

# HANDBOOK OF SOCIALIZATION

*Theory and Research*

*Edited by*  
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## CHAPTER 26

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# Families, Schools, and Developing Achievement-Related Motivations and Engagement

JACQUELYNNE S. ECCLES

In this chapter, I review the impact of experiences in the family and at school on the development of achievement motivation and engagement in skill-based learning. I begin with a brief overview of what I mean by achievement motivation and engagement in skill-based learning, organized around the expectancy-value model of achievement-related choices and behaviors presented in Figure 26.1. I then review the current research on family influences on achievement motivation and engagement organized around the model of family influences presented in Figure 26.2. Next I discuss the role of experiences in schools in supporting or undermining the development of positive achievement motivation and school engagement, organized around the extent to which schools provide opportunities to have one's universal, developmental, and personal needs met. I finish with a very brief discussion of the consequences of the failure of families and schools to provide opportunities for our young people to fulfill their universal and personal needs and the need for more integrated, across-context research.

### **THE ECCLES ET AL. EXPECTANCY-VALUE MODEL OF ACHIEVEMENT-RELATED CHOICES AND BEHAVIORS**

Over the past 30 years, Eccles and her colleagues have studied the psychological and social factors influencing achievement-related motivation, task choice, and performance. Drawing on work associated with decision making, achievement theory, and attribution theory, they developed a comprehensive theoretical model of achievement-related choices

to guide our subsequent research efforts (Eccles-Parsons et al., 1983; see Figure 26.1 for the most recent version). They hypothesized that achievement-related behaviors such as educational, vocational, and leisure choices would be most directly related to individuals' expectations for success and the importance or value individuals attach to the various options they see as available. They also outlined the relation of these beliefs to cultural norms, experiences, and aptitudes and to those personal beliefs and attitudes most commonly assumed to be associated with achievement-related activities (see Eccles-Parsons et al., 1983; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). In this chapter, I summarize what we know about family and school influences on these beliefs and behaviors. But first I need to say a little about the Eccles et al. basic achievement choice model.

Eccles et al. predicted that people will select those achievement-related activities (such as high school and college courses) that they think they can master and that have high task value for them. Individuals' expectations for success (similar to domain-specific personal efficacy as proposed by Bandura, 1997) for the wide range of courses from which the choice must be made depend on both the confidence that individuals have in their various intellectual and other skill-based abilities and the individuals' estimations of the difficulty of the various options they are considering. Likewise, Eccles et al. hypothesized that the relative subjective task values of various achievement-related activities and tasks are influenced by several factors. They grouped these various aspects of subjective task value into four broad categories: interest value (the enjoyment one gets from engaging in the task or activity), utility value (the instrumental value of the task or activity for helping to fulfill another short- or long-range goal), attainment value (the link between the task and one's sense of self and either personal or social identity), and cost (defined in terms of either what may be given up by making a specific choice or the negative experiences associated with each possible choice).

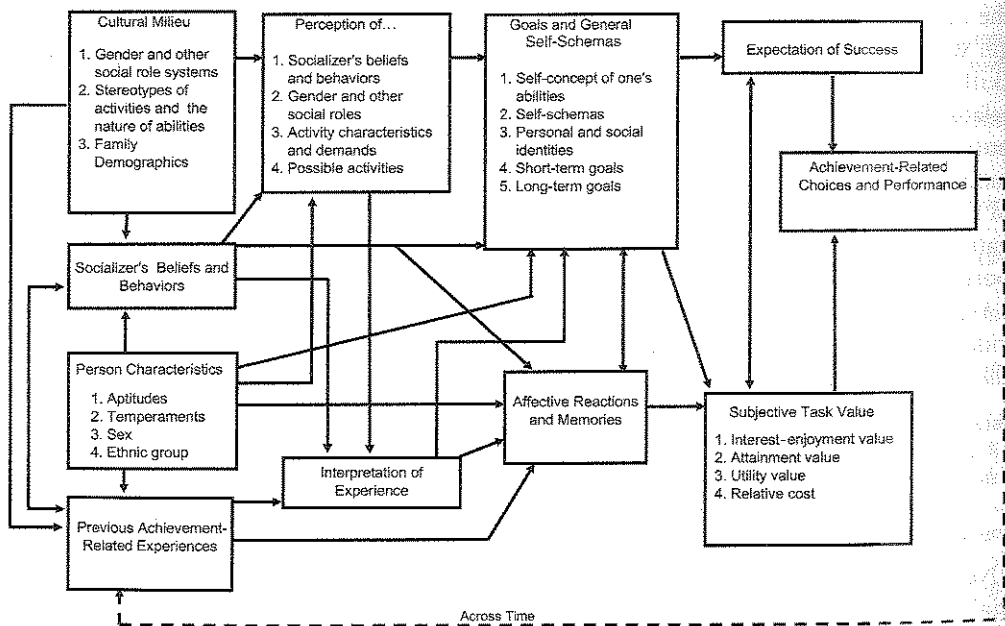


FIGURE 26.1. Eccles expectancy-value model of achievement choices.

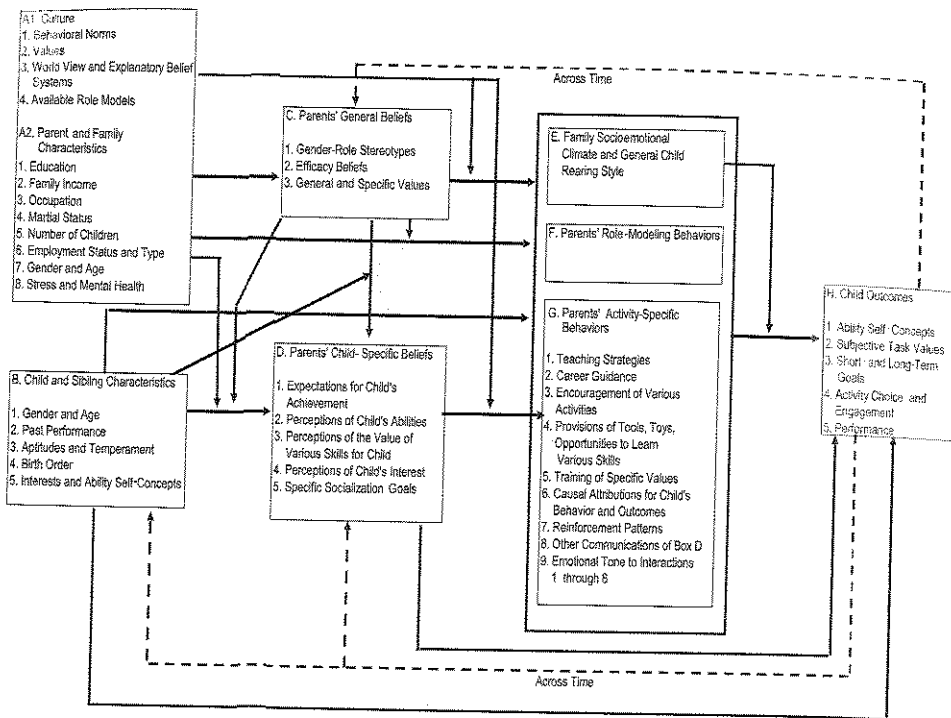
Moreover, Eccles argued that the socialization processes linked to various social roles (e.g., gender and ethnic roles) will influence both group and individual differences in each of these components of subjective task value (Eccles, 1993, 1994). For example, gender-role socialization should lead to gender differences in the kinds of work one would like to do as an adult: Females in most cultures are more likely than males to want to work at occupations that help others and fit well into the family role plans. Males in Western cultures are more likely than females to want future occupations that pay very well and provide opportunities to become famous (Eccles et al., 1998; Ruble & Martin, 1998). If this is true, then various tasks related to future occupational choices (e.g., high school courses), should have different value for females and males. Similarly, the essence of gender-role socialization is creating different value systems, different core identity beliefs, and different normative behavior expectations in females and males. As a consequence, the cost of engaging in any particular activity should differ on average for females and males due to both the anticipated reaction of others to various options and the relative cost of various options for other activities considered to be more or less central in the hierarchy of normative behaviors.

A similar analysis can be made for cultural and ethnic differences in expectations for success, short- and long-term goals, and the most salient and valued parts of the self (e.g., Super & Harkness, 2002; Wigfield, Tonks, & Eccles, 2004). In addition, recent work on stereotype threat provides a good example of how culturally based stereotypes about ethnic group differences in competencies across different skill areas can undermine individuals' performance on assessments of their skills in these areas (Steele & Aronson, 1995). For example, Steele and his colleagues have shown that both African American and female students perform more poorly on tests of math skills when their race or gender is made salient (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Shih and her colleagues have shown that Asian American females do better on math tests when their ethnicity is made salient and worse on math tests when their gender is made salient than they do when neither of these characteristics is mentioned (Ambady, Shih, & Kim, 2001).

Finally, of course, individual differences within various social groups in the value of different achievement-related options can result from similar differences in the kinds of self and task beliefs Eccles and her colleagues assume are linked to achievement motivation and engagement in achievement-related tasks and activities. These differences, in turn, can result from differences in both long-term and immediate social experiences. In this chapter, I outline a comprehensive model for thinking about both long-term socialization and concurrent social contextual influences on the ontogeny and expression of achievement-related choices and performance.

## **FAMILY INFLUENCES ON ACHIEVEMENT**

Figure 26.2 provides a general overview of the ways in which families, parents in particular, can influence their children's engagement and performance on achievement-related tasks through their influence on children and adolescents' achievement-related self-perceptions and subjective task values (Eccles, 1993). Similar social cognitive mediational models of parental behavior and influence have been proposed by many other researchers (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Entwistle & Alexander, 1990; Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Marjoribanks, 2002).



**FIGURE 26.2.** Model of parents' influence on children's achievement related to self-perception, values, and behaviors.

Beginning at the far left, this model predicts that exogenous, cultural, and demographic characteristics of the family, in combination with specific characteristics of the child, influence parents' general and child-specific beliefs, which, in turn, influence parents' general and child-specific behaviors and practices, which, in turn, influence children's developing self and task beliefs, motivation and interest patterns, and actual behavior. Eccles (1993) proposed various direct and indirect relations, as well as moderating influences on the associations between the boxes.

Although there is extensive work on some components of this model, very few studies include both the proximal and more distal components proposed to influence parenting behaviors outlined in Box G. Much of existing literature focuses on the association of the exogenous and child specific characteristics (Boxes A and B) with either parents' beliefs (Boxes C and D) or behaviors (Boxes E, F, G) or more directly with children's (adolescents') achievement-related self and task beliefs, engagement, and actual performance (Box H). For example, there are many studies linking family socioeconomic status (SES) and/or ethnicity directly to children's academic outcomes (Box H) (e.g., Brooks-Gunn, Linver, & Fauth, 2005; Coleman et al., 1966). In the last 10–15 years, a number of studies have linked family SES and/or culture indirectly to children's academic outcomes through their association with either parents' child-specific beliefs (Box D) or specific parenting practices (Box G) (e.g., Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990). However, even these studies have rarely looked at more than a few of the possible parental beliefs and practices in the same study. Very recently, some researchers are beginning to

examine simultaneously several of the mediating and moderating hypotheses on achievement outcomes implied in Figure 26.2 and to trace the impact of parents' beliefs and behaviors on their children's achievement-related engagement and performance over time (Davis-Kean, Eccles, & Schnabel, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002, 2005). Most of the research has focused on school achievement, but there is a growing body of work on family influences on sport achievement as well.

### Family Demographic Characteristics

Researchers in sociology, economics, and psychology have documented the association of such factors as family structure, family size, parents' financial resources, parents' education, parents' occupation, community characteristics, and dramatic changes in the family's economic resources with children's academic motivation and achievement (Laosa, 1999; Magnuson, 2003; Marjoribanks, 2002; Teachman, Pasch, & Carver, 1997; Yeung, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002). By and large, these studies show that children growing up in families with more financial, time, social, and intellectual resources do better academically in school, stay in school longer, and earn higher degrees. Several mechanisms could account for these associations. First, family demographic characteristics and cultural factors could affect children's motivation indirectly through their association with both parents' beliefs and practices and the opportunity structures in the child's home and neighborhood environments. For example, parents with more education are more likely to believe that involvement in their children's education and intellectual development is important, to be actively involved with the children's education, and to have intellectually stimulating materials in their home (DeBaryshe, 1995; Marjoribanks, 2002; Schneider & Coleman, 1993).

Second, some demographic and cultural characteristics could influence motivation indirectly through the competing demands they place on parents' time and energy. For example, the negative association of single-parent status, time spent at work, and large family size on children's school achievement might reflect the fact that these factors reduce the time and energy parents have for engaging their children in activities that foster high general achievement motivation, high domain-specific ability self-concepts, and high domain-specific subjective task values (Marjoribanks, 2002; Schneider & Coleman, 1993). Similarly, the psychological stress associated with some demographic factors could influence parents' ability to engage in the kinds of behaviors associated with the development of high general achievement motivation, high domain-specific self and task-related beliefs, task engagement, and performance. Ample evidence documents how much harder it is to do a good job of parenting if one lives in a high-risk neighborhood or if one is financially stressed (Conger et al., 2002; Elder, Eccles, Ardel, & Lord, 1995; Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999; McLoyd, 1990; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002). Not only do such parents have limited resources to implement whatever strategies they think might be effective, they also have to cope with more external stressors than middle-class families living in stable, resource-rich neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, the children of parents who live in dangerous and resource-poor neighborhoods and are themselves living very stressful lives also evidence less positive motivation toward conventional school success.

Third, cultural and demographic characteristics could affect parents' perceptions of, and expectations for, their children. Both parents' education level and family income have a positive *impact* on parents' expectations regarding both their children's immediate

school success and long-term educational prospects (Davis-Kean, Malanchuk, Peck, & Eccles, 2003; Teachman et al., 1997). Similarly, mothers' expectations for their children's academic achievement drop when they get divorced (Barber & Eccles, 1992). Exactly how long this drop persists is not known. Finally, parents from various ethnic groups and cultures differ in their educational expectations and aspirations for their children. Fordham and Ogbu (1986), for example, suggested that parents from certain ethnic groups living in very poor and disadvantaged neighborhoods may come to believe that there are limited opportunities for their children to obtain conventional forms of success and that doing well in school is unlikely to pay off in terms of access to well-paying jobs within the larger society. These parents may shift their socialization efforts toward other goals and interests, such as finding employment in the neighborhood.

Fourth, cultural and demographic characteristics can influence parents' beliefs and behaviors and children's outcomes in even less direct ways, such as those associated with role modeling. For example, family demographic characteristics are often associated with things like parents' jobs and leisure-time activities, and with the kinds of role models children see outside the home. These behaviors and models can influence children's achievement goals, values, and self-perceptions through observational learning (Furstenberg et al., 1999; Kohn, 1977). Wilson (1987) argued that the relatively low numbers of high-achieving adults in very concentrated poor inner-city neighborhoods is a key factor in poor children's lack of engagement in a variety of conventional achievement activities. Cultures differ even more dramatically in what parents and other important adults do with their time. Again it is not surprising that children growing up in these different cultures come to have different ability self-concepts and different subjective task values. Very little work has addressed this hypothesis directly. Instead, the mechanisms are typically inferred from correlational findings.

Fifth, culture and ethnicity can influence parents' behaviors and children's motivation through mechanism linked directly to values, goals, and general belief systems (Garcia Coll & Pacter, 2002; Lareau, 1989; 2003). For example, several scholars describe cultural differences in valued activities, motivational orientation, and behavioral styles (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Rogoff, 2003; Stevenson et al., 1990). Such differences can affect the socialization of motivated behavior through variations in (1) valued activities (e.g., athletic vs. musical competence), (2) valued goals (e.g., communal goals vs. individualistic goals, mastery vs. performance goals, doing vs. being goals), and (3) approved means of achieving one's goals (e.g., competitive vs. cooperative means).

Recent work by Fuligni, Yip, and Tseng (2002) illustrates another example of cultural influences on academic engagement through its influence on core values and goals: in this case, the value attached to family obligations. In an extensive longitudinal study of multiple immigrant and ethnic groups in California, they found substantial group differences in the importance attached to, and the behavioral manifestations of, family obligations. In addition, adolescents with a high sense of family obligation also attached higher importance to school success in cultures where both family obligation and school success were valued. They argued that school success is part of one's family obligations in such cultures and that both become a core component of these adolescents' social and personal identities.

Other researchers studying cultural differences in school achievement have directly investigated cultural differences in parents' expectations and other achievement-related beliefs and linked them to cultural differences in adolescents' achievement. For example, the work by Stevenson and his colleagues demonstrated that European American parents,



compared to Japanese parents, overestimate their children's academic abilities, are less aware of their children's academic difficulties, and are more satisfied with school performance that falls below their expectations (Crystal & Stevenson, 1991). Finally, recent work by Lepper and his colleagues suggest that there are cultural differences in the impact of parents' use of controlling strategies on their children's motivation. For example, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) found that Asian children prefer tasks they believe were chosen for them by their parents to tasks that their parents had not chosen. In contrast, European American children prefer tasks that they themselves get to pick.

In summary, there are many ways for cultural and family demographic characteristics to directly or indirectly affect the development of children's general achievement motivation, domain-specific self-concepts and domain-specific subjective task values. It is important to note, however, that even though family demographic characteristics have been linked repeatedly to children's school achievement, their effects are almost always indirect, mediated by their association with parents' beliefs, practices, and psychological resources. In addition, parents' beliefs and psychological and social resources can override the effects of even the most stressful demographic characteristics on children's school achievement and motivation. Finally, there are often complex interactions among various demographic characteristics in predicting either parenting beliefs and practices or child outcomes.

### **General Childrearing Climate**

Historically, researchers studying parental influence have focused on the impact of the general patterns and philosophy of childrearing on children's overall orientation toward achievement. The family variables investigated include general emotional warmth and supportiveness in the home (Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995; Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002); valuing of achievement (DeBaryshe, 1995; Clark, 1993; Gutman et al., 2002); general parental childrearing beliefs and theories, values, and goals, as well as sex-typed goals and cultural beliefs, goals, and values (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Miller & Davis, 1992; Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992); general childrearing style as well as authority structure, discipline tactics, and general interaction patterns (Baumrind, 1971; Lord, Eccles, & McCarthy, 1994; Steinberg et al., 1992); parental locus of control and personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Gutman, et al., 2002); and communicative style and teaching style (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Sigel, 1991).

Much recent work has focused on support for autonomy. Drawing on self-determination theory, Grolnick, Pomerantz, and their colleagues argued that the extent to which parents structure their children's learning activities in ways that support the children's sense of autonomy is key to fostering high levels of achievement motivation and engagement (e.g., Grolnick, 2003): "When parents are autonomy supportive rather than controlling, they provide children with the experience of solving challenges on their own" (Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2005, p. 263). Children in such families engage in more mastery-oriented play when they are toddlers (Frodi, Bridges, & Grolnick, 1985) and evidence higher levels of intrinsic motivation and mastery-oriented behaviors once they are in school (Pomerantz et al., 2005). The importance of autonomy support seems to be particularly important for low-achieving children (Ng, Kenney-Benson, & Pomerantz, 2004), especially if the mothers stress the importance of effort and learning strategies as they help their children with homework (Pomerantz et al., 2005), perhaps because such practices help low-achieving children feel both competent and socially supported.

Several investigators have stressed an integrated view of how these various parenting characteristics work together to produce optimal motivational outcomes (Eccles et al., 1998; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002, 2005). For example, Grolnick (2003) stressed the interplay of three components of general parenting in promoting self-determination in children and adolescents: involvement and interest in their children's activities support for autonomous behaviors and adequate structure. Grolnick (2003) suggested that these parenting behaviors are important in helping children form a sense of autonomy and interest in activities, which, in turn, lead to greater achievement performance and lower learning problems. Parents who become too invested in their children's achievements may adopt excessively controlling strategies that undermine their children's sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Grolnick, 2003; Pomerantz et al., 2005). Finally, Eccles (1993) stressed the importance of emotional support, role models, and the right balance between structure, control, challenge, and developmentally appropriate levels of support for autonomy. This balance depends on cultural systems, the specific context in which the family is living (e.g., does the family live in a very dangerous neighborhood where more parental control is essential for the physical safety of the children?), the age of the child, and other individual characteristics. In one test, Lord et al. (1994) found that both perceived parental support for autonomy at home and the perceived quality of the affective relations with one's parents predicted better adjustment to the junior high school transition.

While the magnitude of effects varies by race/ethnicity, sex, social economic class, and nationality, there is consensus that these general parental practices do impact on a variety of quite general indicators of children's motivation and motivated behavior (Eccles, 1993). The results are consistent with three general principles: appropriate levels of structure, consistent and supportive parenting, and observational learning. Families that know enough about their child to provide the right amount of challenge with the right amount of support seem more likely to produce highly competent and motivated children. These parents are also likely to be able to adjust their behavior to meet the changing developmental needs and competencies of their children. Families that provide a positive emotional environment are more likely to produce children who want to internalize the parents' values and goals and therefore want to imitate the behaviors being modeled by their parents. Consequently, children growing up in these homes are likely to develop a positive achievement orientation if their parents provide such a model and value those specific tasks, goals, and means of achieving one's goals valued by their parents. Until quite recently, however, very few of these studies have focused on such child outcomes as domain-specific ability self-concepts, domain-specific subjective task values, and differential engagement and performance across a variety of achievement-related activities, and differential performance. Most studies focus on quite general levels of children's achievement such as school grades rather than domain-specific self-concepts and values linked to specific subject areas such as math versus language arts or sports versus instrumental music. It is likely, however, that these more domain-specific achievement-related beliefs and behaviors result from more specific parental practices and role modeling. I summarize evidence in support of this prediction later.

### **Translating General Beliefs into Specific Beliefs and Practices**

Researchers have shown that parents' general beliefs such as valuing of achievement and school competence, general parental childrearing beliefs and theories, values and goals,

sex-typed ideologies and goals, and culturally based beliefs, goals, and values are linked to parenting behaviors in the school achievement arena in the predicted direction (Eccles, 1993; Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Jacobs & Eccles, 2000; Miller & Davis 1992; Sigel et al., 1992). But how? Figure 26.2 depicts a general overview of how one might approach this question. First, one might ask about the relation of parents' general beliefs and practices to domain- (e.g., sports vs. instrumental music or math vs. reading) and child-specific (e.g., each child in the family) parental beliefs, values, and practices. For example, do parents' gender-role stereotypes affect their perceptions of their own children's specific abilities in various activity domains (like math vs. reading)? Similarly, do parents' beliefs regarding the nature of ability affect their parenting practices? Dweck (1999) hypothesized that different ways of viewing the nature of ability and incompetence account for individual differences in academic achievement orientation. Dweck stressed the distinction between the belief that abilities are entity-based and highly stable over time versus the belief that abilities are incremental in nature and thus amenable to substantial change through effort. As a result, children who think that incompetence is a temporary and modifiable state should respond to failure with increased mastery efforts more than children who think that current incompetence is a sign of insufficient aptitude that cannot be modified. It is likely that parents also differ in their beliefs regarding the origins of individual differences in competence, the meaning of failure, and the most adaptive responses to failure. These beliefs should influence both their response to their children's failures and their efforts to help their children acquire new competencies and interests. Similarly, cultural differences in beliefs regarding the nature of ability and competence should relate to the kinds of statements parents make to their children about the origins of individual differences in performance—statements such as “you have to be born with math talent” versus “anyone can be good at math if they just work hard enough” (Holloway, 1988; Stevenson et al., 1990).

Similarly, one could ask whether general cultural beliefs about things like the nature of ability affect the domain-specific attributions parents provide to their children for the child's successes and failures in various activities and school subjects. Hess and his colleagues (Holloway, 1988; Hess, Chih-Mei, & McDevitt, 1987) and Stevenson et al. (1990) have found that Japanese and Chinese parents make different causal attributions than European American parents for their children's school performances with Japanese and Chinese parents emphasizing effort and hard work and European American parents emphasizing natural talent.

### **Child-Specific Beliefs, Values, and Perceptions: Parents as Socializers of Children's Success Expectations**

Parents hold many specific beliefs about their children's abilities, which, in turn, should affect motivationally linked outcomes, such as the well-established positive link between parents' educational expectations and academic motivation and performance (e.g., Alexander, Entwisle, & Bedinger, 1994; Davis-Kean et al., 2002; Fredericks & Eccles, 2002; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Schneider & Coleman, 1993). Eccles (1993) suggested the following specific parental beliefs as particularly likely influences on children's motivation: (1) causal attributions for their children's performance across various domains; (2) perceptions of the difficulty of various tasks for their children; (3) expectations for their children's probable success and confidence in their children's abilities; (4) beliefs regard-

ing the value of various tasks and activities coupled with the extent to which parents believe they should encourage their children to master various tasks; (5) differential achievement standards across various activity domains; and (6) beliefs about the external barriers to success coupled with beliefs regarding both effective strategies to overcome these barriers and their own sense of efficacy to implement these strategies for each child.

Such beliefs and messages, particularly those associated with parents' perceptions of their children's competencies and likely success, predict children's subsequent self and task beliefs (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2002, 2005; Frome & Eccles, 1998; Miller & Davis, 1992; Pallas, Entwisle, Alexander, & Stluka, 1994; Stevenson et al., 1990). For example, parents' perceptions of their adolescents' abilities are significant predictors of developmental changes in their children's estimates of their own ability and interest in math, English, and sports even after the significant positive relation of the child's actual performance to both the parents' and adolescents' perceptions of the adolescents' domain-specific abilities is controlled (Eccles, 1993; Frome & Eccles, 1998). Similarly, Fredricks and Eccles (2002, 2005) found that the confidence parents have in their elementary school children's math, reading, and sports abilities while the children are in early elementary school predicts the rate of decline in the children's confidence in their own math, English, and sport abilities as the children move into and through adolescence. Several studies have documented declines in children and adolescents' confidence in their own achievement-related abilities over the kindergarten to grade 12 school years (e.g. Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Jacobs, Hyatt, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002). Both the rate of change and the magnitude of the decline are reduced for those children whose parents have higher estimates of their children's abilities. This effect holds even when independent estimates of the children's actual competence (e.g., teachers' ratings and scores on standardized tests) are controlled.

### **Child-Specific Beliefs, Values, and Perceptions: Parents as Socializers of Task Value**

Parents may convey differential task values through explicit rewards and encouragement for participating in some activities rather than others. Similarly, parents may influence children's interests and aspirations, particularly with regard to future educational and vocational options, through explicit and implicit messages they provide as they "counsel" children or work with them on different academic activities (e.g., Jacobs & Eccles, 2000; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2003).

### **Provisions of Specific Experiences at Home**

There is ample evidence that parents influence their children's motivation through the specific types of learning experiences they provide for their children. Researchers have documented the benefits of active involvement with, and monitoring of, children's and adolescents' schoolwork and time spent on other achievement-related activities such as sports and instrumental music (e.g., Clark, 1993; Eccles, 1993; Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Stevenson et al., 1990; Steinberg, et al., 1992). For example, researchers have shown that reading to one's preschool children and providing reading materials in the home predicts the children's later reading achievement and motivation (e.g., Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2003; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Kohen, 2002). Such experiences likely influence

both the child's skill levels and the child's interest in doing these activities, both of which, in turn, have a positive impact on the child's transition into elementary school and subsequent educational success (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990). Similarly, by providing the specific toys, home environment, and cultural and recreational activities for their children, parents structure their children's experiences (Jacobs, Davis-Kean, Bleeker, Eccles, & Malanchuk, 2005). However, the extent to which these experiences actually influence children's domain-specific ability self-concepts and subjective task values should depend on the affective and motivational climate that is created by parents when the children are engaged with any particular experience. If parents overly control and put excess pressure on their children to succeed at particular activities, this is likely to undermine the children's intrinsic interest in the activity, reduce the children's confidence in their ability to succeed, and lead to negative affective associations with the activity due to classical conditioning (Grolnick, 2003; Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). Finally, the differential provision of such experiences to girls and boys and to children from various ethnic groups might explain group differences in subsequent motivation to engage various types of achievement activities. Children can only learn about what they are exposed to. If their families never provide them experiences with a variety of activities, they are unlikely to develop the skills and interest necessary to pursue these activities on their own.

Another avenue by which parents indirectly influence the provisions in the home is through the way they manage the family's time and resources. Parents manage the resources and time of their children and thus choose or help to choose activities for their child that may increase interest and competence in these areas (Eccles, 1993; Furstenberg et al., 1998; Simpkins, Fredericks, Davis-Kean, & Eccles, in press). Many parents try to organize and arrange their children's social environments in order to promote opportunities, to expose their children to particular experiences and value systems, and to restrict dangers and exposure to undesirable influences. Consider, for example, the amount of attention some parents give to the choice of child care during early childhood, to picking a place to live, and to selecting appropriate after-school and summer activities for their children in order to ensure desirable schools and appropriate playmates for their children and to help their children acquire particular skills and interests. In the arena of school achievement, parents' engagement in managing their children experiences vis-à-vis intellectual skills (e.g., reading, acquisition of general information, and mastering school assignments) is directly and powerfully related to children's subsequent academic success even in stressful contexts such as poverty (Brooks-Gunn et al., 2005; Davis-Kean et al., 2002; Furstenberg et al., 1999). Given the consistency of the evidence in this one domain, understanding the specific ways parents organize and manage their children's experiences across a wide range of activities is a promising approach to understanding how parents shape individual differences in specific skills, self-perceptions, interests, and activity preferences. For example, children should be most likely to acquire those skills that their parents make sure they have the opportunity to learn and practice.

Parent involvement with their children's schools is another example of family management strategies. There is increasing interest in the association of family school involvement and children's school achievement. Some evidence suggests that high levels of involvement facilitate school achievement (Booth & Dunn, 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1992). Why? Perhaps because parental involvement in school demonstrates their high valuing of school achievement to the children, which in turn should influence the subjective task value the children come to place on school achievement

themselves. Alternatively, high levels of involvement may also help parents provide more effective and targeted help at home, leading to increases in their children's confidence in their ability to succeed in school as well as increases in the value the children attach to doing well in school (Grolnick, 2003).

## Summary

The studies reviewed suggest a multivariate model of the relation between antecedent childrearing variables and the development of achievement orientation: The development of achievement motivation and engagement in achievement-related activities likely depends on the presence of several variables interacting with each other, both mediating and moderating children's motivation and behaviors. Specifically, proper timing of demands creates a situation in which children can develop a sense of competence in dealing with their environment. An optimally warm and supportive environment with the minimal necessary control creates a situation in which the child will choose his parents as role models and will feel autonomous in that choice. The presence of high yet realistic expectations creates a demand situation in which the child will perform in accord with the expectancies of the parents. Finally, the ability level of the child must be such that attainment of the expected level of performance is within his or her capacity. All these factors, as well as the availability of appropriate role models, are essential for the child to develop a positive achievement orientation. The exact way this orientation will be manifest is likely to be dependent on the values the child has learned, which are directly influenced by the culture in which the family lives and the social roles the child is being socialized to assume.

Very few studies, however, have adopted such an integrated view of family influences. Most include only a limited subset of family constructs and many still use regression-based statistical techniques that estimate the unique contribution of each predictor rather than assessing a more global or holistic view of the family. Structural equation modeling has improved the situation substantially by providing a means to test sequential pathways of influence and this approach is being used in more and more studies. Another promising approach involves creating patterns of family practices and assessing whether particular combinations are more facilitative than others. Baumrind's parenting typologies are an excellent example of this approach (Baumrind, 1971).

Fredricks and Eccles (2005) offer yet one more integrative approach. Building on risk and resilience models of cumulative risk, we assessed whether each family had relatively high levels of each of several different parental beliefs and practices related to both school and sport achievement (see also Simpkins, Davis-Kean, Eccles, 2005; Simpkins et al., 2006). They then created a new construct based on the sum of these practices to estimate the extent to which the family environment included no, a few, or many supports for their children's domain-specific ability self-concepts, subjective task values, and activity engagement. As predicted, the number of such supports was linearly related to increases over time in the children's ability self-concepts, subjective task values, activity participation, and performance even when prior levels of these child characteristics were controlled. In contrast, when all these family predictors were entered into a regression model, parents' expectations for their child performance trumped all other influences, suggesting that parents' behavior did not matter. Clearly this was not the case in the pattern-centered analyses, suggesting that researchers need to be careful when they use re-

gression-type approaches with a set of predictors that are inherently correlated with each other.

One critical factor that is not apparent on Figure 26.2 is the developmental timing of all these practices. In the very first empirical study of parental influences on the development of achievement motivation, Winterbottom (1958) asked about the proper timing of parents' socialization demands for facilitating their children's general achievement motivation. She demonstrated the importance of appropriate developmental timing—a finding that has been widely replicated (see Eccles et al., 1998). Parents need to provide challenging but doable tasks and to provide adequate scaffolding for the children to succeed. These studies suggest that early family influences may be critical for supporting the development of general achievement motivation. Early opportunities to acquire the skills needed for a successful transition into school are also important for school achievement (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Early skill socialization may also be critical for successful, high-level engagement with other skill-based areas as well. We know less about the role parents play in supporting high domain-specific ability self-concepts and subjective task values as children get older. The work of Fredericks and Eccles (2005) and Simpkins et al. (2005; Simpkins et al., 2006) suggests that families of children in elementary and secondary school can support their children's ability self-concepts, subjective task values, and engagement in both academic and nonacademic skill areas by combining high expectations for their children's success with high levels of behavioral and psychological support for their participation in these activities. However, it seems likely that at some point, parents need to let their adolescent children take more and more control over their own engagement choices. There have been very few studies of these developmental changes in the nature of parents' support for high achievement-related engagements.

Another factor that is not readily apparent in Figure 26.2 is the need to look at family influences in conjunction with the many other influences on children's development. The importance of family involvement in their children's schooling is an excellent example of the need to take a broader ecological perspective on the multidimensional role of families and other contexts in facilitating children's achievement strivings and accomplishments (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Parents have a very important role to play in mediating their children's interactions with other organizations and institutions (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1992; Lareau, 2003). With regard to school, they do this by helping prepare their children for the transition into school, by helping their children with homework and other school-related activities, and by getting involved more directly with their children's schools in a variety of ways. We know such practices are very important in supporting positive achievement motivation (e.g., Pomerantz & Eaton, 2001; Pomerantz et al., 2005). Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, and Fredrich (1999) found that parents' involvement in their children's academic lives both at home and at school predicts improved classroom behavior and academic achievement several years later. Furthermore, both Grolnick (2003) and Lord et al. (1994) found that having supportive and involved parents eases adolescents' transition to middle and junior high school. The kinds of general and child-specific beliefs proposed in Figure 26.2 are likely to influence the ways in which parents choose to interact with their children's schooling (Comer, et al., 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Lareau, 1989, 2003). Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris (1997) found that mothers who are confident of their own abilities to impact school, who see being a teacher as part of their parental role, and who do not see their child as difficult are most likely to be in-

volved in their children's homework. Conversely, stereotypes that teachers and school administrators have about children's families likely influence the ways in which the schools reach out to parents (Booth & Dunn, 1996; Comer, et al., 1996; Epstein, 1992; Lareau, 1989). Work by both Epstein (1992) and Grolnick et al. (1997) has shown that parents are more likely to be involved at their children's school if they believe the teachers welcome their participation. Unfortunately, there has been very limited research on this critical interface (i.e., school-family) and even less research on the interface between families and the many other institutions that influence children's development. This is a very important area for future research efforts.

## SCHOOL INFLUENCES ON ACHIEVEMENT

In this section, I review the work on school influences on achievement-related beliefs, behaviors, and choices. I focus on school, teacher, and classroom influences. Much of the research I review is directly related to a notion inherent in person-environment fit perspectives: Motivation is optimized in learning settings that meet individual's basic and developmental needs, some of which are universal and some of which are a function of individual differences in aptitudes, temperament, interests, and socialization histories (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Hunt, 1979; Ryan & Deci, 2002). The exact nature of the basic or universal needs has been articulated in various ways. Deci, Ryan, Connell, and their colleagues focus attention on three basic or universal needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Eccles and Gootman (2002) suggested that the need to matter (e.g., to make a real and meaningful difference in one's social world) is an additional universal value likely to influence achievement-related motivation particularly as individuals mature into and through adolescence. Similarly, both Ryff and Singer (1998) and Pomerantz et al. (2005) suggest that experiencing oneself as purposeful may also be a universal need. Eccles, Midgley, et al. (1993) articulated a set of changing developmental needs that are often not met in school settings as children move from elementary school into secondary school. Each of these theorists argues that individuals will place high value, will have high expectations for success, and will be optimally motivated to engage in the learning activities in settings that provide opportunities for them to fulfill their universal developmental and individual needs, and that individuals will withdraw their engagement in learning in settings that do not provide such opportunities.

### Social Experiences Related to Competence Needs

#### *Teachers' General Expectations and Sense of Their Own Efficacy*

Both teachers' general expectations for their students' performance and general belief in the ability of all students to master the material being taught predict students' school achievement likely through their impact on students' sense of competence: When teachers hold high general expectations for student achievement and students perceive these expectations, students achieve more and experience a greater sense of competence as learners (Eccles et al., 1998; Lee & Smith, 2001; National Research Council, 2004). Similarly, teachers who feel they are able to reach even the most difficult students, who believe in their ability to affect students' lives, and who believe that teachers are an important fac-



tor in determining developmental outcomes communicate such positive expectations and beliefs to their students, which, in turn, increases students' confidence in their ability to learn and engagement in school-based learning tasks (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Lee & Smith, 2001; National Research Council, 2004; Roeser, Marachi, & Gellbach, 2002; Roeser, Eccles, & Samerott, 1998).

### *Differential Teacher Expectations*

Equally important are the differential expectations teachers hold for various individuals within the same classroom. However, because teacher-expectancy effects are mediated by the ways in which teachers interact with the students for whom they have high versus low expectations, whether these effects are positive or negative depends on the exact nature of these interactions (Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996). For example, a teacher might respond to low expectation by providing the kinds of help and structure that increase students' sense of competence and ability to master the material being presented. Alternatively, the teacher might respond in ways that communicate low expectations and little hope that the students will be able to master the material, leading to decreases in students' confidence in their own ability and then lowered academic engagement. Unfortunately, we know very little about which teachers are likely to respond in each of these styles and under what conditions teachers are more or less likely to respond with either of these styles. Most of the research on teacher-expectancy effects assumes that teachers are most likely to respond in ways that leads to fulfilling their expectations; consequently, the data collected have not allowed for a very differentiated study of these processes.

A great deal of the research work on teacher expectancy effects has focused on differential treatment related to gender, race/ethnic group, and/or social class. There are small but fairly consistent negative effects of low teacher expectations on girls (for math and science), on minority children (for all subject areas), and on children from lower social class family backgrounds (again for all subject areas) (Jussim et al., 1996). In addition, some of these studies have documented the cumulative negative effects of low teacher expectations on some groups of students' ability self-perceptions (Madon et al., 1998; Smith, Jussim, & Eccles, 1999). In contrast, the evidence for either negative or positive teacher-expectancy effects for other student populations is quite weak.

### *General Classroom Practices*

Rosenholtz and Simpson (1984) hypothesized that individualized versus whole group instruction, ability-grouping practices, and the relatively public versus private nature of feedback work together to create a classroom environment that fundamentally shapes children's school motivation through their impact on the students' sense of competence. Specifically, they argued that these practices make ability differences salient and, thereby, undermine motivation, particularly of low-achieving students, by increasing the salience of extrinsic motivators and ego-focused learning goals. Such motivational orientations, in turn, are hypothesized to lead to greater incidence of social comparison behaviors and increased perception of one's abilities as fixed entities rather than malleable ones. The work of Midgley, Maehr, and their colleagues showed that school reform efforts designed to reduce these types of classroom practices, particularly those associated with socially comparative feedback and reward systems and teachers' use of competitive motivational

strategies, have positive consequences for adolescents' academic motivation, persistence on difficult learning tasks, and socioemotional development (Maehr & Midgley, 1996; Midgley, 2002).

### *Academic Tracks/Curricular Differentiation*

Curricular tracking (e.g., college track course sequences vs. general or vocational education sequences) is another important school-level contextual feature that can affect students' expectations for success (Oakes, Gamoran, & Page, 1992). However, despite years of research on the impact of tracking practices, few strong and definitive answers have emerged. The results vary depending on the outcome assessed, the group studied, the length of the study, the control groups used for comparison, and the specific nature of the context in which these practices are manifest. The situation is further complicated by the fact that conflicting hypotheses about the likely direction and the magnitude of the effect emerge depending on the theoretical lens one uses to evaluate the practice. The best justification for these practices derives from a person-environment fit perspective. Students are more motivated to learn if the material can be adapted to their current competence level. There is some evidence consistent with this perspective for children placed in high-ability classrooms, high within-class ability groups, and college tracks (Fuligni, Eccles, & Barber, 1995; Gamoran & Mare, 1989; Pallas et al., 1994). In contrast, the results for adolescents placed in low-ability and noncollege tracks do not generally confirm this hypothesis. By and large, when long-term effects are found for this group of students, they are negative primarily because these adolescents are typically provided with inferior educational experience and support (Pallas et al., 1994; Oakes et al., 1992; Rosenbaum, & Kulieke, 1988). Low-track placement is related to poor attitudes toward school, feelings of incompetence, and problem behaviors both within school (nonattendance, crime, misconduct) and in the broader community (drug use, arrests) as well as to educational attainments (Oakes et al., 1992).

Another important and controversial aspect of curriculum tracking involves how students get placed in different classes and how difficult it is for students to move between class levels as their academic needs and competencies change once initial placements have been made. These issues are important both early in a child's school career (e.g., Pallas et al., 1994) and later in adolescence when course placement is linked directly to the kinds of educational options that are available to the student after high school. Minority youth, particularly African American and Hispanic boys, are more likely to be assigned to low-ability classes and non-college-bound curricular tracks than other groups; furthermore, many of these youth were sufficiently competent to be placed in higher-ability-level classes (Dornbusch, 1994; Oakes et al., 1992).

## **Social Experiences Related to Belonging Needs**

### *Teacher-Student Relationships*

Many researchers have stressed the importance of teacher-student or coach-player relationships for optimal engagement in a variety of achievement settings (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2002; Wentzel, 1998). Consistent with these suggestions, there is strong evidence for the importance of positive teacher-student relationships and a sense of belonging for children's development in school (Anderman, 1999; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Lynch &

Cicchetti, 1997; Wentzel, 2005). Teachers who are trusting, caring, and respectful of students provide the kind of socioemotional support students need to approach, engage, and persist on academic learning tasks and to develop positive achievement-related self-perceptions and values, high self-esteem, and a sense of belonging and emotional comfort at school (Eccles et al., 1998; Goodenow, 1993; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996).

### *Extracurricular Activities*

Schools differ in the extent to which they provide a variety of extracurricular activities for their students. Research on extracurricular activities has documented a positive link between adolescents' extracurricular activities and high school grade point average, strong school engagement, and high educational aspirations (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Eccles & Templeton, 2002). This work has also documented the protective value of extracurricular activity participation in reducing dropout rates as well as involvement in delinquent and other risky behaviors (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995). Participation in sports, in particular, has been linked to lower likelihood of school dropout and higher rates of college attendance (Eccles & Barber, 1999; McNeal, 1995), especially among low-achieving and blue-collar male athletes. These effects likely reflect several processes: (1) the impact of extracurricular activities on students' sense of belonging in the school, (2) the impact of extracurricular activities on the increased likelihood of participation leading to good relationships with particular teachers, and (3) the impact of students' own goals on the decision to participate in extracurricular activities (i.e., the students' perceptions of profitable and effective means of gaining admission to college).

### **Social Experiences Related to Autonomy Needs**

Many researchers believe that classroom practices that support student autonomy are critical for fostering intrinsic motivation to learn (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Support for this hypothesis has been found in both laboratory and field-based studies (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). Closely related to this idea is the work showing the negative impact of excessive use of praise and rewards for participation in school tasks on students' intrinsic interest in these tasks (Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). It is likely that such rewards undermine students' sense of autonomy.

However, it is also critical that teachers support student autonomy in a context of adequate structure and orderliness (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). This issue is complicated by the fact that the right balance between adult-guided structure and opportunities for student autonomy changes as the students mature: older students desire more opportunities for autonomy and less adult-controlled structure (Eccles et al., 1993). To the extent that the students do not experience these changes in the balance between structure and opportunities for autonomy as they pass through the K-12 school years, their school motivation should decline as they get older. I discuss this more later.

### **Social Experiences That Support Interest**

Many researchers believe that the meaningfulness of the academic work to the students' interests and goals influences sustained attention, high investment of cognitive and affective resources in learning, and strong identification with educational goals and aims

through its impact on the interest value of the work (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; National Research Council, 2004). In general, research supports this hypothesis: For example, students' reports of high levels of boredom in school, low interest, and perceived irrelevance of the curriculum are associated with poor attention, diminished achievement, disengagement, and, finally, alienation from school (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Jackson & Davis, 2000; National Research Council, 2004; Roeser et al., 1998). Unfortunately, evidence from several different perspectives suggests that the curriculum to which most students are exposed is often not particularly meaningful from either a cultural or a developmental perspective. Several researchers suggest that the disconnect of traditional curricula from the experiences of several cultural groups can explain the alienation of some group members from the educational process, sometimes leading to school dropout (Fine, 1991; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Sheets & Hollins, 1999). There is also a disconnect between increases in students' cognitive sophistication, life experiences, and identity needs and the nature of the curriculum as students move from the elementary into the secondary school years (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Lee & Smith, 2001; National Research Council, 2004). As one indication of this, middle school students report higher rates of boredom than elementary school students when doing schoolwork, especially passive work (e.g., listening to lectures), especially in social studies, math, and science (Larson & Richards, 1991). This could lead to some of the apathy problems discussed earlier.

Recently, educational researchers who focus on the concept of interest have made a distinction between situational interest and personal interest (Hidi, 2001; Renninger, Ewan, & Lasher, 2002). These scholars have identified a number of task characteristics that elicit sufficient situation interest in students to motivate their engagement with academic tasks. These characteristics include the kinds of teaching styles mentioned previously, along with novelty and challenge coupled with some familiarity with the content being taught. Such characteristics are likely to elicit curiosity and the desire to learn. Much of this work has focused on characteristics of text that motivate students to read and study the material. For example, there are significant relations between interest and deep-level learning (e.g., recall of main ideas, coherence of recall, responding to deeper comprehension questions, and representation of meaning; Eccles et al., 1998). Findings by Hidi (2001) suggest that attentional processes, affect, and persistence may mediate the effects of interest on text learning. These scholars, Renninger and Hidi in particular, are beginning to investigate the characteristics of educational experiences that facilitate situational interests becoming more enduring personal interests that will motivate continued engagement with academic tasks. This work will have very important developmental and educational implications.

### **Experiences Related to the Need to Matter**

There is growing interest in the decline in adolescents' engagement and performance in school. One intervention that is being tried to reduce this decline is the provision of opportunities to participate in service learning during high school (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). Advocates of this approach suggest that it is critical for adolescents to learn by being involved in their communities in order to develop good citizenship skills and achievement motivation. Such experiences, however, also provide a wonderful opportunity for adolescents to feel as if they are doing something that really matters to their school and

their community. Evidence is beginning to accumulate supporting the positive impact of such experiences on adolescents' engagement in the learning agenda of their schools (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). These experiences also reduce the likelihood that students who are doing poorly on the academic tasks of secondary school will drop out of high school prior to graduation.

### **Experiences of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination in Classrooms**

Researchers interested in the relatively poor academic performance of children from some ethnic/racial groups have suggested another classroom-level experience related to both expectations for one's own performance and the subjective task value for engagement in the learning tasks: experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Quintana & Vera, 1999; Roeser et al., 1998; Szalacha et al., 2003; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Two types of discrimination have been discussed: (1) anticipation of future discrimination in the labor market which might undermine the long-term benefits of education (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), and (2) the impact of daily experiences of discrimination on one's mental health and academic motivation (Wong et al., 2003). Wong et al. (2003) found that anticipated future discrimination leads to increases in African American youth's motivation to do well in school, which, in turn, leads to increases in academic performance. In this sample, anticipated future discrimination appeared to motivate the youth to do their very best so that they would be maximally equipped to deal with future discrimination (Eccles, 2004). In contrast, daily experiences of racial discrimination from their peers and teachers led to declines in school engagement, confidence in one's academic competence and grades, and increases in depression and anger. Wong et al. (2003) also found that a strong, positive African-American social identity helped to buffer the negative effects of perceived racial discrimination on school-related motivation and achievement. In a study of Asian, Mexican, Central, and South American immigrant high school students growing up in major metropolitan areas of the United States, the majority of youth reported feeling discriminated against at school by their white classmates and their teachers (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Finally, in a sample of Mexican American high school students in California, perceived discrimination in school had a strong, negative multivariate relation to school belonging (Roeser, 2004).

### **Summary**

In this section, I have reviewed what we know about those school experiences likely to support both universal and individual needs. I focused on those school and classroom characteristics and experiences that are likely to either support or undermine students' sense of competence, belonging, autonomy, and mattering, as well as their ability to fulfill their own values, interests, and goals. Thinking of school experiences in these terms is a fairly new approach to the field of educational psychology. It derives from the work by Deci and Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2002) on self-determination theory and the work on person and stage-environment fit theories of motivation and human development (e.g., Covington, 1992; Eccles et al., 1993; Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Hunt, 1979; Maehr & Midgley, 1996). By and large, the results are consistent with the prediction that achievement motivation and school engagement is supported by school characteristics that facili-

tate the person-context fit. Few studies, however, look at multiple characteristics and their fit with multiple needs simultaneously so we have no idea whether some of these needs are more important than others and if so, for whom? We also do not know what keeps young people engaged in school and other skill-based learning contexts when many of their needs are not being met by the context. Finally, we know little about which features of the learning context influence which aspects of engagement. More research is badly needed to answer such questions.

## CONCLUSION

There is growing evidence that experiences both at home and in various school/learning contexts influence children and adolescents' motivation to achieve, defined in terms of self and task beliefs, and engagement. Interestingly, the best-integrated explanations for these influences come from a person-environment fit perspective, coupled with a skill-training perspective. In both contexts, children learn the valued skills if they feel support for their universal needs (e.g., a sense of competence, a feeling of belonging, a sense of autonomy or personal ownership of one's actions, and a sense of mattering) and personal needs (personal and social identity needs, temperament and aptitude-based needs, and interests). Early in life, parents and other socializers likely play a critical role in facilitating the acquisition of general motivational orientations toward mastery, curiosity, and the self-regulation of one's effort and attention. Parents and socializers also structure the types of activities to which the child are exposed, thus influencing the specific skills that children acquire and the opportunities the children have to develop domain-specific ability self-concepts and interests. As children mature, they begin to encounter other social contexts such as schools, peer groups, sports' and arts' programs, and so on. Again, the children's engagement in the learning opportunities provided in each of these contexts appears to depend on the fit between these contexts and the children's universal and personal needs. If the fit is good, the children will engage in the learning opportunities provided. What they learn will depend on what is being taught and how well it is being taught.

If the fit is not good, the children are likely either to disengage from that context altogether or to engage in a variety of behaviors designed to protect their sense of self-worth even if these behaviors conflict with mastering the learning opportunities provided in that context (Covington, 1992). Disengagement can take the form of withdrawing energy and personal resources from the activities inherent in the setting. For example, at school students may stop paying attention in class and doing homework assignments; they may also stop caring about doing well on tests and in their courses; they may increase the amount of time they are truant and may stop attending school at all; and, finally, they may disconnect their sense of self-worth from any of the feedback they receive from teachers and other school personnel. The same can happen with their engagement in their families. In each of these examples, poor person-environment fit may lead to withdrawal from institutions and contexts that are supposed to support positive development. What will the youth do? Given that we are a very adaptive species, it is likely that the youth will seek out other settings in which their needs can be met. Where will these youth turn to have their needs met: perhaps to their peer groups or to other organizations and settings. If these settings provide positive developmental experiences that sup-

port healthy development, these youth may do fine. But what if these settings reinforce less positive developmental trajectories—trajectories that decrease the likelihood of a successful transition into adulthood or trajectories that increase the likelihood of very risky outcomes? It is this latter possibility that we need to avoid by providing our young people with better options and more supportive developmental contexts.

Where should research efforts go now? My focus in this chapter has been on the potential impact of two major socialization contexts on the development of children and adolescents' achievement motivation, engagement, and performance: the family and the school. Most of the existing research has looked at these two contexts quite separately, using different theoretical frameworks and different methods of study. Thus, despite increasing calls for more integrated, cross-context studies that allow one to investigate the full complexity of social experience on human development, we know very little about how these two contexts interact with each other over time to both influence and accommodate to human development. I reviewed some of the few studies that look at family-school interactions. We need many more such studies and we need integrative studies that look more comprehensively at the interaction of these two contexts with each other over time and across a much wider variety of populations. We know, for example, that even very active parents decrease their participation in their children's schooling as their children move into, and through, secondary school (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Why? And what are the consequences of this withdrawal for various types of children? We also know that culture plays a major role in the extent to which, and the manner in which, parents get involved with their children's schooling (Booth & Dunn, 1996; Epstein, 1992; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Rogoff, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). We know less about the consequences of these differences for the families, children, and schools (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Similarly, we know relatively little about the consequences of the fit between the culture and language of the home and the culture and language of the school. Extensive work is now being done on issues related to the fit of languages—work in bilingual versus total immersion language programs, for example (Brisk, 1998). Such issues are currently critical to the American educational system and will become even more critical in years to come as the proportion of children from immigrant and ethnic minority families continues to increase.

We know even less about the interface between families and the many other important contexts in which children have the opportunity to learn and manifest achievement motivation (contexts such as sports programs, faith-based activity settings, summer programs, music and art programs, etc.) The family management perspective outlined earlier provides one framework for looking more closely at the relation between the family context and these other institutions and settings. Parents are an important source of social capital in that they can connect their children to a wide variety of resources and opportunities (Furstenberg et al., 1999). They can also intervene on behalf of their children when other contexts and institutions are not providing the kinds of supports their children need. Finally, they can help their children navigate various out-of-home contexts in ways that support their children's achievement motivation and engagement. As noted earlier, the extent to which parents can successfully play these roles, of course, depends on a wide variety of personal and contextual characteristics. We know very little about these processes.

Finally, despite increasing concern with the need to look at bidirectional effects, most of the research in both of these fields has focused on the impact of socialization experi-

ences on the child. Yet we know that children influence the reactions of parents, teachers, coaches, peers, and other social agents. In addition, children themselves are active agents in their own achievement-related choices and are active agents in moderating the influence of social agents on their development. Much more research is needed on these processes.

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