

ASSESSING TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN IMPLEMENTING
FAMILY CENTERED PRACTICES: DEVELOPMENT OF
THE WORKING WITH FAMILIES SELF-EFFICACY SCALES

By

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To my parents, you were my inspiration to begin this doctoral quest for more knowledge and expertise to help children who are suffering and look for ways to advocate for them.

Thank you for teaching me that with motivation and hard work,
anything is possible.

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*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the world.*

~ Anne Frank

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There is now consensus among teachers, administrators and policy-makers regarding the need and desire to promote family involvement in the education process, yet variations still prevail in the level of family involvement practices exhibited by teachers. The Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (WFSES) were developed to investigate empirically the level of self-efficacy reported by teachers in implementing specific family centered practices designed to involve families in the educational process of their children. Three domains of practice were assessed: (a) teacher communication and conflict resolution practices with families, (b) their appreciation for diverse family's experiences and skills in reaching out and involving such families in their children's learning and development and (c) teacher expected role activities in working with families. It was hoped that if the WFSES could be established as valid and reliable, it could be used to explore the relationships among teacher self-efficacy in performing particular family involvement practices, their actual implementation of involvement practices, and parent/family engagement outcomes.

This study involved 527 teachers of pre-kindergarten through sixth grade who completed the WFSES online. Teachers rated by self-report their capabilities in demonstrating twenty-seven

skills. Principal components analysis resulted in a three factor structure. The three factors closely corresponded to the hypothesized constructs of: (a) communication and conflict resolution, (b) appreciating and adapting to family diversity, and (c) expectations about working collaboratively with families. Future studies should continue empirical investigations on the WFSES to facilitate study of the specific family involvement practices that teachers are skilled in and comfortable with using.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Educators have long recognized the importance of families in influencing student academic achievement. However, it was not until the late 1980s and 1990s that more systematic attention began to be given to considering how educators might work with families to enhance student learning and achievement (Clark, 1983; Dornbush et al., 1987; Kellaghan et al., 1993; Snow et al., 1991). This new interest in families was generated by the results of research regarding the importance of families to the academic success of school-age children. This research demonstrated that family involvement in their children's schooling promoted better student attendance (Epstein, 2002), increased graduation rates and less grade retention, higher parent and student satisfaction with school, less discipline reports, and higher achievement scores in reading and math (Collignon et al., 2001; Murry et al., 2002; Furstenburg et al., 1999).

As a result of these findings, educators are now being encouraged to reach out and involve families more intentionally in their children's schooling. A variety of innovative family-centered practices have now been developed by early childhood educators working with low-income families (Brofenbrenner, 1974; Davison, 1998; Scott-Jones, 1987), by educators working with the families of language-minority children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Delpit, 1995), reducing adolescent problem behavior (Amatea, 1991; Connell, 2007; Lee, 1993) and by educators working in low-income schools (Comer et al., 1996). The importance of family involvement in children's schooling has been accentuated by federal legislation such as the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which defined an active role for caregivers in educational decision-making for their children and for the community at large. Implicit in this legislation is recognition of the interdependence of home and school in socializing children (Coleman, 1987) and of the importance of consistency and harmony between these two contexts. In addition, educators are

realizing that the increasing cultural and economic diversity of families and the changes in family structure brought about with two parents working, with single families, and with economically struggling families, require educators to think differently about how they might interact with families (Epstein, 1990; Graue, 2003).

Thus many educational leaders have raised expectations for teachers to contact and involve families in their children's learning. As a result, many teachers are being asked by administrators at the school, district, or state level to expand their efforts to interact with the families of their students so as to improve student learning and achievement. In addition, many state-level Departments of Education are requiring teacher education programs to include preparation for working with families as a competency to be addressed in their education programs (FESC, 2010). These developments have led to a greater interest in assisting educators in enhancing their skills in working with the families of their students and in assessing teacher attitudes and skills in implementing family-centered teaching practices.

Scope of the Problem

During the past decade, federal policy makers began recognizing the need to include families more systematically in their children's educational experience. For example, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act created federal legislation mandating educational reform to enhance the student achievement of all American children. Moreover, the National Education Goals shaped specific knowledge criteria for teachers that included standards for teacher education and parental participation in the schools (NEGP, 2007). Later, under new presidential leadership, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This act further prescribed how parents were to be involved in their children's schools.

During this same time period, professional standards of practice for family involvement were promulgated by a variety of professional organizations (Family Involvement Network of

Educators, 2001). However, while these professional standards were being recommended, there was not a consistent commitment in either the preservice education or in-service preparation of teachers to work with their students' families. In 2001, Caspe noted: "no state requires a separate course in parent involvement for teacher licensure. Only a handful of states require parent involvement preparation as part of a course. A minority of the states include parent involvement in their competency standards for teachers/administrators or in their standards for teachers/administrators training programs. No state requires parent involvement coursework for recertification or renewal of a license" (p. 21). Even now in 2010, there is no agreement among the states as to the need to have an individual course in family involvement either for teacher certification or recertification.

However, state educational reform has led to the formulation of particular competencies and skills related to parent involvement required of all preservice teachers and recertifying teachers. For example, Florida developed a set of *Educator Accomplished Practices* in 1999 to serve as guidelines for the pre-professional preparation of teachers at universities and colleges in the state and professionals working in school systems. Still utilized in 2010 these *Florida Accomplished Practices* for pre-professional teachers require universities and colleges to prepare teachers to communicate and involve parents, understand diversity with sensitivity to backgrounds and barriers, and build relationships with parents (FESC, 2010). In addition, the *Florida Accomplished Practices* require teachers in the field to demonstrate these same practices of communicating and involving parents, understanding diversity with sensitivity to backgrounds and barriers, and building relationships with parents (FESC, 2010).

Although most teacher preparation programs give limited attention to family involvement practices (Epstein & Salinas, 2004), some teacher preparation programs are beginning to address this topic. Instructors are meeting the needs of students, families and schools by preparing

teacher education students to understand the family and their contribution to children's learning. Epstein (2006) conducted a review of 161 U.S. schools, and noted that educational leaders recognized the need to better prepare new educators in parent involvement. "Fully 76% of the sample recommended that a full course on parental involvement be required at the undergraduate level" (Epstein, 2006, p. 83). Furthermore, she reported a strong consensus among her respondents that "*all teachers should know how to conduct practices of school, family, and community partnerships with all families*" (Epstein, 2006, p. 94). Not only does Epstein's research support the inclusion of a course to prepare preservice teachers to value and engage in family involvement and collaboration (Epstein, 2004), it affirms the need for teacher educators and researchers to come together to discuss family involvement training and to offer preservice training and continuing education for teachers in the community (Epstein, 2005).

Baum and Swick (2008) not only recommended that preservice teachers enroll in a course on family involvement, they recommended that the focus of family involvement be expanded to include the entire preparation program so as to give students time to understand their "personal beliefs and practice, while applying their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a variety of settings" (Baum & Swick, p. 61). These authors also encouraged teacher educators to increase the experiential learning opportunities by increasing the contact with parents with meaningful interactions before student teaching. In addition, they recommended that teacher educators find "cooperating teachers" who could assist in creating opportunities for preservice teachers to observe teachers successfully having positive experiences with families.

As a result, a growing body of literature has described the impact of family involvement courses in preservice teacher education. For example, Mulholland et al. (2008) conducted research on a university class on family involvement in which they exposed students to teachers in the field and to families with special needs. The ninety students enrolled in the course were

required to interview both a teacher and parent. Some of the questions that the students in the course asked teachers in the field regarding their practices with families were: *Have you had many problems working with parents?* And *What kinds of communication do you use with the parents?* Students were generally not pleased with the teachers' answers and instructors of the course talked about the question framing and lead in of "problems" rather than asking questions about successful partnerships. Instructors proposed that activities talking with teachers in the field led to a better understanding of how students might work with families. The researchers also noted that in talking with and listening to other students' experiences, the students were able to reflect upon common teacher issues and the need for collaboration. Sutterby et al. (2007) conducted similar research and reported on the benefits for Latino preservice students interacting with Latino families in an after-school tutoring program in building cultural communication and emotional support.

Murray & Curran (2008) also conducted research with 26 teacher education students enrolled in an undergraduate course, entitled *Consultation and Collaboration with Colleagues and Families* that was required of students seeking licensure in K-12 special education at a medium-sized, mid-western university. Instructors assigned students to interact with individuals from a local county agency serving children and families with mental health and developmental needs and report on their findings. In a survey, administered at the end of the course to measure attainment of the course objectives students were instructed to provide evidence of their meeting the following objectives: (1) Define and explain the characteristics of collaboration, (2) Describe the current research on Families, (3) Understand the complex interaction of social, emotional, and economic issues impacting families, (4) Explain the influences of culture and diversity on families, (5) Develop successful collaboration with families, (6) Describe why collaboration is integral to partnerships, (7) Recognize manifestations of resistance for families. (8) Select/apply

strategies for managing resistance by families, (9) Demonstrate awareness of personal attitudes, beliefs, and values that impact the development of partnerships, and (10) Value family contributions to the collaborative process. The researchers reported that “the objective on which students most consistently felt they made gains (due to the absence of any tied ratings from pre- to post-intervention) was, *understand the complex interaction of social, emotional, and economic issues impacting families of children with disabilities*. This was the objective on which all 26 students indicated their ability improved upon completion of the course” (p. 61). Furthermore, these students reported that the experiential learning opportunity of interacting with individuals from the local agency created a long lasting effect on learning about family involvement.

Bingham & Abernathy (2007) also designed a course “to provide students with theory, general principles, procedures, and legal requirements for fostering collaborative partnerships among families, professionals, students and their stakeholders that lead to outcomes of individual and mutual empowerment by emphasizing the family centered model” (p. 41). The course was designed to satisfy Nevada certification for special education teachers. The researchers compared the students’ conceptual mapping of family involvement pre and post testing through use of a concept mapping procedure. This concept mapping procedure addressed four main categories: (a) *Communication*, representing teacher/parent interaction or specific advocacy on behalf of the parent of child; (b) *Role of School/Teacher*, representing the role of teachers in school settings; (c) *Perception of Family Issues*, representing perceptions of issues families face raising a child with a disability; and (d) *Other*, for any items that fell outside the major codes (p. 47).

In the process of developing their communication skills, students expanded their views of teacher-parent communication from that of mere dissemination of information from teacher to parent to a more collaborative process seeing families as team members in the process. With the role of the teacher, researchers found that at the pretest students began the course with more

traditional and stereotypical roles but changed by the end of the course to conceptualizing the teacher's role as one of "teaming, sharing resources, and showing compassion toward both child and family challenges" (p. 52). In terms of perceptions of family issues, students reported at entry that they did not expect to have much interaction with families and had a limited understanding of resources and the financial hardships experienced by families. As a result of their findings, these researchers encouraged the incorporation of family concepts and family involvement into other courses within the preservice teacher preparation curriculum (Bingham & Abernathy, 2007; Hiatt-Michael, 2006).

These research efforts reveal that teacher educators are currently involved in developing family-centered courses, and identifying the "essential skills and knowledge of teachers" to work with families in schools and communities (Epstein, 1999).

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual development of the Working with Families Self-efficacy Scales (WFSES) was influenced by (1) Alfred Bandura's social learning theory and self-efficacy theory, (2) Joyce Epstein's theory of family-school involvement, and (3) Family systems theory that links family needs and interests, system interaction and building supportive relationships.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Alfred Bandura (1977) describes the concept of self-efficacy within his social learning theory as the belief that one has the capabilities to execute a course of actions required to manage prospective situations. Behavior is affected by both outcome expectations (judgments of teacher's consequences to certain behaviors) and efficacy expectations (teacher's beliefs about their skill in a situation). *Self-efficacy is the belief (whether or not accurate) that one has the power to produce an effect.* Low self-efficacy can lead people to believe tasks are harder than they actually are and reverse high self-efficacy can lead people to believe that tasks are more

manageable, possible where they are more capable of producing an effect on a situation.

According to Bandura, self-efficacy results from the following four conditions: (a) performance accomplishments/mastery experiences, (b) modeling /vicarious experiences, (c) social persuasions and (d) physiological factors. Performance Accomplishments, later termed Mastery Experiences, is comprised of the idea of completing the task successfully. In some cases, failure to perform the task can lead to influential encouragement to abstain from repeating the task.

Therefore, repeated experiences in performing a task well and successfully are most influential and necessary to continue to perform the task. Modeling/vicarious experiences consists of the impact of observing others successfully completing a task and accomplishing the goal. Observers believe that they can accomplish the skills because someone else is able to do it. It is less dependable than first hand experience. Verbal Persuasions, later termed social persuasions, are encouragements to perform/master a task. When persons are told they are able to master a task in difficult situations they are more likely to put forth greater effort and demonstrate more confidence in performing a task. Emotional Arousal, later termed Physiological Factors, relate to how we operate in situations. Stressful and fearful situations may provide informative data that shape our feelings of personal competency. The perceived self-efficacy in threatening situations, increased anxiety and vulnerability may disable capabilities and belief in potential performance (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy has become a powerful construct applied to explain individual behaviors across many fields. Researchers have linked self-efficacy to the teaching role (Denham, 1981; Gibson, 1993), and to teacher beliefs in their capability to complete a range of teaching tasks, assignments or duties. Dellinger et al. (2008) differentiate between the constructs of *teacher efficacy* and *teacher self-efficacy*. “Teacher Efficacy is defined as teachers’ beliefs in their abilities to *affect student performance* (outcomes)” (p. 753). In contrast, Alfred Bandura’s

theory of “teacher self-efficacy beliefs can be defined as a teacher’s individual beliefs in their capabilities to perform specific teaching tasks at a specified level of quality in a specified situation.” (p. 752). Researchers have often intertwined the two constructs when creating measurements of teacher beliefs about their performance. For example, the construct of *Teacher Efficacy* defined by Ashton (1984) shows two components to teacher expectations towards students: (1) the teacher believes that students can learn the material; and (2) the teacher believes that these particular students can learn under their teaching. In comparison in this study teacher efficacy toward families is conceptualized as: (1) the teacher’s beliefs that families are important to their student’s education and development; and (2) the teacher’s beliefs that families can be successfully involved in their school program with their support.

One of the most well known and frequently used instruments is the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), originally designed by Gibson & Dembo in 1984, and composed of 22 questions responses ranging on 6 points from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. Hoy & Woolfolk (1990) developed a shorter version Teacher Efficacy Scale - Short form consisting of ten questions. In both forms of these questionnaires a sample family item: *The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background*. Items were based on a full range of teacher beliefs.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) developed a measure to assess teacher efficacy, entitled the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The TSES assesses teacher beliefs about performing certain specific task or roles in the schools. The basic structure of the TSES instrument assesses teacher efficacy in Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management.

In a limited number of measures, a portion of the instrument has been devoted to assessing teacher self-efficacy *in* Family and Parent Involvement (Epstein, 1991, Hoover-

Dempsey et al., 2002). In these measures, one or two questions are asked of the teacher to rate their skill in working with families. For example, the unpublished version of Alfred Bandura's Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale is comprised of seven scales: (1) Efficacy to Influence Decision Making, (2) Efficacy to Influence School Resources, (3) Instructional Self-Efficacy, (4) Disciplinary Self-Efficacy, (5) Efficacy to Enlist Parental Involvement, (6) Efficacy to Enlist Community Involvement, and (7) Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate (<http://people.ehe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/research/instruments/>, 2009). In the fifth subscale, Efficacy to Enlist Parental Involvement, he asks three questions of teachers regarding their self-efficacy: *How much can you do to get parents to become involved in school activities?*, *How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school?* and *How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to school?*

Bandura (2006) describes his updated rating and scoring system in his *Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales*. Bandura updates his scoring method from levels of influence teachers have in their certain skills; nothing, very little, some influence, quite a bit and a great deal versus a newer version “cannot do at all”, “moderately do at all” and “highly certain can do.” He emphasizes the “can do” and “cannot do” in his scoring range modeling from his theory with Self-Efficacy, the idea that “Can is the judgment of capability” (Bandura, 2006).

Only recently have researchers begun conceptualizing the possible role that teachers might play with student families (Graue, 2003; Garcia, 2004). It is necessary to understand the differing models of viewing parent benefits to their child's education. The theory that families can contribute to the educational learning of children similarly to professionals involved in the families coincides with looking at families as having strengths, resources and abilities (Amatea, 2009; Barnard, 1994; Rafuls, 1996). Within the literature review, ideas of the Needs and Benefits of Families in Student Learning, Educational Reform, Communication, Diversity,

General Self-Efficacy, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Commitment to Building Relationships are discussed. This research study examines teachers' ideas of their skills when working with parents and families in the education process. The complexity of school and family interactions is viewed from a multi-systemic theoretically based perspective.

Joyce Epstein's Theory of Family-School Roles

A key theory necessary to further identify key family involvement beliefs and skills is *Epstein's theory* on involving families in the schools. In particular her ideas of types of involvement include: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community (Epstein, 1987). Her comprehensive guide to each type of involvement includes different practices and challenges to partnerships. Her expansive career focused on the particular ways families contribute to the school and how involving families assists the academic achievement of children. In her six types of involvement, she specifies ways that schools choose to interact with families to meet student's needs.

- **Type 1 – Parenting** (Assist families with parenting and childrearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families).
- **Type 2 – Communicating** (Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications).
- **Type 3 – Volunteering** (Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or other locations to support students and school programs).
- **Type 4 – Learning at Home** (Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum linked activities and decisions.)
- **Type 5 – Decision Making** (Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.)
- **Type 6 – Collaborating with the Community** (Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with business, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community (Epstein, 1997).

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2002) created a Questionnaire for Teachers and Parents to survey teacher and parent perceptions of their family-school relationships based upon Epstein's typology (Hoover-Dempsey, 2002). In an in-depth survey that assessed the six types of family involvement practices and teachers' opinions of how they would rate their personal usage and/or school in these practices or opinions about families, the research team requested that teachers reflect on their "personal judgments about parent's involvement, the practices they were currently using, and the partnership programs teacher would like to see developed or improved in their school or in their own classrooms" (Hoover-Dempsey, questionnaire, p. 1). The instrument was administered as a pre-post test to assess the impact of an in-service training program for teachers in two U.S. public schools that was "designed to enhance practicing teachers' beliefs, skills, and strategies related to parental involvement" (Hoover-Dempsey, 2002, p. 1). The questions items range from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree* with an example of personal judgment *Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school* (Q-1). Another section for activities teachers can choose the question range of not important to very important *Contact parents about their children's problems or failures* (Q-6). Results indicated that teachers began to understand the value in communication and invitations to parents, including communication around positive information and style of communication, i.e., "I will be friendlier from the beginning" (p. 860) regarding forming relationships with parents. Further understanding and "increased comfort with the risks associated with increased invitations to parental involvement—and increased commitment to treating involvement obstacles as problems to be solved rather than barriers to action" (p. 860). Some teachers appeared to have a renewed interest to make efforts with increased enthusiasm "Never give up; there is always a way to get hold of a parent!" (p. 860). While other teachers seemed to learn that with their own avoiding of situations with parents limited invitations. Their own hesitance in

dealing with conflict and problems led to their decisions of actions. Teachers began to understand from the parental perspective that “many parents do want to be involved but are inhibited by fear, addiction, schedules” learning that teachers “need to help them (parents) feel familiar and comfortable” (Hoover-Dempsey, 2002, p. 860).

Systems Theory

General systems theory defines complex “layers” of the environment, each having an interdependent effect on a child’s development. The interaction between layers in the child’s environment from his immediate family, community environment to the societal layers surrounding the child are influential in development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple through other layers. To study a child’s development then, we must look not only at the child and the immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well. Researchers have explored the ideas of families and schools as connected layers using systems theory in psychology, counseling and education where the patterns of interaction, relationships and the environment are all interconnected (Minuchin, 1974; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Nichols, 1991). The impact of systems theory has led to fundamental changes in how we think parents should be involved in the school and how and when to invite them. This dimension involves not only the underlying concepts that drive teachers to invite parents to participate but also their methods for inviting them. Systems theory “stresses the importance of understanding people’s behavior in their natural context” (Nichols, 1991, p. 77). Their natural context would be their home, school, peer and community environment. The context would also include the primary relationships in each context and interaction of each other. In understanding the teacher-family roles, teacher’s identified interaction with children, parents and the school influences how teachers interact with families in circumstances. These relationships underscore the context with which teachers make decisions in how they are to relate, react and interact with

families. The interaction between teachers and families develop over time from theory (Keys et al., 1998), education, and relationships with the environment.

Family Systems Theory

Research emphasizes the importance of parent involvement in promoting school success in students (Comer, 1984; Finders, 1994; Lareau, 1987). Programs demonstrating support of family involvement present verification that student performance and achievement (Hampton, 1998; Henderson, 1987; Peeks, 1993) comes with the school partnering with multiple partners, school personnel, students and families (Keys et. al, 1997). “Research has demonstrated the relationships between family interactions patterns and children’s adjustment” (Nichols, 1992, p. 351). Teachers understanding family issues and cultural influences can be better equipped to assist children in the classroom. Early evidence has shown that school performance of children is strongly influenced by their home background and family structure (Christenson, 1990) and improves student learning (Epstein, 1990). Building on the strengths, resources and diversity of the youth and families can assist in alleviating burdens to the school and community resources. Families seen as resources by the teachers and school can partner with the school to assist children.

Among mental health and family counseling fields, students are taught the importance in interacting with multiple parts of the system, practice family interactions, family involving techniques and building system relationships. Professionals trained in the Family Systems approach learn ways of building and continuing on-going relationships (Amatea & Sherrard, 1993; Mandell & Murray, 2009; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). Focusing on the relationship, professionals look to find solutions in collaborations (Harrison, 2000), difficulties and conflicts while they develop these strong bonds with families (de Shazer, 1985; Lewis, 1996). Counselors create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with families (Amatea, 1981;

Dedmond, 1998; Hinkle, 1993; Kraus, 1998; McBride, 1999; Samis, 1993). While in training as a student and working as a professional, the continual focal point is on building relationships and maintaining them. Family Centered Principle is when teachers and professionals learn ways that the family contributes, influences and can benefit children's learning. This primary preparation in Family Systems approach and Family Centered Principle enables counselors to be more comfortable and capable in working with families. Family intervention training for counselors is both experiential learning and theory based. Systems theory "stresses the importance of understanding people's behavior in their natural context" (Nichols, 1991, p. 77). Their natural context would be their home, school, peer and community environment. The context would also include the primary relationships in each context and interaction of each other. In understanding *the role of a teacher*, teachers' identified beliefs on interaction with children, parents and the school influences how teachers interact with families in circumstances. These relationships underscore the context with which teachers make decisions in how they are to relate, react and interact with families. The interaction between teachers and families develop over time from theory (Keys et al., 1998), education, and relationships with the environment.

Counselors are specialists in working with families. Whether in dyads, triads or understanding an individual in the system, these professionals are trained to understand how families relate and communicate to one another. In the context of a child, there are multiple influences on the individual such as family, schools, friends, spiritual leaders, communities, etc. As with the teacher in the school, teachers can be the gate keeper to involving the family in the school. With family systemic training in education and understanding the Family Centered Principle, teachers can gain comfort in learning how to interact with families. In some cases, teachers are the first to identify issues and concern of the students leading to possible referrals to counselors. Counselors can assist in the development of training modules, links to community

resources (Downing, 1993), and support for child-family-team meetings (Amatea, 1991; Clark, 2000; Colbert, 1996).

Family Centered Beliefs and Practices

Previous research has found several key beliefs and practices that appear to contribute to the development of effective family involvement practices. These are: (a) a shift in family-teacher role expectations toward collaboration, (b) a commitment to developing a relationship with students' families, (c) effective communication and conflict resolution, (d) active efforts to reach out and involve families in their children's learning and development, and (e) appreciating of diverse family backgrounds and beliefs.

Collaborative Family-Teacher Role Expectations

Teacher education literature for over three decades has promoted the practice of parent and family involvement. Epstein's theories are widely acknowledged as acceptable practices throughout the research and in practice. These practices exemplify communication with parents and families, techniques of involving and overcoming barriers to interacting with families (Turnbull, 2001; Sanders, 1996) and the impact of family involvement instructional practices on children's education and achievement. In reviewing the roles of teacher-family relationships, universal school practices, teacher preparation and activities emphasize widely varying family-school relationship structures and role activities (Epstein, 1990; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). One direction is to promote a collaborative, partnership relationship between families and educators so as to maximize the resources available to promote children's learning (Amatea, 2009; Taylor & Adelman, 2000). Rather than interact with families merely on an "as-needed" basis, educators are being encouraged to consciously examine the beliefs undergirding family-school relations and are proposing a co-expert or collaborative paradigm to replace the "sole-expert" model that has traditionally characterized family-school relationships (Amatea, 2009;

Epstein, 1990; Swap, 1993; Weiss & Edwards, 1992). A second direction is to promote a “parent involvement” model in which the educator's role is that of “sole expert or authority” that assesses students' needs, identifies concerns or problems that merit attention, decides what type of instruction or solution is necessary, and determines how students and their families should be involved. In this sole expert/authority model, educators are expected to assume unilateral or dominant roles in educational decision-making with a philosophy of “doing to” or “doing for” students and families. In contrast, in the co-expert or collaborative model educators “work with” students and their families together to identify resources for taking action to solve children's concerns and celebrate their learning. Other differences between these two paradigms include the focus of the relationship; the roles of the educator, student, and family members; the nature of the relationship, including the goal toward which it is directed; the nature of the activities; and the expected outcomes (Amatea, 2009).

Henderson et al. (1987) formulated a unique model of the four different paradigms depicting ways schools interact with families: (a) Partnership, (b) Open Door, (c) Come if We Call, and (d) Fortress. In the Partnership paradigm, families and schools work collaboratively in unison, in the Fortress paradigm families are seen as unnecessary in the education of children and a source of unnecessary conflict. In this latter paradigm, families are blamed for problems, seen as a nuisance and often make activities more difficult and take more time. The Open Door paradigm depicts schools as welcoming most parents yet the schools decide how parents will be involved. In the Come if We call paradigm, schools involve families in only limited ways, parents come to schools only as invited and educators do not expect a lot from families.

One influential interpretation of family-teacher roles is depicted in Gibson & Dembo's Teacher Efficacy Scale (1984). The Teacher Efficacy Scale created to conceptualize a teacher's ability to teach children along a continuum with one aspect being the belief that the teacher has

the greatest influence in helping children learn, and the other that the parents have the greatest influence. This is illustrated by test items such as: *If parents could do more for their children, I could do more* or *If students aren't disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline*, or *The influences of student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Woolfolk, 1990). Skills entailed in building professional relationships with parents, encompass the teacher's commitment to engaging with families, to creating an environment of collaboration and to identifying ways families can contribute to the learning process for their children. In teacher-family roles, teachers' views and actions reflect their skills in various levels of involving and interaction of families.

Commitment to Family-Teacher Relationship Development

The teacher-family relationship is complex yet starts with the foundation of trust, alliance and support for a common goal to help the children in the school. Demonstrating family sensitivity and taking into consideration barriers of culture, economics, race relationship, prior history of unsuccessful collaborations, family education level, and other biological, psychological, social and system concerns the school professionals can build better interactions with primary relationships. Models of interactions with systemic strength-based approaches foster greater student and family success and as a result, increase school and family satisfaction of student progress. Understanding teacher beliefs in how they can work and build relationships with family's leads us to try to understand how they communicate with them and understand family differences and complexities.

Communication and Conflict Resolution

Teacher Communication with families involves methods of convincing parents and families you understand where they are coming from, you want them to participate, are interested in seeing them in the schools and look to them for assistance. Traditional methods of

communication, nonverbal and verbal convey these messages. While in conversation with families in person or by phone, teachers should express partnership language, non-blaming qualities, even tempered tones, cooperation and appreciation for their time. While meeting with families in person, there is a necessity of beginning connections with warm greetings and appreciation. Beginning connections require only a few moments to set the conversation for meetings and conferences. Understanding core communication with nonverbal body language, climate building within the environment and soothing, calming words can calm and comfort families rather than make them tensed and stressed. Conflict underlies teachers' decisions for building relationships. A skill in communication is learning to talk to others who have opinions that differ from one's own. Teachers who know the value of family involvement and parent participation often struggle with the time and difficulties that complicate their efforts. A group of educators have begun to link the difficulties in managing conflict choosing a preferred style of interaction with groups. The research, in general, looks at the preferred interaction of Accommodating, Avoiding, Collaborating, and Competing. Researchers have begun to use the popular business management Thomas Kilmann Instrument (TKI) at social service positions: principals, teachers and counselors. This instrument delves into the ideas of conflict in general situations applied to multiple fields, not teacher specific activities with families. Interesting to note, conflict preferred interactions differ among professionals in certain fields where Competing and Avoiding were Managers (Industrial field) differed from Social Service field preferring Compromising and Collaboration. The development of this study incorporates the theme of Communication in conflicting situations and topics around teachers' communication with families (Connelly, 1998).

Some of the elements in this paper will discuss the types of involvement or participation available to teachers and schools. Also mentioned will be a discussion on how teachers'

decisions may be supported by the school environment. Understanding the choices available for involvement, it is necessary to understand how teachers perceive parents and families, which may reinforce their decisions for involving them. Communication involves techniques of communication, frequency, and dealing with miscommunication. Working through conflicts in styles, topics, opinions require skills in effective listening, negotiating, and respect for other parties to reach solutions.

Appreciating Family Diversity

Diversity involves sensitivity to parents/family barriers and strengths perspective focusing on cultural and societal differences among teacher and student/families. The perspective works to identify how families contribute to their child's learning, internal family supports as strengths, parental and cultural barriers to involvement. The "family" has evolved over time having become more complex with separation, divorce, split household, stepfamilies and blended families, "The (traditional) model for family involvement despite enormous changes in the reality of family structures is that of a two-parent, economically self-sufficient nuclear family with a working father and homemaker" (David 1989 cited Finders, 1994, p. 83). In an article interviewing parents, parents "explain how the diverse contexts of their lives create tensions that interfere with positive home/school relations" (Finders, 1994, p. 84). "Parents who have dropped out of school do not feel confident in school settings. Needed to help support their families or care for siblings at home, these individuals limited schooling makes it difficult for them to help their children with homework" (Finders, 1994, p. 84). Some explanations lean toward parent experiences with schools when they were students and parents' past experiences with trying to unsuccessfully access services for their children (Melaville, 1993) and is especially true for lower socio-economic and minority students (Comer, 1984; Lareau, 1987; Swap, 1993). "Cultural, socioeconomic and racial differences between school staff and families create either

real or assumed barriers” (Weiss, p. 216). Campbell (1993) suggests possible reasons of resistance can be presented from parents. Parents having conflict with time, perceiving the consultation to be organized as a form of “attack”, negative associations to schools, fear of personal disclosure, societal-cultural-economic issues, and denial of child’s misbehavior in the school. Common methods discussing reducing resistance include: setting a positive tone, empathy to parent situation(s), and reframing from problem-oriented to socio-oriented focus (p. 86). “Parent counseling and consultation for example, positively affects student motivation, academic achievement, self-esteem, and classroom behavior” (Nichols, 1992, p. 352). Diversity involves familiarity with other cultures and styles and learning to be comfortable in talking with them. Teachers need skills in viewing parents and families as having strengths and contributing to all parts of the learning process while considering family barriers. Working through self-difficulties of complex family systems, alternate lifestyles and beliefs require skills in patience and acceptance with meeting with altering views of parenting, education and involvement.

Need for the Study

Limited research has been conducted on teacher self-efficacy in implementing family centered practices. To date, studies show the parent’s perspective and the teacher’s viewpoint both on ideas of barriers to collaboration, values of family/school partnerships and family involvement. Enhancing teacher self-efficacy in working with families is a possible training goal. Self-efficacy has been a construct used to assess teacher’s perceived skills. Understanding the level of comfort and proficiency in how teachers communicate, working with diverse populations/situations and building teacher-family relationships may contribute to how teachers involve families. Teacher education has begun to identify needed competencies and skills for teacher preparation working with families. Researchers have had few methods for assessing the impact of teacher preparation efforts to impact teaching practice with families in the schools.

Purpose of the Study

Although there is general agreement in the teacher education field as to the types of competencies that teachers need to demonstrate in working with students' families, research on the effectiveness of training to develop such competencies has been hampered by a lack of available instruments for measuring teachers' perceptions about their capabilities for working with students' families (Graue, 2003; Garcia, 2004; Becker 1982; Christenson et al., 2004).

A valid, reliable and appropriate assessment tool is crucial for teacher educators so that they can more effectively assess the skills, relationship building, and training. Therefore, the major goal of this study is to develop a measure to assess teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about working with families. More specifically, the purpose of the study is to determine the psychometric properties of the WFSES based on data derived from a sample of teachers responding to a request to complete a survey via email. The WFSES item, subscale, and total scale psychometric properties will be determined, as will its factor structure. Initial differential validity will also be gathered.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be evaluated in this study:

- **RQ1.** What is the factor structure of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales?
- **RQ2.** To what extent does the determined factor structure confirm the proposed, theoretical structure?
- **RQ3.** What are the reliability coefficients for each the WFSES subscales?

Definition of Terms

Family-School Communication consists of those persons involved in techniques of exchanging ideas and support through interaction dealing with positive communication, miscommunications, interactions and collaborations. Parties working in collaboration and differences in styles, topics, opinions require skills in effective listening, negotiating, and respect

for other parties to reach solutions. Individuals developing ways to interact in the presence of conflicts, stressful situations, deadlines and tension.

Family Centered Principle built from Family Systems Theory that the family influences child development. When using the Family Centered Principle, teachers and professionals should learn ways that the family contributes, influences and can benefit children's learning.

Family Diversity entails the ability to understand Socio-Cultural perspectives with familiarity and being comfortable interacting with other cultures and styles. Professionals viewing parents and families as having strengths and contribution to all parts of the learning process while considering family barriers and challenges. Individuals working through self-difficulties of alternate lifestyles, family systems and beliefs require skills in patience and acceptance in meeting with altering views of parenting, education and involvement.

Teacher Role with Families describes skills in building professional relationships and the commitment to support parents and families. Professionals creating an environment of collaboration and ways families contribute to the learning process for their children. Professionals assisting families in finding ways to relate to their schools and staff in their desired level of involving and interaction with the school and teachers.

Efficacy is the power to produce an effect (i.e., competence).

Self-Efficacy beliefs are those beliefs (whether or not accurate) that one has the power to produce an effect (Bandura, 1977). Alfred Bandura points to four sources affecting self-efficacy of: (a) performance accomplishments/mastery experiences, (b) modeling /vicarious experiences, (c) social persuasions and (d) physiological factors.

Teacher Self-Efficacy is the teachers' beliefs about their capabilities to produce an effect or task as a teacher; what they feel they "can" do tasks as a professional.

Teacher Self-Efficacy working with Families is the teachers' beliefs about their capabilities of interacting with families of their students; in particular their ability to communicate, capability of interacting in socio-cultural, diverse and connected roles with families.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study will be organized into four chapters. The second chapter is a review of the literature relevant to the study. Chapter 3 includes research methodology with the development of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales. Chapter 4 contains the results of the data analyses and Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the major findings, the study limitations and implications of the findings.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the research and theoretical literature relevant to family involvement in children's schooling, and the preparation of teachers in family involvement will be presented. The theoretical frameworks of family systems theory, social learning theory, family school involvement theory and the development of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales will also be discussed in this chapter.

Family Involvement in Children's Schooling

Over the past three decades there has been an emerging consensus that the quality of relations between schools and families plays an integral role in student success. There is now substantial research emphasizing the importance of parent involvement in promoting school success of students (Comer, 1984; Finders, 1994; Lareau, 1987). Research evidence has shown that school performance of children (Christenson, 1990), their attitudes and behaviors (Jeynes, 2007) and their attendance (Epstein, 1990; 1996) is strongly influenced by their home background. In one book, *Family Involvement in Children's Education*, the authors cite "thirty years of research confirm that family involvement is a powerful influence on children's achievement in school" (Funkhouser, v, 1997). Funkhouser (1997) further states that "when families are involved in their children's education, children earn higher grades and receive higher scores on tests, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families" (p. 3). Parent involvement has also been shown to improve the attitudes of parents about schools and teachers (Epstein, 1986) and to increase student self-esteem (Fan & Chen, 2001).

As a result, parental involvement in the education of children has been identified as a major national priority by educational reformers. Mattingly, Prislín, McKenzzie, Rodriguez and Kayzar (2002) point out that “at the national level, the goal of improving parent participation has enjoyed bipartisan support and has been part of all major educational reform legislation.” (p. 549). The Goals 2000: Educate America Act created federal support for educational reform for student achievement for all American children and schools. The core goals created standardized measures of goals named National Education Goals in 1990. Further goals added to the initial goals with the last revision in 1995 formed Goal 4 and Goal 8 (NEGP, 2007). The goals panel focused on vital concerns of Teacher Education (4) and Parental Participation in schools (8). In particular, the goals outlined in parent participation were that by “the year 2000, every school would promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children”. The objectives for this goal were that “every state was to develop policies to assist local schools and local educational agencies to establish programs for increasing partnerships that respond to the varying needs of parents and the home, including parents of children who are disadvantaged or bilingual, or parents of children with disabilities; every school was to actively engage parents and families in a partnership which supports the academic work of children at home and shared educational decision making at school; and parents and families were to help to ensure that schools are adequately supported and will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability” (p.2).

Additionally, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and parent involvement was one of the six targeted areas of school reform. As a result, several state initiatives and mandates now require schools and teachers to participate in family involvement planning, curriculum and activities. For example, in

Florida, the Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement Act of 2008 was created to provide parents with specific information regarding their child's educational progress and with comprehensive information about their choices and opportunities for involvement in their child's education later updated in 2010. This act also created a framework for building and strengthening partnerships among parents, educators and other school related personnel, and community organizations" (Florida Statute, 2010). The statute depicted below describes the uniform meaningful partnerships *expected* of teachers and schools to maintain with families. Each section provides further clarification available on the state website (information detailing each section shortened for this research):

2010 Florida Statutes: *1002.23 Family-School Partnership for Student Achievement Act*. The purpose of the Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement Act is to:

(a) Provide parents with specific information about their child's educational progress; (b) Provide parents with comprehensive information about their choices and opportunities for involvement in their child's education; and (c) Provide a framework for building and strengthening partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, district school superintendents, and other personnel.

~ Each district school board, school district superintendent, and teacher shall fully support and cooperate in implementing a well-planned, inclusive, and comprehensive program to assist parents and families in effectively participating in their child's education.

~ To facilitate meaningful parent and family involvement, the Department of Education shall develop guidelines for a parent guide to successful student achievement which describes what parents need to know about their child's educational progress and how they can help their child to succeed in school.

~ Each district school board shall adopt rules that strengthen family involvement and family empowerment. The rules shall be developed in collaboration with parents, school administrators, teachers, and community partners, and shall address: (a) Parental choices and responsibilities; (b) Links with community services; (c) Opportunities for parental involvement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of family involvement programs; and (d) Opportunities for parents to participate on school advisory councils and in school volunteer programs and other activities.

~ Each school district shall develop and disseminate a parent guide to successful student achievement, consistent with the guidelines of the Department of

Education, which addresses what parents need to know about their child's educational progress and how parents can help their child to succeed in school. The guide must: (a) Be understandable to students and parents; (b) Be distributed to all parents, students, and school personnel at the beginning of each school year; (c) Be discussed at the beginning of each school year in meetings of students, parents, and teachers ([Florida Statue](#), 2010, p. 1).

This Florida statute further exemplifies the expectations that educators will work with families in the schools. Communities, schools and school personnel need to comply with state regulations and mandates as requirements become more standardized.

Teacher Preparation in Family Involvement

Even though teachers, principals, policy makers and teacher educators agree on the importance of parental involvement, only recently has attention been given to preparing teachers to work with students' caregivers. Although most teacher preparation programs provide a limited amount of exposure to family involvement practices (Epstein & Salinas, 2004), some teacher preparation programs are beginning to address these needs by preparing preservice teachers to understand the family and their contribution to children's learning.

Joyce Epstein (2006) conducted a review of 161 U.S. schools and noted that educational leaders recognized the need to better prepare new educators in parent involvement. "Fully 76% of the sample recommended that a full course on parental involvement be required at the undergraduate level" (Epstein, 2006, p. 83). Furthermore, she reported a strong consensus among her respondents that *all teachers should know how to conduct practices of school, family, and community partnerships with all families*" (Epstein, 2006, p. 94). Not only does Epstein's research support the need to instruct preservice teachers in understanding family involvement, it affirms the need for teacher educators and researchers to discuss family involvement preparation (Epstein, 2005).

Baum and Swick (2008) discussed the benefits of not only having a course on family involvement but expanding the focus of family involvement to the entire preparation program so as to give students time to understand their “personal beliefs and practice, while applying their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a variety of settings” (Baum & Swick, p. 61). These authors also encouraged teacher educators to increase the experiential learning opportunities by increasing preservice teachers’ meaningful interactions with parents before student teaching. In addition, they recommended that teacher educators find “cooperating teachers” who could assist in creating opportunities for preservice teachers to observe teachers successfully having positive experiences with families.

Mandell & Murray (2005) completed a comprehensive review of preservice teacher preparation in a family involvement approach known as the Family Centered Preservice Model (FCPM). Among the participants, 70% “reported relying on their own personal family experiences as a framework for working with families” (pg 76) demonstrating the need for preservice teachers to acquire specialized skills in working with families within their school. Sutterby et al. (2007) reported similar experiences occurred when Latino preservice students interacted with Latino families in an after-school tutoring program building on cultural communication and support.

Rupiper (2004) interviewed 82 special education teacher educators as to the inclusion of specific family centered content areas in their special education teacher preparation programs. There was a consensus among these teacher educators that the family centered content areas should include: a knowledge of families, IFSP/IEP skills, a respect for diversity, communication skills, and knowledge of teamwork. However, the faculty rated respecting diversity as the most important area identified.

Grossman et al. (2007) emphasized the necessity of understanding “relationships” in the professions of psychology and teaching which promotes the outcome. The core of these jobs relied on the relationship between teacher and student or therapist and client. Hence these researchers felt that learning, working on and maintaining relationships was crucial for success in these jobs. On page 111, they cite this example in understanding the teacher-student relationship “the new teacher who has always been a model student may be shocked to find that her own students behave defiantly” when learning and coping with students. Further they note “teaching novices to build relationships with reluctant or resistant clients presents a central challenge for preservice education in these helping professions” (p. 112). Their research studied eight professional preparation programs: three clinical psychology programs, two teacher education programs, and three seminars looking at what they termed “relational practices” where they looked “specifically on how novices are prepared to respond to various forms of resistance” (pg 109). They suggest that psychology programs offer role-plays, simulations and theoretical bases to analyze client resistance, teaching programs should follow similar in their training.

Using a qualitative methodology, Murray and her associates (2006) studied the use of family centered practices among 19 teachers or administrators employed in 19 different programs located in six states. Researchers asked the study participants: “*What challenges or barriers have you experienced in implementing family-centered practices in your job? What opportunities or supports have you experiences in implementing family-centered practices in your job?*” *How did course content or experiences impact your skills in working with families?* and *How are early childhood interventionists implementing family-centered practices?* (pg 129). They reported that “regardless of the level of understanding of family-centered practices, administrators viewed on-the-job experiences occurring early in their careers as an influential factor in shaping their beliefs about working with families” (p. 17).

Sarah Kit-Yee Lam (2005) developed an interdisciplinary course to prepare school professionals to work with families. In her specialized course, she defines school professionals as teachers, school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, and school nurses surrounding the child. The foundation of her course entails the benefits of involving families in children's education. In particular, she educates teachers-in-training on the needs of exceptional children. Students with disabilities needs differ to the more traditional child. She also encourages among special education on these children's needs; the families of these children have unique needs as well. She developed her course using the principles of Evans-Schilling (1996) of: (1) developing self- and other awareness; (2) developing a knowledge base; (3) gaining direct experience with families; and (4) contributing to the field.

Staton and Gilligan (2003) designed a course in which they sought to instill professional skills in preservice teachers in the following domains: (a) developing professional identity through reinforcing reflection and self- awareness (2) developing knowledge of and respect for other professionals through exposing students to other professionals and sharing training experiences; and (3) building systemic thinking (page 39). They reported that changes had occurred in preservice teachers' attitudes and skills through use of pre/post questionnaires and reflection papers.

Giallourakis (2005) assessed changes in the family-centered beliefs, skills and practices of 104 graduate students by means of the Partnership Scale. They defined *family-centered beliefs* as the graduate student's philosophical beliefs about family-centered practice: *Family-centered skills* were defined as the teacher's knowledge (ability) to work with families. *Family-centered systems* represented the environment in which the teacher works with young children, and *family-centered work practices* were defined as the teacher's actual practices in the work setting as a family-centered practitioner.

MacPherson et al. (2005) developed an on-line training course in family-centered intervention based upon the 1996 theories of Begun. “Family-centered intervention recognizes that the family as a system is more than the sum of its parts and that the family system exists within a larger social and environmental context” (pg 161). One addition to the “course materials included 8 self-study modules focusing on family-centered practice and the assessment of family strengths and needs (Kysela, McDonald, Drummond, & Alexander, 1996) was also included to instruct on family-centered practices (page 161).

Murray & Curran (2008) conducted research with 26 teacher education students enrolled in an undergraduate course required of students seeking licensure in K-12 special education at a medium-sized, mid-western university. The course was titled *Consultation and Collaboration with Colleagues and Families*. Instructors created an experiential opportunity for the preservice students to interact with individuals from a local county agency servicing children and families with mental health and developmental needs. A survey was administered at the end of the course to measure attainment of the course objectives using of the following questions: (1) Define and explain the characteristics of collaboration, (2) Describe the current research on families, (3) Understand the complex interaction of social, emotional, and economic issues impacting families, (4) Explain the influences of culture and diversity on families, (5) Develop successful collaboration with families, (6) Describe why collaboration is integral to partnerships, (7) Recognize manifestations of resistance for families, (8) Select/apply strategies for managing resistance by families, (9) Demonstrate awareness of personal attitudes, beliefs, and values that impact the development of partnerships, and (10) Value family contributions to the collaborative process. The researchers reported that the only objective on which all 26 students indicated their ability improved upon completion of the course was that of *understanding the complex interaction of social, emotional, and economic issues impacting families of children with*

disabilities. Furthermore, these students reported that the experiential learning opportunity of interacting with individuals from the local agency created a long lasting effect on learning about family involvement.

Bingham & Abernathy (2007) designed a course “to provide students with theory, general principles, procedures, and legal requirements for fostering collaborative partnerships among families, professionals, students and their stakeholders that could lead to outcomes of individual and mutual empowerment by emphasizing the family centered model” (p. 41). The course was designed to satisfy Nevada certification for special education teachers. The researchers compared students’ conceptual mapping of family involvement pre and post testing through use of a concept mapping procedure to analyze students’ work. This concept mapping procedure addressed four main categories: (a) *Communication*, representing teacher/parent interaction or specific advocacy on behalf of the parent of child; (b) *Role of School/Teacher*, representing the role of teachers in school settings; (c) *Perception of Family Issues*, representing perceptions of issues families face raising a child with a disability; and (d) *Other*, for any items that fell outside the major codes (p. 47). In the process of their evaluation with communication, students reported that they had changed their understanding of their role from that of a disseminator of information to parents to that of a collaborator with parents and with families as team members in the process. While the students began with more traditional and stereotypic ideas about their role, they later were “teaming, sharing resources, and showing compassion toward both child and family challenges” (p. 52). Changes also occurred in students’ perceptions of family issues. At entry into the course students did not have much interaction with families and had only a limited scope of understanding about financial hardships. However by the end of the course, students perceived that there were family resources as well.

Zygmunt (2006) assessed the effects on 78 preservice teachers of a university course on family involvement. The course instructor administered the Peabody Family Involvement Survey (Katz & Bauch, 1999) to both a treatment and control group. Participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with the following statements: “*Conducting scheduled and unscheduled Parent/Teacher conferences, I believe communicating by phone to family member is feasible for negative feedback*”, “*Calling family members by phone with positive feedback or regarding concerns*” and “*Conducting home visits*”. Crucial to her research was the exploration of teachers “involving families, perceived feasibility in accomplishing these practices, and their perception of their preparation for such work.” (Zygmunt, 2006, p. 327). The course focused on teaching methods of establishing family partnerships around mutual trust and respect, understanding family issues, and promoting school relationships. The course utilized experiential learning of role playing and case studies.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2002) conducted an in-service teacher training program and used a variety of pre/post measures. The research sought to measure: (1) Teacher Efficacy, (2) Teachers’ beliefs about parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school, (3) Teacher beliefs about parent involvement, (4) Teacher beliefs about importance of specific involvement practices, (5) Teacher invitations to involvement and (6) Teacher reports of parent involvement. Item example of measuring Teacher Efficacy: “I feel that I am making a significant difference in the lives of my students”. Results yielded conclusive findings with comparisons of post surveys to pre-surveys; teachers increased their knowledge of the benefits of problem solving, strategizing and solutions utilizing family involvement more frequently.

These research studies reveal that teacher educators are beginning to identify the “essential skills and knowledge of teachers” to work with families (Epstein, 1999) and are developing courses to cultivate these skills.

Essential Teacher Competencies in Family Involvement

A number of professional organizations have now formulated teacher competencies in family involvement (Caspé, 2001). For example, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, the National Parent Teacher Association, the Council for Professional Recognition, and the Association of Teacher Educators, have now developed standards that emphasize communication with students' families and understanding the underlying principles of family and school partnerships. The Family Involvement Standards described by Caspe (2001) specify that: "Candidates establish positive and productive relationships with families. Candidates maintains an open, friendly, and cooperative relationship with each child's family, encourages their involvement in the program and supports the child's relationship with his or her family" (from Competency Goal IV; Functional Area 11 for Center-Based and Family child Care CDAs, c, p.5). On a different note, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards discusses the varying differences in building relationships and possible conflicts with families and schools. "Accomplished teachers develop skills and understanding to avoid these traditional pitfalls and work to foster collaborative relationships between school and family" (Caspé, 2001, p. 16). Caspe (2001) describes the underlying principles in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education where "field experiences and clinical practice support the development of educators who can apply their knowledge of diversity, including exceptionalities, to work in schools with all students. They provide opportunities for candidates to reflect on their observations and practices in schools and communities with students and families from diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups" (Caspé, 2001, p. 18).

Although a growing number of teacher educators are recognizing the importance of teachers being prepared to work with families, there have been only limited efforts to change the curriculum standards for the preparation of teachers. Caspe (2001) noted that currently "no state

requires a separate course in parent involvement for teacher licensure. Only a handful of states require parent involvement preparation as part of a course. A minority of the states include parent involvement in their competency standards for teachers/administrator or in their standards for teacher/administrators training programs” (p. 21).

Some states, such as Florida, have developed standards for preparing teachers. “The Educator Accomplished Practices were developed by the Education Standards Commission pursuant to legislative directive. The Accomplished Practices are general teacher competencies related to the goals of the Education Accountability Act and were adopted by the State Board of Education on November 7, 1996. In the 1998-1999 fiscal years, the Education Standards Commission worked on ways to better endorse the Practices to the education profession” (FESC, 2010). State standards led to the educational reform in Florida leading to the specification of competencies and skills required of all teachers.

Although there does not exist an individual theme of family involvement or working with families in the Florida Accomplished Practices, there are significant indicators of family and parent practices woven into the various standards that were developed. These Educator Accomplished Practices include:

Assessment (sample key indicators referencing family/families or parent): Communicates individual student progress based upon appropriate indicators to the student, families, and colleagues.

Communication (sample key indicators referencing family/families or parent): Communicates with colleagues, school and community specialists, administrators, and families.

Continuous Improvement (sample key indicators referencing family/families or parent): Communicates planned learning activities and student progress with students, families, and colleagues.

Diversity (sample key indicators referencing family/families or parent): The professional teacher establishes a “risk-taking” environment which accepts and fosters diversity. The teacher must demonstrate knowledge of varied cultures by

practices such as conflict resolution, mediation, and creating a climate of openness, inquiry, and support. Analyzes and uses school, family, and community resources to help meet students' learning needs. Recognizes the importance of family and family structure to the individual learner and is aware of student's family situation when planning individual learning.

Ethics (sample key indicators referencing family/families or parent): Takes reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated. Maintains honesty in all professional dealings. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

Role of the Teacher The professional teacher establishes open lines of communication and works cooperatively with families, educational professionals, and other members of the student's support system to promote continuous improvement of the educational experience; (sample key indicators referencing family/families or parent): Serves as an advocate for her/his students. Confers with students and their families to provide explicit feedback on student progress and obtains assistance for families. Proposes ways in which families can support and reinforce classroom goals, objectives, and standards. Can describe overt signs of child abuse and severe emotional distress, and, when recognized, can take appropriate intervention measures, referral, and reporting actions. Can describe overt signs of alcohol and drug abuse, and, when recognized, can take appropriate intervention measures, referral, and reporting actions. Works with colleagues to meet identified educational, social, linguistic, cultural, and emotional needs of students. Communicates with families, including those of culturally and linguistically diverse students, to become familiar with the students' home situations and backgrounds. Develops short- and long-term personal and professional goals relating to the roles of a teacher (FESC, 2010).

A review of the content of current teacher coursework on family involvement and of professional standards for teachers reveals some consensus regarding the essential knowledge and skills required. Three areas in which teachers are expected to have some basic knowledge and skills are family-school communication, understanding of family diversity, and teacher role with families. In the following sections, these three areas will be discussed.

Family-School Communication

The family-school communication domain comprises the teacher's beliefs about their ability to interact, intervene, and influence their working with students' families. For example,

Chen et al. (2009) designed an 18-month professional development course to increase teachers understanding of positive family involvement practices. Information covered more traditional ways of communicating with families as well as understanding families' influence, contribution and strengths in child's learning. Researchers asked teachers about the nature of their contacts with families with the question "*Mostly when I contact parents, it's about problems or trouble*" (p. 14). In communicating and collaborating with families, teachers reflected on how they perceived students' families and their benefits in influencing their children's learning.

Baum (2004) notes an important recommendation made by Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms (1986) that "future teachers need to develop an understanding of the importance of parents' role in education, diversity in families, family factors that impact children's learning and development, and skills necessary for successful communication and collaboration (p. 57). She further reveals the importance of this preparation with opinions of McBride (1991) stating "teachers who are not well prepared may feel frustrated and demonstrate negative attitudes about their work with families" (p. 57). Baum (2004) writes "Preservice and beginning teachers, who have had only one course on parent education, often express hesitation and sometimes even trepidation when discussing the nature and the quality of the relationships that they expect to develop with the families and children with whom they will work" (p. 58). Baum (2004) comments, "Preservice teachers often anticipate that these relationships will be characterized by conflict and criticism" (p. 58). Hence it is important that preservice teachers role play situations in order to learn how to use appropriate communication and conflict resolution strategies (Baum, 2004). "Most teachers feel frustrated in their attempts to involve parents" (Garcia, 2004, p. 310). Regrettably families who do not feel welcome by teachers avoid coming to school (Lott, 2001).

The practice literature emphasizes the need for teachers to build rapport with students' caregivers, to use strength-based versus deficit based language, to be sensitive to diversity, to

avoid blame, and to overcome family resistance and various barriers of working with families. Building rapport means creating an environment for the teacher, counselor, and parent to talk non-judgmentally, sympathetically and supportively to each other. A teacher using skills of positive “communication (e.g. listening, demonstrating empathy, being non-judgmental, problem solving, conflict management, stress management)” can model a way of working with fellow teachers and families (Coy & Sears, 2000, p. 60).

When families are viewed as resourceful and helpful in the process of teaching their children, teachers value families and their contribution. In contrast, when families are viewed as deficient (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) or unskillful in helping their children, teachers plan procedures and policies without families and/or take a leadership role informing families of duties. It is predicted that teachers like parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995) question their confidence and communication skills when trying to build relationships with non-traditional families especially when a school problem occurs.

Communicating with families has always been promoted in school systems through the use of parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher associations, volunteering at school and parent-child centered goals for working with children at home. Teachers communicate with parents and families through letters home, phone calls, and invitations for participation in the schools. Sometimes communication is pleasant between parent and teacher and other times where conflicts occur communication is difficult. Teachers are trained to communicate ideas and principles to children and adolescents. Math, Science, Foreign Language all require skills in explaining new ideas, build on previous principles, and expanding depths of understanding. Part of the teacher’s daily tasks requires communicating with students in order to instill discipline, structure, and motivation in students. Teachers also communicate and disseminate information to parents and caregivers.

Although professional literature emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in children's learning, there has been limited research about teachers' strategies for handling conflictual communication with parents. Teachers face challenges to their job with student's expanding homes, increased demands, intense communities, demanding complex families, expanding job descriptions, changes in expectations of roles placed by the school, principal, community and parents. Swap (1993) discussed a theory of how teachers avoid interactions with families in order to reduce their conflict and intrusion of parents. Conflict is unpleasant for any professional. If there were a choice, most people would prefer not to enter an altercation with another person. Preventing conflict has advantages, so teachers/schools avoid situations in order to avoid potential conflict and can make it more difficult and uncomfortable to repair. For families, teacher-parent-child situations where the child is not behaving well or performing well leads families to have self-doubt about their influence. In preparation for school meetings, families have feelings of confusion, anxiety and fear they are to blame for the situation (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). A research review of school strategies suggests that teachers practice ways to reduce the anxieties and frustrations of parents and children to increase the success of meetings (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1997). By blocking blame and having opportunities to view each other's viewpoint, teachers work to offer respect and consideration to parents providing equal time in offering positive contributions and solutions (Amatea et al., 2006).

Teachers are being encouraged to involve and invite parents into the school and into their classrooms. Some invitations are to assist with homework assignments at home while others include invitations to problem solving and solution building teams to address child school disciplinary issues. Teacher invitations to parents are guided by the teacher's level of comfort and understanding of family values. Parents affect children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The foundation of building relationships with families begins with respect, trust, and

appreciation. Upon development of this connection between teachers and families, sensitive communication can occur even when addressing complicated problems and issues arise with the child in school. If this step of building the relationship (with classroom orientations, family information meetings, courteous messages and phone calls, concern, tolerance and resilience) is missed, family alliance building will suffer.

Conflict resolution curriculums have reentered the school with the increasing violence in the schools (Girard, 1995). Vestal (2001) emphasized the positive effects of conflict resolution training in the schools where teachers reported an increased level of comfort, strategies and understanding of handling conflict. Kelly (1983) stressed the importance of understanding the skills of mediation to include: acceptance, active listening skills, development of rapport and empathy, confidentiality, interpretation of interactive dynamics, and role modeling. These skills are similar to the fields of counseling and psychology. According to Deutsch (1994) the influencing skills one should possess to resolve conflict involve: (1) establishing a working relationship with each of the conflicting parties to establish trust, communicate freely with him/her, and be responsive to her/his suggestions regarding an orderly process of negotiations and (2) establishing and maintaining a cooperative problem-solving attitude among the conflicting parties toward their conflict.

Understanding Family Diversity

Researchers report that parents are often unsure as to what kinds of questions to ask or what to do (Plunge, 1998), and feel they do not have the knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for services for their child or to understand the decisions made by professionals (Simpson & Simpson, 1994). Moreover, parents often report feeling intimidated by educators (Brightman & Sullivan, 1980). The multitude of complex concerns facing schools and communities begin with understanding issues faced by students and their families; for example,

drug addiction, abuse, separating families, unsupervised children, unemployment, crime and violence (Cloud, 1999; Coffman, 1984; Gilliland, 1993; Funkhouser, 1997; Melaville, 1993).

McGrew et al. (1991) developed a twelve item instrument to assess the degree to which families perceived their own sense of empowerment as a result of family members' interactions with school staff that were related to their children's educational program. From their factor analysis, three dimensions of the family-school relationships emerged: (a) parent's comfort level in the relationship with school staff, (2) parents' perception of the level of collaboration by school staff and (3) the parental sense of control. Item questions examples *It is difficult to work together with the school staff when planning my child's school program* and *The school staff anticipate our family's concerns and needs*. This instrument demonstrates both strength-based family themes and sensitivity to family situations.

Practitioners frequently note that family involvement in the schools should express standards with working with families in a considerate, respectful manner (Barnard, 1994; Johnson, 1989) and combat barriers to families coming to schools (Turnbull, 2001). Some families and parents have traditionally not had positive experiences in the schools (Coffman, 1992; Finders, 1994; Lareau, 1987; Turnbull, 2001). This is especially true for lower socio-economic and minority students (Comer, 1984; Lareau, 1987). Many of the families who were not successful in school have children who are suffering in school (Finders, 1984). Some explanations lean toward parent experiences with schools as students and parents' past experiences with trying to unsuccessfully access services for their children (Melaville, 1993). There are other families that are unsure of what they can offer a school or toward their children's education (Finders, 1994).

Cultural diversity between teachers and families may contribute to these difficulties. Barriers of family poverty (clothing, food and housing difficulties), racial differences and

cultural disparities can also contribute to these difficulties. The perception of differences can cause conflict between teacher and family yet families regardless of family structure, socioeconomic status, or cultural identification can contribute to child success in school (Clark, 1983). Family stressors may decrease family's attention to details. Acceptance and sensitive communication can bridge the cultural differences between school and home. Building a relationship sometimes requires the professional to become aware of the family circumstances and barriers to make a valuable connection to parents. Changing the way teachers relate and interact with families can begin with sensitivity to family situations.

Teacher Role with Families and Relationships

Several researchers have described different types of family-school relationships. Snyder (2000) describes a typology of family-school relationships in which one type of relationship is characterized by minimal "contact" of school staff with the family. This may entail a letter sent home or phone call requesting permission for the child to be in services or possibly stating the child will receive services, a form of notification. This may also include the parent(s) coming to school to receive paperwork or sign in person. In contrast, another type of family-school relationship is one depicting a higher level of contact with the parents/family through an invitation for a workshop, parent/teacher conference, parent/counselor conference, etc. At this level, the school disseminates information to the family. Another type of family-school relationship involved actual interaction with parents that may be "focused on a psycho-educational model entailing instruction for parents and families on a problem-solving method of handling stress and children's inappropriate behaviors" (Snyder, 2000, p. 41).

Joyce Epstein (1995) has proposed a variety of ways that family might be involved in their children's learning that fall into five distinctive categories: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, and (e) decision making and

collaborating with the community. In general, her theories comprise of a comprehensive guide to each type of involvement including different practices and challenges to partnerships.

Graue et al. (2003) conducted an investigation into the beliefs of preservice teachers' ideas of parent involvement in teaching. She based her study on Epstein's (1995) typology of parent involvement of family structures and practices. Their research measured a variety of variables including preservice teachers' memories of family involvement in education, for example: *Describe your parents' activities during your elementary years regarding how they:* (1) showed respect for school, (2) responded to school, (3) discussed school with child, (4) attended school events and other activities. In addition to personal family experiences, the preservice teachers were asked to rate their beliefs regarding their certain family-school knowledge domains: (1) curriculum, (2) child functioning in a group, (3) socio-emotional needs, (4) academic strengths, and more. Another section including ideas of anticipated parent involvement in teaching, for instance the question lead, *How do you anticipate working with parents and families in your teaching?* (1) Parent-Teacher Conferences, (2) Invite parents to work in the classroom, (3) Home visits, and more. Their studies indicated that preservice teachers held more traditional models of teacher interactions with families and the more traditional family unit would be more inclined to participate in school involvement. These study participants appeared to base their perceptions on their own history and upbringing.

Ferrara (2009) surveyed 16,288 parents, 46 administrators, 1,200 teachers and clerical staff, and 125 preservice teachers about family-school relationships (Ferrara, 2009). Within the survey to parents, the parents responded to the question *I feel welcome at the school* with 89% of the elementary school parents agreeing, 83% of the middle school parents agreeing, and 81% of the high school parents whereas 4% of the elementary parents disagreed as did 6% of the middle school parents and 6% of the high school parents. To the question *School wants my ideas to*

make school better, 57% of the parents in elementary, 43% of the middle school parents, and 39% of the high school parents agreed whereas 23% of the elementary, 46% of the middle school parents and 48% of the high school disagreed. Among the teachers and clerical staff, staff “wanted to see more parents volunteering, mostly expressed as the desire for parents to help as tutors or with clerical work such as photocopying. Some respondents mentioned parents serving as crossing guards or patrol helpers, or assisting with non-classroom activities such as lunchroom, recess, and field trip supervision.” Some staff wanted parents to make sure their children were completing their homework and using good study habits” where a smaller group wanted “to have improved or increased communication with parents” (Ferrara, 2009, pg. 135). Along the lines of teachers identifying parenting concerns, “staff would like to see more responsible parenting practices. These practices may include getting children to school on time, helping children take more responsibility for their behaviors, and ensuring that responsible adults provide for children’s basic needs such as clothing and nutrition” (Ferrara, 2009, p. 135).

Several researchers have begun to define the *type of family-school relationship* characterizing particular involvement practices. For example, Henderson, Jones and Raimondo (1999) presented a unique model of school paradigms depicting four ways that schools interact with families: (a) *Partnership*, (b) *Open Door*, (c) *Come if We call*, and (d) *Fortress*. In the *Partnership* paradigm school staff believe that all families, teachers, schools work and learn together. They talk often about how students are doing. Parents are involved in schools to their interest/level of involvement. Educators encourage families to be involved in all aspects of their child’s education and school, and have high standards for all students, in all classrooms. In the *Open Door* paradigm, educators welcome most parents in many ways, but teachers and principal decide how parents will be involved. Although the Open Door paradigm tries to help all students, they do a better job with some students than others. In the *Come if We call* paradigm,

educators involve families in very limited ways. Parents come to school only when invited. They appear to not expect a lot from their students or families independently. In the *Fortress* paradigm, educators keep parents on the outside. When students do not do well, the school often blames them and their families. The school favors very few parents and seems to look down on the others.

DeForest & Hughes (1992) assigned sixty elementary school teachers to one of two groups to view videotapes depending upon whether they scored above or below a certain cutoff score on the Teacher Efficacy Scale. First, teachers viewed one of two consultation videos that were identical except for identifying the problem, selecting an assessment procedure and selecting an intervention plan. Second, teachers rated the consultant's effectiveness and the intervention's acceptability. Teachers in the high Personal Teacher Efficacy group rated the consultant as more effective and the intervention as more acceptable.

Teacher collaboration with parents, students and other community members is becoming a more accepted relationship form. Collaboration involves developing relationships, shared responsibility, and active participation among members. Becoming a team, members share responsibilities and exchange of information working together on a joint plan. Knowledge and power can play an integral part in school climate from principal, teacher and family. The "professional as expert" viewpoint has shifted in research allowing for all parties to partake in expert knowledge, including parent (McCaleb, 1994; Gonzalez, 1996) and child (Austin, 1994; Amatea, 2009). The teacher, parents, and child are now collaborators in building an educational team. The team approach allows members to share activities as part of a team of experts valuing each persons opinions, input and knowledge of how to succeed in school, i.e., shared power and "cooperative process of planning and problem solving" (Weiss & Edwards, 1992, p. 215). The research strongly suggests evidence that "methods of effectively serving psychological needs of

the child in the context of the family demonstrate cost-effective, cost-efficient evidence of success for children (Epstein, 1990; Funkhouser, 1997; Sprenkle, 1996).

Involvement invitations from school personnel to parents may be occurring as a result of state regulations rather than by professional choice (McAllister-Swap, 1990). Therefore the interaction and motivation of staff may not look to be embracing the knowledge and assistance a parent can provide. Christenson et al. (1997) sought to measure parents and school psychologists' perspectives on parent involvement activities aimed at enhancing success of students in school. Researchers asked participants to rate on a point system of 1 – 4 activities that should be offered in schools (rating system (1) no to (4) definitely yes) and how feasible the activity would be to complete (rating system was (1) not feasible to (4) very feasible). Sample partnership activities include: *give parents information about community agencies to support children's and family's needs* and *create more time for parents to meet with teachers and conduct family-school meetings to problem solve with parents and teachers about ways to enhance children's learning*. They reported that parents had significantly higher ratings of interest in parent involvement activities than did school psychologists.

Becker and Epstein (1982) measured elementary school teachers' perceptions of parent involvement in home learning. In generating opinions of parent involvement, for example, an item question: *Teachers can only provide parents with ideas about how to help with their children's schoolwork – teachers cannot influence parents to use these ideas* and another *Establish a formal agreement where the parent supervises and assists the child in completing homework tasks*. Their results indicated teachers had a positive view of parent-oriented teaching strategies. Findings are discussed in terms of teachers' attitudes toward parent involvement, reported practices, and some differences in opinion and practice among teachers.

Theoretical Frameworks

Joyce Epstein's Theory of Family-School Roles

As discussed in the section *Essential Teacher Competencies* above, one of the key theories conceptualizing the teachers' role and relationships with families was formulated by Joyce Epstein in her Theory of Family-School Roles. Spanning thirty years, her theory identifies key beliefs and skills for involving families in the schools. Her comprehensive guide to each type of involvement includes different practices and challenges to school partnerships. Her research focuses on the particular ways families contribute to their child's schooling and how involving families facilitates the academic achievement of children. In her six types of involvement, she specifies ways that schools choose to interact with families to meet student needs. Her defined practices incorporate theories on parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making/collaboration with the community (Epstein, 1987).

Family Systems Theory

Family system theorists (Kraus, 1998; Minuchin, 1974; Nichols, 1991) approach interventions by emphasizing the need to examine the child in context of the family, their roles and their interactions. Hence the interdependency of family members is focused on rather than looking at individuals in isolation from the family. When viewing the child, family systems theorists view the organization of the members, not specifically the child or one person in the system. In trying to help the child, family practitioners help the system, not one part of the system (i.e., not *just* the child or not *just* the parent). They look at how the family is relating to each other and how they affect each other.

The application of family systems theory centers on understanding the child in the context of the environments in which they live and learn. Within the theory, professionals learn about family needs and interests, and how family members interact, support and function

together. It is important to observe family interactions and other relationships that influence each other. A family systems theorist seeks to understand and create relationships with family members and system partners to support the development and growth of the child. In building relationships with the child's support team, professionals promote positive working relationships and can support family changes and improvements. When looking at the relationships around a child, the parents, siblings, grandparents, extended community and peers influence the child inside and outside the school walls. The influence of a child's connections can foster or hinder a child's daily success, learning and development. Viewing the child's development through a family systems lens can assist educators in promoting the academic progress of children.

In family systems theory, the use of a strength-based perspective that focuses on parents' strengths and positive contribution to children's development enables professionals to identify ways that parents contribute to their child's success and support ways parents can continue to contribute inside and outside the school.

Researchers have explored the ideas of families and schools as connected systems using systems theory from the fields of psychology, counseling and education (Minuchin, 1974; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Nichols, 1991). Often the first and most valuable professionals for parents and their children, beyond visits to a pediatrician, are teachers who work with children every day. Because they become an important part of children's social systems, classroom teachers are in a unique position to interact positively learning, development and relationships daily.

Bandura's Social Learning and Self-Efficacy Theory

Alfred Bandura (1977) describes the concept of self-efficacy within his Social Learning theory as the belief that one has the capabilities to execute the course of actions required to manage prospective situations. Self-Efficacy is the belief that one has the power to produce an

effect. Low self-efficacy can lead people to believe tasks are harder than they actually are and reverse high self-efficacy can lead people to believe that tasks are more manageable, possibly where they believe they are more capable of producing an effect on a situation or reaching a goal.

Bandura (1977) presented the theoretical groundwork to explain psychological behaviors and motivations achieved or actualized in different situations. His theory “hypothesized that expectations of personal efficacy (or influence) determine whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences” (p 191). Bandura (1977) proposed that expectations (or perceptions) of personal self-efficacy are “derived from four principle sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. The more dependable the sources, the greater are the changes in perceived self-efficacy” (p. 191). His theory of behavioral change where educators or psychologists influence a person’s self-efficacy is to create an environment of modeling more productive behaviors inducing situations of strong Performance Accomplishments with positive feedback (later named Mastery Experiences), Vicarious experiences (modeling/watching others), Verbal persuasion (encouragements rather than discouragements), and increase positive physiological states to achieve beneficial outcomes.

Further reviewed, teacher’s sense of accomplishment around completing a task reinforces the act of repeating the task. Therefore, repeated experiences performing the task well and successfully are necessary to continue to perform the task. Teachers need opportunities to experience this growth in non-traditional activities with families. Various activities surrounding working with families will encourage more involvement if they have the sense of capability in performing the activity or task. Continued mastery of actions, with positive benefits to the task,

will also instill greater likelihood of continuing the behavior. More common in the teaching profession is the ability to watch classmates, newer teachers and more seasoned teachers performing the interaction with families and successfully. Observers believe that they can accomplish the skills because someone else is able to do it and worthwhile doing it. It is less dependable than first hand experience (Bandura, 1977). Like their students, teachers can benefit from the Verbal Persuasions, later termed Social persuasions in performing a task. Others encouraging them to get families involved, learning how to involve families, and learning skills to relate to families from peers and administration. Persons told they are able to master a task in difficult situations are more likely to put forth greater effort and confidence in performing a task. Ideally, these encouragements work better if they are positive, should negative feedback be passed to the teacher in training they will more likely be disinterested in trying something new or want to because they are feeling uncomfortable. The Physiological Factors, formally Emotional Arousal relates to how we operate in situations. Stressful and fearful situations may be informative data to feelings of personal competency. The perceived self-efficacy in threatening situations, increased anxiety and vulnerability may disable capabilities and belief in potential performance (Bandura, 1977). If teachers-in-training do not feel prepared to work with families it will affect their self-efficacy in believing they can do it. “Staff often becomes frustrated from special needs children, especially untrained staff” (Snyder, 2000, p. 179). “Others feel inadequate, helpless, and confused when encountering the various exceptionalities” of students (Snyder, 2000, p. 179). Some examples of physiological responses, teachers experiencing poor or negative physiological factors may feel the situation to be stressful creating headaches, stomachaches, and general panic/dread from upcoming event. Teacher Preparation programs have begun to address these training needs due to National and State regulations.

Bandura (1977) suggests that reinterpretation of events causing positive outcomes and successes help recognize how events are correlated reinforcing positive outcomes. Positive outcomes in dealing successfully with stressful situations can lead persons to overcome their doubts. Frequency of behaviors will not increase if persons do not believe that the same actions will not be rewarded on future occasions with like positive results whereas the same would hold true if persons believed there may be no effect or little consequence especially in stressful situations. Central to the theory of self-efficacy are the ideas for analyzing changes achieved in fearful and avoidant behavior. Bandura (1977) asserted that a person's perception of their mastery of a skill:

affect both initiation and persistence in a coping behavior. The strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even cope with a given situation. At this initial level, perceived self-efficacy influences choice of behavioral settings. People fear and tend to avoid threatening situations they believe exceed their coping skills, whereas they get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situations that would otherwise be intimidating (p. 193-4).

Teachers have the opportunity to be in various situations with parents and families in schools.

There is no accepted model for teaching and involvement of families. Research suggests involving families in the process of educating students, home/school communication, classroom teaching, and policies. It is hypothesized that teachers invite and involve families in their classroom and school according to their skill level in working with them and perceived beneficial outcome of their efforts. The strength of the teacher's conviction involving families would benefit their students and their teaching may coincide with their perceived ability to cope with involving them in such activities. Teacher's fear or hesitation in working with families may exceed their beliefs about their coping skills for handling the situation intimidating their choices influencing their behavior and the setting. Teachers who expressed a solid sense of efficacy also reported higher levels of preparation and enthusiasm (Allinder, 1994). *Higher Teacher Self-*

Efficacy in the literature asserts the teacher's level of self-efficacy will persist even with the most difficult child or unmotivated student. *Higher Teacher Self-Efficacy in working with Families* will assert that the teacher's level of self-efficacy will persist even with the most complicated family or seemingly unmotivated parent.

Assessments of Teacher Self-Efficacy

Researchers describe teachers reporting high efficacy as “more confident of their skills and abilities related to children’s learning, and more likely to initiate and invite parent involvement in children’s school-related learning activities” (Hoover-Dempsey, 1992, p. 288). Previous measurements created to assess these attitudes have focused on teacher school practices and teacher-parent interactions, like conferences or volunteering. In the Morris and Taylor (1998) study of Teacher Self-Efficacy, preservice teachers responded to questions “How comfortable do you feel about your ability to encourage parents to increase their involvement in the school activities of their children?” (p. 225). Respondents answered with a low (1) or a high (5), the mean score (standard deviation) was 3.22 (.98) when asked post semester replies were 4.56 (.54). In the Morris et al. (1995) teacher efficacy and parent efficacy were evaluated among 221 parents and 196 teachers from 9 schools revealing teacher self-efficacy were significantly and negatively correlated with several indicators of parent involvement. Theoretical grounding for this survey reflects ideas from Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement of school-family partnerships. Teachers who reached out to families, along with the literature, usually have high expectations and efficacy with parental feedback and involvement. Characteristically, a parent-teacher conference or a phone call can be either positive or negative. Teacher efficacy did yield a higher correlation in a positive direction with parents’ attendance to conferences, parent help with homework, and parental assistance in activities. “This is an expected finding because teachers who believe that parents can have a positive impact on their children’s educational

outcomes are expected to actively invite parents to engage in home-school activities” (Morris et al., 1995, p. 25). An example of a question on the Teacher Efficacy Questionnaire survey, *Parents and guardians, rather than teachers, are primarily responsible for children’s learning* (Morris, 1995, p. 50). The answer key scale ranged from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*.

One of the earliest teacher efficacy studies was conducted by the RAND organization (Armor et al., 1976). This study used a two-item teacher efficacy measure and the items included (a) *When it comes right down to it, a teacher really cannot do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment* and (b) *If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students*. The first question seemed to measure environmental variables influencing children’s education. The second question examined teacher's ideas on their ability to influence student academic and behaviors known as personal teaching efficacy. Rotter’s (1966) theories grounded the earlier works of looking at Teachers beliefs in their abilities. In the past two decades, work in teacher efficacy has expanded the theoretical base to include the social cognitive theory of Bandura, 2006 and Bandura, 1977.

Izzo et al. (1999) presented a comprehensive study of teacher perceptions of parental involvement over 3 years linking the ideas that enhancing parents involvements in children’s school relates to improvements in school functioning. Teachers rated four dimensions of parental involvement: frequency of parent-teacher contact, quality of the parent-teacher interactions, participation in educational activities at home and participation in school activities.

In the Teacher Efficacy Scale, Gibson and Dembo (1984) maintain two different dimensions contributed to the teacher efficacy construct: *General Teaching Efficacy* designed to measure the general influence teachers believe they have in the face of external barriers such as family influence, and *Personal Teacher Efficacy* designed to measure teacher’s beliefs in their

own ability to reach goals with students. Debate over the construction of these different measures has appeared in the literature. Controversy stemmed around Rotter's Locus of control (Guskey, 1994) vs. Bandura's Self-efficacy, Negative vs. Positive item questions, and certain item inclusions. Researchers argue the Gibson and Dembo's (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale, assesses teachers' beliefs of their functioning in general rather than assessing teachers' beliefs in their ability to perform certain specific functions (Ross, 1998; Brouwers and Tomic, 1999). Brouwers and Tomic (1999) developed the Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy scale to measure Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory associated to teachers' beliefs in their ability to perform specific activities. The dimensions of their measurement scale include (1) teacher perceived self-efficacy in managing student behavior in the classroom, (2) teacher perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from colleagues, and (3) teacher perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from the school principal (p. 13).

Researchers have sought to measure Teacher Efficacy as defined by Bandura's self-efficacy and social learning theories (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Ashton & Webb (1986) are documented as pioneering the development of a measure. They identified two dimensions personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE). Gibson & Dembo (1984) developed the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) to also measure the dimensions. Their variation is most prevalent in the research and has since had several critics and other adaptations to modify the validity and internal consistency (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) argued they created a more accurate measurement describing Bandura's theory of self-efficacy created in earlier years (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990) with a more recent revision measuring overall Teacher Efficacy with factors Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management.

In this development of the WFSES in this study, the measurement of professional self-efficacy working with families was inspired by various teacher efficacy measures. One such research instrument was the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). This instrument is composed of 22 questions targeting various teacher responsibilities. Another researcher team, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), developed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) to assess teachers' beliefs about involving families in certain specific task or roles in the schools. The TSES instrument includes the following subscales; efficacy in Student Engagement, in Instructional Strategies, and in Classroom Management.

A very limited number of measures are now available that assess and understand teacher self-efficacy in working with students' parents or families (Epstein, 1996, Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). However these measures tend to narrowly conceptualize parent involvement in a remediation paradigm based upon Epstein's model of family-school roles (1994) rather than a collaborative paradigm of family-school roles and also tend to ignore the special challenges of working with culturally diverse families. For example, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2002) conducted an in-service teacher training program and used a variety of pre/post measures of: (1) Teacher Efficacy, (2) Teachers beliefs about parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school, (3) Teacher beliefs about parent involvement, (4) Teacher beliefs about importance of specific involvement practices, (5) Teacher invitations to involvement and (6) Teacher reports of parent involvement. An example of an item measuring Teacher Efficacy: *I feel that I am making a significant difference in the lives of my students.*

Kieffer & Hensen (2000) developed a new instrument challenging traditional methods of measuring Teacher Efficacy. The new measurement Sources of Self-Efficacy Inventory (SOSI) examined a sample of 252 pre-certification education teachers of varying educational levels at a southwestern university. Their instrument sought to measure four scales grounded in Bandura's

theories of Self-Efficacy – Mastery Experience (9 items), Emotional/Physiological Arousal (7 items), Vicarious Experience (9 items) and Social Verbal Persuasion (10 items).

The predominant interpretation of “Bandura’s theory to construct teacher efficacy, outcome expectations would essentially reflect the degree to which teachers believed the environment could be controlled, that is, the extent to which students can be taught given such factors as family background, IQ, and school conditions” (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, p. 570). The research into the development of the WFSES is set forth to examine Teacher Self-Efficacy working with families is the belief with the understanding that families influence of child development and that teachers can utilize parents’ influence to meet teaching goals.

Lamorey and Wilcox (2005) adapted the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) to fit their research needs of Early Intervention Teachers with expanding roles and demands on liaisons between home and school. They modified item statements from the TES to create their measure EISES: original TES statement: *When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort*; their changes: *When a family does better than expected, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort*. The majority of item statements were family centered and strength-based regarding early education interventionists and working with families. The scale measured dimensions similar to the original TES, personal teacher self-efficacy and general teacher self-efficacy. Interesting to note on their measurement, their descriptive statistics presented with some respondents rated as low as 1 (1-7) on almost half of the item statements.

Teacher efficacy appears linked to teacher expectations of parent efficacy (the belief that parents have the skills to teach their children). A parent that exhibits higher efficacy is also associated with higher levels of interactions with classroom teachers and the school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). High teacher self-efficacy teachers persist longer with students (Dembo &

Gibson, 1985). In describing the extrapolations of low vs. high teacher self-efficacy, Gibson & Dembo (1984) proposed the “teacher’s willingness to stay with a student in a failure situation is indicative of a teacher’s confidence in his or her teaching ability and/or the student’s ability to learn” (p. 570). The teacher’s willingness to stay with a parent and family in a difficult or compromising situation is indicative of a teacher’s confidence in her ability to work with parents to meet the needs of the students. Lamorey and Wilcox (2005) “When applied to teachers, Bandura’s social cognitive theory of self-efficacy would predict that teachers with low teaching efficacy may put minimal effort into their work because they do not think that they have the skills or resources to make a difference in the lives of their students based on (a) vicarious observations of others’ failure, (b) their own past failures, (c) negative feedback, and (d) individual states such as depression, anxiety, and stress. In contrast, teachers with high teaching efficacy would put forth a substantial amount of effort in the classrooms and would persist in these efforts in the face of adversity based upon (a) opportunities to observe the success of other teachers, (b) a history of positive experiences, (c) positive feedback, and (d) individual states such as hopefulness, optimism, and self-reliance” (p. 71).

Kevin Kieffer (2000) described the development of his measure the Sources of Self-Efficacy Inventory (SOSI), and construct validation of teacher efficacy of teaching. The SOSI has 35 items with an answer key of items ranging from *Definitely not true for me* to *Definitely true for me* on a 1 - 7 Likert scale. His unique scale is based on Bandura’s Social Learning theory, in particular the four domains describing Mastery Experience, Emotional/Physiological Arousal, Vicarious Experiences, and Social Verbal Persuasion focusing on general teaching efficacy. Sample items include: *I get excited when I do something right to help a child learn; I tend to believe others when they tell me I will be a good teacher; My fears of making mistakes affect my ability to teach; and Feedback from other teachers are valuable to me.* The instrument

was administered to 252 undergraduates in a psychology class was gathered followed by a factor analysis conducted on the instrument.

McNaughton et al. (2008) pre/post design studied active listening skills of preservice professionals. Active Listening skills are the methodical teaching of communication and listening skills taught in psychology and counseling. Although teaching Active Listening skills are not new to teacher education programs, there is a limitation of literature regarding teaching effective listening skills to preservice teachers (McNaughton, 2008). Their education team describes a unique viewpoint into the core foundation skills for preservice teachers could benefit from in empathetic listening, paraphrasing, and non-verbal body gestures.

The research linking the relationship between teacher efficacy and family involvement practices have begun to widen. Few surveys link teacher efficacy with specific practices and skills of teachers in family involvement. Garcia (2004) developed an inventory Family Involvement Teacher Efficacy Scale. The scale was designed to measure levels of family involvement practices reported by teachers. Her study compared the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and her scale. She describes her scale as addressing 24 practices covering the six categories of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement of school-family partnerships. The scale has a total of 34 items with item questions corresponding to one of the six categories. The scale's answer key ranges from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. Sample items in the scale include: (1) *Teachers are not very powerful influences in promoting the involvement of parents*, (2) *I am effective at providing enough opportunities for working parents to participate in school/classroom-related activities*, and (3) *I do not have enough training to provide parents with suggestions on parenting and childrearing practices for the age and grade levels I teach*. She administered the two measurements before and after a training program. Her research conclusions held that her measurement was a significant predictor of Epstein's model of

practices. In particular, the measurement represented four categories. She concluded that like Bandura's original notions of teacher self-efficacy "teachers who perceived themselves as more efficacious in their ability to work with families made more attempts to involve families in the educational process of their children" (Garcia, 2004, p. 308).

Similar to Delia Garcia's Family Involvement Teacher Efficacy Scale, Elizabeth Graue (2003) developed a measure to assess the beliefs about home-school relations of preservice teachers, in particular the "beliefs, memories and proposed practices of prospective teachers to illuminates the social and cultural understandings teachers bring to their professional education" (Graue et al., 2003, p. 722). The instrument is based on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement of school-family partnerships. The survey has a total of 90 items. The survey was divided into several categories demographic: prospective teachers' memories of family involvement in education, ascribing knowledge to parents and teachers (Parents and teachers each have unique expertise about children. Directions including: Please rate the knowledge that parents and teachers have, i.e., school expectations, family cultural practices, ways to deal with learning problems), conceptions of parental involvement for various subgroups (i.e., divorced parents, grandparents, stay-at-home parents), anticipated parent involvement in teaching (i.e., meet with parents to set goals, family get-togethers outside of school time, home visits). Question format: *How do you anticipate working with parents and families in your teaching?* Open ended item questions enabled preservice teachers to speculate on the grade they hope to teach, to describe appropriate roles of parents in education, biggest worries with families, and how they anticipated learning about working with parents.

Development of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales

In developing the *Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales* for this study, the content and format of existing instruments were reviewed by the researcher. For example in Epstein's

scale, several different response formats were utilized: a four-point Likert scale measuring extent of agreement; a four point scale measuring extent of importance and a four point scale measuring extent of support. Epstein also utilized open ended questions for the teacher to discuss their beliefs (Epstein, 1996). In contrast in the development of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001) the three factors of Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management, utilized a nine point scale ranging from *Nothing* to *A Great Deal* assessing how much the respondent felt they could perform a task using the lead in question of "How much can you...". In *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents*, Alfred Bandura (2005) further modified this rating scale to include a larger amount of choices stating the "can do" of confidence of completing the task with a continuous response scale of 0 to 100 where 0 represented *cannot do at all*, 50 represented *moderately can do* and 100 represented *highly certain can do*.

A measure was developed to assess teacher self-efficacy in working with families consisting of the three subscales of Family-School Communication, Family Diversity, and Teacher Role with Families using Bandura's most recent response format.

Summary

This review of the literature on family involvement and on the preparation of teachers to work with families supports the need to develop a measure to assess preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about working with families. A valid, reliable and appropriate assessment tool is crucial for teacher educators to more effectively assess the impact of training in working with families. Although there is general agreement in the teacher education field as to the need for teachers to incorporate family involvement practices and the general competencies that teachers need to demonstrate in working with students' families, there is limited agreement regarding the specific knowledge and skills for working with families that teachers need to acquire.

Additionally, there is not a consensus as to how such teacher skills and knowledge are to be assessed.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (WFSES) was developed to assess the level of confidence of educators in building working relationships with the families of their students. WFSES has been subjected to some professional scrutiny; the purpose of this study is to assess the psychometric properties of the WFSES. The research procedures are presented in this chapter, as are the sampling procedures. Also included are presentations of the development and completed WFSES measurement. Finally, the methodological limitations are presented.

This study is descriptive in nature because educator attitudes and beliefs regarding their competence in building working relationships with the families of their students will be collected only as a basis from which to evaluate the WFSES; no experimental manipulation of variables was conducted in this study. The data collected were used to evaluate the WFSES as a measure of teacher self-efficacy in building teacher-student caregiver relationships.

Population

The population for this study was composed of teachers employed in regular or special education positions in the United States teaching children at the pre-kindergarten through 6th grade levels. In the general elementary school population in 2007-2008 employed in the United States, a total number of 2,103,400 teachers (323,924 male teachers and 1,779,476 female teachers) were employed both in the public and private sector. The ethnic composition of elementary school teachers in the United States in 2007-2008 were: 82.3% white, non-Hispanic teachers, 7.2% African-American, 7.7% Hispanic, 1.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, .4% American Indian/Alaskan Native and .8 identifying as two or more ethnicities. The age range among elementary school teachers in the United States consists of: 18.7% under 30, 26.3% ages 30-39, 23.8% ages 40-49, 25.6% ages 50-59, and 5.6% ages 60 and above. In the highest degree

earned, teachers held: 50.7% bachelor, 48.5% post-baccalaureate, 42.3% master, 5.7% education specialist and .5% doctoral (NCES, 2010). In a state composition of Florida, there were 7,265 male teachers and 73,050 female teachers (FDOE, p. 5) employed as elementary school teachers in 2008-2009. The ethnic composition of elementary school teachers in the state of Florida in 2008-2009 were: 74.47% white, non-Hispanic teachers, 12.68% African-American, 11.75% Hispanic, 90 % Asian/Pacific Islander and 19% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Last ethnic composition for exceptional student education teachers (ESE) in the state of Florida in 2008-2009 were: 74.48% white, non-Hispanic teachers, 14.23% African-American, 10.12% Hispanic, .90% Asian/Pacific Islander and .28% American Indian/Alaskan Native (FDOE, 2009).

Sampling Procedures

To participate in the study, educators need to meet the following sampling criteria: a) currently employed as a teacher in the United States, b) teaching in regular and/or special education classes in grades pre-kindergarten through 6th grade, c) and proficient in the use of the English language. The sampling procedures used in this study involved two levels. The first level involved the identification and enlistment by this researcher of chairpersons in departments of teacher education programs in various higher education institutions and persons in leadership positions in the National Education Association and Kappa Delta Pi professional teacher organizations so as to have access to email-addresses of alumni or members of an organization. Departmental administrators and leaders at each college or university were asked to forward to their alumni and local professionals. The following schools contacted were: Alabama State University, Auburn University, Faulkner University, Jacksonville State University, University of Alabama, Troy University, Alaska Pacific University, Northern Arizona University, Arkansas State University, Lyon College, University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, Williams Baptist College, California State University - Long Beach, San Diego State University, University of Colorado -

Boulder, Eastern Connecticut State University, Fairfield University, University of Connecticut, University of Delaware, George Washington University, Howard University, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, Florida International University, Stetson University, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, Albany State University, Clayton State University, Georgia State University, University of Georgia, University of Hawaii-Manoa, University of Idaho, DePaul University, Northeastern Illinois University, Wheaton College, Ball State University, Indiana State University, Manchester College, Taylor University, Graceland University, Kansas State University, University of Kansas, Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Western Kentucky University, Louisiana State University, University of New Orleans, University of Maine, Bowie State University, Towson University, University of Maryland College Park, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Eastern Michigan University, Spring Arbor University, Concordia University, University of Minnesota - Duluth, Jackson State University, University of Mississippi, Missouri Southern State University, Truman State University, University of Montana - Missoula, Creighton University, University of Nebraska At Lincoln, University of Nevada - Las Vegas, Keene State College, Kean University, Monmouth University, The College of New Jersey, Eastern New Mexico University, Western New Mexico University, Buffalo State College, Fordham University, Pace University, Syracuse University, Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, Wake Forest University, University of North Dakota, Bowling Green State University, Muskingum University, Ohio State University, Northeastern State University, Oklahoma State University, Oregon State University, University of Portland, Pennsylvania State University, Widener University, University of Rhode Island, Clemson University, University of South Carolina, Dakota State University, University of South Dakota, University of Tennessee, Vanderbilt University, Baylor University, University of Houston, Trinity University, Brigham Young University, University of

Vermont, George Mason University, Virginia State University, Seattle University, Western Washington University, Marshall University, West Virginia University, Marquette University, University of Wisconsin - Stout, and University of Wyoming. Each letter requested representatives also pass on the survey to other representatives and colleagues that fit the criteria to complete the survey.

After electronic access to college alumni or professional association members, several other methods were employed to invite teachers to participate. One method involved the researcher directly contacting teachers via phone to discuss the research project and providing an electronic link to the survey; another method was through a letter of invitation (Appendix A). A third method was an electronic message to teachers and principals inviting them to participate in the online survey. After the request was made for participation, participants were linked to the online consent form (Appendix B), and submitting their agreement before beginning the survey.

The question of needed sample size for this study as challenging Gay and Airasian (2000) proposed that for a population beyond 5,000, a sample size of 400 is sufficient. In populations exceeding 10,000, researchers suggest a sample size between 200 and 1,000 is satisfactory (Alreck & Settle, 1995). Therefore, because the greatest possible degree of generalizability was desired, a minimum of 500 participants was sought for this study.

Instrumentation

Essential steps in developing the WFSES have been completed. The first version of the WFSES was developed to assess three constructs of teachers' work with families: (a) their communication with families, (b) their appreciation for family diversity, and (c) their expectations as to their role in working with families. These three constructs were identified as a result of examining the research literature concerning teacher abilities to build relationships with families, and are defined as follows:

Family-School Communication consists of those practices in which teachers and caregivers engaged in exchanging ideas, expressing opinions and providing support. As such, communication involves positive communications, miscommunications, conflictual interactions and collaborations. Teachers and student's caregivers may demonstrate different communication styles, perspectives, opinions that require skills in effective listening, negotiating, and conveying respect for differing perspectives. Hence educational professionals need to develop ways to effectively communicate in the contexts of conflicts, stressful situations, deadlines and tension.

Family Diversity entails the ability to understand the perspectives of persons from diverse economic and cultural circumstances and demonstrate comfort in interacting with such persons. Professionals need to view parents and families as having strengths and contributing to the learning process while considering family barriers and challenges. This entails individuals examining their own attitudes about race, gender, alternate lifestyles, family structures and differing beliefs about parenting, education and parent involvement.

Teacher Role with Families describes expectations as to the nature of the roles that an educator expects to implement with their students' caregivers and families. Professionals need to assist families in finding ways to relate to their schools and staff in their desired level of involvement and interaction with the school and teachers.

A set of 56 items was created initially to represent these three constructs. Fifteen questions assessed Family-School Communication, 29 questions assessed Family Diversity, and 13 questions assessed Teacher Role with Families. The item format was modeled after Bandura's Teacher Efficacy Scale which requested the teacher to assess their confidence to perform an activity. Item questions began with the stem of either "How much can I influence" or "How much can I do" to determine the teacher's self rated level of confidence in performing each activity (Bandura, 1997). The response range was from 1 – 9, with the categories labeled as

nothing (1 point: something they believe they cannot do), very little, some influence, quite a bit, a great deal (9 points: something they believe they can do very well). Three subscales were derived from the sum of the items composing each subscale. Respondents scoring above the midpoint response were identified as *high* self-efficacy responders and those scoring below the median were classified as being *low* self-efficacy.

To establish content validity, the researcher solicited feedback from three teacher education faculty members currently involved in teaching courses on family involvement to teacher education students. Each reviewer was given a working definition of the three constructs and questions were listed randomly. To determine how well each item fit into its assigned (construct) category, the reviewers were asked to sort each of the items into one of the three construct categories, and to provide feedback regarding the content and relevance of the item. Test items were selected based upon the reviewers' comments.

Questions were eliminated if reported to be confusing or seem to duplicate other items. Second, questions were eliminated if the three reviewers did not agree on the coding of the question item, for example, one thought a question fit as a Family-School Communication and two thought a question was Teacher Role with Families category. Overall, the instructors were not familiar with Bandura's style of question format "How much can you do" and answer key (Woolfolk Hoy, 2009). Respondents commented that they did not like the original response format and found it confusing in answering each question.

This review process resulted in a reduced set of 27 questions with nine questions composing each subscale. In addition, the category Role of Teacher was renamed Teacher Role with Families to reflect the fact that the respondent would have expectations regarding both the teacher and the parent/caregiver's role in family-school matters (See Appendix C). In addition,

the response format of the instrument was changed to reflect circulated version of Bandura's self-efficacy scales (Woolfolk Hoy, 2009).

The format of the items was changed to be a statement of skill. The answer key range from *cannot do the task at all* to the percentage of *highly certain participants can do the task*. Answers are in a percentage of 0% to 100% confident. The three subscales were derived from the sum of all the items composing each subscale. The scores 0-31% are classified as *low* self-efficacy, 32-52% *fair*, 53-73% *moderately*, 74-94% *high* and 95-100% *proficient* self-efficacy.

As a next step, the researcher conducted a small pilot study involving 10 teachers in the field to assess individual item characteristics and instrument format. To improve the clarity of items, modifications were made in sentence structure, word choice and demographics questions. For example one question that previously was: *Share with parents/caregivers your current ideas and observations of the children you are working with* later modified to *Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child*. Another revised question: *Intervene when a family is in crisis* later modified to *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis*. After completing these initial procedures, the final draft of the instrument consisted of 27 items.

Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic information from the respondents was collected through use of a demographic questionnaire designed by the researcher that appeared at the end of the online survey. Respondents were asked to report their age, gender, ethnicity, parental status, level of education, teaching specialty, extent of teaching experience, the size and economic level of the community in which they were raised, the size and economic level of the community in which they currently worked, extent of instruction in family interaction practices, the perceived nature of their interaction with student's families, and extent of institutional support for family-teacher relationships (See Appendix C for a sample of the questionnaire and Appendix D for

demographic variables). For the purpose of this study, urban, suburban, rural areas and lower, middle, upper class families were defined using the federal poverty guidelines (HHS, 2009). The definitions include geographic areas of: an *urban area* is a place that has a total population greater than 100,000 people; a *suburban area* is a place that has a total population of 100,000 people or less with a population density of 500 people or more per square mile; and a *rural area* is defined as having a population density less than 500 people per square mile. Economic Communities are defined as a *lower income community* is one in which most residents have an income at or below the poverty level. For example, a family of four having an income of \$22,000 would be considered at the poverty level. A *middle income community* is one in which most residents have an income range from \$25,000 to \$150,000 (a wide range of income levels in these communities). Similarly, *upper income community* is one in which most residents have a family income ranging from \$160,000 or above. Participants were questioned regarding their identification of the community environment they were raised, where they currently work and the state. The 9 categories are: a) Rural – Lower Income, b) Rural – Middle Income, c) Rural – Upper Income, d) Suburban – Lower Income, e) Suburban – Middle Income f) Suburban – Upper Income, g) Urban – Lower Income, h) Urban – Middle Income, and i) Urban – Upper Income.

Data Collection Procedures

Teachers were invited to participate in the study after reading the online consent form (Appendix B), and submitting their agreement. In compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) research protocol, participants were informed of potential risk and benefits as a result of participation in the study. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and informed that no identifying data of any type would be gathered. Each participant completed the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (Appendix C), and a demographic

information sheet (Appendix D). Contact information was also provided in the original email for questions or comments. At the end of the survey, a series of open ended questions were provided to assess the participant's sense of support and satisfaction with their work with students' families. In addition, instructions to participate in a raffle for a gift certificate were provided. All information was kept confidential. The survey took 7 to 20 minutes online to complete.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined in this study,

- **RQ1.** What is the factor structure of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales?
- **RQ2.** To what extent does the determined factor structure confirm the proposed, theoretical structure?
- **RQ3.** What are the reliability coefficients for each the WFSES subscales?

Data Analytic Procedures

To determine the factor structure of the instrument, the researcher performed a principal components factor analysis. An orthogonal (varimax) rotation was applied. To address question two, the factor structure derived from the first research question was examined in relation to the proposed theoretical structure of the three hypothesized factors (or constructs) of Family-School Communication (I), Family Diversity (II), and Teacher Role with Families (III). The factors were determined with a correlation of .40 or higher that comprised 16% of the variance with each construct. Items correlating with the proposed construct were retained. Items that aligned with more than one construct were retained to maintain consistency and integrity. Items were adjusted according to constructs and then used to assess internal consistency.

To assess the reliability of the three subscales, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were also calculated. In addition, item statistics for each of the 27 items were calculated including,

response frequencies, standard deviation, mean, median and mode. Finally, the researcher compiled descriptive statistics on the sample in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, parental status, teaching specialty, extent of teaching experience, community raised and work, level of education, extent of instruction in family interaction practices, and perceived nature of interaction in working with student's families.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (WFSES) was developed to assess the level of confidence and competence of educators in working with and building relationships with the families of their students. The psychometric properties of the WFSES were investigated in this study. The results of this investigation are presented in this chapter along with a discussion of the characteristics of the study sample. A discussion of the psychometric properties, data analyses and responses to each research question is also presented.

Sample Demographics

Six hundred and thirty teachers participated in the study out of a 10,000 email invitations and 100 letters of invitation were sent out to university and college professors, leaders of professional associations, and individual teachers. However, eighty-two of those participants either did not complete the WFSES or demographic questionnaire or had to be deleted from the sample. In addition, 21 participants were eliminated from the sample because they did not meet the sampling criteria for this study. These individuals either identified themselves as high school teachers (10), principals (2), guidance counselors (1), teachers with only an associate degree (6), or teachers teaching outside the United States (2). As a result a the study sample consisted of 527 teachers who met the criteria of: a) being currently employed as a teacher in the United States, b) teaching in regular and/or special education grades pre-kindergarten to 6th grade, and c) being proficient in the use of the English language.

As depicted in Table 4-1, the study sample consisted of 477 females (90.5%) and 50 males (9.5%). The ethnic composition of the sample was 470 Caucasian (89.8%) and 57 minority teachers (10.8%). The minority categories include: 4 Asian (.8%), 13 African-American (2.5%), 20 Hispanic (3.8%), 2 Native American (.4%), 6 Bi-Racial (1.1%) and 12 in

Other Race not listed (2.3%). These demographics reflect the national statistics for teachers (NCES, 2009).

The age composition of participants ranged from 35 among ages 21-25 (6.6%), 60 among ages 26-30 (11.4%), 53 among ages 31-35 (10.1%), 53 among ages 36-40 (10.1%), 47 among ages 41-45 (8.9%), 68 among ages 46-50 (12.9%), 163 among ages 51-60* (30.9%), 42 among ages 61-65 (8%), 5 among ages 66-70 (.9%), and 1 among ages 71-75 (.2%). A design error* in the variable of 51- 60 lead to a combined category not separating the age bracket of 51-60 into two categories 51-55 and 56-60. The data set consists of two categories combined. Among the 527 teachers, 368 teachers (69.8%) identified themselves as being a parent/caregiver/guardian of a child whereas 159 teachers (30.2%) stated they were not a parent (see Table 4-1).

Of the participants, 411 were regular education teachers (78%) and 116 were special education teachers (22%). Both regular and special education teachers at all grade levels were represented in the study sample Participants ranged in amount of teaching experience from less than 1 year to 35 years or more. A much larger portion of the sample was composed of teachers with between 2 to 10 years of experience versus teachers with 20 years or more experience. Sixty-seven teachers from 2-4 years experience (12.7%), 56 5-7 years (10.6%), and 49 8-10 years (9.3%) showed the top three category sampling listing. In the sample, there were 178 teachers holding a bachelor's degree (33.8%) and 181 master's degree teachers (34.3%) (see Table 4-2).

In terms of representation by geographic and economic level, teachers predominantly identified themselves as having been raised in suburban middle class communities (250 or 47.4%) or rural middle class communities (98 or 18.6%). However, most of the teachers participating in this study were currently working in suburban middle income communities (153) or suburban lower income communities (84 or 15.9%) (see Table 4-3).

In this study, invitations to participate were initially sent to national teacher organizations, student associations and university professors who were requested to forward the survey to their alumni. The largest proportion of participating teachers worked in the following states: New Jersey 54 teachers (10.2%), Florida 42 teachers (8%) and Virginia 176 teachers (33.4%) (see Table 4-4).

The participating teachers had varying levels of instruction in family involvement or family-teacher interaction. There were 159 teachers (30.2%) who reported having no in-service course or training in family interaction practices. Forty teachers (7.6 %) identified themselves as having a part of one of their courses being devoted to family interaction practices, 116 teachers reported having 1 or more in-service training experiences or courses on this topic, and 212 teachers (40.3%) had 2 or more of these training experiences on this topic. There were 315 (59.8%) of the participating teachers who reported having an overall *positive* relationship with student's families and 115 (29.4%) who reported an *extremely positive* relationship. The amount of school support from administrators towards working with families also varied substantially with 9 teachers rating they had *no support* (1.7%), 38 teachers *little support* (7.2%), 97 teachers *some support* (18.4%), 153 teachers *moderate support* (29%) and 224 teachers *a great deal of support* (42.5%) (see Table 4-5).

Item Analysis

The Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales was designed for use by teachers to self-report their level of confidence and competence working with the families of their students. The scale measures from 0 (cannot do at all), midway at 50 (moderately can do) and 100 (highly certain can do). The scale rises from 0 to 100 in increments of 10 points. Teachers responded to the 27 proposed skills set questions. All 27 items demonstrated a .40 correlation on factor loading with a construct. Some items loading on more than one construct. The skill item:

Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child resulted in a range of 30 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.306. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (210 teachers), 90 (153 teachers) and 80 (91 teachers) (see Table 4-6). The skill item: *Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.05. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (191 teachers), 90 (154 teachers) and 80 (114 teachers) (see Table 4-7). The skill item: *Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you* resulted in a range of 20 to 100 and a standard deviation of 16.38. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (164 teachers), 90 (114 teachers) and 100 (88 teachers) (see Table 4-8). The skill item: *Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them* resulted in a range of 20 to 100 and a standard deviation of 17.66. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (141 teachers), 90 (103 teachers) and 100 (95 teachers) (see Table 4-9). The skill item: *Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you* resulted in a range of 20 to 100 and a standard deviation of 17.89. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (128 teachers), 90 (126 teachers) and 100 (104 teachers) (see Table 4-10).

The skill item: *Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.44. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (164 teachers), 90 (146 teachers) and 80 (122 teachers) (see Table 4-11). The skill item: *Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.44. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (179 teachers), 90 (136 teachers) and 80 (124 teachers) (see Table 4-12). The skill item: *Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent* resulted in a range of 30 to 100 and a standard deviation of 15.46. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (151 teachers), 90 (126 teachers) and 100 (106 teachers) (see Table 4-13). The skill item: *Intervene to help when a*

family is in crisis resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 20.40. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (106 teachers), 100 (104 teachers) and 100 (90 teachers) (see Table 4-14). The skill item: *Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.37. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (180 teachers), 90 (159 teachers) and 80 (103 teachers) (see Table 4-15).

The skill item: *Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community* resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 21.29. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (106 teachers), 90 (103 teachers) and 100 (80 teachers) (see Table 4-16). The skill item: *Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances* resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.97. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (240 teachers), 90 (132 teachers) and 80 (80 teachers) (see Table 4-17). The skill item: *Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 14.30. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (172 teachers), 90 (135 teachers) and 80 (116 teachers) (see Table 4-18). The skill item: *Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development* resulted in a range of 20 to 100 and a standard deviation of 16.92. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (140 teachers), 90 (112 teachers) and 100 (105 teachers) (see Table 4-19). The skill item: *Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess* resulted in a range of 20 to 100 and a standard deviation of 14.98. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (154 teachers), 100 (141 teachers) and 90 (119 teachers) (see Table 4-20).

The skill item: *Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Single Parent families, Multigenerational families, Adoptive/Foster*

families resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 14.20. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (255 teachers), 90 (126 teachers) and 80 (84 teachers) (see Table 4-21). The skill item: *Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 10.83. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (267 teachers), 90 (146 teachers) and 80 (74 teachers) (see Table 4-22). The skill item: *Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children* resulted in a range of 40 to 100 and a standard deviation of 11.42. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (235 teachers), 90 (161 teachers) and 80 (91 teachers) (see Table 4-23). The skill item: *Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development* resulted in a range of 30 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.2. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (208 teachers), 90 (138 teachers) and 80 (112 teachers) (see Table 4-24). The skill item: *Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers* resulted in a range of 30 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.66. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (152 teachers), 90 (147 teachers) and 80 (133 teachers) (see Table 4-25).

The skill item: *Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development* resulted in a range of 30 to 100 and a standard deviation of 13.63. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (186 teachers), 80 (132 teachers) and 90 (129 teachers) (see Table 4-26). The skill item: *Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family* resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 20.02. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (131 teachers), 70 (101 teachers) and 50 (83 teachers) (see Table 4-27). The skill item: *Assist parents in improving how they parent* resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 22.70. Teachers most frequently selected options 80 (98 teachers), 70 (96 teachers) and 50 (84 teachers) (see Table 4-28). The skill item:

Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 15.75. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (152 teachers), 90 (129 teachers) and 80 (128 teachers) (see Table 4-29). The skill item: *Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning* resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 20.56. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (127 teachers), 80 (120 teachers) and 90 (90 teachers) (see Table 4-30).

The skill item: *Schedule school events so parents are active participants* resulted in a range of 0 to 100 and a standard deviation of 20.76. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (144 teachers), 80 (105 teachers) and 90 (99 teachers) (see Table 4-31). The skill item: *Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development* resulted in a range of 10 to 100 and a standard deviation of 16.69. Teachers most frequently selected options 100 (197 teachers), 90 (131 teachers) and 80 (108 teachers) (see Table 4-32).

Of the 27 items, 7 items present as 77% or lower in degree of confidence. The mean scores were with the following questions: a) *Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them* at 77.72%, b) *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis* at 75.90%, c) *Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community* at 73.49%, d) *Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family* at 69.43%, e) *Assist parents in improving how they parent* at 64.12%, f) *Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning* at 77.6% (see Table 4-36). Of the 27 items, these 10 items presented in 16 increments or higher in standard deviation. The standard deviations scored with the following questions: a) *Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you* at 16.39, b) *Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them* at 17.66, c) *Respond effectively*

to a parent who seems upset with you at 17.89, d) Intervene to help when a family is in crisis at 20.40, e) Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community at 21.29, f) Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development at 16.92, g) Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family at 20.02, h) Assist parents in improving how they parent at 22.70, i) Schedule school events so parents are active participants at 20.76, j) Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning at 20.56 (see Table 4-37).

The general statistics performed on all 27 skill items are displayed in Table 4-6 to 4-32. Each skill set under the three category constructs of Family-School Communication, Family Diversity and Teacher Role with Families computed including frequencies of item selection, percentage of item selection, standard deviation, mean, median and mode. In Tables 4-33 to 4-35, mean scores are calculated for each construct delineating ranges Family-School Communication (77.72 to 88.39), Family Diversity (79.43 to 91.73) and Teacher Role with Families (64.12 to 88.18).

Research Questions

The first research question for the study was: What is the factor structure of the WFSES? The 27 items on the WFSES were analyzed using a principal components analysis (PCA) to determine the factor structure. An orthogonal (varimax) rotation was applied. The PCA for these 27 items yielded five factors in the initial (i.e. unrotated) factor structure of the WFSES. A scree plot in Table 4-38 was used to examine how many factors should be retained. The scree plot showed a substantial drop in the respective eigenvalues of the component factors after three factors. The values starting with components: 1 (12.297), 2 (1.99), 3 (1.920) then 4 (1.290) and 5 (1.039). Therefore, based on the scree plot, three factors were retained. The distinct eigenvalues displayed with a

noticeable decline on the 4th and 5th eigenvalues. In the scree plot, three factors (components) showed visible variability and accounted for 60% of the total variance in the instrument. Presented in Table 4-39 are the eigenvalues of each of the five factor (unrotated) PCA solution. As well as the percentage of variance explained in the rotated factor solution.

Each of the first three factors shown in Table 4-41 was treated as a subscale of the WFSES and each retained survey item was assigned to one of three subscales based on highest factor loading. Subscale scores for each respondent then were computed by summing the response weights for each item for each particular subscale.

The second research question was: To what extent does the determined factor structure confirm the proposed, theoretical structure? To address question two, the factor structure was examined in relation to the proposed theoretical structure of the three hypothesized factors (or constructs) of Family-School Communication (I), Family Diversity (II), and Teacher Role with Families (III). The questions chosen for each of the hypothesized constructs in the survey originally were derived from the theoretical and research literature. Subsequently, the original set of items on the WFSES was examined in a pilot study which helped to refine the constructs. The WFSES that emerged from the final factor structure included 27 items over three subscales. The factors were determined with a loading of .40 or 16% or higher of the variance and compared with each constructs. Skill set items falling under the proposed construct were retained where others matching with a different construct were adjusted. Items that aligned with more than one construct were retained to maintain consistency and integrity. Items were moved to the corresponding constructs and then manipulated to assess internal consistency. The three subscales were similar to the three constructs upon which the original WFSES was based. Comparison of the proposed and derived constructs and WFSES subscales are discussed below.

Family-School Communication

The first derived subscale consisted of items that predominantly came from the construct of family-school communication. This subscale represented the level of confidence that teachers reported in communicating and/or effectively resolving conflicts with their students' caregivers. Items from this subscale include *Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child (.687)*; *Balance your opinion about what a child needs with that of a parent who has a different opinion about their child (.798)*; *Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns (.676)*; and *Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them (.795)*. Other skill sets include: *Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you (.810)*; *Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child (.637)*; *Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child (.735)* and *Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent (.776)*. One item, *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis* which was originally hypothesized to be included in this subscale yet loaded more heavily on the Teacher Role with Families subscale. Another item *Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development (.437)* loaded on both the Family-School Communication and Teacher Role with Families subscales hence it was retained in the final instrument on both categories. As a result, this subscale consisted of 9 items with factor loadings ranging from .437 to .810.

Teacher Role with Families

The second derived subscale consisted of items that predominantly came from the proposed construct of Teacher Role with Families in involvement strategies. This subscale represented the level of confidence participants reported in implementing specific family involvement strategies. The item *Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development (.513)* was proposed on the Teacher Role

with Families construct and also loaded on the Family-School Communication self-efficacy scales. As with the item *Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development* (.522) proposed on Teacher Role with Families construct which also loaded on another scale Family Diversity. Both items *Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development* (.639) and *Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess* (.458) were proposed on Family Diversity yet also loaded on Teacher Role with Families self-efficacy scales. Hence these two items were retained for each category. The following items were proposed on the Teacher Role with Families self-efficacy scales and maintained loading on this construct: *Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers* (.548); *Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family* (.753); *Assist parents in improving how they parent* (.689); *Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning* (.664); *Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning* (.728); *Schedule school events so parents are active participants* (.708); *Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development* (.629); *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis* (.473); and *Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community* (.646). This category contains 13 skill set items ranging from .453 to .689.

Family Diversity

The third derived subscale consisted of items that predominantly came from the proposed construct of Appreciating Family Diversity. This subscale represented the level of confidence participants reported in appreciating the specific circumstances and characteristics of families from diverse cultural and economic circumstances. Item *Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development* (.420) originally

proposed on Teacher Role with Families scales also loaded onto Family Diversity. Where the items *Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development (.407)* and *Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess (.552)* were proposed on Family Diversity and also loaded on Teacher Role with Families scales. These items were retained for each category. Items from this subscale include *Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves (.663)*; *Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances (.791)*; *Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities (.649)*; *Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Multigenerational families, Single Parent families, Adoptive/Foster families (.755)*; *Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families (.760)*; and *Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children (.573)*. This category contains 9 skill set items ranging from .407 to .791.

The third research question was: What are the reliability coefficients for each the WFSES subscales? The Family-School Communication subscale expanded to 9 items. The Family Diversity subscale contained 9 items and the Teacher Role with Families subscale expanded to 13 items. After identifying the placement of each item in the three subscales, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed and are shown in Table 4-41. A reliability coefficient of .899 was computed for the Family-School Communication subscale a coefficient of .930 was computed for the Family Diversity subscale and a reliability coefficient of .923 for Teacher Role with Families, subscale indicating that each subscale was highly reliable.

Table 4-1. Gender, Ethnicity, Age, and Parental Status of study sample (527 participants)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Female	477	90.5
Male	50	9.5
Ethnicity		
Asian	4	.8
African-American	13	2.5
Hispanic	20	3.8
Caucasian	470	89.2
Native American	2	.4
Bi-Racial	6	1.1
Other Race not listed	12	2.3
Age		
21-25	35	6.6
26-30	60	11.4
31-35	53	10.1
36-40	53	10.1
41-45	47	8.9
46-50	68	12.9
51-60*	163*	30.9
61-65	42	8
66-70	5	.9
71-75	1	.2
Parent/Caregiver/Guardian		
Yes	368	69.8
No	159	30.2

* Design error 51-60 have read 51 – 55 and 56 – 60.

Table 4-2. Participants' Teaching Specialty, Work Experiences and Ed. Level (527 participants)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Current Track as a Teacher		
PreK to K - Regular Education	57	10.8
1 st to 2 nd - Regular Education	111	21.1
3 rd to 4 th - Regular Education	96	18.2
5 th to 6 th - Regular Education	147	27.9
PreK to K - Special Education	20	3.8
1 st to 2 nd - Special Education	21	4
3 rd to 4 th - Special Education	20	3.8
5 th to 6 th - Special Education	55	10.4
Level of work experience as a Teacher		
0-2 years	38	7.2
2-4 years	56	10.6
5-7 years	67	12.7
8-10 years	49	9.3
11-13 years	46	8.7
14-16 years	43	8.2
17-19 years	43	8.2
20-22 years	46	8.7
23-25 years	31	5.9
26-28 years	27	5.1
29-31 years	28	5.3
32-34 years	29	5.5
35-up	24	4.6
Level of Education		
Bachelor	178	33.8
Master	181	34.3
Master+20	85	16.1
Post Master	70	13.3
PhD	13	2.5

Table 4-3. Type of community in which teacher was reared and worked (527 participants)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Community Environment you were reared in:		
Rural-Lower Income	39	7.4
Rural-Middle Income	98	18.6
Rural-Upper Income	7	1.3
Suburban-Lower Income	16	3
Suburban-Middle Income	250	47.4
Suburban-Upper Income	35	6.6
Urban-Lower Income	18	3.4
Urban-Middle Income	60	11.4
Urban-Upper Income	4	.8
Community Environment you work in:		
Rural-Lower Income	53	10.1
Rural-Middle Income	58	11
Rural-Upper Income	1	.2
Suburban-Lower Income	84	15.9
Suburban-Middle Income	153	29
Suburban-Upper Income	48	9.1
Urban-Lower Income	55	10.4
Urban-Middle Income	62	11.8
Urban-Upper Income	13	2.5

Table 4-4. State in which participants reared and work (527 participants)

Variable	Community Reared	%	Community Work	%
State				
Alabama	3	.6	0	0
Alaska	0	0	0	0
Arizona	3	.6	1	.2
Arkansas	27	5.1	35	6.6
California	23	4.4	16	3
Colorado	8	1.5	16	3
Connecticut	5	.9	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0
District of Columbia	0	0	0	0
Florida	40	7.6	42	8
Georgia	6	1.1	1	.2
Hawaii	0	0	0	0
Idaho	13	2.5	22	4.2
Illinois	20	3.8	10	1.9
Indiana	6	1.1	0	0
Iowa	6	1.1	10	1.9
Kansas	5	.9	4	.8
Kentucky	14	2.7	13	2.5
Louisiana	3	.6	0	0
Maine	11	2.1	15	2.8
Maryland	12	2.3	10	1.9
Massachusetts	5	.9	0	0
Michigan	12	2.3	6	1.1
Minnesota	5	.9	2	.4
Mississippi	2	.4	1	.2
Missouri	8	1.5	1	.2
Montana	2	.4	4	.8
Nebraska	2	.4	0	0
Nevada	1	.2	0	0
New Hampshire	1	.2	0	0
New Jersey	56	10.6	54	10.2
New Mexico	13	2.5	25	4.7
New York	46	8.7	9	1.7

Table 4-4. Continued.

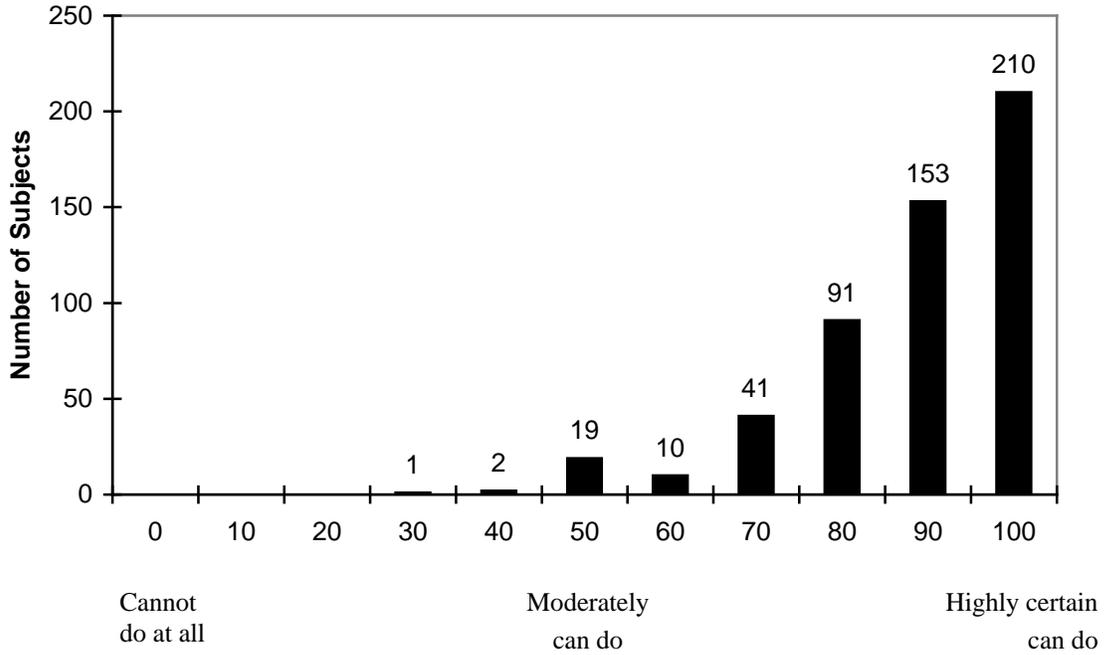
Variable	Community Raised	%	Community Work	%
State				
North Carolina	4	.8	3	.6
North Dakota	10	1.9	10	1.9
Ohio	15	2.8	6	1.1
Oklahoma	16	3	24	4.6
Oregon	3	.6	0	0
Pennsylvania	17	3.2	3	.6
Rhode Island	3	.6	3	.6
South Carolina	3	.6	0	0
South Dakota	0	0	1	.2
Tennessee	3	1.1	2	.4
Texas	13	2.5	0	0
Utah	2	.4	0	0
Vermont	2	.4	1	.2
Virginia	49	9.3	176	33.4
Washington	3	.6	0	0
West Virginia	3	.6	0	0
Wisconsin	5	.9	1	.2
Wyoming	1	.2	0	0
Outside the US*	14	2.7	0	0

Table 4-5. Extent of Instruction, Nature of Relationships, and School Support (527 participants)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Extent of Instruction in family interaction practices		
No in-service course or training	159	30.2
Part of a course	40	7.6
1 in-services training or course	116	22
2 or more of either	100	19
3 or more of either	112	21.3
Overall nature of relationships with student's families		
Extremely negative	0	0
Negative	0	0
Somewhat negative	5	.9
Neutral	18	3.4
Somewhat Positive	34	6.5
Positive	315	59.8
Extremely Positive	155	29.4
Amount of School Support from administration towards working with families*		
None	9	1.7
Little	38	7.2
Some	97	18.4
Moderate	153	29
A great deal	224	42.5

*optional question 6 missing 1.1% responses.

Table 4-6. SKILL: Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child.



527 subjects

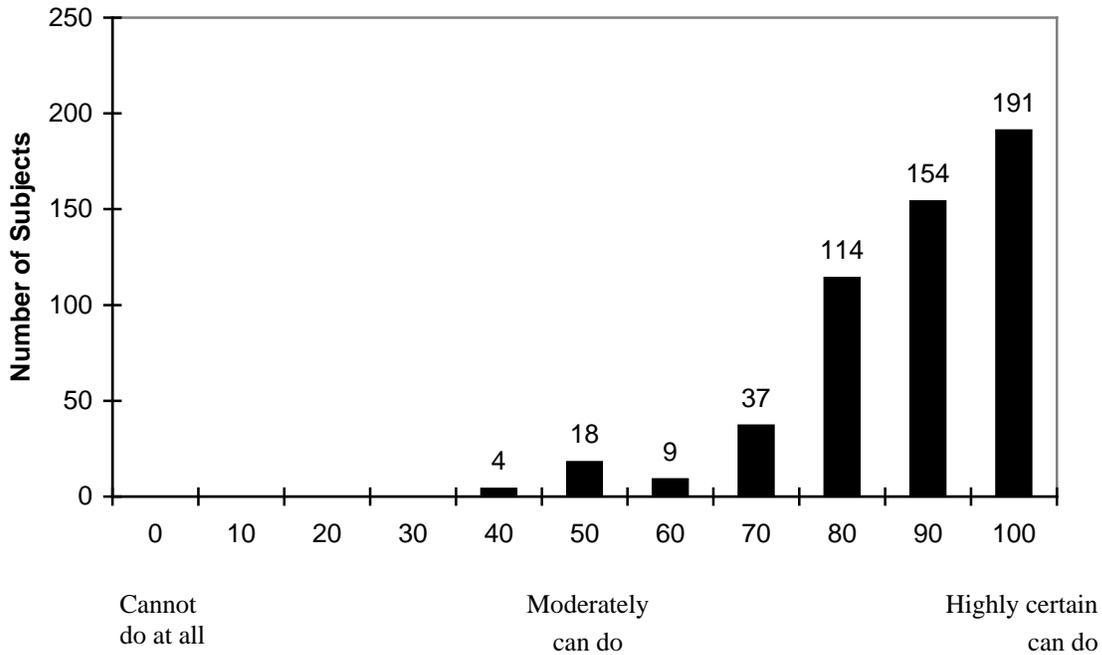
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
			1	2	19	10	41	91	153	210
			.2%	.4%	3.6%	1.9%	7.8%	17.3%	29%	39.8%

Mean	Median	Mode
88.39	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.306

Table 4-7. SKILL: Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns.



527 subjects

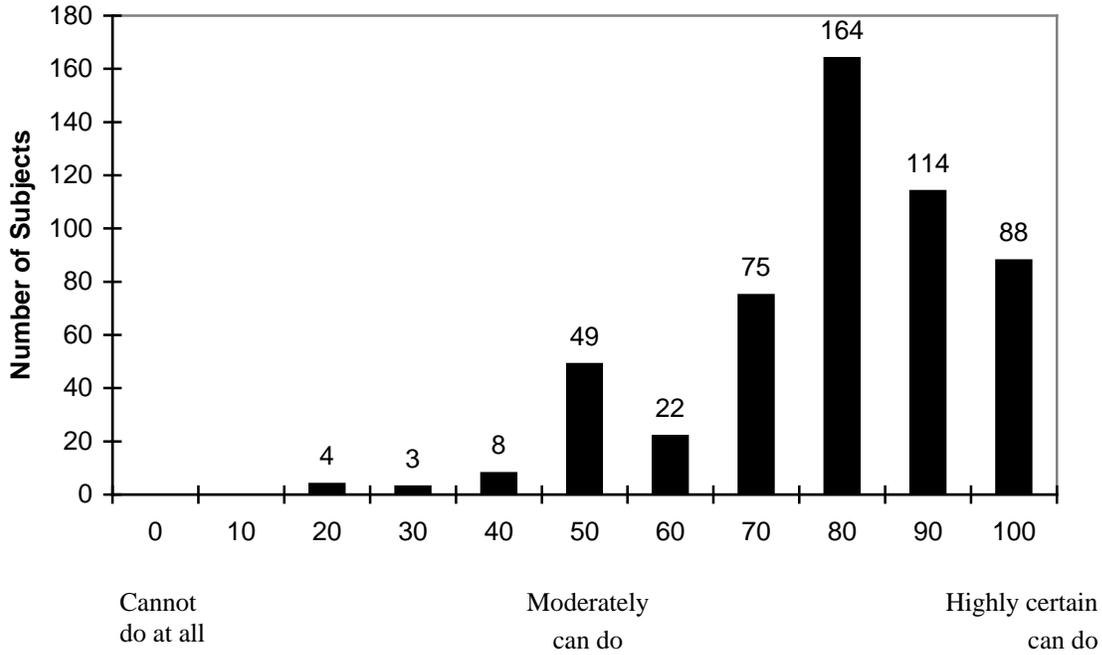
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				4	18	9	37	114	154	191
				.8%	3.4%	1.7%	7%	21.6%	29.2%	36.2%

Mean	Median	Mode
87.80	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.05

Table 4-8. SKILL: Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you.



527 subjects

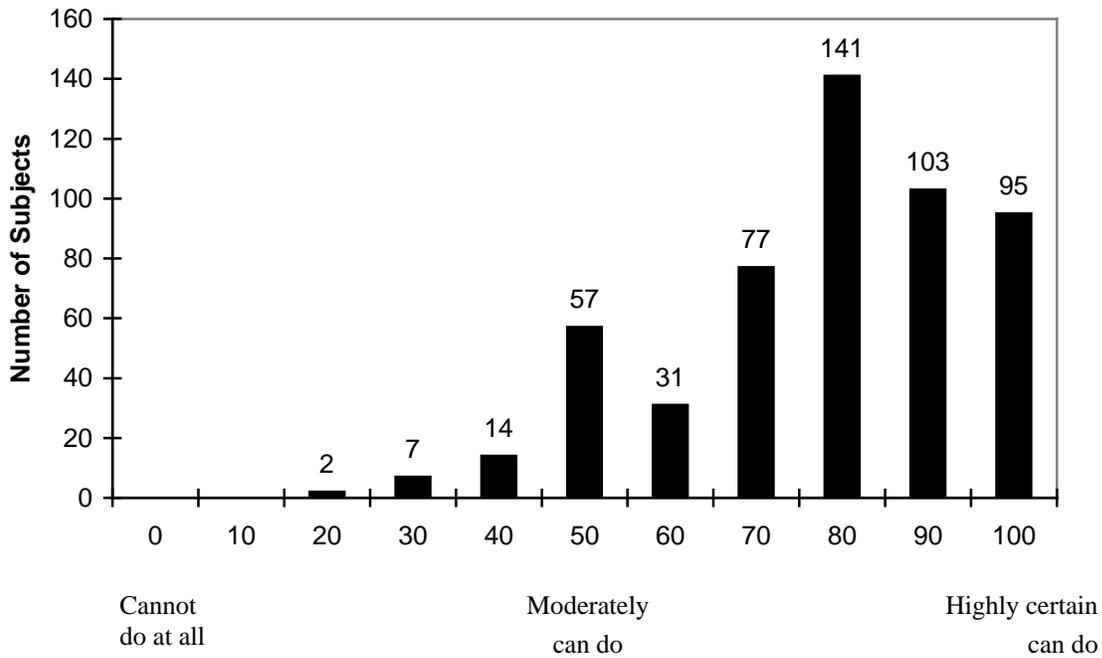
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
		4	3	8	49	22	75	164	114	88
		.8%	.6%	1.5%	9.3%	4.2%	14.2%	31.1%	21.6%	16.7%

Mean
Median
Mode
79.11
80

Standard Deviation
16.38

Table 4-9. SKILL: Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them.



527 subjects

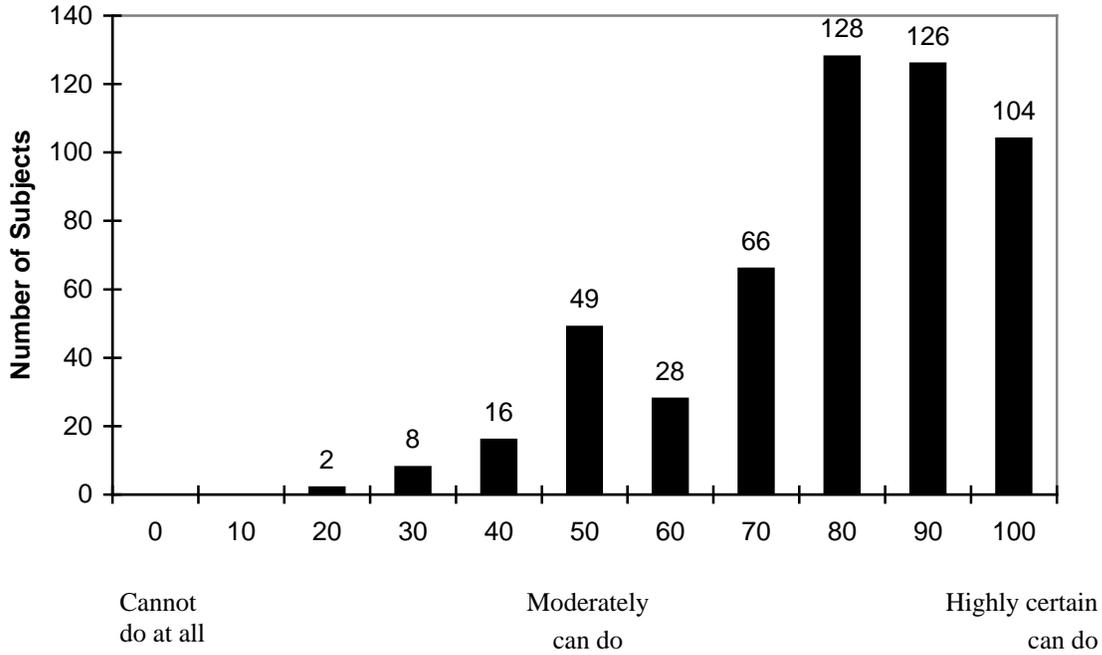
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
		2	7	14	57	31	77	141	103	95
		.4%	1.3%	2.7%	10.8%	5.9%	14.6%	26.8%	19.5%	18%

	Median
Mean	Mode
77.72	80

Standard Deviation
17.66

Table 4-10. SKILL: Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you.



527 subjects

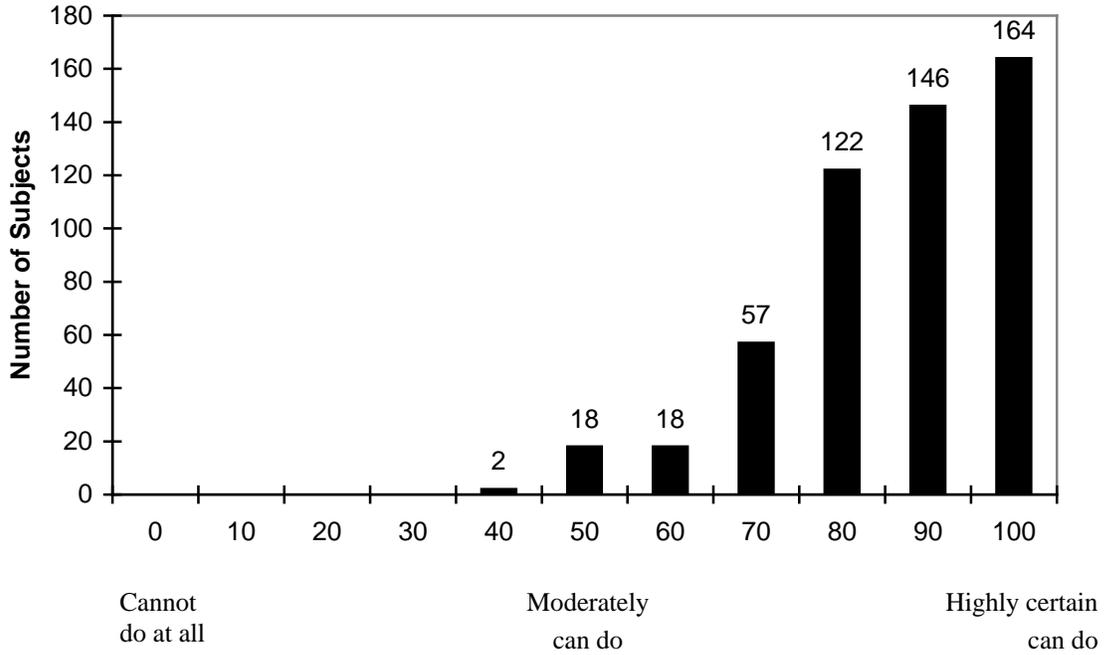
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
		2	8	16	49	28	66	128	126	104
		.4%	1.5%	3%	9.3%	5.3%	12.5%	24.3%	23.9%	19.7%

Mean
Median
Mode
79.03
80

Standard Deviation
17.89

Table 4-11. SKILL: Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child.



527 subjects

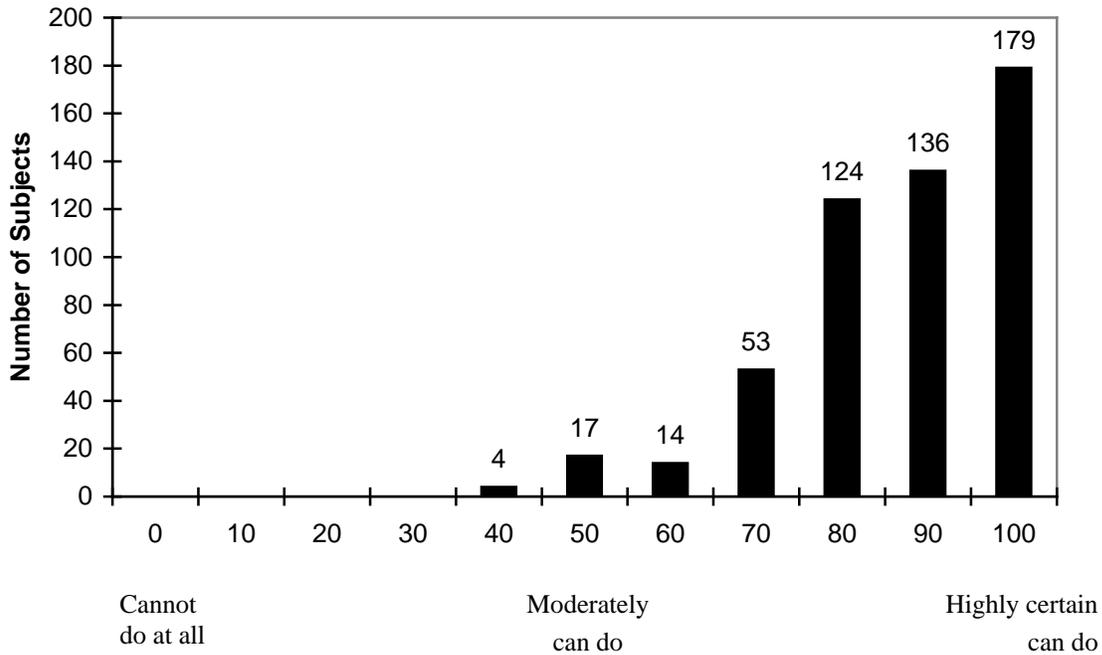
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				2	18	18	57	122	146	164
				.4%	3.4%	3.4%	10.8%	23.1%	27.7%	31.1%

Mean	Median	Mode
86.05	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.44

Table 4-12. SKILL: Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child.



527 subjects

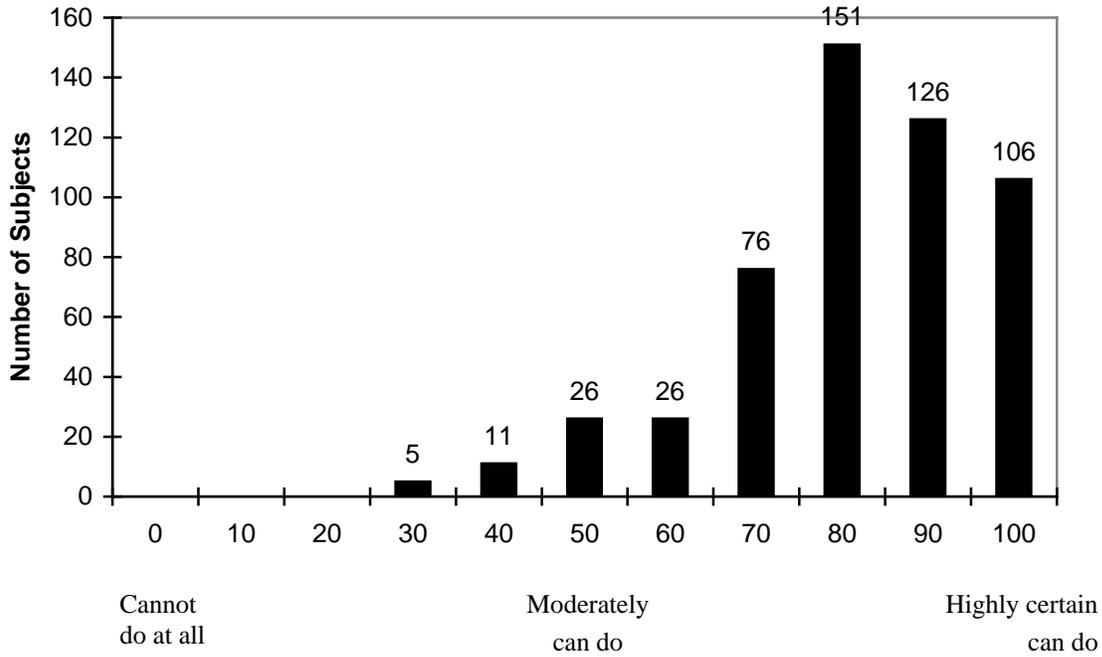
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				4	17	14	53	124	136	179
				.8%	3.2%	2.7%	10.1%	23.5%	25.8%	34%

Mean	Median	Mode
86.57	90	100

Standard Deviation	
13.44	

Table 4-13. SKILL: Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent.



527 subjects

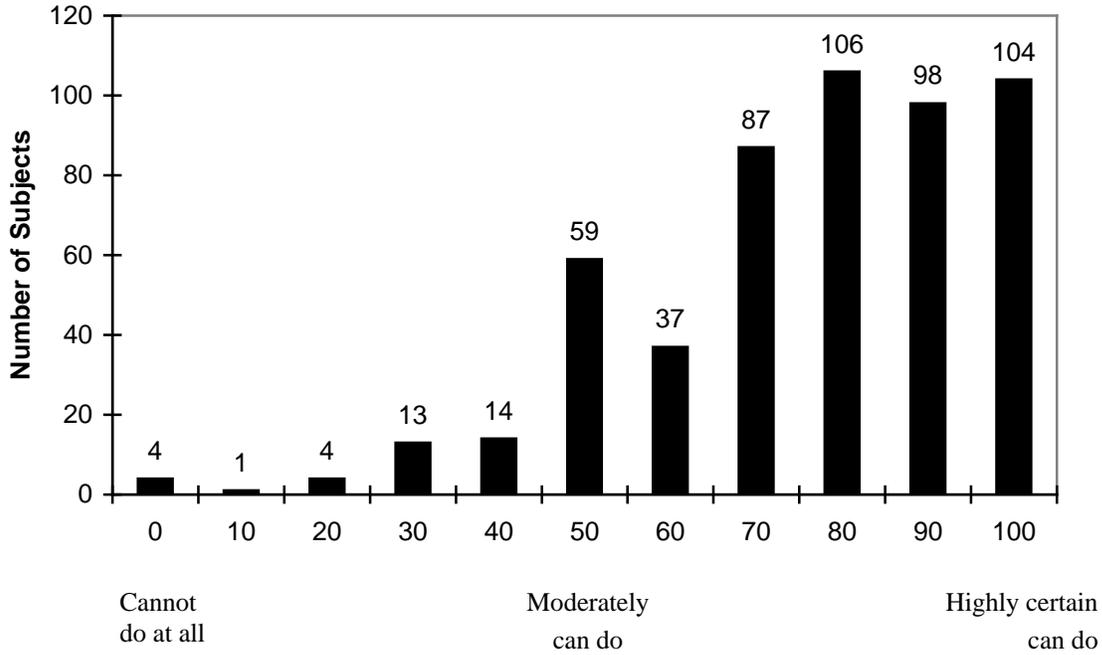
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
			5	11	26	26	76	151	126	106
			.9%	2.1%	4.9%	4.9%	14.4%	28.7%	23.9%	20.1%

Mean
Median
Mode
81.20
80

Standard Deviation
15.46

Table 4-14. SKILL: Intervene to help when a family is in crisis.



527 subjects

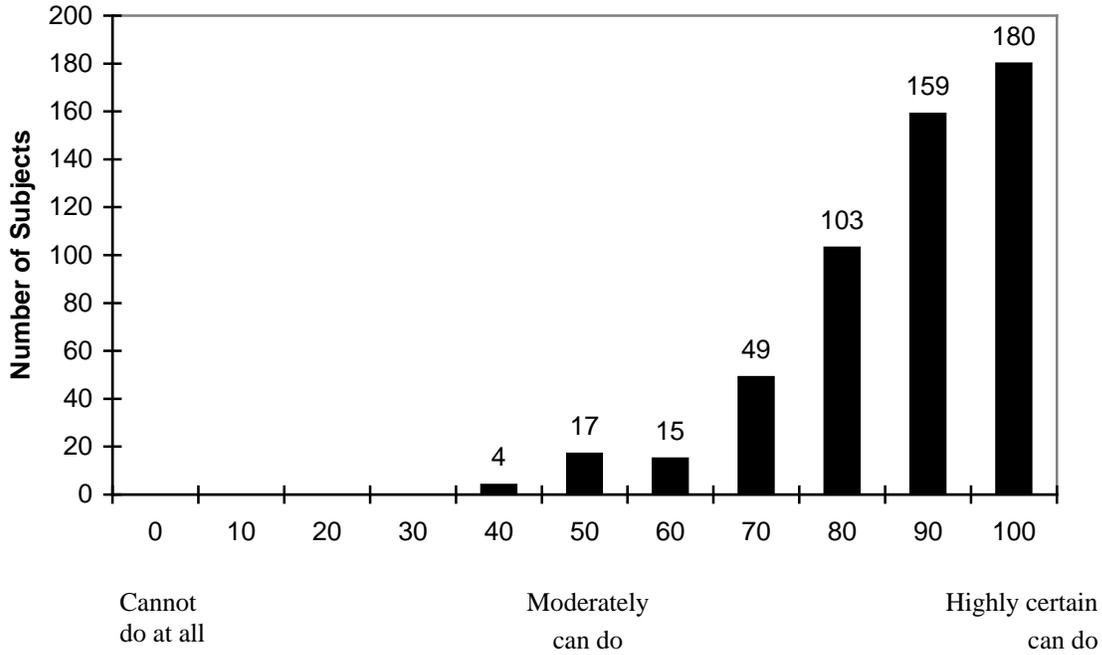
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
4	1	4	13	14	59	37	87	106	98	104
.8%	.2%	.8%	2.5%	2.7%	11.2%	7%	16.5%	20.1%	18.6%	19.7%

	Median
Mean	Mode
75.90	80

Standard Deviation
20.40

Table 4-15. SKILL: Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves.



527 subjects

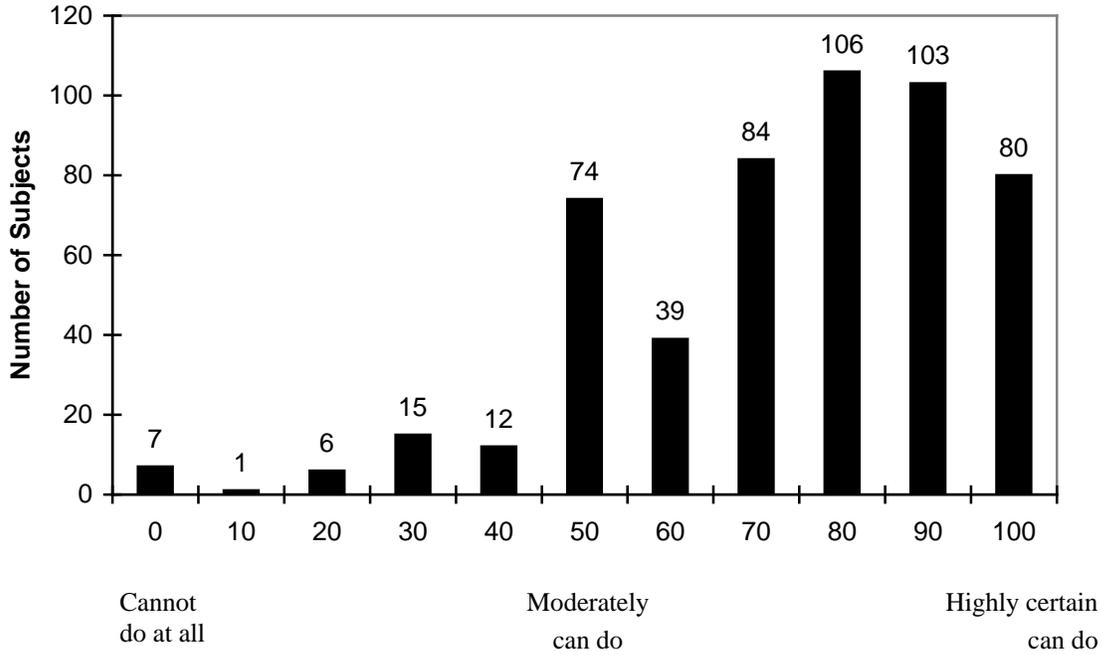
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				4	17	15	49	103	159	180
				.8%	3.2%	2.8%	9.3%	19.5%	30.2%	34.2%

Mean	Median	Mode
87.08	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.37

Table 4-16. SKILL: Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community.



527 subjects

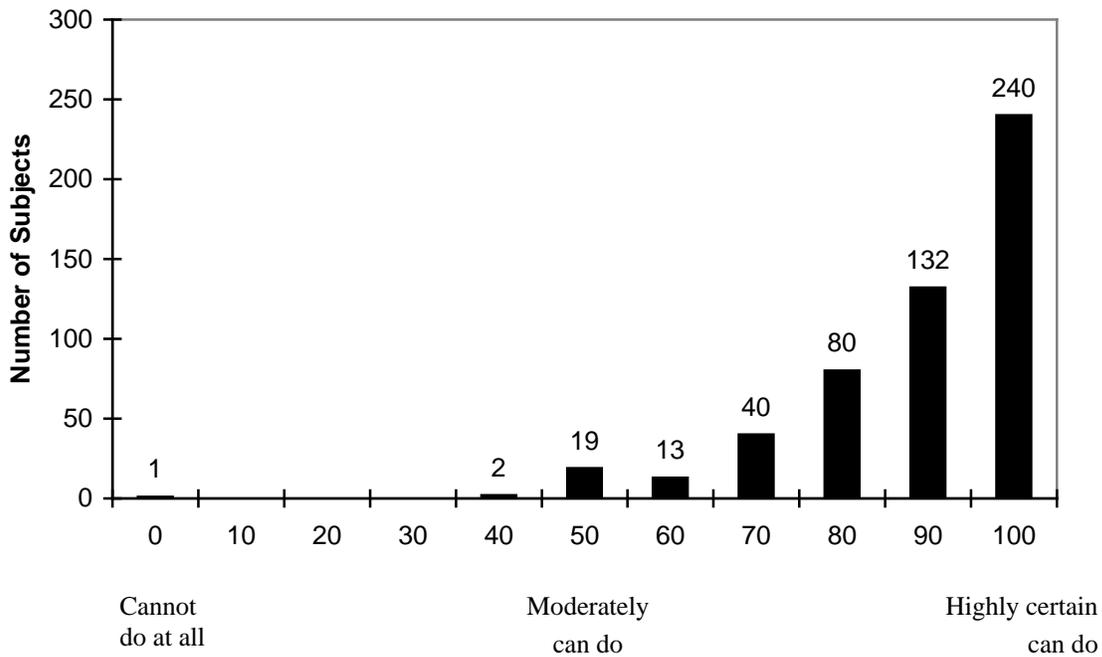
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
7	1	6	15	12	74	39	84	106	103	80
1.3%	.2%	1.1%	2.8%	2.3%	14%	7.4%	15.9%	20.1%	19.5%	15.2%

	Median
Mean	Mode
73.49	80

Standard Deviation
21.29

Table 4-17. SKILL: Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances



527 subjects

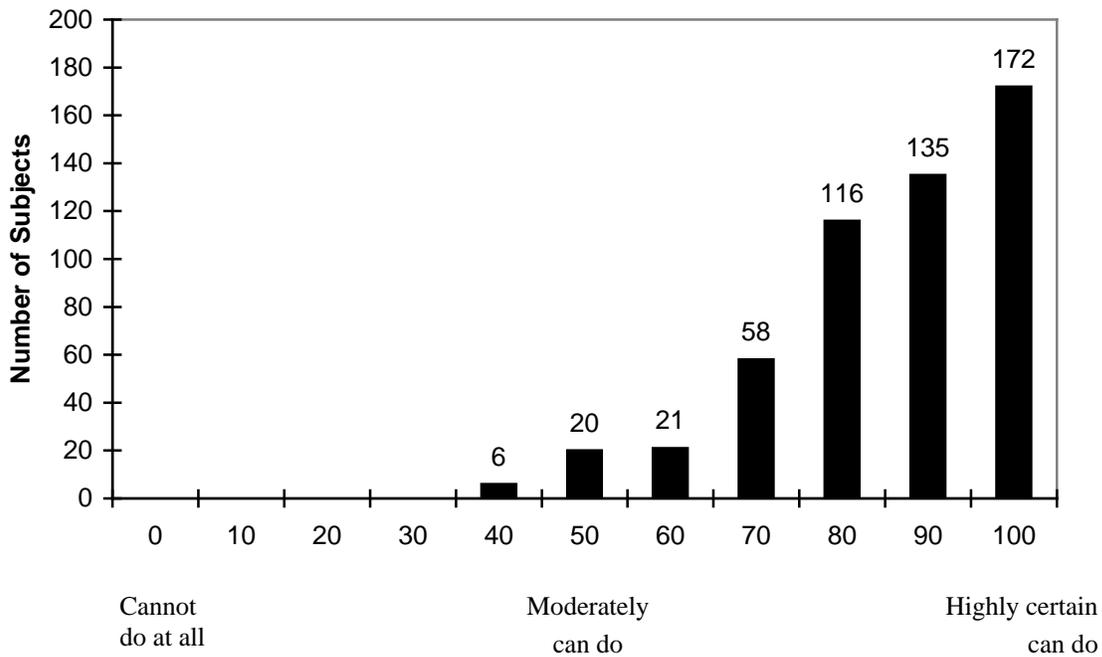
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
1				2	19	13	40	80	132	240
.2%				.4%	3.6%	2.5%	7.6%	15.2%	25%	45%

Mean	Median	Mode
88.98	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.97

Table 4-18. SKILL: Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities.



527 subjects

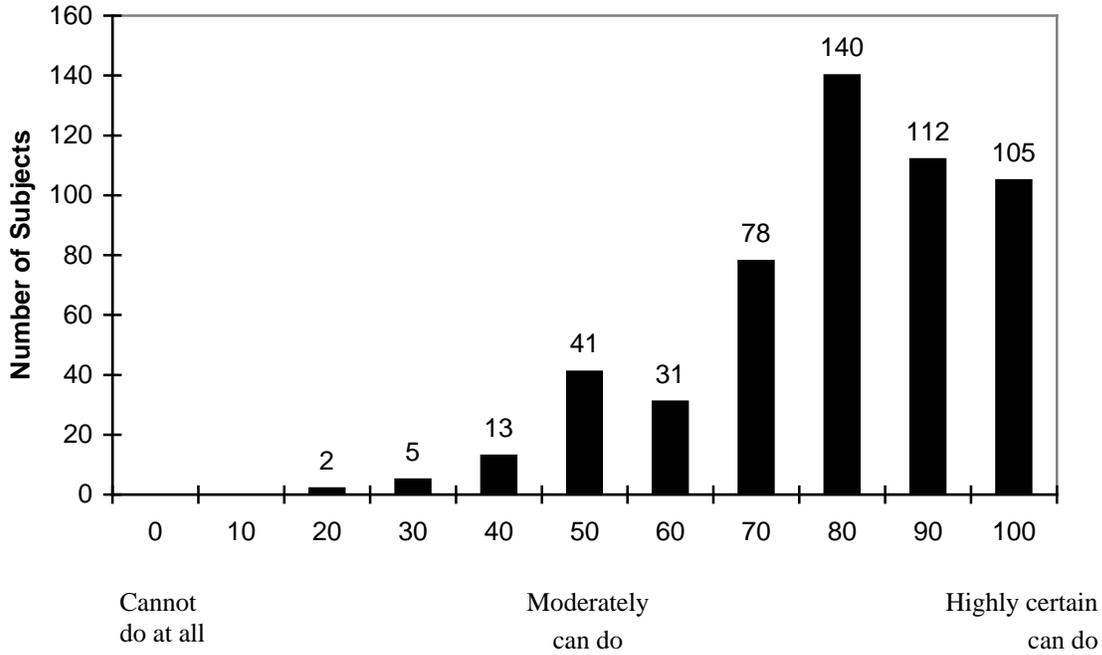
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				6	20	21	58	116	135	172
				1.1%	3.8%	4%	11%	22%	25.4%	32.6%

Mean	Median	Mode
85.58	90	100

Standard Deviation
14.30

Table 4-19. SKILL: Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development.



527 subjects

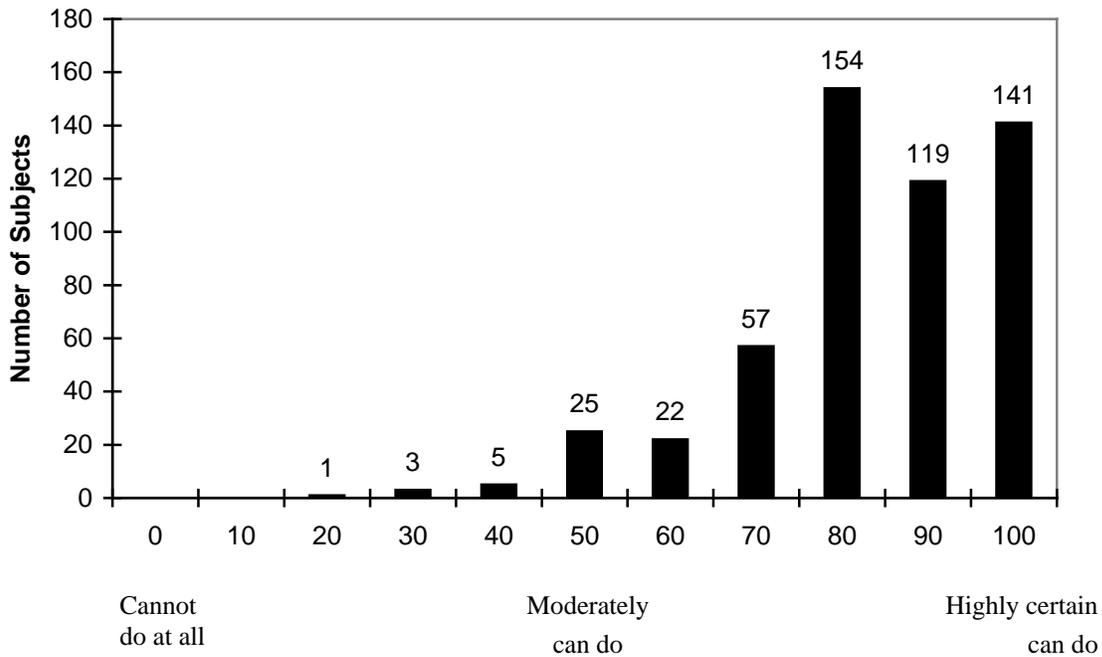
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
		2	5	13	41	31	78	140	112	105
		.4%	.9%	2.5%	7.8%	5.9%	14.8%	26.6%	21.3%	19.9%

Mean
Median
Mode
79.43
80

Standard Deviation
16.92

Table 4-20. SKILL: Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess.



527 subjects

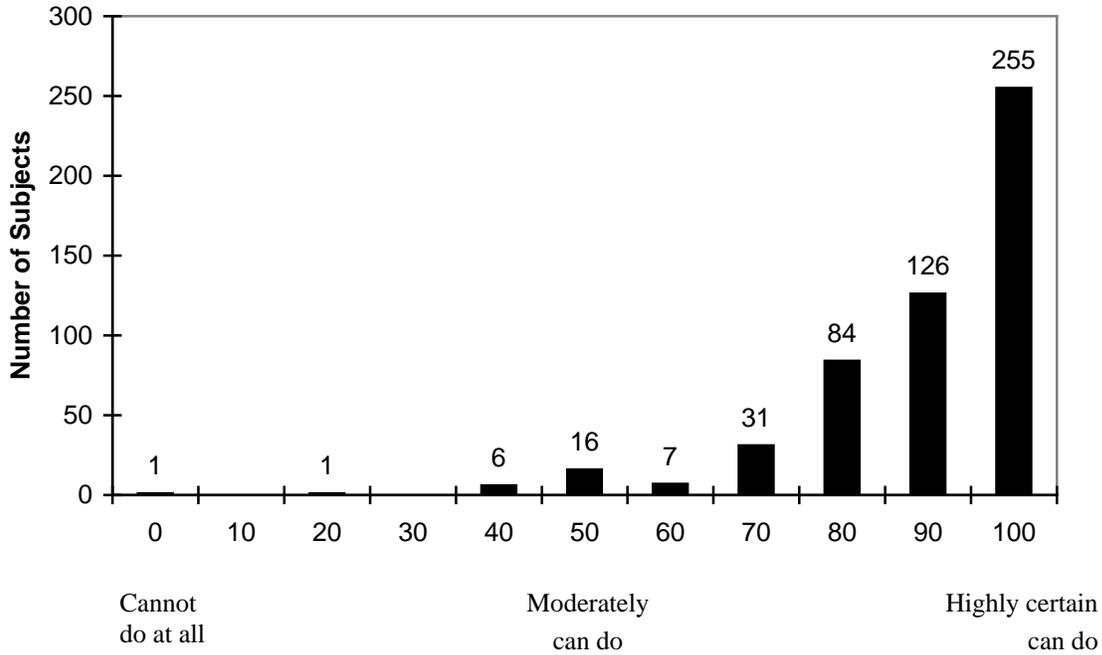
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
		1	3	5	25	22	57	154	119	141
		.2%	.6%	.9%	4.7%	4.2%	10.8%	29.2%	22.6%	26.8%

Mean
Median
Mode
83.5
80

Standard Deviation
14.98

Table 4-21. SKILL: Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Single Parent families, Multigenerational families, Adoptive/Foster families.



527 subjects

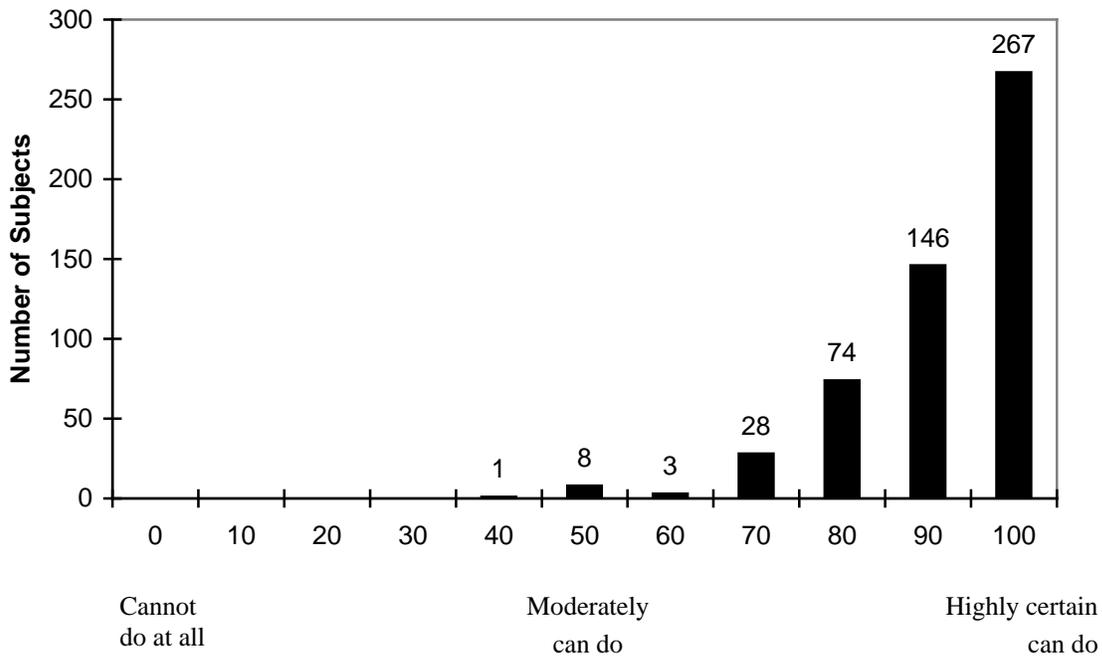
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
1		1		6	16	7	31	84	126	255
.2%		.2%		1.1%	3%	1.3%	5.9%	15.9%	23.9%	48.4%

Mean	Mode
Median	
89.58	100
90	

Standard Deviation
14.20

Table 4-22. SKILL: Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families.



527 subjects

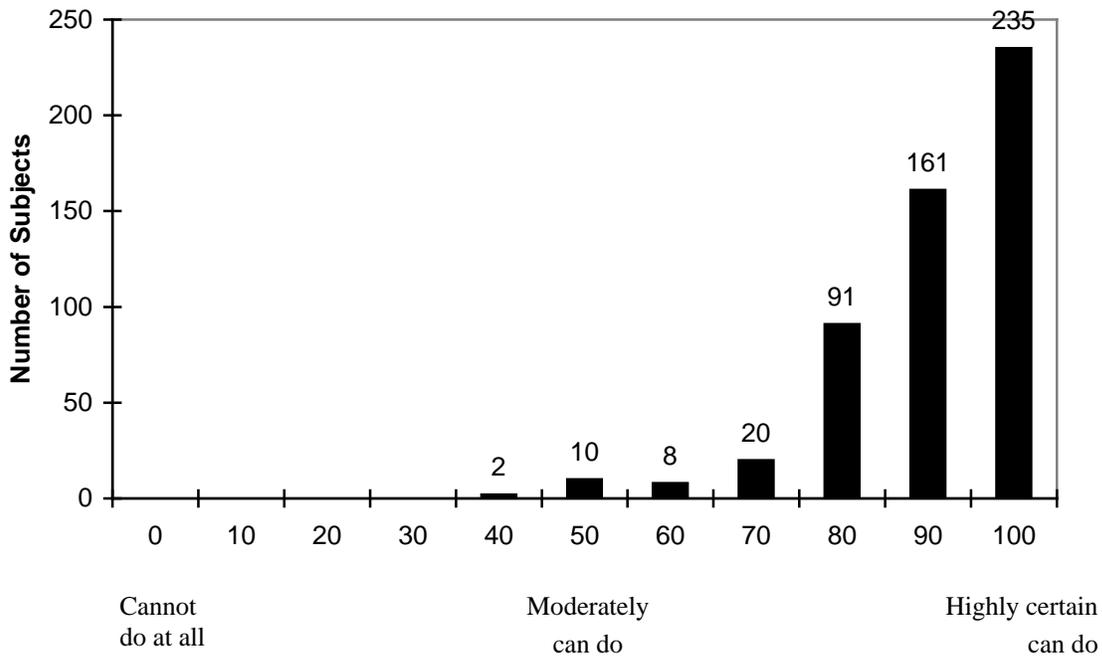
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				1	8	3	28	74	146	267
				.2%	1.5%	.6%	5.3%	14%	27.7%	50.7%

	Median
Mean	Mode
91.73	100

	Standard Deviation
	10.83

Table 4-23. SKILL: Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children.



527 subjects

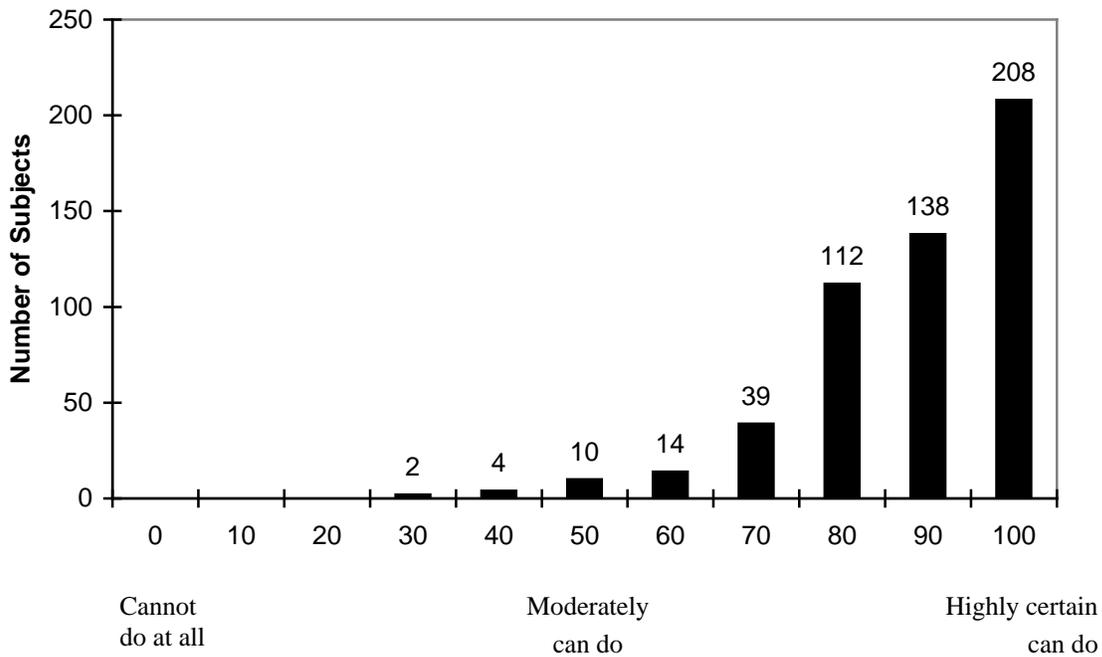
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
				2	10	8	20	91	161	235
				.4%	1.9%	1.5%	3.8%	17.3%	30.6%	44.6%

Mean	
Median	Mode
90.57	100
90	

Standard Deviation
11.42

Table 4-24. SKILL: Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development.



527 subjects

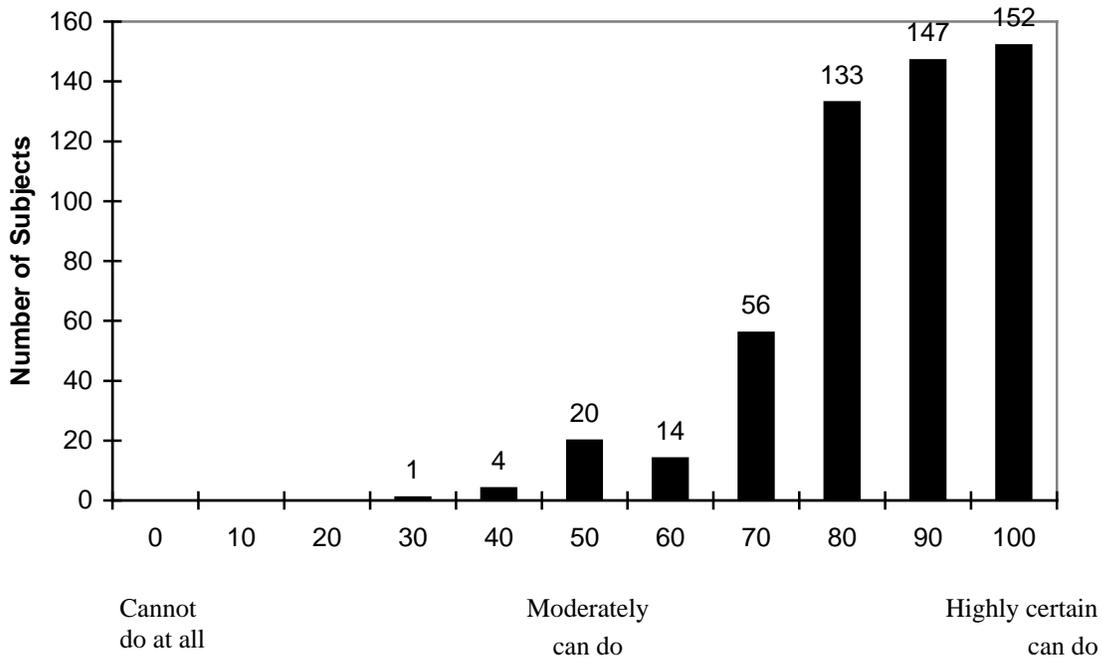
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
			2	4	10	14	39	112	138	208
			.4%	.8%	1.9%	2.7%	7.4%	21.3%	26.2%	39.5%

Mean	Median	Mode
88.18	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.2

Table 4-25. SKILL: Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child’s parents/caregivers.



527 subjects

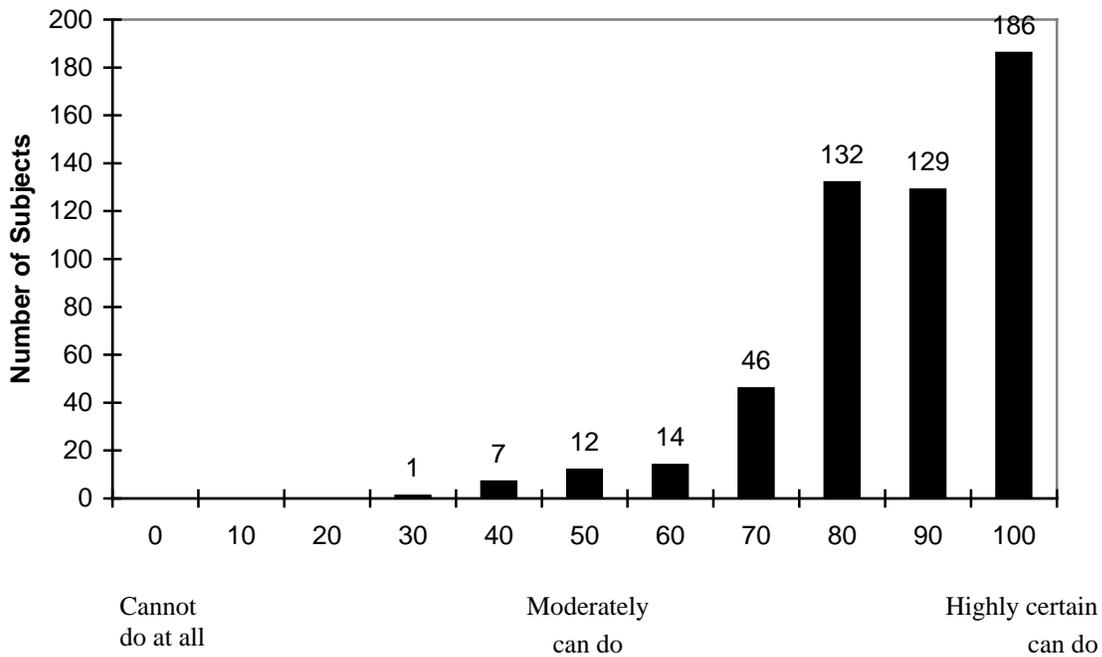
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
			1	4	20	14	56	133	147	152
			.2%	.8%	3.8%	2.7%	10.6%	25.2%	27.9%	28.8%

Mean	Median	Mode
85.43	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.66

Table 4-26. SKILL: Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children’s development.



527 subjects

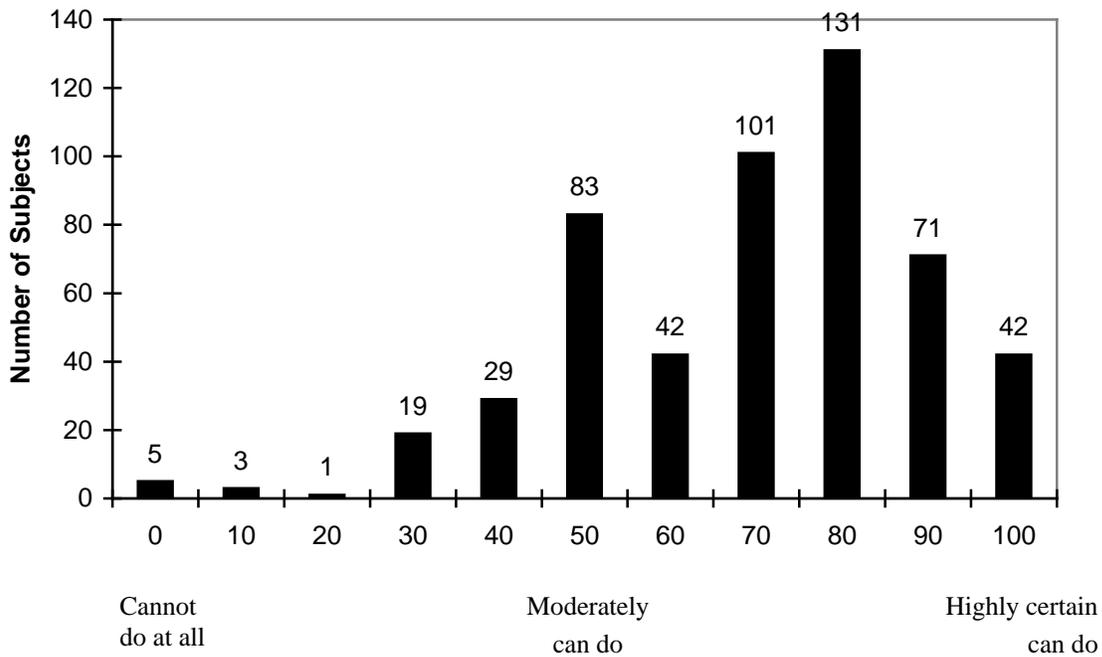
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
			1	7	12	14	46	132	129	186
			.2%	1.3%	2.3%	2.7%	8.7%	25%	24.5%	35.3%

Mean	Median	Mode
86.8	90	100

Standard Deviation
13.63

Table 4-27. SKILL: Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family.



527 subjects

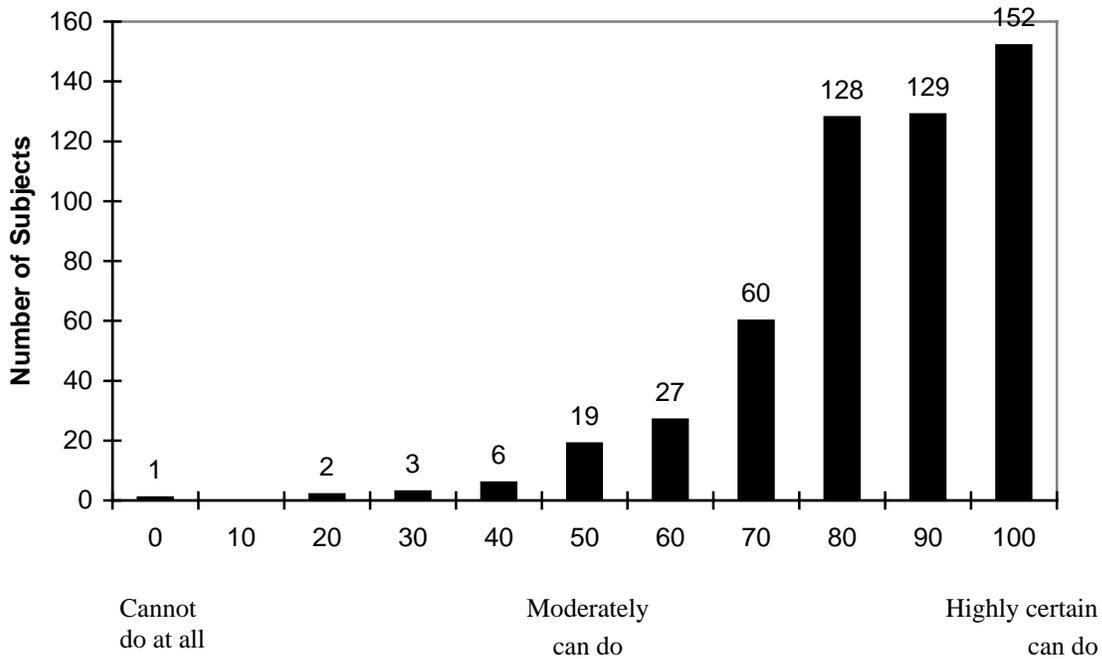
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
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0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
5	3	1	19	29	83	42	101	131	71	42
.9%	.6%	.2%	3.6%	5.5%	15.7%	8%	19.2%	24.9%	13.5%	8%

Mean	Median	Mode
69.43	70	80

Standard Deviation
20.02

Table 4-29. SKILL: Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child’s development and learning.



527 subjects

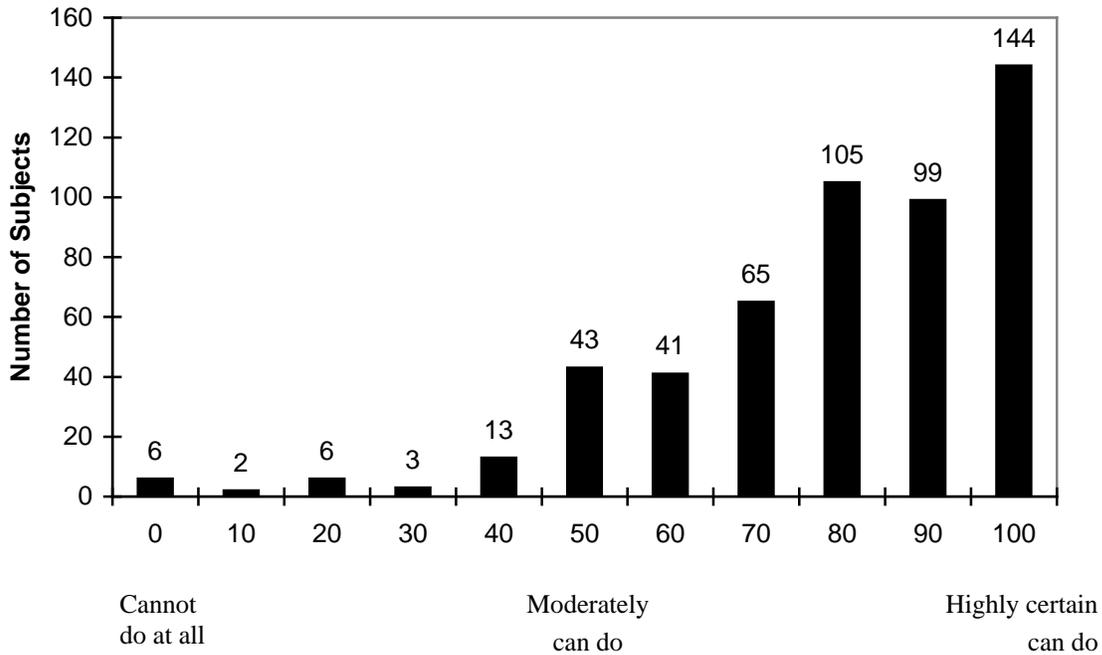
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
1		2	3	6	19	27	60	128	129	152
.2%		.4%	.6%	1.1%	3.6%	5.1%	11.4%	24.3%	24.5%	28.8%

Mean	Median	Mode
83.85	90	100

Standard Deviation
15.75

Table 4-31. SKILL: Schedule school events so parents are active participants.



527 subjects

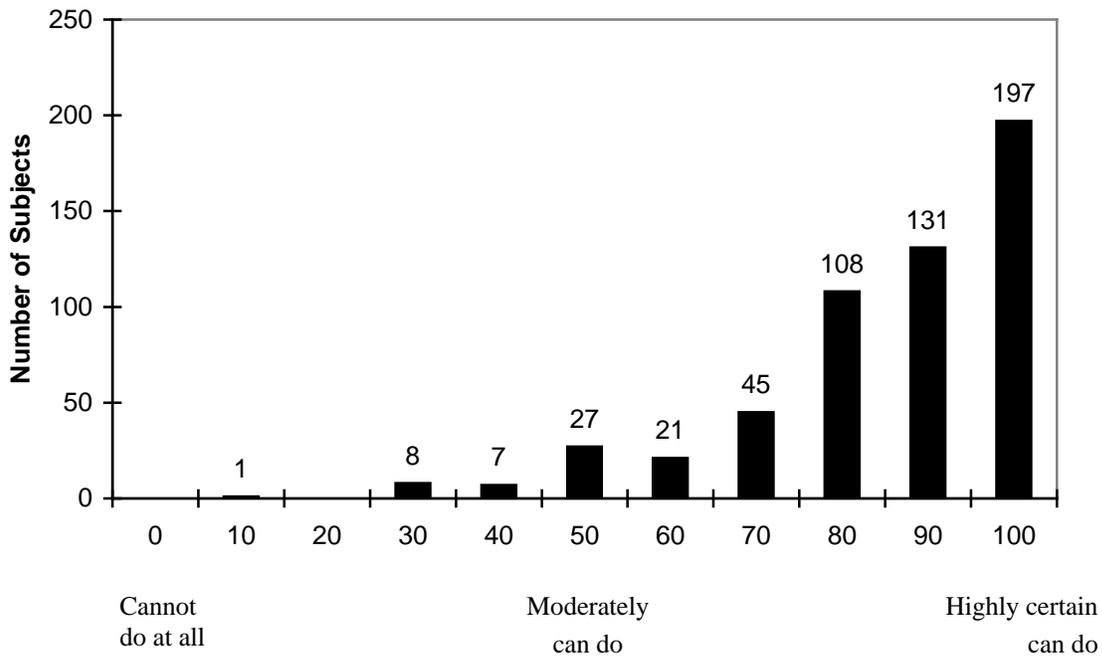
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
6	2	6	3	13	43	41	65	105	99	144
11%	.4%	1.1%	.6%	2.5%	8.2%	7.8%	12.3%	19.9%	18.8%	27.3%

Mean	Median	Mode
78.98	80	100

Standard Deviation
20.76

Table 4-32. SKILL: Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child’s development.



527 subjects

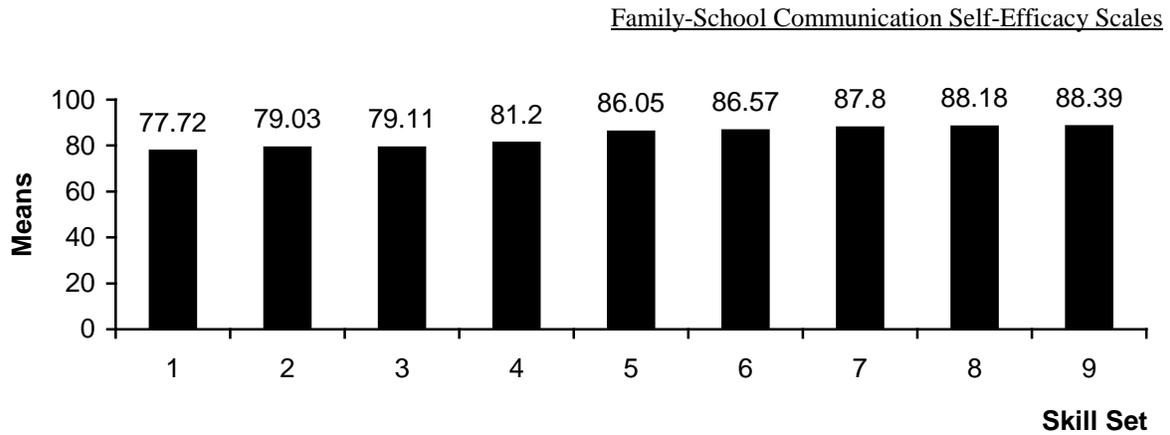
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy	32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy	53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy	74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy	95-100% Proficient Self-Efficacy
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
	1		8	7	27	21	45	108	131	197
	.2%		1.5%	1.3%	5.1%	4%	8.5%	20.5%	24.9%	34%

Mean	Median	Mode
84.67	90	100

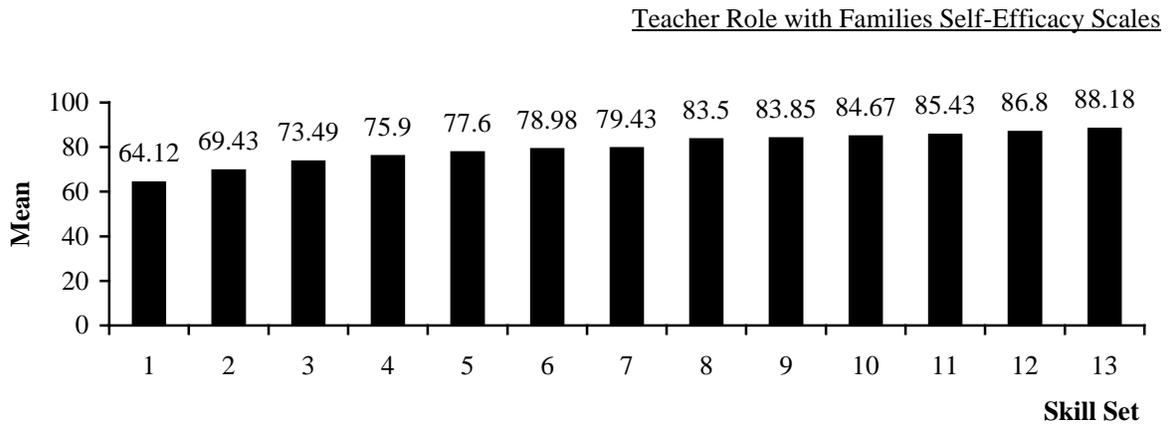
Standard Deviation
16.69

Table 4-33. Mean scores of WFSES: Family-School Communication Self-Efficacy Scales.



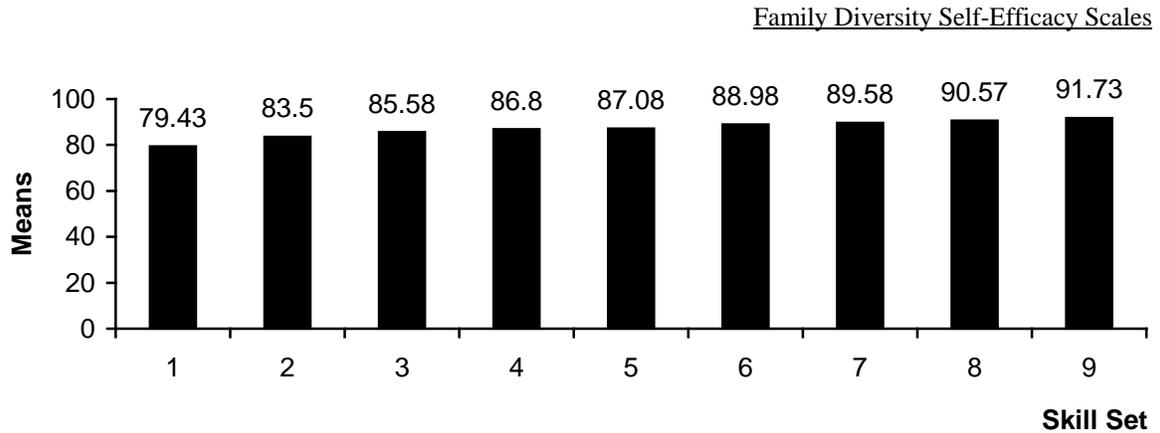
Skills	Means	Skill Set Item
1	77.72	Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them.
2	79.03	Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you.
3	79.11	Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you.
4	81.2	Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent.
5	86.05	Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child.
6	86.57	Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child.
7	87.8	Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns.
8	88.18	Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development.
9	88.39	Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child.

Table 4-34. Mean scores of Teacher Role with Families Self-Efficacy Scales.



Skills	Means	Skill Set Item
1	64.12	Assist parents in improving how they parent.
2	69.43	Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family.
3	73.49	Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community.
4	75.90	Intervene to help when a family is in crisis.
5	77.6	Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning.
6	78.98	Schedule school events so parents are active participants.
7	79.43	Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development.
8	83.5	Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess.
9	83.85	Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning.
10	84.67	Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development.
11	85.43	Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers.
12	86.8	Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development.
13	88.18	Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development.

Table 4-35. Mean scores of Family Diversity Self-Efficacy Scales.



Skills	Means	Skill Set Item
1	79.43	Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development.
2	83.50	Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess.
3	85.58	Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities.
4	86.8	Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development.
5	87.08	Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves.
6	88.98	Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances.
7	89.58	Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Single Parent families, Multigenerational families, Adoptive/Foster families.
8	90.57	Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children.
9	91.73	Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families.

Table 4-36. Questionnaire skill sets resulting with means 77% of lower in degree of confidence

Skill sets	Mean
• Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them.	77.72
• Intervene to help when a family is in crisis.	75.90
• Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community.	73.49
• Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family.	69.43
• Assist parents in improving how they parent.	64.12
• Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning.	77.6

Table 4-37. Questionnaire skill sets resulting with standard deviations of 16 increments or higher

Skill sets	Std. Dev.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you. 	16.39
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them. 	17.66
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you. 	17.89
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervene to help when a family is in crisis. 	20.40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community. 	21.29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development. 	16.92
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family. 	20.02
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist parents in improving how they parent. 	22.70
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule school events so parents are active participants. 	20.76
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning. 	20.56

Table 4-38. Scree Plot results from questionnaire 27 components

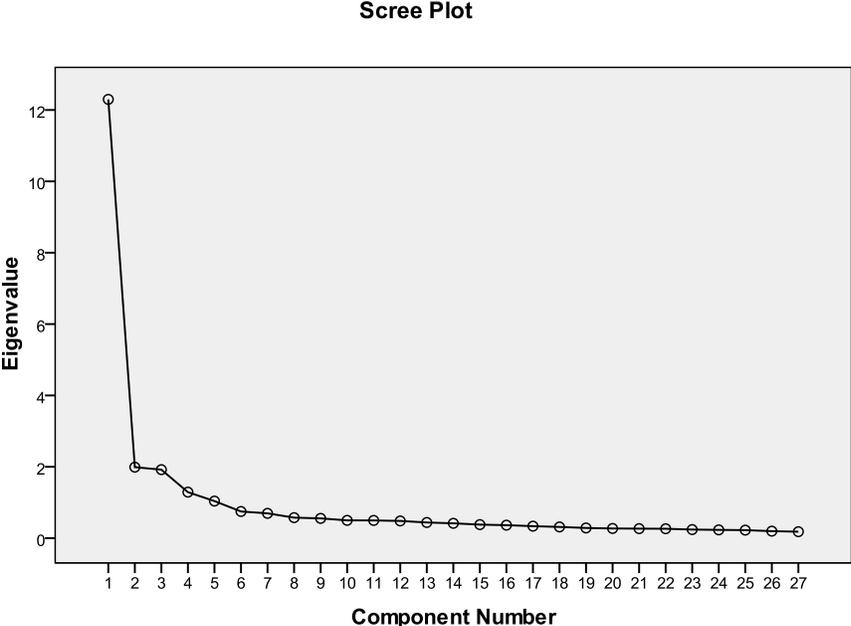


Table 4-39. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.297	45.545	45.545	5.867	21.729	21.729
2	1.990	7.369	52.914	5.742	21.267	42.997
3	1.920	7.111	60.024	4.598	17.028	60.024
4	1.290	4.777	64.801			
5	1.039	3.849	68.650			

Table 4-40. Factor Analysis for Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales - .40 or higher.

**Final arrangement*

Family-School Communication Efficacy

1. Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child.	.687
2. Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns.	.676
3. Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you.	.798
4. Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them.	.795
5. Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you.	.810
6. Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child.	.637
7. Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child.	.735
8. Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent.	.776
9. Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development.	.437

Family Diversity Efficacy

1. Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development.	.420
2. Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves.	.663
3. Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances.	.791
4. Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities.	.649
5. Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Single Parent families, Multigenerational families, Adoptive/Foster families.	.755
6. Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families.	.760
7. Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children.	.573
8. Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development.	.407
9. Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess.	.552

Teacher Role with Families Efficacy

1. Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development.	.513
2. Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development.	.522
3. Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development.	.639
4. Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess.	.458
5. Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers.	.548

Table 4-40. Continued.

Factor Analysis on the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales - .40 or higher determination

6. Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family.	.753
7. Assist parents in improving how they parent.	.689
8. Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning.	.664
9. Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning.	.728
10. Schedule school events so parents are active participants.	.708
11. Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development.	.629
12. Intervene to help when a family is in crisis.	.473
13. Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community.	.646

Table 4-41. Cronbach Alpha scores on Family-School Communication, Family Diversity and Teacher Role with Families

Item	Mean	Range		Cronbach Alpha
		Low	High	
Family-School Communication (9)	87.025	79.431	91.727	.899
Family Diversity (9)	84.083	77.723	88.387	.930
Teacher Role with Families (13)	79.337	64.118	88.178	.923

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to facilitate the development of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (WFSES), a measure developed to assess the level of confidence of teachers working with and building relationships with the families of their students. The items in the instrument depicted particular practices in which a teacher might engage in interacting with the families of his/her students. Although promising, the WFSES lacked an empirical basis for its theoretical constructs and psychometric properties. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the psychometric properties (including factor structure) of the WFSES. Presented in this chapter is the development of the WFSES, and a discussion of the results, implications, and recommendations that evolved from the research.

Development of the WFSES

In developing the WFSES for this study, the content and format of existing instruments were reviewed by the researcher. One of the earliest teacher efficacy studies was conducted by the RAND organization (Armor et al., 1976). This study used a two-item teacher efficacy measure and item with ideas about families, examples include: (a) *When it comes right down to it, a teacher really cannot do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment* and (b) *If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students*. In the Morris and Taylor (1998) study of Teacher Self-Efficacy, preservice teachers responded to questions “*How comfortable do you feel about your ability to encourage parents to increase their involvement in the school activities of their children?*” focusing on teacher school practices and teacher-parent interactions, like conferences or volunteering (p. 225).

One of the most well known and frequently used instruments is the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), originally designed by Gibson & Dembo in 1984, and composed of 22 questions. Hoy & Woolfolk (1993) developed a shorter version Teacher Efficacy Scale - Short form consisting of ten questions. Both instruments ranged from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. In both forms of these questionnaires a sample “family” item: *The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background*. Items were based on a full range of teacher beliefs.

Kevin Kieffer (2000) described the development of his measure the Sources of Self-Efficacy Inventory (SOSI), and construct validation of teacher efficacy about the teaching performance administered to 252 undergraduates in a psychology class. The SOSI has 35 items with an answer key of items ranging from *definitely not true for me* to *definitely true for me* on a 1 - 7 Likert scale. Sample items include: *I get excited when I do something right to help a child learn* and *My fears of making mistakes affect my ability to teach*.

The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001) was developed researching three factors of Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies and Classroom Management utilizing a nine point response scale ranging from *Nothing* to *A Great Deal* assessing how much the respondent felt they could perform a task using the lead in question of “*How much can you....*”. The TSES instrument would become a ground breaking instrument using the definition of self-efficacy emphasizing respondents beliefs in their ability that they “can do” a certain task.

Elizabeth Graue developed a measure to assess the beliefs about home-school relations of preservice teachers (Graue et al., 2003). The instrument is based on Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement of school-family partnerships. The survey has a total of 90 items. Question format: *How do you anticipate working with parents and families in your teaching?* Open ended item questions enabled preservice teachers to speculate on the grade they hope to teach, to describe

appropriate roles of parents in education, biggest worries with families, and how they anticipated learning about working with parents.

In *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents*, Alfred Bandura (2005) further modified his rating instrument for Self-Efficacy with changes to his response choices with “can do” language exemplifying confidence of completing the task with a continuous response scale of 0 to 100 where 0 represented “cannot do at all”, 50 represented “moderately can do” and 100 represented “highly certain can do”. Items include: *How much can you do to get parents to become involved in school activities?*, *How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school?* and *How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to school?*

Lamorey and Wilcox (2005) adapted the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) to fit their research needs of Early Intervention Teachers with expanding roles and demands on liaisons between home and school. Their modification item statements of their measure EISES: Original TES statement: *When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort.* Their changes: *When a family does better than expected, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort.* The majority of item statements were family centered and strength-based regarding early education interventionists and working with families. The scale measured dimensions similar to the original TES, personal teacher self-efficacy and general teacher self-efficacy.

McNaughton et al. (2008) pre/post design studied active listening skills of preservice professionals. Active Listening skills are the methodical teaching of communication and listening skills taught in psychology and counseling. Sample items in the scale include: (1) *Teachers are not very powerful influences in promoting the involvement of parents,* (2) *I am effective at providing enough opportunities for working parents to participate in*

school/classroom-related activities, and (3) I do not have enough training to provide parents with suggestions on parenting and childrearing practices for the age and grade levels I teach.

In developing the *Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales*, Bandura's response scale (2005) was chosen ranging from 0 to 100 where 0 represented teachers beliefs they "cannot do at all" the task, 50 represented "moderately can do" the task and 100 represented "highly certain can do" the task. The directions for teachers read "*please indicate how certain you are that you can do each of the things described below by choosing the appropriate number*" and "*rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100*". Respondents were asked to rate their self-efficacy with working with families where they rated their confidence and capability with family centered skill sets in complex situations working with families. Teachers were asked to respond to 27 family centered skills.

Discussion of Results

The WFSES was developed based upon multiple theorists' ideas regarding the optimal roles and practices that teachers might demonstrate in building relationships with the families of their students. Based on these sources, the original instrument was conceptualized as three underlying practice domains represented as three subscales. The factor analysis of teacher responses to the WFSES yielded three factors that closely corresponded to the original three practice domains:

The *Family-School Communication* subscale was designed to assess how educators reported that they interacted with caregivers in exchanging ideas and support even in the presence of conflicts, stressful situations, deadlines and tension. Understanding the difficulties in communication is not often discussed in the literature or with research measurements. This dissertation research opened up the conversation of understanding the barriers in teacher communication by increasing awareness of conflicts and stressful situations around interacting

with families. It was assumed that educators working in collaboration with students' caregivers could experience differences in styles, agendas or opinions yet demonstrate skills in effective listening, negotiating, and respecting other parties in order to reach solutions. As such, this practice domain assessed how the respondent handled positive communications, miscommunications, interactions and collaborations. The ideas of miscommunications and difficulties in learning the skills to interact with families are new aspects of teachers' communication with families.

In particular, items loading on this subscale included: *Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child; Balance your opinion about what a child needs with that of a parent who has a different opinion about their child; Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns; and Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them.* Other skill sets include: *Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you; Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child; Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child and Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent.* One item, *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis* which was originally hypothesized to be included in this subscale loaded more heavily on the Teacher Role with Families subscale. Another item *Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development* loaded on both the Family-School Communication and Teacher Role with Families subscales hence it was retained in the final instrument on both categories.

The *Family Diversity* subscale assesses the educator's ability to understand diverse socio-cultural perspectives and experience comfort in interacting with persons from other cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Education professionals need to view parents and families as having strengths and contributing to all parts of the learning process while considering family

barriers and challenges. This requires educators to become aware of their own biases and attitudes about persons having alternate lifestyles, family structures, socioeconomic backgrounds who might hold differing beliefs about parenting, education and parent involvement. Item *Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development* originally proposed on teacher-family scales also loaded on the diversity factor. In contrast, there were two items *Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development* and *Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess that were* proposed to represent the diversity factor and also loaded on Teacher Role with Families factors. Hence these two items were retained for each factor. Other items loading on the diversity factor are: *Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves; Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances; Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities; Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Multigenerational families, Single Parent families, Adoptive/Foster families; Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families; and Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children.*

The *Teacher Role with Families* subscale assesses teacher expectations as to the nature of professional relationships they expect to create with students' caregivers and the types of activities they expect to engage in with families. It was assumed that educators would demonstrate a variety of ways of engaging families in their child's schooling. The item *Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development* was proposed on the Teacher Role with Families construct and also loaded on the Family-School Communication self-efficacy scales. As with the item *Communicate with parents*

of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development proposed on Teacher Role with Families factors also loaded on the Family Diversity factor. There were two items, *Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development* and *Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess* were proposed for the diversity subscale that also loaded on Teacher Role with Families self-efficacy scales. Hence these two items were retained for each factor. As a result the following items were proposed on the Teacher Role with Families self-efficacy scales and load on this factor: *Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers; Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family; Assist parents in improving how they parent; Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning; Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning; Schedule school events so parents are active participants; Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development; Intervene to help when a family is in crisis; and Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community.*

Although not surprising, the four items demonstrating the greatest response variation (largest standard deviation) in self-efficacy among this sample of teachers were: *Assist parents in improving how they parent* and *Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community*. Somewhat surprising was the large response variation in self-efficacy to the items: *Schedule school events so parents are active participants* and *Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning*. The first two items are often considered to be outside of the realm of teacher responsibilities, but the last two items are important strategies that teachers might implement. As for teacher self-efficacy with working with families, teachers rated mean averages of 69.43% for *Motivate parents to make the changes*

they would like to in functioning better as a family and 64.12% *Assist parents in improving how they parent*. Often teachers are looking for students' families to support or supervise students completing school projects or supervising schoolwork. One important learning opportunity exists in having the teacher discuss with caregivers working outside the home how to assist their children in tackling these difficult tasks. Other areas of teacher assistance to families in parenting fall in the lines of encouragement, redirection, and discipline. As a family-school team, collaboratively the team can work to strategize on what is working in school or home for the child. With the on-going conversation, the team can discuss how the family can continue to work together positively. For instance, often when a child comes from a divorced family and spends time in two different households of their divorces parents, there can be difficulties in the transfer of information from school, development of similar disciplinary rules and even the location of the school backpack. One possible strategy is for teachers to assist the family in developing procedures for school communication with both households.

For 20 of the items on the WFSES, teachers' responses demonstrated considerable certainty that they could perform skills. There were only a few respondents who indicated low levels of self efficacy of having 0 to 31% confidence in their capability to perform these described skills working with families: *Discuss with parents your ideas and observations about their child* (1 teacher), *Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you* (7), *Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them* (9), *Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you* (10). *Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent* (5), *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis* (22), *Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community* (29), *Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances* (1), *Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development* (7), *Understand the*

unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess (4), Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Single Parent families, Multigenerational families, Adoptive/Foster families (2), Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development (2), Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers (1), Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development (1), Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family (28), Assist parents in improving how they parent (54), Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning (6), Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning (23), Schedule school events so parents are active participants (17), Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development (9).

On the other hand, there were 15 items on the WFSES in which a number of teachers rated themselves as having 0% confidence in their capability to perform these described skills working with families. There were a varying number of teachers who indicated they could not perform the tasks described in the following items: *Intervene to help when a family is in crisis (4 teachers), Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community (7), Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances (1), Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Single Parent families, Multigenerational families, Adoptive/Foster families (1), Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family (5), Assist parents in improving how they parent (10), Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning (1), Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning (3), and Schedule school events so parents are*

active participants (6). This is a good indication of the further necessity of family centered skills training for preservice and current teachers. Teachers rating 0 to 31% confidence in their capability to perform these described skills working with families.

Limitations

The study sample was comprised of 527 elementary school teachers in the United States working in grades pre-kindergarten through 6th grade. The study sample was drawn from teachers who volunteered to participate in this study from a request via an email. One potential limitation to this sample was the possible lack of representativeness of the sample of teachers who chose to participate in the study. Due to the voluntary nature of the participant pool, the extent to which the findings are generalizable to a broader teacher population is questionable. Also, the method of enlisting the assistance of Department heads at universities to provide names and email addresses to their teacher education alumni might have resulted in an unrepresentative sample wherein department heads selected only certain alumni for the researcher contact. In addition, the delivery of the study questionnaire exclusively through computer contact, automatically excluded from the potential sample all teachers who did not have access to a computer. Some emails were nonfunctioning and others were directed to the incorrect representatives. Several administrators discussed their limitations in forwarding the study to request participations. Also teachers may have experienced some difficulties with accessing surveymonkey.com on a computer with firewalls.

The demographic questionnaire was designed to differentiate among teachers in terms of the socioeconomic level of their community and school. However some older teachers may have different perceptions of how they might characterize their community economic level they were raised. An income of a family of \$50,000 may be interpreted by teachers differently than teachers in their twenties today as compared to an income bracket. As defined in the community

for income, some differences in how a 60 year old teacher might perceive the economic level of their childhood communities may need further review. It is important to understand the demographic sample as representative from the responses of teachers. As well, teachers working in lower socio-economic environments as compared to where they were raised or currently working in suburban areas. It is important to linking research to contextual differences in confidence in skills depending on their student population they work with.

A second limitation concerns the self-report nature of the response format. Historically, it has been well documented that self-reports are subject to social desirability influences. Respondents may have wanted to “look good” and thus shaped their answers to appear that way. A third limitation concerns the conceptualization of the scales. Items were developed according to existing literature and best practice. However, they may not be representative of the entire array of practices teachers need to work effectively with parents. Finally, due to the self selection process used in this study, teachers responding and completing the survey may represent a sample of teachers who *are more confident* in their abilities and skills in working with parents and thus may demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy due to their interests in responding to this specific survey.

Bandura (2005) posited that items may some times be too specific to effectively demonstrating the construct of self-efficacy. However, items may be too general. To establish content validity, the researcher solicited feedback from three teacher education faculty members currently involved in teaching courses on family involvement to teacher education students. Each reviewer was given a working definition of the three constructs and questions were listed randomly. To determine how well each item fit into its assigned (construct) category, the reviewers were asked to sort each of the items into one of the three construct categories, and to provide feedback regarding the content and relevance of the item. A final limitation of this

instrument is the interpretation by the participant of the meaning of terms in an item. For example in the items *Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families* – does the “warm, inviting interaction” have a universal understanding? Would teachers agree as to what is meant by “warm, inviting interaction” as how it might be provided to different types of families? As such in the item *Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you* – does “effectively” have a universal understanding and agreed upon response(s) so that the parent feels both heard and supported? Further refinement of items within each practice domain may be necessary so as to fully understand, learn and teach the fundamental strengths of building relationships with students’ families. The logical next step for this instrument furthering this doctoral research, a panel should evaluate the skill set items as it appears under each construct. It is recommended that the original three person expert panel who reviewed the building and defining of each of the proposed constructs – Family Diversity, Family-School Communication and Teacher Role with Families revisit this instrument for content validity. This instrument should undergo professional scrutiny with the expert panel to review each item question as it appears in each domain. In their review, the panel should evaluate whether each item retained the spirit of the item intended under each domain. The panel of experts can also review omitted skills removed to form the final 27 items. The expert panel can review the wording of skill set items for specifics around the meaning of the item and/or improving the way the item is worded. In addition, reviewer can observe whether the item best fits a teacher self-efficacy by demonstrating teachers’ beliefs of their capabilities to perform the skills.

Implications

The creation of the instrument and analyses of the WFSES statistics generated in this study yield implications for theorists of Teacher Self-Efficacy, teachers involved in family centered practices and researchers who study Teacher Self-Efficacy working with Families.

This research generated teachers responses to skill set items some expected while others surprising. The confirming items further created support for implications to the theory, practice and more research.

Implications for Theory

Most of the research on family-school involvement has examined either the nature of parents' roles in working with schools or the possible student outcomes resulting from their involvement. However, a new body of literature is emerging describing optimal practices in which teachers might engage families. Although there is a growing body of literature describing the types of practices in which teachers should engage, only recently have teacher preparation programs recognized the need to help teachers develop their skills in working with families. This study sought to identify specific skills and practices that teachers use during interactions with families. The conceptual development of the Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (WFSES) was influenced by (1) Alfred Bandura's social learning theory and self-efficacy theory, (2) Joyce Epstein's theory of family-school involvement, and (3) Family Systems Theory linking family needs and interests, system interaction and building supportive relationships. The identification of particular teacher practices with families that evolved from these theories were organized into three domains: (a) family diversity, (b) teacher role with families and (c) family-teacher communication.

Self-Efficacy measurement sets out to measure the belief in performing a certain task. Although this instrument is not focusing on teacher specific application of these skills, the outcome expectancy is relevant in today's understanding of the skills.

Implications for Practice

The Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales (WFSES) was developed to assess the level of confidence of educators in building working relationships with the families of their

students. Teachers frequently work with families in the schools regarding a variety of settings and interactions. Some teacher interactions are more traditional as in the back to school nights, volunteering or parent teacher conferences other interactions may be interactions with parents as leaders, advocates for their children or understanding the Individual Education Planning (IEP) process. A large amount of the research is available on the parents' perspective on interacting with the school and barriers to becoming involved. Little research has been conducted from the teachers' standpoint on teacher practices, confidence and comfort level on working with families in the schools.

The WFSES has the potential to assist teachers and administrators in developing individual self-growth and workshops on working with families' practices. This instrument can be used to help understand the difficulties and strengths in working with families. Understanding teachers' confidence in working with families can lead to understanding teacher comfort levels and practices with involving families in activities and interactions. Core curriculums can be developed to strengthen skills around understanding family diversity, family-school communication and teacher roles with working with families. There is a need in understanding the level of comfort and proficiency in how teachers communicate, work with diverse populations/situations and build teacher-family relationships contributing to how teachers involve families.

The WFSES has implications for educators besides professionals in the schools. The WFSES fills a need in the study of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and can be useful for many practice-oriented applications. For instance, the WFSES, in its present format, can assess the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers as they work with the caregivers of students whom they currently teach. Educators need to understand the confidences of their students when working with families. Understanding the key constructs of this study, teachers in training and teachers in the

field can develop their skills in working with families, beliefs and practices contributing to family centered training.

Implications for Research

The development of Teacher Self-Efficacy in research has blossomed into an explosion of new instruments. With a standard definition of Teacher Self-Efficacy and how instruments can measure teachers' beliefs in their capabilities to perform certain tasks, the further development of specialized instruments leads into the future. This research set out to compare beginning measurements of Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Self-Efficacy with their creation of instruments and research studies. The WFSES lines up with other measurements in the field in practices and skills of teachers. This measurement created under this doctoral research focused on the development of a measure specific in nature measuring specific skill sets of teachers working with families. In comparison with other measures within completed research, the WFSES is the only instrument that measures teachers' beliefs in their capabilities to work with families of their students. In that respect, the WFSES creation and study has begun a new path to straighten this existing measurement and possibly opening up for other measurements of this focus. In addition, although this measure specifically researched teachers' self-efficacy with working with families, the WFSES can transfer to multiple other respective fields of medical, counseling, social services, administrative – fields that interact with children and families in the workplace.

Research has found several key beliefs and practices that appear to contribute to the development of effective family involvement practices. Over the last decades, there has been a shift in family-teacher role expectations toward collaboration and a commitment to developing a relationship with students' families. Research has only begun to understand effective communication and conflict resolution, active efforts to reach out and involve families in their

children's learning and development, and appreciating of diverse family backgrounds and beliefs. Over the span of decades, research has linked the academic success of students with parental involvement. This measurement is needed to further understand teachers' accounts of their skills working with families. Measurements understanding the relationship between teachers' beliefs in their skills, teacher's comfort level and teachers' practices with working with families are needed to be explored. Researchers have few methods for assessing the impact of teacher preparation efforts with impacting teaching practice with families in the schools. Limited research has been conducted on teacher capabilities in implementing family centered practices. A valid, reliable and appropriate assessment tool is crucial for teacher educators so that they can more effectively assess skills, relationship building, and continued training of teachers. Academic research has only begun to review teacher preparation training efforts on effectively impacting the ways we think about teacher development and family interventions in the schools. There is a limited consensus on how teachers should be trained in working with families and raising self-efficacy toward family interactions. There is a limited consensus on teacher practices with working with families in schools.

The WFSES fills a need in the study of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and can be useful for many practice-oriented applications. For instance, the WFSES, in its present format, can assess the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers as they work with the caregivers of students whom they currently teach. These assessments could be useful in profiling individual teachers or teacher groups (e.g. grade level work groups or specialized teacher groups such as special education teachers or ESOL teachers), assessing needs of teachers, and for developing targeted professional development experiences about working with students' families. The WFSES could also be used to evaluate the impact of professional development experiences or preservice

training experiences designed to influence teachers' beliefs about their ability and their subsequent behaviors interacting with students' caregivers.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was undertaken to design a measure to assess teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about working with the families of their students. The resulting measure provides a model for creating additional items or areas of teacher interaction with families that might be useful to a practitioner such as principal or school administrator. Previous research has found several key beliefs and practices that appear to contribute to the development of effective family involvement practices. These are: (a) a shift in family-teacher role expectations toward collaboration, (b) a commitment to developing a relationship with students' families, (c) effective communication and conflict resolution, (d) active efforts to reach out and involve families in their children's learning and development, and (e) appreciation of diverse family backgrounds and beliefs. For example, this domain of items might be expanded to develop measures of a teaching faculty's view of their collective self-efficacy in school-wide efforts to develop a particular school wide climate characterized by collaborative relationships with the families of their students or with community members. Self-Efficacy looks at confidence in ability to perform certain tasks. Further research looking at a teacher's level of confidence in correlation with their level of comfort performing the task and in turn their ability to carry out the task is needed in the future.

The WFSES could be refined through continued use in future research. Specifically, research that extends what is known about how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about working with families are structured, how these beliefs impact teachers' behaviors with caregivers and with students, how these relationships impact student achievement, and how outcome expectations play a part in this relationship. There is a need to know whether teacher self-

efficacy beliefs are strong predictors of teacher behaviors, of parent behaviors, of student achievement, of student school bonding, or of other relevant outcomes. The WFSES could also be used to evaluate the impact of professional development experiences or preservice training experiences designed to influence teachers' beliefs about their ability and their subsequent behaviors interacting with students' caregivers.

The demographic research compiled in this study with the WFSES can be further analyzed using Multiple Regression analysis to look at the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. As well, a qualitative research study can be performed to further review the open ended questions offered optionally to participants at the end of the demographic survey. Questions included: *Describe the extent of support you receive from your school administration?*, *What do you find most satisfying about your work with students' families?*, *What do you find least satisfying about your work with students' families?*, and *What have we not asked you about working with students' families that it would be helpful for us to know?* In quick review, one teacher from an urban, lower socioeconomic Virginian school working as a 1st grade teacher writes:

I work in a Title 1 school and we get lots of support from Title 1 to involve parents. There is a program called Partners in Print that is designed to invite parents to come after school to learn how to read and write with their child at home. They come with their child and the child receives a free book to bring home. We usually offer a session in English and a session in Spanish all taught by teachers on our grade level. The lessons are all prepared by Title 1 so there is very little additional prep. We do this about 2 - 3 times per year. We also send home folders every week with communication to parents and a place for parents to write back. These are sent home in English and if needed in Spanish. I have a partner teacher that will translate for me when it's beyond my Spanish ability! We have 2 full time school counselors that are wonderful and supportive and a great help working with our families. Your question asking if I am a parent is a good one. I felt much more confident working with parents after having my own kids (19 and 16 years ago).

Future studies could examine the performance of weak items of the WFSES, explore relationships with other measures of teacher-parent involvement, and investigate whether

teachers with high levels of self-efficacy beliefs on particular WFSES subscales are more successful with diverse groups of students' caregivers in different contexts.

Confirmatory factor analysis should be used in future studies using the WFSES to confirm the alignment of the factor component structure of scores generated from this measure in this study. Additionally, it is important to investigate whether teachers in other contexts besides pre-kindergarten - 6th grade in elementary schools (e.g. middle schools, high schools, special education classrooms) respond in a similar way to rate their confidence.

Summary

Although the constructs of teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been around for several decades, only recently have efforts been made to assess the specialized knowledge and practice teachers need to work with the families of their students. The WFSES measures teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to specific practices for working with the families of their students. In this research, *Teacher Self-Efficacy working with Families* is the teachers' beliefs about their capabilities of interacting with families of their students; in particular their ability to communicate and capability of interacting in socio-cultural, diverse and connected roles with families. The results of this study confirm the proposed factor component structure of this measure and suggest that the three factors (a) family diversity, (b) teacher role with families and (c) family-teacher communication comprising the WFSES are important aspects of a teachers' functioning with students caregivers.

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Principal Investigator:

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Faculty Supervisor:

Dr. Ellen Amatea, Ph.D.

July 2009

Dear Education Leader,

Good day. I am a doctoral student in Counselor Education from the University of Florida. I am interested in understanding teachers' assessment of their abilities to work with the families of their students. For my doctoral dissertation I have created a measure to assess teacher confidence and competence in working with families.

I am writing to ask your assistance in circulating a questionnaire to the teachers in your school district. A brief paragraph below describes the research to be forward to staff:

INFORMATION: I am a doctoral student from the University of Florida. I am writing asking for you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers assess their skills in working with the families of their students. If you volunteer for this study you will be asked to fill out demographic data on yourself (age, gender, ethnicity, level of work experience, level of education training and instruction in family involving techniques courses/trainings.) You will also be asked to respond to questions about your ability to accomplish certain skills. You will not be asked to identify yourself by name nor by school or community.

Staff should follow this link to the survey Working with Families Self-Efficacy research at www.WFSES.com, review the informed consent, and complete a 27 question survey and 14 demographic questions. The questionnaire will take approximately 7 – 10 minutes.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter,

~ Erika
Erika Hollander, LPC

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Survey takes 7 – 10 minutes with 27 questions. Demographics page has 13 questions.

TITLE OF STUDY: Assessing Teacher Confidence and Capabilities in Communication, Diversity, and Collaborative Relationships with Families - Development of the Measure WFSES: Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales.

Principal Investigator:
Erika S. Hollander, Doctoral Student

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Ellen Amatea, Ph.D.
University of Florida, Counselor Education
(352) 273 – 4322

INFORMATION: We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers assess their skills working with students' families. If you volunteer for this study you will be asked to fill out demographic data on yourself (age, gender, ethnicity, level of work experience, level of education training and instruction in family involving techniques.) You will be asked to respond to questions about your ability to accomplish certain skills.

CONFIDENTIALITY: You are not asked to identify yourself by name in this study. Participants interested in the dinner gift certificate raffle only will be asked to provide their name and address so winnings can be mailed. Participation in this raffle is voluntary. Surveys are for educational university research only.

BENEFITS: The benefit of this study is to help teachers have a better understanding of their skills in building relationships with families of students. The possible risks to your participating in this study are a slight possibility of emotional discomfort (if any) to responding to the questions. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop or not respond at any time. There is no compensation or direct benefits for your participation in this study. All volunteering participants in the lottery raffle will have a chance to win a gift certificate to a restaurant. There will be 20 raffle winners. There are no foreseen risks to participation in this study.

Local resources for counseling if needed are the Crisis Center (352) 334 – 0888 and University of Florida Counseling Center (352) 392 – 1575. For out of the area counseling services, please contact your local community counseling center. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, contact the UF-IRB office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250.

AUTHORIZATION FOR PARTICIPATION: I have read the above and understand the nature of this study and agree to participate. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this study I have not waived any legal or human rights. I also understand that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during this study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice. I have received a copy of this description via email.

Press next page if you agree to the terms and would like to continue...

APPENDIX C
WORKING WITH FAMILIES SELF-EFFICACY SCALES

This questionnaire is designed to help gain a better understanding of professionals' confidence and capabilities with skill sets in complex situations working with families. Please indicate how certain you are that you can do each of the things described below by choosing the appropriate number. Some skills are classified under more than one category; rating the same number across the whole row. For an overall proficiency in a category add column numbers and divide by the number of questions.

Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale below:

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
Cannot do at all				Moderately Can do				Highly certain can do			

Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales

Working with Family Skills	Family-School Communication Efficacy	Family Diversity Efficacy	Teacher Role with Families Efficacy
Discuss with parents your ideas and observations with their child.	1. _____		
Assist a parent to feel comfortable in talking with you about their concerns.	2. _____		
Balance your opinions about what a child needs with a parent who has a different opinion than you.	3. _____		
Work out a compromise with a parent when you strongly disagree with them.	4. _____		
Respond effectively to a parent who seems upset with you.	5. _____		
Assist a parent who seems frustrated with their child.	6. _____		
Show a parent that you care about their child when they react like you do not like their child.	7. _____		
Effectively resolve a conflict you have with a parent.	8. _____		
Give parents specific information about what they can do to influence their children's learning and development.	9. _____		1. _____
Communicate with parents of differing social classes about how they can support their children's development.		1. _____	2. _____
Understand the difficult situations in which families may find themselves.		2. _____	
Feel comfortable in working with families of different cultures and socioeconomic circumstances.		3. _____	

Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales
page 2

Understand the particular constraints that may limit a family's involvement in their child's learning and daily activities.		4. _____	
Feel comfortable in working with nontraditional families such as: Gay/Lesbian families, Multigenerational families, Single Parent families, Adoptive/Foster families.		5. _____	
Provide a warm, inviting interaction with caregivers from different types of families.		6. _____	
Understand how your view of children may differ from the parents' view of their children.		7. _____	
Involve parents who have limited resources and/or time in their child's learning and development.		8. _____	3. _____
Understand the unique knowledge and strengths a child's family possess.		9. _____	4. _____
Create opportunities to develop positive, trusting relationships with each child's parents/caregivers.			5. _____
Motivate parents to make the changes they would like to in functioning better as a family.			6. _____
Assist parents in improving how they parent.			7. _____
Offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's development and learning.			8. _____
Design school events in which parents can actively participate with their child to develop the child's learning.			9. _____
Schedule school events so parents are active participants.			10. _____
Invite parents to express their perspective as key decision makers in their child's development.			11. _____
Intervene to help when a family is in crisis.			12. _____
Assist a family in accessing needed services in the community.			13. _____
	Family-School Communication Efficacy	Family Diversity Efficacy	Teacher Role with Families Efficacy

The Working with Families Self-Efficacy Scales rating contains five categories: Low Self-Efficacy, Fair Self-Efficacy, Moderate Self-Efficacy, High Self-Efficacy and Proficiency Self-Efficacy working with families. See chart below:

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
0 - 31% Low Self-Efficacy			32 - 52% Fair Self-Efficacy		53 - 73% Moderate Self-Efficacy		74 - 94% High Self-Efficacy		95-100% Proficient Self- Efficacy	
Cannot do at all			Moderately Can do						Highly certain can do	

10. In this question identify the answer that best fits your situation, the definitions include:

Geographic Area

- a. An *urban area* is a place that has a total population greater than 100,000 people.
- b. A *suburban area* is a place that has a total population of 100,000 people or less with a population density of 500 people or more per square mile.
- c. A *rural area* is defined as having a population density less than 500 people per square mile.

Economic Community

- a. A lower income community is one in which most residents have an income at or below the poverty level. For example, a family of four having an income of \$22,000 would be considered at the poverty level.
- b. A middle income community is one in which most residents have an income range from \$25,000 to \$150,000. There are obviously a wide range of income levels in these communities.
- c. Similarly, upper income community is one in which most residents have a family income ranging from \$160,000 or above.

a.) Please identify the COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT you were reared in and identify the state:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Rural – Lower Income | f) Suburban – Upper Income |
| b) Rural – Middle Income | g) Urban – Lower Income |
| c) Rural – Upper Income | h) Urban – Middle Income |
| d) Suburban – Lower Income | i) Urban – Upper Income |
| e) Suburban – Middle Income | |

b.) Please identify the COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT you work in and identify your state:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Rural – Lower Income | f) Suburban – Upper Income |
| b) Rural – Middle Income | g) Urban – Lower Income |
| c) Rural – Upper Income | h) Urban – Middle Income |
| d) Suburban – Lower Income | i) Urban – Upper Income |
| e) Suburban – Middle Income | |

11) Please identify your current LEVEL of YOUR education:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| a) Associates | d) Master + 20 |
| b) Bachelor | e) Post Master |
| c) Master | f) PhD |

- 12) Please identify the extent of INSTRUCTION you have in family interaction practices:
- a) no in-service training or course
 - b) part of a course
 - c) 1 in-service training or course
 - d) 2 or more of either
 - e) 3 or more of either
- 13) Please identify your overall nature of interaction with your student's families:
- a) extremely negative, b) negative, c) somewhat negative d) neutral
 - e) somewhat negative f) negative g) extremely negative
- 14) Please identify the amount of support you receive from your school administration towards your working with families as a teacher (optional):
School Support: a) none b) little c) some d) moderate e) a great deal
- 15) Describe the extent of support you receive from your school administration? (optional)
- 16) What do you find most satisfying about your work with students' families? (optional)
- 17) What do you find least satisfying about your work with students' families? (optional)
- 18) What have we not asked you about working with students' families that it would be helpful for us to know? (optional)
- 19) Respondents interested in the RAFFLE for GIFT CERTIFICATES to community restaurants, can submit their name and address for the random drawing. *Surveys must be received by April 30, 2010 to be eligible for raffle.* Specific research surveys are confidential and will not be linked to the winner or non-winner in any capacity. Research study for educational use only. (No answer necessary for participants who do not want to be in the raffle.) Please include your NAME and ADDRESS so the gift certificate can be mailed to the winners.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Erika Hollander was born and raised in New Jersey. She is the daughter of Steven and Joan Hollander. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from the Louisiana State University where she began her work in foster care and therapeutic arts for children who experienced abuse in their childhood. She enjoyed using play, music and art mediums to assist children in healing. She furthered her education with a Master of Education in counseling psychology with a specialization in elementary and secondary school guidance counseling from Temple University. After graduation, she continued her learning working in an urban, lower socioeconomic elementary school where she was introduced to family therapy techniques leading her to the Philadelphia Child Guidance Center. With an interest in learning ways the family contributes and supports child development, she pursued a Postmaster in Marriage and Family Counseling from the University of Florida and continued for her Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Counseling from the University of Florida. She holds professional licenses from Florida and New Jersey. She has focused much of her training and research around understanding child development, her training settings include: shelters for runaway and ungovernable youth among rural and suburban areas, urban school guidance, foster care programs, prison for men incarcerated for substance abuse, family conflict, teacher-family alliances, and in-home counseling. Dr. Erika Hollander specializes in building family-school collaborations, increasing parent-child communication, and reducing childhood stress. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, community service, animals, painting, drawing, gardening, reading, snorkeling, laughing, learning and singing.