and father home- and school-based school involvement.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Parental school involvement is one of the most widely recognized factors that impact a child's learning and development. From the time children enter school age, parents have opportunities to engage in their child's schooling. Children and adolescents between ages 5 to 18 spend at least half of their waking hours during the school year either at school or engaged in school-related activities (Miller, 2002). Although parental school involvement has a powerful influence on positive child academic, social, and psychological outcomes (for a review, see Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Jeynes, 2005), the link between family level processes and parental school involvement remains less understood. In order to address this gap in the literature, the purpose of this study is to explore the association between the parents' coparenting relationship and mother and father school involvement based in the home context (home-based school involvement), and mother and father school involvement based in the school context (school-based school involvement) when the child is nine years-old. Additionally, because parental union transitions between biological parents (e.g., union dissolution; union formation) can potentially influence the coparenting relationship (Carlson & Högnäs, 2011; Pruett & Donsky, 2011), this study explores whether parental union transitions moderate the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement.

Home-Based School Involvement

Home-based school involvement refers to parenting practices that are related to the child's school and occur outside of the school, usually in the child's home (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). Practices may include assisting children with school-related tasks, such as helping children with their homework, talking with children about their academic work, or discussing their day at school. Home-based school involvement also includes engaging

children in intellectual activities that may not be related to school (e.g., reading books with the child). In the United States, home-based school involvement usually takes the form of assisting with homework, with 70% of parents helping their child with homework at least once a week (Pomerantz et al., 2007). Parental school involvement in the home has been related to child academic achievement and social-emotional development (Brandon, 2007; Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs, 2004; Sanders & Epstein, 2000). Home-based school involvement has also been associated with better grades and higher standardized test scores in language arts, math, and science (e.g., Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998; Culp, Hubbs-Tait, Culp, & Starost, 2000; Sheldon, Epstein, & Galindo, 2010; Van Voorhis, 2003; 2009). Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, and Holbein (2005) revealed that parental engagement in their children's education at home was connected to higher levels of student school engagement, perceived competence and control, self-regulation, mastery goal orientation, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

School-Based School Involvement

School-based school involvement refers to parenting practices that include direct contact with the school (Pomerantz et al., 2007), such as attending parent-teacher conferences, initiating contact with teachers, or volunteering at school. The majority of parents in the United States (approximately two-thirds) become involved through their presence at school meetings and parent-teacher conferences (Pomerantz et al., 2007). School-based school involvement has been linked with higher child reading achievement and lower rates of grade retention, higher daily attendance and lower chronic absenteeism, lower rates of high school dropout, and higher levels of on-time high school completion (e.g., Barnard, 2004; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Meidel & Reynolds, 1999). Parent-school connectedness has also been found to be a protective factor against adolescent health risk factors, such as emotional

distress, suicidality, age of first sexual intercourse, alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use, and student interpersonal violence (Resnick et al., 1997).

Predictors of Parental School Involvement

Parental school involvement research has primarily revolved around demographic variables, individual influences, and school characteristics. Parents with higher incomes were found to be more involved in their child's schooling, and higher levels of parents' education were associated with a greater tendency for parents to actively manage their child's education (e.g., advocating for placement in honor's courses; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Parents with fewer years of education may have a greater propensity to harbor more negative experiences with school, and thus may be less willing to initiate contact with the school (Lareau, 1996). Parents with a lower SES may also have more barriers to school involvement, such as inflexible work schedules, lack of resources, and transportation issues (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Research has suggested that parental school involvement may differ among ethnic groups and family structure. For example, African-American parents were more likely to be more involved in home-based school involvement than school-based school involvement, whereas Caucasian parents were more likely to be involved in school-based school involvement than home-based school involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Married mothers were found to be more involved in school-based involvement than mothers from single-parent families (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997; Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000).

Apart from demographic factors, individual factors have also been linked to parental school involvement. Lower levels of parental social resources have been shown to undermine school involvement (Sheldon, 2002), and parental depression has been negatively associated with lower levels of home- and school-based school involvement (Kohl et al., 2000). Parental

school involvement has been related to beliefs about whether parents think their actions will help their child succeed in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Child characteristics, such as exhibiting difficult behavior, have also been associated with decreased parental school involvement (Grolnick, Weiss, McKenzie, & Wightman, 1996).

Finally, research has suggested that school climate may also influence parents' willingness and ability to be engaged in their child's schooling. Parents have reported becoming more involved if they received a direct invitation from teachers to be involved and perceived the school as welcoming parent involvement (Griffith, 1998). Positive school climate has been shown to enhance the parent-school relationship because schools were more likely to communicate the importance of parent involvement, invite parents to be involved with their child's schooling, and demonstrate respect for parents' concerns and suggestions about their child (for a review, see Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Aims of Research

The goal of this study was to understand the relationship between the mother-father coparenting relationship and mother and father home- and school-based school involvement. Understanding the family processes that contribute to parental school involvement in elementary school may have immediate and long-term consequences for the child. As children enter school-age, parental school involvement provides the opportunities to demonstrate that schoolwork and learning is important (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001). Parental school involvement has been linked to student personal competence and efficacy necessary to achieve academic goals (Frome & Eccles, 1998), and has been found to be a protective factor against mental health distress and risky behaviors (e.g., Resnick et al., 1997). Children with involved parents exhibited fewer behavior problems and higher levels of social functioning at home and in the classroom (El

Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Rimm-Kauffman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003; Supplee, Shaw, Hailstones, & Hartman, 2004). Parental involvement early in their child's education may have lasting positive benefits, including lower drop-out rates, increased on-time high school completion, and decreased grade retention (e.g., Barnard, 2004; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999; Meidel & Reynolds, 1999; Wilson & Hughes, 2009).

Much of the prior research on parental school involvement has focused on demographic factors and individual influences (e.g., Kohl et al., 2000), has used small samples (e.g., Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, & Efreom, 2005; Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010), has focused on the impact of relationship status (e.g., Grolnick et al., 1997; Kohl et al., 2000), or has primarily used maternal reports of school involvement (e.g., Semke, Garbacz, Kwon, Sheridan, & Woods, 2010; Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Given these limitations, the motivation of the current study is to move beyond the current literature by using a large and diverse sample to explore the association between the specific family-level process of coparenting support and levels of mothers' and fathers' home- and school-based elementary school involvement, and to examine whether parental union transitions moderate these relationships.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Family systems theory assumes that the family is more than the sum of its parts, and although family relationships can be described individually, they can never be entirely understood separate from the whole family unit (Cox & Paley, 1997; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Thus, family members are interdependent, affecting each other and influencing individual outcomes. In the same way that family members are interdependent, individual family members form mutually interdependent smaller subsystems (marital, parental, sibling, etc.) embedded within the larger family system (Minuchin, 1974; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Subsystems reciprocally influence each other, so that the dynamic role of dyadic (mother-father) and triadic (mother-father-child) relationships within family systems influence individual and family level outcomes (Minuchin, 1974). Family systems theory conceptualizes coparenting as a family level, triadic relationship that involves adults raising a child together and the quality of coordination between adults in their parental roles (Feinberg, 2003; Minuchin, 1974). The quality of the coparenting relationships includes how well and regularly parents communicate about the child, and the degree to which parents trust and support that the child is well cared for when with the other parent (McHale, 2011).

Parents who are able to effectively coordinate and support each other in the parenting role may impact the boundaries between subsystems, and between subsystems and the external school system. For example, if parents are able to collaborate around helping their child with homework or checking to see if he or she completed school assignments, there is likely active solidarity regarding parenting roles around their child's school involvement. Thus, both parents are more likely to be involved in their child's schooling. Conversely, if parents are unable or

unwilling to cooperate with one another, there is likely a lack of communication about the child, and a lack of trust that the other parent can adequately fulfill parenting responsibilities around the child's schooling. A parent's lack of communication and coordination, whether intentional or not, can directly influence the other parent's involvement in the child's school. For example, a parent may not notify the other parent of parent-teacher conferences or a school activity in which the child is involved. A lack of coordination around the child's school may also be due to the expectation that the other parent will assume the primary responsibility for involvement in the child's school. A father may choose to not be involved in assisting with the child's homework because he expects the mother to be responsible for fulfilling this role.

The potential disconnect between the coparenting relationship and parental school involvement is likely to be heightened when parents dissolve their coresidential relationship. At the time of the union dissolution, the relationship between the mother and father is likely to be filled with conflict and hostility. Thus, boundaries may become more closed, blocking effective communication between parents. In this case, the residential parent may intentionally exclude the nonresidential parent from being involved in school by not disclosing information about school activities (e.g., gate-keeping behaviors; Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Closely related to family systems theory, the "spillover" hypothesis proposes that affect and/or behavior from one part of the family system "spills over," or transfers, to another part of the family system, influencing outcomes (Erel & Burman, 1995). Conceptually, emotions and affect from the coparenting relationship may transfer to the parent-child relationship, influencing parental school involvement. Higher quality coparenting relationships, with higher levels of coordination around the parent-child relationship, will likely "spillover" into higher levels of parental commitment and investment into the parent-child relationship. As a result, parents will

invest more time and energy in their child's schooling. Conversely, the feelings and behaviors produced in lower quality coparenting relationships may "spillover" into the parent-child relationship by parents lowering their level of commitment and investment in the parent-child relationship.

The Coparenting Relationship

Among the dyadic relationships in the family (e.g., husband-wife; parent-child), coparenting is a family-level triadic relationship that focuses on parents raising a child together. Coparenting is defined as the way parents work together to raise their common child (Carlson & Högnäs, 2011; Feinberg, 2003). Playing a distinct role in the family system, coparenting is a construct that differs from both the couple relationship and the parent-child relationship (McHale, 1995; McHale, Kuersten-Hogan, Lauretti, & Rasmussen, 2000). A supportive coparenting relationship is motivated by concern for the child's welfare and their connection to the child, while a quality romantic relationship is focused on the individual partner or the romantic relationship (Feinberg, 2003; McHale, Kuersten-Hogan, & Rao, 2004). Moreover, the coparenting relationship does not include components found in the romantic relationship, such as the romantic, sexual, companionate, emotional, financial, and legal aspects of adult relationships (Feinberg, 2003). Distress in the coparenting relationship also differs from romantic relationship distress, as parents who experience a distressed romantic relationship do not always display negative coparenting behaviors, and parents who display negative coparenting behaviors do not always report romantic relationship distress (Van Egeren, 2004).

Across child development, coparenting and parent relationship quality are distinct predictors of child outcomes (McHale & Rasmussen, 1998). Coparenting has been shown to be more predictive of parenting and child outcomes than relationship quality (for a review, see

Feinberg, 2003). Feinberg, Kan, and Heatherington's (2007) study of over 500 families concluded that the coparenting relationship, specifically coparenting conflict, predicted as much or more unique variance in parenting and child adjustment than did marital quality. Researches have also differentiated the coparenting relationship from the parent-child relationship, as coparenting has been shown to have similar or stronger influence on child functioning than on the parent-child relationship (e.g., Cowan & McHale, 1996; Karreman, van Tuijl, van Aken, Marcel, & Dekovic, 2008). Due to its unique contribution to parenting and child outcomes, the coparenting relationship is a construct that influences the family system in distinct ways.

Coparenting Support

As a distinct construct influencing the family system, Feinberg (2003) proposed a four-component framework for the coparenting relationship: a) childrearing agreement or disagreement, b) division of duties, tasks, and responsibilities, c) management of interactional patterns, and d) coparenting support. Levels of agreement or disagreement refer to the extent to which parents share the same expectations on child-related issues, such as discipline, behavior, education, and moral values. The division of duties, tasks, and responsibilities refers to the way parents divide the tasks and responsibilities associated with raising a child. Tasks include daily routines, such as feeding infants, and responsibility for financial, legal, and health matters. Effective coparenting involving this component includes not only how chores are divided, but whether parents view the arrangement as equitable and are satisfied with the arrangement. The third component, management of interactional patterns, includes the manner by which parents control the level of conflict and hostility towards each other, the appropriateness of boundaries around the coparenting relationship (e.g., not putting child in the middle of parental arguments),

and the amount of time each parent engages with the child when the triad is interacting together (e.g., triadic balance).

The current study focused on the relationship between coparenting support and parental school involvement. Coparenting support refers to the strategies and actions that support the other parent's efforts to accomplish parenting goals (Feinberg, 2003; Van Egeren & Hawkins, 2004). Parents can offer support to the other parent in his/her parenting role through a variety of behaviors, including positive affirmation of the other's parenting ability, valuing and respecting the other's contribution to parenting, and upholding the other's parenting decisions and authority (Feinberg, 2003). Although various dimensions of coparenting exist, Bronte-Tinkew and Horowitz (2010) state that most studies have overlooked the dynamics of the positive coparenting relationship by focusing on the negative aspects of the coparenting relationship. Examining the dimension of coparenting support emphasizes a family strengths-based perspective that focuses on the dynamics of positive coparenting functioning. Theoretically, understanding how parents support each other in their parenting role may also be a key factor in properly assessing the overall solidarity and collaboration between parents (McHale, 2011).

Coparenting and Parental Engagement

Parents' ability to support each other may "spillover" into the parent-child relationship, increasing the resources to engage in positive parenting (Feinberg, 2003; Morrill, Hines, & Mahmood, 2010). Developmentally, having a school-age child introduces new opportunities for parents to communicate about the child and be involved in their child's life. Although studies have suggested a positive relationship between coparenting and parental engagement during the developmental ages of preschool and middle childhood (e.g., Bonds & Gondoli, 2007; Jones, Shaffer, Forehand, Brody, & Armistead, 2003), no known studies have focused on the

relationship between coparenting support and mother and father home- and school-based school involvement.

Coparenting support is closely linked with mothers' and fathers' parenting behavior (Feinberg, 2003; Floyd, Gilliom, & Costigan, 1998). Over the last several years, research has focused on the link between coparenting support and father engagement (e.g. Elliston, McHale, Talbot, Parmley, & Kuersten-Hogan, 2008; Futris & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2007), concluding that when parents work together and support each other's parenting role, fathers stay more involved and have higher levels of father-child interactions (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Hohmann-Mariott, 2011; Sobolewski & King, 2005). Similarly, Waller's (2012) study concluded that fathers were more likely to engage in daily activities with their child when involved in a supportive coparenting relationship with the biological mother.

The coparenting relationship may be especially important for father engagement because fathers are more sensitive and susceptible to family environmental influences than mothers (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998; Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2007), meaning that lower levels of coparenting support could impact fathers in more profound ways. Culturally, mothers typically assume the primary responsibilities for caring for young children, and most often have residential custody after a union dissolution (Carlson & Högnäs, 2011). Thus, fathers may have a greater need for support in their parenting roles than mothers. In conclusion, although research suggests a positive link between coparenting and parental involvement, it is unknown whether the coparenting relationship is associated with involvement in their child's schooling. This study extends current research on parental school involvement by focusing on the link between the family process of coparenting support and mothers' and fathers' home- and school-based involvement.

Union Transitions as a Moderator

Theoretically, family processes can interact with each other, strengthening or weakening those processes in the family system. The current study explored whether parental union transitions moderated the relationship between coparenting support and parental school involvement. Specifically, this study investigated the union transitions of biological parents who dissolved a coresident relationship, parents who formed a coresident relationship, and parents who maintained a coresidential union between child ages 5 and 9.

Following a divorce or separation, parenting roles are likely to be redefined, boundaries between parents and the parent-child may become more ambiguous, and communicating about the child's school may develop into a more tenuous task. More complex logistical issues, due to custody arrangements, and less frequent contact between biological parents are likely to provide fewer opportunities for parents to coordinate around their child's school. A power struggle can also take place, as both parents expect to be treated like principle stakeholders who should be included in the many facets of their children's lives (Pruett & Donsky, 2011). If there is conflict and hostility between parents, the primary residential parent may choose not to include the other parent. Theoretically, this inequality between parents infiltrates the coparenting relationship and the willingness of each parent to coordinate their roles around their child's school. Conversely, parents who form a coresidential relationship or are in a stable coresident relationship are likely more willing and able to communicate and coordinate their parenting roles. However, one major limitation of the literature is that the relationship between coparenting support and parental school involvement has not been examined among parents who were involved in a union transition. Therefore, it cannot be stated whether this relationship is stronger or weaker for biological parents who dissolved their coresidential relationship, biological parents who formed a coresident relationship, or biological parents who maintained a stable coresident relationship. To

address this gap in the literature, the current study explored whether union transitions moderated the relationships among the variables of interest.

Parent Gender as a Moderator

This study tested if parent gender moderates the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement. Allen and Hawkins (1999) suggest that mothers may accept the cultural role of family managers, overseeing and directing aspects of the child's life, while fathers assume the role of helping meet standards set by the mother. Thus, mothers may be primarily responsible for clarifying parental roles and responsibilities around the child's life, including managing each parent's involvement in their child's schooling. Mothers have been found to be more actively involved in child education at home and at school (Coyl-Shepherd & Newland, 2013; Hango, 2007; Jeynes, 2005). As parents maintain these gender distinctions, it is likely that fathers may rely on the coparenting relationship for communication and coordination regarding roles and involvement in the child's school. Extant research has shown that coparenting support impacted father-child engagement more than mother-child engagement (Hohmann-Mariott, 2011; Pedro, Ribeiro, & Shelton, 2012). While previous research has not examined this relationship in the context of parental school involvement, fathers who experience mutual coparenting support and solidarity may develop a clearer sense of their role and responsibilities around their child's schooling. As a result, they may feel more included in the family system and be more willing and able to engage in their child's school. It is expected that the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement will be stronger for fathers than mothers.

Type of School Involvement as a Moderator

Additionally, it is expected that the relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement is likely to be stronger than the relationship between coparenting support school-based school involvement. Because home-based school involvement has been shown to be the most frequent form of parental school involvement (Coyle-Shepherd & Newland, 2013; Tan & Goldberg, 2009), it is likely that parental interaction around the child's school mainly entails school involvement in the home. Parents have more opportunities to coordinate and communicate about their child's schooling at home. School activities are limited throughout the school year, whereas parents may organize their interactions around their child's schooling at home every day. Work schedules or attending a child's non-school activity may also limit a parent's willingness and ability to attend school activities. These time constraints may not influence home-based school involvement in the same manner, as parents will usually engage in their child's schooling at home before the next school day. For example, parents who attend a child's non-school sporting activity until late evening will likely check to see if their child finished their homework before the next school day. If this same activity occurs on the same night as a school activity, parents may choose to attend the non-school activity instead of the school activity. Based on theory and previous research, it is expected that the relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement will be stronger than the relationship between coparenting support and school-based school involvement.

Control Variables

This study will control for several variables that have been linked with mothers' and fathers' home- and school-based school involvement. Control variables measure the impact of any given variable above and beyond the effects of the other variables. The current study tested

whether there was a significant relationship between coparenting support and mother and father home- and school-based school involvement beyond the effects of mothers' and fathers' race, total household income, physical health, initial levels of coparenting support at child age 5, and maternal primary residential custody. Minority status and lower income have been related to lower levels of home- and school-based involvement (Reynolds, Weissberg, & Kaspro, 1992). Poor physical health has been found to negatively impact parent-child involvement (Abraído-Lanza, 1997); therefore, it is likely that poor health could be linked with lower levels of parental school involvement. It was important to examine the coparenting relationship before the union transition; thus, this study controlled for mothers' and fathers' coparenting support at child age 5, the most recent wave of data before the wave used for this study. Finally, nonresident fathers have been shown to have lower levels of involvement in their children's schooling compared to married coresident couples (Hawthorne & Lennings, 2008).

Summary

Based on theory and previous research, the aim of this study was to test the association between coparenting support and mothers' and fathers' home- and school-based school involvement when the child was nine years-old, and to determine if parental union transitions moderated these relationships. The following hypotheses were tested (see Figure 1 for conceptual model):

H₁: Higher levels of coparenting support will be associated with higher levels of home-based school involvement for mothers and fathers at child age 9.

H₂: Higher levels of coparenting support will be associated with higher levels of school-based school involvement for mothers and fathers at child age 9.

H₃: Union dissolution between biological parents will weaken the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement for mothers and fathers.

H₄: Union formation between biological parents will strengthen the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement for mothers and fathers.

H₅: Maintaining a stable coresidential union between biological parents will strengthen the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement for mothers and fathers.

H₆: The relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement will be stronger for fathers than mothers.

H₇: The relationship between coparenting support and school-based school involvement will be stronger for fathers than mothers.

H₈: The relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement will be stronger than the relationship between coparenting support and school-based school involvement for mothers and fathers.

Chapter 3 - Method

Participants for this study came from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS), a longitudinal birth-cohort study of 4,898 families in 20 U.S. cities with over 200,000 people. Conducted by the Center for Research on Child Wellbeing at Princeton University and the Social Indicators Survey Center at Columbia University, the FFCWS used a multi-stage stratified random sample of all U.S. cities with more than 200,000 people based on policy environments and labor market conditions in the different cities (Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, & McLanahan, 2001). Beginning in 1998-2000, the study followed a nationally representative birth cohort in 20 cities in 15 states in order to obtain information on family conditions, capabilities, relationships, and the well-being of parents and children. By oversampling nonmarital births, this data set provides a rich source of information from unmarried couples on their living arrangements, partnership transitions, the nature of the couple's relationship, and parent-child interactions. Baseline interviews with mothers occurred in the hospital within 48 hours after the child's birth, with biological fathers being interviewed either in the hospital or shortly after the child's birth. At baseline, 4,898 mothers and fathers were interviewed, with follow-up interviews occurring when the child was one (Year 1), three (Year 3), five (Year 5), and nine (Year 9). At Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, and Year 9, respectively, approximately 89%, 86%, 85%, and 76% of mothers, and 69%, 67%, 64%, and 59% of fathers, were re-interviewed either by phone or in person.

The sample for the current study was defined using a two step-process. First, mothers and fathers were dropped if they had no contact with the other biological parent at Year 5 or Year 9. This reduced the sample to 4,150 mothers and fathers, 85% of the original FFCWS sample. Second, this sample was limited to mothers and fathers who met one of the following

criteria: (a) dissolved their coresident relationship from Year 5 to Year 9; (b) formed a coresident relationship from Year 5 to Year 9; (c) maintained a coresident relationship from Year 5 to Year 9. The final sample consisted of a total of 1,896 mothers and fathers, including 786 biological mothers and fathers who dissolved their coresident relationship, 585 biological mothers and fathers who formed a coresident relationship, and 525 biological mothers and fathers who maintained a coresident relationship across Year 5 and Year 9.

Among parents who dissolved their coresidential relationship, approximately 33% of mothers and 32% of fathers were Black, and around of 33% of mothers and 28% of fathers were Hispanic. In this group, roughly 23% of mothers and 19% of fathers reported a total household income of \$30,000 or less. Among parents who formed a coresidential union, approximately 57% of mothers and 43% of fathers were Black, and around of 25% of mothers and 17% of fathers were Hispanic. In this group, roughly 52% of mothers and 21% of fathers reported a total household income of \$30,000 or less. Among parents who maintained a coresident relationship, about 32% of mothers and 28% of fathers were Black, and nearly 32% of mothers and 29% of fathers were Hispanic. In this group, approximately 23% of couples reported a total household income of \$30,000 or less (see Table A.1 for sample descriptive information).

Measures

Coparenting support. Mothers' and fathers' coparenting support was assessed using four items from the Year 9 questionnaire (1 = *never true* to 4 = *always true*). Items used for this study were similar to other studies that measure coparenting support from the FFCWS (e.g., Fagan & Palkovitz, 2011). Items included: (a) "You can trust (other parent) to take good care of the child," (b) "(Other parent) supports you in the way you want to raise the child," (c) "You and (other parent) talk about problems that come up with raising (child)," (d) "You respect (other

parent's) wishes about how (child) should be raised." Items were coded and summed so that higher scores represented higher levels of coparenting support. The reliability was adequate for mothers and fathers who dissolved their coresident relationship ($\alpha = .86$, $\alpha = .84$, respectively), mothers and fathers who formed a coresident relationship ($\alpha = .69$, $\alpha = .66$, respectively), and mothers and fathers who maintained a coresident relationship ($\alpha = .78$, $\alpha = .60$, respectively).

Home-based school involvement. Mothers' and fathers' home-based school involvement was assessed at Year 9 and modeled as latent variables. Five items were used as indicators for mothers' and fathers' reports of their home-based school involvement (0 = *not once in the last month*; 1 = *1-2 times in the last month*; 2 = *once a week*; 3 = *several times a week*; 4 = *every day*). Following Pomerantz and colleagues (2007) description of home-based school involvement (2007), items for this measure included methods that were directly and indirectly related with the child's school: (a) "Read books with (child) or talk with (him/her) about books (he/she) reads," (b) "Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news," (c) "Talk with (child) about (his/her) day," (d) "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework," (e) "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."

School-based school involvement. Mothers' and fathers' reports of school-based school involvement were modeled as latent variables at Year 9, with six items used as indicators for this measure (0 = *not in the current school year*; 1 = *once in a current school year*; 2 = *more than once*). Items included: (a) "Attended open house or back-to-school night," (b) "Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization," (c) "Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child's) teacher," (d) "Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated," (e) "Volunteered at the school or served on a committee," (f) "Visited or sat in on (child's) classroom."

Control variables. Control variables, measured as manifest variables, included mothers' and fathers' race, mothers' and fathers' total household income, mothers' and fathers' overall health, gender of the child, coparenting support at child age 5, and maternal primary residential custody. Race was measured as two dummy variables (1 = *Black*, 0 = *all else*; 1 = *Hispanic*, 0 = *all else*). Total household income was coded (0 = *less than \$20,000*, 1 = *\$20,001 to \$40,000*, 2 = *\$40,001 to \$60,000*, 3 = *more than \$60,000*). Both parents were asked one question about their overall physical health (1 = *poor* to 5 = *excellent*). Mothers' and fathers' coparenting support was measured at Year 5 using six items (1 = *never true* to 4 = *always true*). Sample items included: (a) "When (other parent) is with (child), he likes the (father/mother) you want for the child," (b) "You can trust (other parents) to take good care of (child)," (c) "(Other parent) respects the schedules and rules you make for (child)." Finally, to determine maternal residential custody, mothers were asked how much time the child lived with them. Mothers who answered all or most of time were considered to have residential custody of the child (1 = *primary residential custody*, 0 = *not primary residential custody*).

Analytic Strategy

Incorporating latent structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses, the goal of this study was to test the link between mothers' and fathers' coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement, and to determine whether parental union transitions moderated these relationships. Prior to the primary analyses, sample descriptives were examined to determine potential violations of skewness and kurtosis. Normality assumptions were considered violated when kurtosis values were greater than an absolute value of 10.0 and skewness values exceeded 3.0 (Kline, 2011). Because skewness and kurtosis were inside the normal range, full-information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML) was used to handle missing data. FIML takes into

account all available information (i.e., means, variances, and covariances) to produce the estimation of parameters within the model. This approach of managing missing data is considered less biased than the alternatives of mean imputation, listwise deletion, or pairwise deletion and comparable in adequacy to multiple imputation (Acock, 2005).

Mothers' and fathers' reports of coparenting support were used as indicators of a latent, couple level variable of coparenting support. Based on theory and previous literature, coparenting operationally is a construct that occurs at the dyadic level. Creating the latent coparenting support construct from the two coparenting support manifest variables followed the procedures for the common fate model (see Lederman & Macho, 2009).

The measurement model was tested to determine if the hypothesized model fit the data and for measurement invariance. Model fit was determined by the examining the model chi-square (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Good model fit was interpreted when the χ^2 was nonsignificant, but because the model chi-square is a function of sample size and can incorrectly indicate poor model fit when sample size is large, it was important to examine additional model-fit indices. Good model fit was also interpreted when the RMSEA was less than .06, the CFI was greater than .95, and the SRMR was less than .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Measurement invariance refers to whether a latent construct has the same meaning under different conditions (Byrne, 2012; Dimitrov, 2010; Kline, 2011). Following the guidelines set forth in Byrne (2012), this studied tested for configural invariance, construct level metric invariance, and equivalence of construct variances and covariances. Configural invariance, or whether the same indicators are associated with the same factor in each union transition group, was analyzed by testing the measurement model simultaneously for each group. Next, metric

invariance was tested to determine if the factor loadings of each indicator were equal across each union transition group. All factor loadings were constrained to be equal between the three union transition groups, and the model fit was compared to the configural baseline model through a chi-square difference test. Evidence of metric invariance occurred if the model fit did not get significantly worse when constraining the unstandardized factor loadings. If the comparison was statistically significant, then partial metric invariance was tested. Partial metric invariance was tested by first consulting the modification indices to determine which factor loadings needed to be freely estimated. These factor loadings were freely estimated in each sample, but the loadings of the remaining factors were constrained to be equal across groups. Chi-square difference tests compared the modified constrained model to the unconstrained baseline model until the model did not yield a significantly worse model fit.

Construct factor variance and covariance invariance refers to the items that measure the latent factor with the same degree of measurement error. Testing for construct variances and covariances invariance included constraining all of the factor variances and covariances except for the unequal factor loadings, and then comparing the model fit to the configural baseline model by conducting a chi-square difference test. If the constrained model fit significantly worse, then modification indices were consulted to determine which variances and covariances to freely estimate. Modified constrained models were tested until the model did not yield a significantly worse model fit. In the final structural model, moderation was tested by applying equality constraints on model pathways and then calculating a chi-square difference test (Kline, 2011). Data analyses were performed with *Mplus* version 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2014).

Chapter 4 - Results

The data was initially analyzed by zero-order correlations, and an analysis of variance test (ANOVA) with Gabriel post-hoc analysis was used to determine mean differences between groups in the sample (See table A.1 for mean differences and table A.2 for zero-order correlations). Parents of dissolved unions reported significantly lower means all variables of interest. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine if the measurement model fit the data (see Figure B.2 for standardized factor loadings). Because the initial measurement model revealed a less than optimal fit to the data ($\chi^2(802) = 2642.749, p < .001$; RMSEA = .060 (90% CI: < 0.58 to < 0.063); CFI = .817; SRMR = 0.080), modification indices were consulted in order to improve model fit. Several latent indicator error variances were correlated based on the modification indices (see Appendix D). These correlations were theoretically justified, as these variables were facets of parental-school involvement and were expected to be correlated.

The measurement model, with latent indicator error variances correlated, indicated good model fit: $\chi^2(673) = 1171.382, p < .001$; RMSEA = .034 (90% CI: < 0.31 to < 0.038); CFI = .951; SRMR = 0.054. In order to test for configural invariance, the measurement model was simultaneously estimated for all groups. The model fit was adequate: $\chi^2(633) = 1032.233, p < .001$; RMSEA = .032 (90% CI: < 0.28 to < 0.035); CFI = .961; SRMR = 0.045. Testing for construct-metric invariance included constraining all factor loadings to be equal between groups and comparing model fit with the configural baseline model. Based on the chi-square difference tests, the following factor indicators were unequal between groups and freely estimated: a) fathers' coparenting support; b) "Read books with (child) or talk with (him/her) about books (he/she) reads" for both mothers and fathers; c) "Talk with (child) about (his/her) day" for both

mothers and fathers; d) “Help (child) with homework or school assignments” for mothers; e) “Attended open house or back-to-school night” for mothers; f) “Volunteered at the school or served on a committee” for mothers.

Finally, factor variances and covariances were constrained to be equal across groups. After conducting chi-square differences tests, the variance of mothers’ home-based school involvement was constrained to be equal across groups. Additionally, the following covariances between latent variables were constrained to be equal across groups: a) mothers’ home-based school involvement with mothers’ school-based school involvement; b) mothers’ home-based school involvement with fathers’ school-based school involvement; c) mothers’ school-based school involvement with fathers’ home-based school involvement; d) mothers’ school-based school involvement with fathers’ school-based school involvement; e) fathers’ home-based school involvement with fathers’ school-based school involvement; f) fathers’ home-based school involvement with mothers’ school-based school involvement. The following latent indicator variances were also constrained to be equal across groups: a) “Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news” for fathers; b) “Help (child) with homework or school assignments” for fathers; c) “Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization” for mothers; d) “Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child’s) teacher” for mothers; e) “Visited or sat in on (child’s) classroom” for mothers; f) “Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated” for fathers; g) “Attended open house or back-to-school night” for fathers.

The hypothesized multiple-group structural model, with the constraints imposed from invariance testing, indicated good model fit: $\chi^2(675) = 1061.665, p < .001$; RMSEA = .030 (90% CI: < 0.027 to < 0.034); CFI = .962; SRMR = 0.047. In order to determine if union transitions

moderated the relationships between the variables of interest, all corresponding pathways were constrained to be equal for all groups. Chi-square difference test revealed that constraining the model did not significantly worsen model fit ($\chi^2_{diff}(9) = 6.404, p > .05$), suggesting that union transitions did not moderate the relationships among the variables of interest. Thus, a multiple-group structural model was not recommended. For parsimony, the three groups were collapsed into one group, and the hypothesized relationships were analyzed by using a single-group latent SEM analysis ($N = 1,896$).

The full structural model, including all control variables, revealed a good fit with the data: $\chi^2(408) = 825.946, p < .001$; RMSEA = .023 (90% CI: < 0.021 to < 0.026); CFI = .966; SRMR = 0.033. Standardized path coefficients can be seen in Figure B.3. Higher levels of coparenting support was significantly associated with higher levels of mothers' home-based school involvement ($\beta = .87, p < .001$), and higher levels of fathers' home-based school involvement ($\beta = .68, p < .001$). Using the path from coparenting support to mothers' home-school involvement as an example, these results can be interpreted as follows: for every one standard deviation unit increase in coparenting support, there is a .87 unit increase in mothers' home-based school involvement, while controlling for the influence of the other mother and father school involvement variables, mothers' and fathers' race, mother' and fathers' total household income, mother and fathers' overall health, coparenting support at Year 5, and maternal residential custody. Coparenting was also significantly associated with higher levels of mothers' school-based school involvement ($\beta = .13, p < .01$), and higher levels of fathers' school-based school involvement ($\beta = .45, p < .001$). The model accounted for 74% of the variance in mothers' home-based school involvement ($R^2 = .740$), approximately 47% of the variance in fathers' home-based school involvement ($R^2 = .474$), roughly 3% of the variance in

mothers' school-based school involvement ($R^2 = .033$), and about 24% of the variance in fathers school-based school involvement ($R^2 = .241$).

Statistical differences in the path coefficients between mothers' and fathers' were empirically tested by constraining corresponding pathways to be equal (e.g., the path from coparenting support to mothers' home-based school involvement and the path from coparenting support to fathers' home-based school involvement were constrained to be equal), and then running a chi-square difference test to determine if the model fit was significantly worse. If the constrained model produced a significantly worse fit, it was determined that the path coefficients were different between mothers and fathers. The relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement was significantly stronger for mothers ($\chi^2_{diff}(1) = 50.35, p < .05$), and the relationship between coparenting support and school-based school involvement was significantly stronger for fathers ($\chi^2_{diff}(1) = 54.696, p > .05$).

Next, statistical differences between coparenting support and home-based school involvement, and between coparenting support and school-based involvement, were empirically tested by constraining corresponding parent gender pathways to be equal (e.g. the path from coparenting support to mothers' home-based school involvement and the path from coparenting support to mothers' school-based school involvement were constrained to be equal). If the constrained model produced a significantly worse model fit, it was determined that the path coefficients were different between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement. The path from coparenting support to home-based school involvement was significantly stronger than the path from coparenting support school-based school involvement for both mothers and fathers ($\chi^2_{diff}(1) = 11.00, p < .05$; $\chi^2_{diff}(1) = 278.147, p < .05$).

Some notable findings emerged regarding the control variables included in the model. Hispanic motherhood was associated with higher levels of home-based school involvement ($\beta = .10, p < .05$), and Black and Hispanic fatherhood was associated with lower levels of home-based school involvement ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$; $\beta = -.13, p < .05$). Black and Hispanic fatherhood was linked with lower levels of school-based school involvement ($\beta = -.20, p < .01$; $\beta = -.17, p < .01$), and fathers' in better physical health were more likely to be involved in home- and school-based school involvement ($\beta = .07, p < .05$; $\beta = .09, p < .01$). Mothers who reported primary residential custody at child age 9 were less likely to be involved in home-based school involvement ($\beta = -.28, p < .01$). Finally, mothers who reported primary residential custody were more likely to be involved in school-based school involvement ($\beta = .07, p < .01$).

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Drawing on family systems theory and the “spillover” hypothesis, the current study explored the potential link between coparenting support and mothers’ and fathers’ home- and school-based school involvement when the child was nine years-old, while controlling for mothers’ and fathers’ race, mother’ and fathers’ total household income, mother and fathers’ overall health, coparenting support at Year 5, and maternal primary residential custody. This study also tested if union transitions moderated the relationships among variables of interest. Using a large and diverse sample, this study extends the parental school involvement literature by investigating the relationship between the family process variable of coparenting support and maternal and paternal school involvement. Although coparenting has been shown to be related to parent involvement in a variety of daily activities with the child (e.g., Feinberg, 2003; Floyd et al., 1998), this is the first known study to examine the direct link between the coparenting relationship and parental involvement in their child’s schooling.

The first important finding from this study is that coparenting support, or efforts made by parents to employ strategies that support the other parent to accomplish parenting goals, was associated with higher levels of mothers’ and fathers’ home-based school involvement when the child was nine years-old. It is interesting to note the strength of this relationship for mothers ($\beta = .87$) and fathers ($\beta = .68$). These associations were strengthened by using latent variables to correct for measurement error. As parents experience a supportive coparenting relationship, it is likely to spill over into aspects of the parent-child relationship, including being involved with the child’s schooling at home. Results are also consistent with previous research on the positive associations between coparenting support and mother- and father-child engagement (e.g., Carlson et al., 2007; Caldera & Lindsey, 2006; Floyd et al., 1998; Hohmann-Mariott, 2011;

Margolin, Gordis, & John, 2001; Sobolewski & King, 2005). A mutually supportive coparenting relationship includes joint investment in the child, respecting the input of the other parent, and communicating about child needs. Theoretically, as parents maintain this coordination and harmony, it will likely bolster parent efficacy and confidence to be involved in home-based school involvement. Supportive coparenting may also be influenced by contextual factors such as stress (Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Frosch, & McHale, 2004). From a family stress and emotional spillover perspective, supportive coparenting is likely to reduce stress in the family system (Feinberg & Sakuma, 2011), providing the basis for positive coparenting interactions about roles and responsibilities around their child's schooling.

The relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement was empirically stronger for mothers than fathers. One potential explanation could be that mothers and fathers work together to maintain gender distinctions during aspects of family life (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Mothers typically adopt the cultural norm of maintaining the home and caring for the children, including assuming the major responsibility of being involved and helping their child progress in their schooling. Mothers may act like managers, organizing, planning, and overseeing different aspects of the child's life (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Fathers are likely to take on a supporting role, helping to meet the standards set by the mother. Setting standards may not be a way for mothers to control paternal involvement, but instead may be the primary method to clarify parental roles and responsibilities. Increased coparenting support may validate the cultural mothering identity and role as the center of care in family life (Allen & Hawkins, 1999), which may extend to maternal school involvement in the home context. Future research should clarify whether cultural parental expectations influence the relationship between coparenting support and parental school involvement.

Findings also revealed that higher levels of coparenting support were associated with higher levels of school-based school involvement, and that this relationship was stronger for fathers than mothers. One reason could be that mothers are usually more involved and know about school activities (Shumow & Miller, 2001). Therefore, increases in coparenting support may have minimal effect on maternal school-based school involvement. Because mothers typically assume the primary responsibility for caring for children, father engagement in school activities may be directly related to the coparenting relationship. Fathers are generally less involved in school events (Shumow & Miller, 2001), so they may rely on the coparenting relationship for communication and coordination around their child's school activities. Fathers are also sensitive and susceptible to family environmental influences (Doherty et al., 1998; Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2007), meaning that higher levels of coparenting support may provide more resources for fathers engage in their child's schooling. When the coparenting relationship improves, fathers are more likely to become more involved with their children (Carlson et al., 2008). Theoretically, as parents increase their communication and support around school activities, fathers may feel more included in the family system and develop a clearer role for their involvement in their child's schooling.

The relationship between coparenting support and home-based school involvement was stronger than the relationship between coparenting support and school-based school involvement. Theoretically, parents have more opportunities to engage in communication around their child's schooling at home. School activities occur periodically, while a child's schooling in the home context may occur daily during the school year. Scheduling conflicts, such as work schedules or attending a child's non-school activity, may interfere with attending school events. While additional studies need to explore these potential differences, results may

also point to the perceived saliency of home-based school involvement for parents. This may be true, especially for fathers, as available studies indicate that fathers are more willing to be engaged in homework assistance than attending school activities (e.g., Tan & Goldberg, 2009). Even though parents may not be able to be involved in all the child's school related activities, they may still be actively involved in their child's schooling at home.

Union transitions did not significantly moderate the relationships among variables in the model. In other words, there were no differences between union transition groups regarding the relationship between coparenting support and home- and school-based school involvement. Theoretically, regardless if parents decide to dissolve, generate, or maintain their coresident relationship, effective coparenting involves mothers and fathers effectively communicating about roles and responsibilities, and supporting the each other's actions and decisions in their parenting role. It is also important to consider the imprecise measurement of union transitions in this study, as each union transition was based on waves of data four years apart. Parents who dissolved their relationship several years ago may have adjusted their coparenting relationship more than parents who recently dissolved their relationship. Future studies should explore whether the length of time since the union transition moderates the relationship between coparenting support and parental school involvement. Future research should also examine if the relationship between coparenting and parental school involvement differs for parents who experienced other types of union transitions (e.g., mother forming a coresident relationship with a residential father), or for single parents who do not have a coresident relationship with the biological father or a residential father.

Results of the current study support propositions within systems theory. As the mother-father subsystem increases the quality of their coparenting coordination, it spills over into the

parent-child subsystem, thereby increasing the resources to engage in positive parenting. As the mother-father subsystem increases their collective solidarity about the way they work together to raise their child, parents are more likely able to feel more included in their role as a parents and are more likely to view themselves as a principle stakeholder in their child's life (Pruett & Donsky, 2011). Thus, parents may be more willing and able to invest in their child's schooling.

Increasing coparenting support may create healthier boundaries between parents, which may in-turn create healthier parent-child boundaries. One potential explanation is the clarification of parental roles with the child. Cooperative coparenting allows parents to effectively communicate, agree on, and support parenting role expectations regarding involvement in their child's school. Another possible explanation could be that as coparenting support increases, one parent may trust and respect the other parent's parenting views and practices. Thus, that particular parent may relax their strict "gatekeeping" behaviors, or choices about how and when the other parents will spend time with the child (Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Clinical Implications

Findings from this study are relevant to interventions at improving the coparenting relationship, and mother and father school involvement. Clinicians can help parents improve their communication about role expectations that each parent has for the other parent and themselves about home- and school-based school involvement. McHale (2011) suggests that clinicians should take a strengths-based approach by taking note of positive coparenting functioning and building on these strengths to increase the coparenting relationship. Clinicians should adequately assess the coparenting relationship by understanding what has gone well in the coparenting relationship and what circumstances are in most in need of change to provide a healthier environment. Interventions should help parents define and discuss with one another the

roles each will play in the child's life, converse collaboratively with one another around the child's school, and improve their joint parenting decision-making. There are also a number of coparenting programs and interventions that can be used with married parents (see Feinberg & Sakuma, 2011), unmarried parents (see Adler-Baeder & Shirer, 2011), and divorced parents (see Pruett & Donsky, 2011).

Limitations and Future Research

This study contains a number of limitations. First, the variables of interest were not empirically validated measures of studied constructs. Although the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study covers a wide range of topics, it provides less detail about any given topic than would typically be found in a study focused in one area. This is common in studies involving national data sets, which contain large, heterogeneous samples but are usually limited in measurement. Second, the model was tested using mothers' and fathers' self-report on all items. This can increase construct bias, as respondents may exaggerate their responses to present their situation as being better than if responses were examined through observational analyses. Third, strength of the results may be attributed to common method variance, or variance that is attributed to the measurement method rather than the constructs of interest. For example, the zero-order correlation between coparenting support and mothers' home-based school involvement was $r = .80$, and the path coefficient between the two constructs was $\beta = .87$. It is possible that measurement of these constructs could have inflated the observed relationship. Fourth, the data used for this study was cross-sectional, which limits the ability to determine causality. Fifth, only a small amount of the variance in mothers' school-based school involvement could be explained, suggesting that other variables may better explain this relationship. Another limitation of this study was that the direction of effects was hypothesized on theory and previous

research, but it is important to note that these effects are likely bi-directional. Finally, the results of this study focused on parents who dissolved, formed, or maintained a coresident union from child age 5 to child age 9. Results of this study may not be applicable across other union transitions or union transitions that occurred at different time points in the child's life.

Future research should address other aspects of Feinberg's (2011) framework in relation to parental school involvement. Specifically, exploring the coparenting aspects of childrearing agreement or disagreement, division of duties, tasks, and responsibilities, and management of interactional patterns can provide a clearer picture of the relationship between coparenting and parental school involvement. Additionally, longitudinal designs can be employed to better understand the impact of coparenting support on parental school involvement over time. Because this study focused on children in elementary school, additional studies could examine the relationship between the coparenting relationship and parental school involvement for adolescents in middle- and high-school. While this study measured coparenting support as a dyadic-level variable, future studies should also explore the inter-individual and intra-individual influences of mothers' and fathers' coparenting support on home- and based-school involvement by testing the relationship with an actor-partner interdependence model (APIM).

Studies should also continue to explore the relevance of family level processes and parental school involvement in order to further clarify these relationships. For example, studies have suggested that relationship quality influences parent-child interactions (e.g., Bonds & Gondoli, 2007), but there are no known studies that have examined whether this relationship exists in the context of parental school-involvement. Parenting stress, or stress from fulfilling the demands associated with being a parent (Deater-Deckard, 1998), has been related to less involved parenting and more negative parent-child interactions (Crnic, Gaze, & Hoffman, 2005;

Rodgers, 1998). One study, with a small sample of mostly mothers, has explored the impact of parenting stress on home- and school-based school involvement (Semke et al, 2010). Future studies can expand this research by using both mothers' and fathers' reports to examine the link between this family contextual variable and parental school involvement. Additionally, it is necessary to explore indirect effects regarding family processes and parental school involvement. Finally, future research should investigate other potential moderators of these relationships, particularly, race, child gender, and SES. Given that some of the variables in this study had strong associations with race, the next step would be to investigate these relationships in light of racial differences.

Conclusion

Using the data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, this study is the first to examine the relationship between the family-level process of coparenting support and parental school involvement. Results found that coparenting support was positively associated with mothers' and fathers' home- and school-based involvement. The current study extends the literature on parental school involvement by demonstrating the need to consider the influence of dyadic and triadic family processes on mother and father school engagement.

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Appendix A - Tables

Table A.1 Descriptive Statistics for Parents with Dissolved Coresidential Unions (n = 786), Parents who Formed Coresidential Unions (n = 585), and Parents who Maintained a Coresident Union (n = 525).

<i>Variables</i>	Union Dissolution		Union Formation		Coresident	
	<i>M or %</i>	(SD)	<i>M or %</i>	(SD)	<i>M or %</i>	(SD)
Mothers' Coparenting Support	7.99*	(3.70)	11.01	(1.58)	11.11	(1.64)
Fathers' Coparenting Support	9.16*	(9.16)	11.36	(1.13)	11.39	(1.03)
Mothers' HBSI	9.37*	(5.40)	16.98	(4.98)	17.13	(4.98)
Fathers' HBSI	9.51*	(5.15)	13.75	(4.11)	13.76	(3.97)
Mothers' SBSI	6.77*	(3.21)	7.26	(3.11)	7.36	(3.11)
Fathers' SBSI	3.53*	(3.77)	5.70	(3.32)	5.36	(3.27)
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Mothers' race						
Black	33.1		57.6		31.6	
Hispanic	33.1		25.0		32.2	
Other	33.0		17.3		35.6	
Fathers' race						
Black	31.7		42.9		28.4	
Hispanic	28.4		16.6		29.3	
Other	29.9		12.1		30.9	
Mothers' Household Income						
Less than \$20,000	13.5		37.9		13.1	
\$20,001 - \$30,000	9.3		14.4		11.0	
\$30,001 - \$40,000	11.1		7.7		10.9	
\$40,001 - \$60,000	16.0		9.1		16.6	
Greater than \$60,000	25.2		3.6		26.9	
Fathers' Household Income						
Less than \$20,000	8.9		14.0		12.8	
\$20,001 - \$30,000	10.3		6.8		9.7	
\$30,001 - \$40,000	9.7		5.3		6.7	
\$40,001 - \$60,000	15.3		6.5		18.1	
Greater than \$60,000	28.9		5.5		27.6	
Mothers' Physical Health	3.78	(.97)	3.56	(1.08)	3.73	(.96)
Fathers' Physical Health	3.87	(.96)	3.56	(1.10)	3.90	(.94)
Mothers' Coparenting Support (Year 5)	21.21	(2.72)	15.43	(6.34)	16.85	(1.89)
Fathers' Coparenting Support (Year 5)	21.56	(2.50)	17.28	(5.70)	17.19	(1.50)
Maternal Residential Custody	89.6		98.8		98.9	

Note. HBSI = Home-based school involvement. SBSI = School-based school involvement. *Mean differences are significant at the .05 level between the union dissolution group, the union formation group, and the stably coresident group.

Table A.2 Correlations for Parents with Dissolved Coresidential Unions (n = 786), Parents who Formed Coresidential Unions (n = 585), and Parents who Maintained a Coresidential Union (n = 525).

Variables	Coparenting Support	Mothers' HBSI	Fathers' HBSI	Mothers' SBSI	Fathers' SBSI
(A) Dissolved Parents					
Coparenting Support	-				
Mothers' HBSI	.49***	-			
Fathers' HBSI	.38***	.54***	-		
Mothers' SBSI	.14*	.18**	.17*	-	
Fathers' SBSI	.31***	.37***	.39***	.36***	-
(B) Union Formation Parents					
Coparenting Support	-				
Mothers' HBSI	.80***	-			
Fathers' HBSI	.56***	.58***	-		
Mothers' SBSI	.15*	.13*	.04	-	
Fathers' SBSI	.42***	.37***	.66**	.19**	-
(C) Coresident Parents					
Coparenting Support	-				
Mothers' HBSI	.52***	-			
Fathers' HBSI	.22*	.46***	-		
Mothers' SBSI	.15	.20**	.14*	-	
Fathers' SBSI	.15	.33***	.49***	.24**	-

Note. HBSI = Home-based school involvement. SBSI = School-based school involvement. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

Appendix B - Figures

Figure B.1 Theoretical Framework for Multiple-Sample Structural Equation Modeling

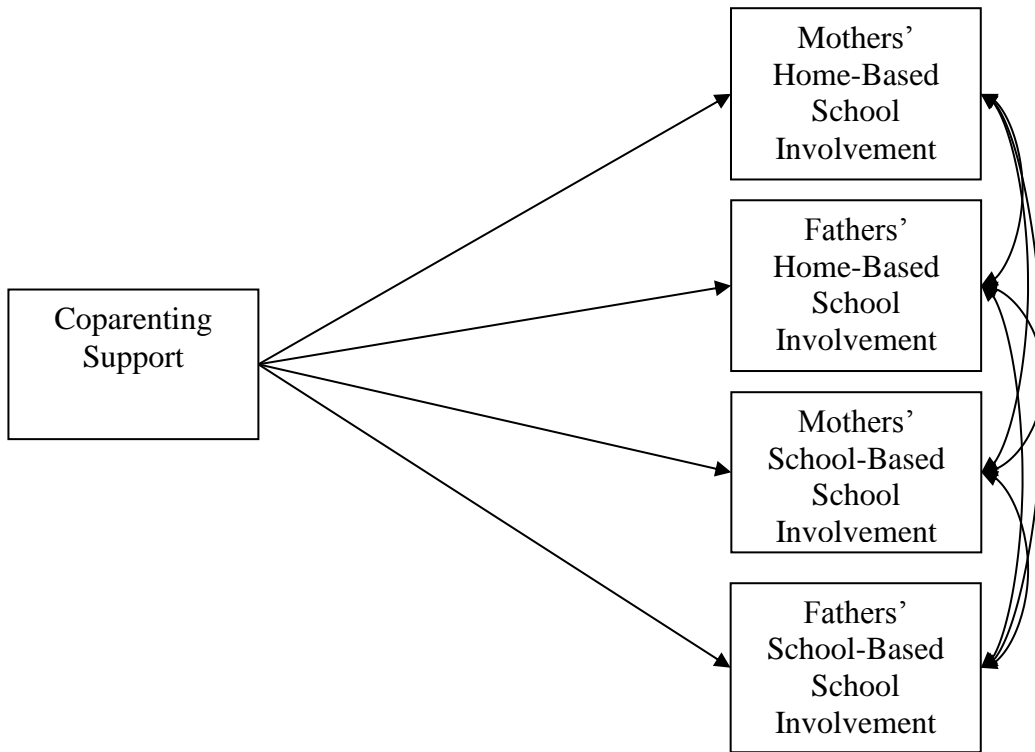
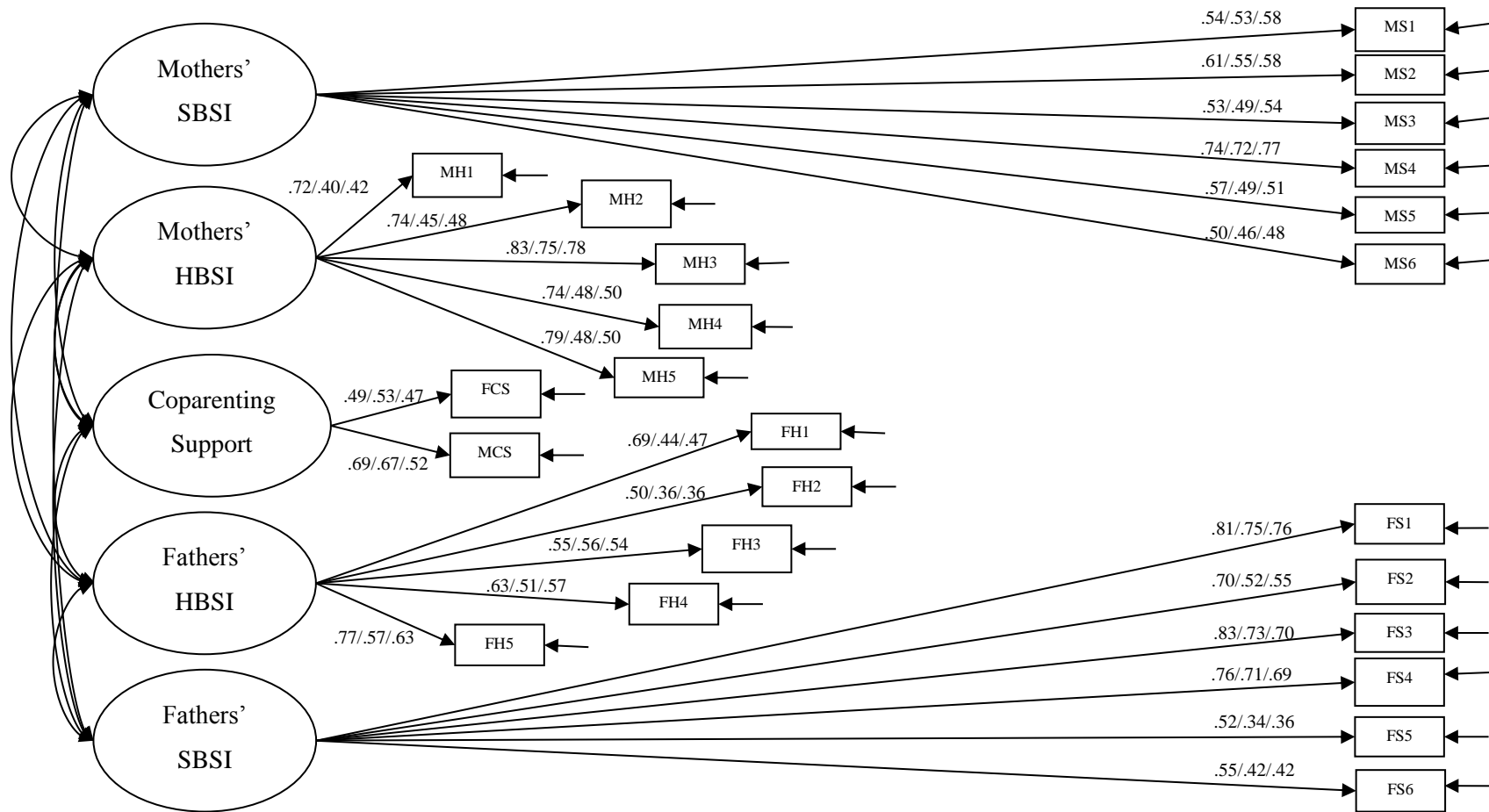
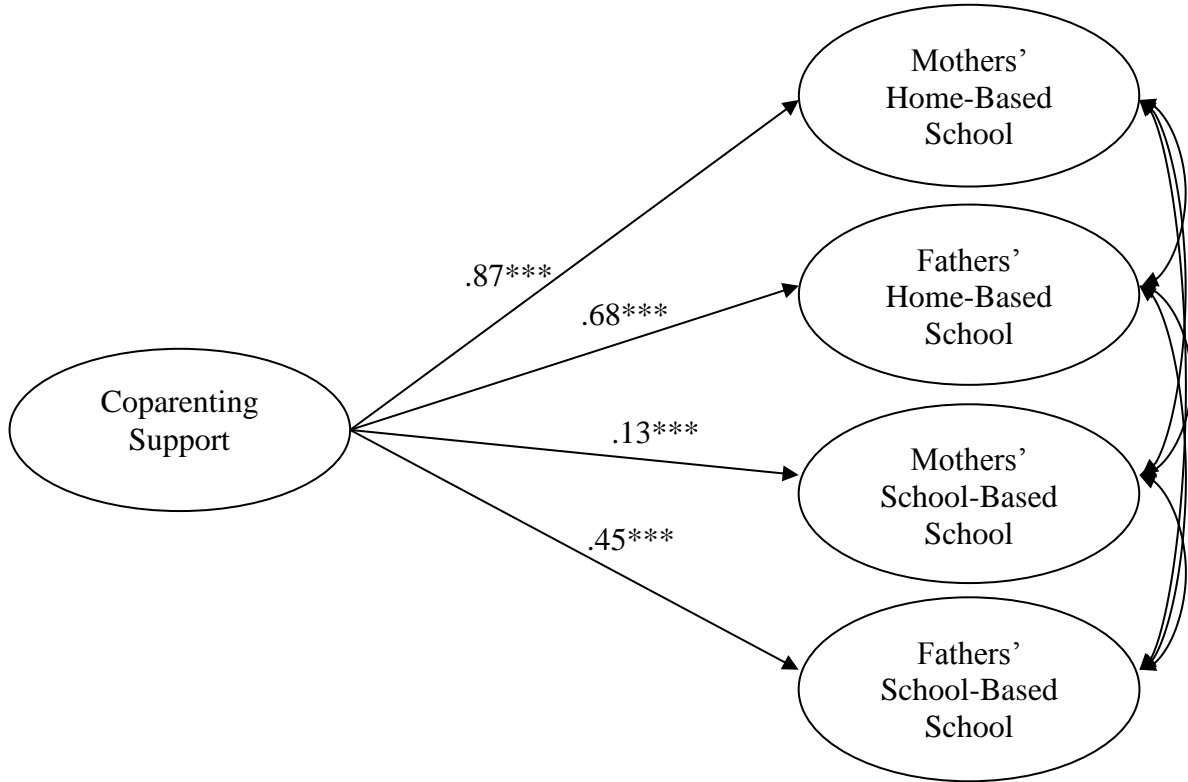


Figure B.2. Standardized Estimates for Confirmatory Factor Analysis Measurement Model for Parents with Dissolved Coresidential Unions (n = 786), Parents who Formed Coresidential Unions (n = 585), and Parents who Maintained a Coresidential Union (n = 525).



Note: Parents who dissolved their coresidential unions of the left, parents who formed coresidential unions in middle, and parent who maintained a coresidential union on right. HBSI = Home-based school involvement. SBSI = School-based school involvement. FCS = Fathers' coparenting support. MCS = Mothers' coparenting support. Model fit indices: $\chi^2(673) = 1171.382$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .034 (90% CI: < 0.031 to < 0.038); CFI = .951; SRMR = .054.

Figure B.3. Full Structural Model Standardized Estimates of the Relationship between Coparenting Support and Mothers' and Fathers Home-Based School Involvement, and Mothers' and Fathers' School-Based School Involvement (N = 1,896).



Note: Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2 (408) = 825.946$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .023 (90% CI: $< .021$ to $< .026$); CFI = .966; SRMR = .043. HBSI = Home-based school involvement. SBSI = School-based school involvement. $^{***}p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Appendix C - Measures

Mothers' Coparenting Support

1 = Never true, 2 = Rarely true, 3 = Sometimes true, 4 = Always true

1. You can trust (father) to take good care of (child).
2. He supports the way you want to raise (child).
3. You and (father) talk about problems that come up with raising (child).
4. You respect (father)'s wishes about how (child) should be raised.

Fathers' Coparenting Support

0 = Never true, 1 = Rarely true, 2 = Sometimes true, 3 = Always true

1. You can trust (mother) to take good care of (child).
2. She supports the way you want to raise (child).
3. You and (mother) talk about problems that come up with raising (child).
4. You respect (mother)'s wishes about how (child) should be raised.

Home-Based School Involvement

0 = once in the past month, 1 = 1-2 times in the past month, 2 = once a week, 3 = several times a week, 4 = Every day

1. Read books with (child) or talk with (him/her) about books (he/she) reads.
2. Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news.
3. Talk with (child) about (his/her) day.
4. Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework.
5. Help (child) with homework or school assignments.

School-Based School Involvement

0 = Not in (this/the last) school year, 1 = Once in (this/the last) school year, 2 = More than once in (this/the last) school year

1. Attended an open house or back-to-school night.
2. Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization.
3. Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child's) teacher.

4. Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated.
5. Volunteered at the school or served on a committee.
6. Visited or sat in on (child's) classroom.

Appendix D - Modification Indices Employed in Model

Correlated Mothers' Home-Based School Involvement Variables

1. "Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news," with all variables in home-school based school involvement.
2. "Read books with (child) or talk with (him/her) about books (he/she) reads" with "Check make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework" and "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."
3. "Talk with (child) about (his/her) day" with "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework" and "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."
4. "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework" with "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."

Correlated Fathers' Home-Based School Involvement Variables

1. "Talk with (child) about (his/her) day" with "Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news," "Check make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework," and "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."
2. "Read books with (child) or talk with (him/her) about books (he/she) reads" with "Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news."
3. "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework" with "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."

Correlated Home-Based School Involvement Variables between Mothers and Fathers

1. "Read books with (child) or talk with (him/her) about books (he/she) reads."
2. "Talk with (child) about current events, like things going on in the news."

3. "Talk with (child) about (his/her) day."
4. "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework."
5. "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."
6. "Fathers' report of "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework" with mothers' report of "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."
7. Mothers' report of "Check to make sure that (child) has completed (his/her) homework" with fathers' report of "Help (child) with homework or school assignments."

Correlated Mothers' School-Based School Involvement Variables

1. "Visited or sat in on (child's) classroom" with "Attended an open house or back-to-school night," "Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization," "Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated," and "Volunteered at the school or served on a committee."
2. "Volunteered at the school or served on a committee" with "Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child's) teacher" and "Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated."
3. "Attended an open house or back-to-school night" with "Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child's) teacher."
4. "Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization" with "Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated."

Correlated Fathers' School-Based School Involvement Variables

1. "Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization" with "Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child's) teacher," "Attended a school or

class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated,” and “Visited or sat in on (child’s) classroom.”

2. “Gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference with (child’s) teacher” with “Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated,” “Volunteered at the school or served on a committee,” and “Visited or sat in on (child’s) classroom.”
3. “Volunteered at the school or served on a committee” with “Visited or sat in on (child’s) classroom.”

Correlated School-Based School Involvement Variables between Mothers and Fathers

1. “Attended open house or back-to-school night.”
2. “Attended a meeting of a PTA, PTO or parent-teacher organization.”
3. “Attended a school or class event, such as a play, sports event or science fair, in which your child participated.”
4. “Volunteered at the school or served on a committee.”
5. “Visited or sat in on (child’s) classroom.”