A recent report by Herrold and O'Donnel (2008) from the National Center for Education Statistics found that over 90% of parents of elementary school children reported attending general school meetings, like those for the PTA/PTO, as well as participating in regularly scheduled parent teacher meetings throughout the school year. Roughly 80% of parents in the nationally representative sample reported attending school events and about 60% reported volunteering in the classroom. Parent involvement is often considered a pathway through which schools enhance the achievement of underperforming children (Berger, 1991). Consequently, parent involvement is encouraged by teachers, childcare providers, policy makers, parents, and researchers (Duch, 2005; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Moreover, parent involvement is a key component of early childhood education programs, such as Head Start. These programs encourage parent involvement by inviting parents to participate in activities at school and facilitating parent-teacher communication.

Over the years, a large literature has documented the importance of parent involvement for young children. The role of parent involvement in the later years of schooling has received less attention. Past research on parent involvement has also been more heavily focused on associations with student achievement, with less attention to social and emotional domains of children's development. This propensity may be attributed to the academic nature of many of the behaviors defined as parent involvement like helping with homework. Such activities should prompt more enrichment at home and attunement to a child's academic progress. However, teachers and parents may discuss children's behavior in the classroom as well, since behavior problems and social functioning may have immediate consequences for the classroom environment and teachers’ instructional efforts. The aim of this study is to extend past research by examining within- and between-child associations among parent involvement and children's academic and socioemotional trajectories during elementary school.

**Parent Involvement in Early Childhood**

Parent involvement typically involves parents’ behaviors in home and school settings meant to support their children's educational progress. Measures of parent involvement commonly include the quality and frequency of communication with teachers as well as participation in school functions and activities (Dearing, McCartney, Weiss, Kreider, & Simpkins, 2004; Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Machen, Wilson & Notar, 2004). Parent involvement also characterizes parents’ values and attitudes regarding education and the aspirations they hold for their children (Catsambis, 2001; Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004). Although values and attitudes may not directly influence academic outcomes, they may enhance academic achievement indirectly by promoting children's motivation and persistence in challenging educational tasks.

Parent involvement bridges two key contexts in children's early development, namely the home and school settings.

Within an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), the home and school contexts are characterized as autonomous microsystems and parent involvement is conceptualized as a mesosystem, which is made up of interactions between key microsystems. Although each setting can independently influence a child, together the home and school contexts interact to offer a unique influence. In this study parent involvement is conceptualized as a product of the interaction between the influences of school and home settings by providing continuity between the two environments. For example, if parents are aware of a teacher's instructional goals, they may provide resources and support for those learning aims at home. Similarly, in terms of social development, parent involvement may facilitate the development of consistent disciplinary approaches across home and school. Accumulating evidence suggests that these parenting practices are associated with higher academic success in the early grades, although links to socioemotional outcomes remain less clear.

**Academic Achievement**

Past research on parent involvement and children's academic skills is mixed (Fan & Chen, 2001). Some studies have found no significant association
between parent involvement and academic achievement (Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986; Okpala, Okpala, & Smith, 2001; Reynolds, 1992; White, Taylor, & Moss, 1992) and a few have even detected negative associations (Milne, Myers, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). Yet, positive associations between parent involvement and academic achievement have been demonstrated repeatedly in the literature. A recent meta-analysis by Fan and Chen (2001) finds moderate associations between parent involvement and an array of learning-related or academic skills, such as achievement motivation, task-persistence, and receptive vocabulary, during preschool and kindergarten. With a predominant research focus on parent involvement and achievement in either preschool and kindergarten or high school, the potentially supportive role of parent involvement during middle childhood remains understudied.

Past non-experimental research on parent involvement commonly investigates contemporaneous associations between parent involvement and academic achievement. These studies typically examine within-grade associations of parent involvement and academic skills (Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004). Other work incorporates contemporaneous research in the early grades with longitudinal follow-up data later in elementary school or beyond (Englund et al., 2004; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). For example, Miedel and Reynolds (1999) detected positive associations between parent involvement in preschool and kindergarten and reading achievement in kindergarten and in eighth grade. Izzo and colleagues (1999) also found significant positive associations between average parent involvement in early elementary school and socioemotional development and achievement in later elementary school. Such studies reflect the common practice of considering parent involvement as a static predictor of concurrent achievement or educational outcomes in later school years. A notable exception is a study by Dearing and colleagues (2006) which employed longitudinal data on parent involvement and reading achievement to examine within- and between-family associations of parent involvement and literacy across elementary school. Findings suggested that differences in levels of parent involvement between-families and changes in parent involvement within-families were both predictive of children's literacy skills, and increasing parent involvement during elementary school improved literacy growth.

Socioemotional Development
Parent involvement is generally thought of as an avenue for promoting academic performance. However, parent involvement may also enhance children's behavior at home and in the classroom as parents and teachers work together to enhance social functioning and address problem behaviors. A growing literature has demonstrated benefits of parent involvement for social functioning (Izzo et al., 1999; McWayne et al., 2004; Reynolds, 1989; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003; Supplee, Shaw, Hailstones, & Hartman, 2004). For example, a recent study of Head Start students revealed that parent involvement was associated with lower conduct problems (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Such findings are also evident in adolescence (Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004). However, studies addressing parent involvement's links to socioemotional skills have typically focused on early childhood and utilized cross-sectional designs.

Research Questions
The aim of the current study is to extend past research by examining within- and between-child associations among parent involvement and academic and socioemotional trajectories during elementary school. In doing so, this investigation addresses the heavy reliance on contemporaneous, within-grade research during early childhood in past literature by examining associations between parent involvement and academic and socioemotional functioning longitudinally throughout middle childhood.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973328/